



ship of God (*Berachoth* 40b). Modern Jews continue to hope for such an earthly kingdom.

words would have held to his Jewish audience. They were likely accustomed to the anticipation of an earthly political kingdom that was to come in the future. The Babylonian-Talmud records that the first century Rabbi Johanan ben Zakai taught that any benediction (or ritual prayer) must include mention of the king-

It is true that we must never allow human misconceptions to determine what we believe and teach. We must teach the truth about God's kingdom whether it runs contrary to popular thinking or not. However, in every section of this model prayer, Jesus is not dictating the exact words that are to be spoken, but the general elements that constitute acceptable prayer. Given the fact that the *Kaddish* and modern premillennialists apply this appeal in a corporate sense, the modern use of the words "**Your kingdom come**" (without any modification) could certainly give the wrong impression.



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14.42

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

October 14
2012

Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Can We Pray "Your Kingdom Come"?

By Kyle Pope

In the model prayer offered by Jesus in Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus gave an example of the type of prayers His disciples should offer up to God. The second statement of that prayer declares, "**Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**" (Matt. 6:10, NKJV). At least as early as 1867 brethren wrestled with the question of whether the appeal "**Your kingdom come**" should still be offered up because of the fact that Christ's kingdom has now come in the establishment of His church (cf. Col. 1:13). An anonymous writer published in *Lard's Quarterly* argued for a personal application of the appeal of this prayer, claiming, "so long as there is one sinner unconverted, or one saint unsanctified; so long will we have need for the petition 'thy kingdom come'" (249). Moses Lard, the editor of the journal, however, did not agree with this view. He added a comment after the ar-

ticle rejecting this argument, writing, “I cannot pray ‘thy kingdom come;’ but I profoundly can [pray], thy ‘everlasting kingdom’ come” (252). This has been the position taken by many brethren. In 1875, J. W. McGarvey argued that “it is improper to retain the words, and yet attach to them a sense different from that in which Jesus employed them”



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(*Commentary on Matthew 65*). The question is, are we able to determine exactly in what *sense* the Lord originally employed these words? Later, in this very chapter, Jesus used an individual, rather than a corporate, sense of *seeking the kingdom* (Matt. 6:33). Was that his meaning in our text?

It may be significant that the appeal “**Your kingdom come**” is not repeated later in the New Testament in apostolic prayer. Instead, we find phrases of slightly different emphasis. Paul would use the Aramaic phrase *marana tha*, “**O come Lord**” (1 Cor. 16:22). John, near the end of the great vision of Revelation appeals “**Come Lord Jesus**” (Rev. 22:20). Yet, these very writers describe the kingdom as being in existence in the first century. Paul told the Colossians that God has “**delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love**” (Col. 1:13). John wrote, “**He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen**” (Rev. 1:6, NASB). Do these facts show that the apostles recognized that it was no longer necessary to pray that the kingdom might come (in a corporate sense), but that we should pray for Christ’s return?

It might be argued that if “**Your kingdom come**” is no longer applicable, it destroys the force of Jesus’ model as an example to Christians of all ages. We should note, however, that there may be many things for which the emphasis in prayer changed after the cross. For example, I appreciate McGarvey’s point that “We must also insert the name of Jesus as the mediator through whom we pray: for on the night of the betrayal he taught his disciples to thenceforward ask in his name (John 16:24; see also Col. 3:17)” (*Commentary on Matthew 65*). This command of Jesus doesn’t rob the model prayer of its force, but it introduces the relationship of mediation that did not exist until after the cross.

People cannot remove themselves completely from the environment and culture in which they live and communicate. Words and concepts that attain a certain sense within a culture, cannot be divorced from the meaning they hold within that culture. In our own day, the apostasy of the denominational world has permeated our culture to such a degree that many (if not most) in the religious world conceive of the “**kingdom**” as a future, political, material, and geographically identifiable entity which will come in the future. John

R. Rice expresses the typical premillennial view, declaring of the words “**Your kingdom come**” —“This is clearly a prayer for the reign of Christ on earth. That kingdom has not yet come” (*Commentary on Matthew 105*). Modern Jews hold a similar view. Many still use, the *Kadish*, a ritual prayer that was originally a type of doxology recited at the end of a rabbinical sermon in the synagogue. Its use in early Judaism is attested in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sotah 49a*). Although it is preserved in different versions, a common form appeals “may his kingdom come in your lifetime.” If this appeal was offered in the first century it may indicate to us the force Jesus’