

THE KINGDOM SHALL BE THE LORD'S

Obadiah 10-21

The biblical concept of the kingdom of God also occasionally takes on a special sense. Jesus described this narrower sense of the kingdom in this way: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10). God's holiness and glory in his heavenly throne room is so overwhelming that all creatures there honor him with unqualified voluntary service. On earth, however, creatures rebel and refuse to acknowledge God as King, and evil kingdoms rise up to oppose God's Kingdom. The hope that Scripture presents from cover to cover is that this disparity between the heavenly throne room and earth will be eliminated one day (1 Chr. 16:31). God will judge the wicked and bring redeemed humanity into a new creation (Isa. 65; Zech. 14). When this transformation takes place, only God's kingdom will stand and voluntary obedience to him will extend to the ends of the earth as it does in heaven (1 Chr. 16:31; Ps. 97:1-2). The Scriptures reveal, however, that God determined to accomplish this end through a lengthy historical process.... The New Testament teaches that this final worldwide stage of the kingdom of God began with the incarnation of Christ. He and John the Baptist announced the good news that the Kingdom was at hand (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15). But contrary to common Jewish expectations, Jesus and his apostles explained that the worldwide reign of God on earth would not come immediately in all of its fullness. Instead, Christ inaugurated this final stage of the kingdom in his earthly ministry (Matt. 2:2; 4:23; 9:35; 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 16:16; 23:3; John 18:37). It continues today in the church (Matt. 24:14; Rom. 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 4:19-20; Col. 4:11), but it will reach its ultimate end when Christ returns in glory (1 Cor. 15:50-58; Rev. 11:5). When that day finally comes, the will of God will be done throughout the earth just as it is done in heaven.

Richard Pratt

- I. **THE ENEMY:** Who is the enemy? (10-15)

- II. **THE LEADER:** Who can lead us to victory over this force? (15-18; Col 2:6-15)

- III. **THE BATTLE PLAN:** What role do we play in this great war? (18-21)