

THE WORLD OF GOD IN THE WORLD OF MEN

GOLDEN TEXT

“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). (Matthew 1:23)

USEFUL PRACTICE

In the dispensation of grace, the Church must reflect the values of the Kingdom of God in the world.

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:21-23; Galatians 4:3-7

Matthew 1

21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

Galatians 4

3 So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world.

4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

6 Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba, Father.*”

7 So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

I) To explain what the Kingdom of God in the world is about;

II) To highlight the blessings of a life in the Kingdom;

III) To point out the evils of a life in the World.

INTRODUCTION

The Scriptures reveal that there will be a future literal kingdom, but in the present dispensation of grace, that kingdom is spiritual: “the kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:21). In this lesson, which closes the current quarter, we will study the implantation of the Kingdom of God in the world, the contrast between those who live under the aegis of this kingdom and those who live according to the values of the world. Thus, the purpose is to remember how God acts to dwell with us and to reinforce that, although we experience great challenges, the Kingdom of God remains at work in the world through the Church (Matt. 5:16).

I - THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE WORLD

1. The incarnation of Christ. Matthew asserts that the messianic prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1:21, 22; Isa. 7:14). This event took place through the conception of our Lord by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, in which it is ratified by the Gospels that He is “the Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32) and that the “Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). In other words, our Lord is Emmanuel, God with us (Matt.1:23). Thus, at the set time, Christ became human (Gal. 4:4), so that He partook of our nature to atone for our sins (Heb. 2:14-18).

2. The Kingdom message. After the temptation in the desert, our Lord began his ministry: “From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for

the kingdom of heaven has come near.” (Matt. 4:17). Here it is made clear that the message of the Kingdom of God contains a call to repentance (Matt. 3:2), in which the Greek term for repentance is *metanoia*, which means change of mind, it encompasses abandoning sin and turning to God (Luke 24:46, 47); it includes a new spiritual and moral attitude and a new conduct as well as (Acts 26:20; Eph. 4:28). Only repentance and faith in the atoning and redeeming work of Christ can restore the sinner before God (Acts 3:19; Rom. 3:23-25; 2 Cor. 7:10). Therefore, it is the role of the Church to proclaim the message of the Kingdom throughout the world (Matt. 24:14).

3. The Kingdom values. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ reveals the ethics and morals of the Kingdom, where the necessary control of anger (Matt. 5:21,22); fleeing from sexual immorality (Matt. 5:27,28); the indissoluble marriage (Matt. 5:31, 32); honesty in speaking (Matt. 5:33-37); not paying back evil with evil (Matt. 5:38-44); almsgiving, prayer and fasting from a sincere heart (Matt. 6:1, 5,16); not judging others (Matt. 7:1, 2); the warning about the two ways (Matt. 7:13,14/NKJV); the warning against false prophets (Matt. 7:15-23); and the exhortation to practice these values (Matt. 7:24-35) stand out. In this sense, the Sermon calls us to a life of perfection in Christ (Matt. 5:48) and invites us to prioritize the Kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt. 6:33). Thus, the children of the Kingdom must express these values in their daily lives (Eph. 5:8).

II - THE BLESSINGS OF A LIFE IN THE KINGDOM

1. Remission of sins. In Galatians, Paul portrays the new position of believers in Christ. The apostle states that "we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world" (Gal. 4:3). This means that, before the Gospel of the Kingdom, the spiritual perception of both Jews and Greeks was limited, legalistic and superstitious. However, at the set time, "God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Gal. 4:4) to redeem mankind from the bondage of sin (Gal. 4:5a). Thus, Christ's atoning death freed man from the curse of the law and the power of darkness (Gal. 3:13; Col. 1:13). Thus, as sinners, once slaves, and now forgiven, we were raised to the status of children by adoption and heirs of Christ (Gal. 5:4,5b).

2. Adopted and Heirs of Christ. Once we were strangers and enemies, but now we are reconciled children in Christ (Col. 1:21). God gave the children the gift of a new name and a new image: the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29; Rev. 2:17). As a result of our adoption, now as children, we are "also heirs of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:7). Included in this inheritance are the

promises to Abraham (Gal. 3:29) and eternal life (Titus 3:7; Eph. 3:6). By being accepted, we were transformed into children for his praise and glory (Eph. 1:6). The purpose of remission of sins, sonship and inheritance, has no other aim than to praise and glorify God (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). Therefore, the Church will never have glory in itself; all glory is exclusively attributed to God through the work of Christ (Ps. 115:1, John 13:31, 32). Thus, the Church is the field where the Kingdom of God is manifested here in the world (Eph. 3:10-12).

III - THE EVILS OF A LIFE IN THE WORLD

1. The bondage of sin. The Bible asserts that everyone who sins is a slave to sin (John 8:34). This means that human beings are slaves to whatever has mastered them (2 Peter 2:19), since sin makes man unable to accept the Word of God (John 8:43). Furthermore, pride prevents him from recognizing his own slavery (John 9:41). Subjugated by the flesh, the sinner surrenders to dishonesty, injustice, gluttony, alcohol, nicotine and other vices (Rom. 13:13). It is the picture of a miserable life, without peace of mind, which walks the path of darkness and needs urgent deliverance (John 8:36).

2. Children of wrath and eternal damnation. Scripture emphasizes that men enslaved by the desires and thoughts of the flesh are “by nature children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3/NKJV). It refers to the inclination to gratify the passions and to do the evil inherent in unregenerate man (Gen. 6:5). Carnal inclinations, impurity, covetousness, and idolatry, among others, result in “the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 5:3-6/NKJV). Therefore, our Lord taught that whoever “does not believe stands condemned already” (John 3:18b). Anyone who does not give their life to the Savior is condemned, because they refuse to believe “in the name of God’s one and only Son” (John 3:18c). Thus, the sin of unbelief is the peak of the rebellion that resists the salvation offered in Christ (Luke 7:30; Acts 7:51). Therefore, we are exhorted, “but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Matt. 24:13 - NIV).

CONCLUSION

The Jews looked forward to a literal kingdom that would free them from political, social, and economic oppression. Christ corrected them and stated that the “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed” (Luke 17:20), that is, it would not be earthly, but spiritual. The literal kingdom is yet to be implanted. In this respect, Christ came to rescue man from sin. This requires repentance and faith in the sacrifice of

the cross. Those who refuse the ethics and morals of the Kingdom are condemned to eternal death. Thus, Christian values must be observed by the Church, whose mission is to announce the Kingdom of God in a world dominated by the Empire of Evil.