

The apostle Paul believed that he was part of Christ's Kingdom. Not only that, but he believed that all other Christians were too. Paul believed that the same process which frees us from the bondage of sin also places us in the Kingdom of Christ. In Colossians 1:13 he wrote, "For (*God*) delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." Did you notice the past tense in those verbs? Paul is not looking to some future date when God would transfer him into Christ's Kingdom; he said that God had already done it. Past tense -- he was in the Kingdom! The Kingdom was in existence!

The apostle John also considered himself to be a part of the Kingdom. In Revelation 1:9 he referred to himself as a "fellow partaker in the ... kingdom." When two inspired apostles both believe themselves to be in the Kingdom, we can assuredly conclude that the Kingdom had come into existence. Like Paul, John also linked the process of entering the Kingdom with the process of forgiveness from sin. In verses 5 and 6 he said that Jesus "released us from our sins by His blood, and He has made us to be a kingdom." Past tense -- He has already made us to be a kingdom, just as He has already released us from our sins by His blood.

This theme is recurrent in the New Testament. In Revelation 12:9-11, John has a vision in which he witnesses the casting down of Satan. He says that Satan was defeated because of the blood of the Lamb (vs. 11). Only after the defeat of Satan does John hear a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come." This Scripture is very significant, for it verifies that "Salvation," "the Kingdom," and "the Authority of Christ" all came at the same time ... after the defeat of Satan by the blood of Jesus.

What we have learned here is consistent with Jesus' description of His Kingdom as being "not of this world" (John 18:36). His is a Spiritual Reign and has to do with Spiritual Things. Likewise, these points are consistent with Daniel's vision in Daniel 7:13-14. Daniel foresaw the ascension of Jesus into heaven. When the one like a "Son of Man" was standing before the "Ancient of Days," Daniel said, "to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom" There is a consistent pattern in Scripture that the Kingdom began after the ascension of Christ into heaven. The account of Christ's ascension is recorded in Acts 1:9. Prior to Acts 2, all references to the Kingdom are "Future Tense." Following the powerful events of Acts 2, references to the Kingdom are "Past Tense." And -- in Acts 11:15, Peter looked back to the events of Acts 2 and called it: "The Beginning." The beginning of what? Could the events of Acts 2 be the beginning of the Kingdom of God? We shall explore that chapter and that possibility in "Bible Talk" # 304.

1. What did you learn about the existence of the Kingdom from Colossians 1:13?

2. When you read Revelation 1:6,9 -- does it sound to you like John believed the Kingdom was in existence?

3. After examining Revelation 12:9-11, when did "Salvation," "the Kingdom," and "the Authority of Christ" become a reality?

4. According to Daniel 7:13-14, when did the one like a "Son of Man" receive a Kingdom?

5. Study the context surrounding Acts 11:15.

What has happened which makes Peter think about the events of Acts 2?

Why do you think he referred to the events of Acts 2 as "The Beginning"?