

Shall Not Taste Death

The Kingdom of God and the Taste of Death

Matthew 10:28, Page 1530

Mark 9:1, Page 1574

Luke 9:27, Page 1616

Jesus prophesied about the taste of death and Kingdom of God. As the omniscient God and King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus always knows all things. Just before Jesus took Peter, James and John up the mountain to witness the transfiguration of Jesus, He prophesied that "some of those standing here shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." We shall now focus upon the prophecies of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God and the taste of death.

The Matthew Prophecy of the Kingdom

In Matthew 10:28, page 1530, Jesus made a very specific prophecy concerning the Son of Man. ((We know that the title Son of Man refers to Jesus because of Daniel 7:13-14, pages 1400-1401 where we read: "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like the Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of very language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed." Therefore, we see the title Son of Man describing the One who will have an everlasting dominion so that all people might serve Him. Jesus frequently applied this Son of Man title to Himself as in Mark 9:1, page 574.)) Speaking to His disciples, Jesus told them that some of them would not taste death until they see the Son of Man

coming in His kingdom.



Matthew 16:28, Page 1530

“Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

In Matthew 16:28, page 1530, Jesus was very specific about the time and event. The event would be the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. Some of the disciples would live long enough to see that time. Although some teachers now emphasize that the Kingdom of God has already been realized upon earth, the Old Testament prophets spoke of a physical rule of Christ upon earth, with His throne in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:1-19, pages 1492-1493; Psalm 2:6-9, pages 857-858; Isaiah 2:2-4, page 1073; Joel 3:16-21, pages 1433-1434). We have not seen that prophecy yet fulfilled. Jesus spoke of the future time when He would return to earth to reign (Matthew 24:29-51, pages 1545-1547). Jesus made a very specific prophecy to His disciples and the very words are inspired. ((Compare Matthew 16:24, page 1530, to see that Jesus was speaking to His disciples.)) Jesus told all His disciples that some of them would not ((The Greek here “οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου” contains very precise information. Matthew emphasized two terms for “not.” The first term for “not” (“οὐ”) means in the physical, existing world that they shall not taste death. The second term “not” (“μὴ”) means that, in the subjunctive world of possibilities, under no possible circumstances shall some of the disciples taste death. In both instances, Jesus spoke of them living long enough to see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. Taken together, Jesus made the strongest possible claim that some of His disciples would not die before seeing the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom.)) taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. Jesus expanded upon

this prophecy in Mark and we should look at that verse next.

The Mark Prophecy of the Kingdom

In Mark 9:1, page 1574, Jesus had summoned the disciples and the crowd to Himself. Jesus then made a second prophecy before He went up to the mountain of transfiguration. Similar to the prophecy in Matthew 16:28, page 1530, Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God.



Mark 9:1, page 1574

And Jesus was saying to them, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

In Mark 9:1, page 1574, Jesus prophesied that some of His living disciples would “not taste death until they see the Kingdom of God after it has come with power.” Notice that here Jesus focused upon the time after the kingdom of God has come with power. ((The Greek word for “after” is part of the translation of the single word “has come” (“ἐληλυθυῖαν”) meaning that the disciples will see **after** the kingdom of God has come with power. The “has come” word is a perfect passive participle, accusative singular, and that participle depends upon the main verb for its meaning in this context. The main verb “they see” (“ἴδωσιν”) is a perfect subjunctive, third person plural. Some disciples will see the kingdom, but the participle further describes the kingdom of God as already having come with power. Therefore, the thrust then amounts to a claim that some of the disciples will live long enough to see the Kingdom of God after it has come with power. They see

the time after the initial coming of Jesus to establish His physical kingdom on earth. They will see the operation of the kingdom of God in divine power.)) The words of Scripture are inspired and every word is inspired. So, we must pay close attention to the words Jesus prophesied in both Matthew and Mark concerning the kingdom of God. The prophecies in Matthew and Mark are very similar, but have crucial distinctions.

The Two Prophecies Compared

Now we may compare and contrast the two prophecies Jesus gave to His disciples and the crowd at large. One emphasized the Son of Man coming in His kingdom and the other prophecy emphasized the time after the kingdom of God has come with power. We may summarize the prophecies as follows.

Prophecy One. Some of the disciples will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Matthew 16:28, page 1530).

Prophecy Two. Some of the disciples will not taste death until they see the Kingdom of God after it has come with power (Mark 9:1, page 1574).

The two prophecies focus upon two related events which are: (1) seeing the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom; and (2) seeing the Kingdom of God after it has come in power. The prophecy in Mark 9:1, page 1574 is not identical then to the Matthew 16:28, page 1530 prophecy because of the different time frames involved. The Matthew prophecy only refers to the time of the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom, whereas the Mark prophecy looks farther ahead to a time after the Kingdom of God has come with power. ((At this point, we should begin to doubt that the traditional explanation of the prophecy being fulfilled with the disciples seeing Jesus transfigured on the mountain because the the dual nature of the prophecies.)) Now let us look to the fulfillment of these two prophecies in the New Testament.

The Luke Prophecy of the Kingdom

Jesus offered the same prophecy concerning the taste of death and the Kingdom of God in Luke 9:27, page 1616. Jesus prophesied: "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." In the context of this prophecy, consider the preceding verse, Luke 9:26, page 1616. Jesus declared: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes ((The Greek word for "comes" ("ἵδωσιν") means to see with the eyes and to experience. In this text, Jesus emphasized that some of His disciples will see with their eyes, or mind, Jesus coming in the glory of His kingdom. This picture of glory may support the view that Jesus referred to the transfiguration here, but the transfiguration does not picture a time when Jesus comes in glory to confront men ashamed of Him.)) in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." Therefore, we understand that Jesus in Luke 9:27, page 1616, focused upon the time when Jesus would come "in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" and men would have their shame of Jesus returned to them by Jesus coming in glory. The time here links to Christ coming in His glory and confronting men ashamed of Him on earth. So, we may see that only when Jesus comes in His glory to confront unbelieving men will this prophecy be fulfilled.

The Fulfillment in the Apostle John

The Apostle John wrote from the Isle of Patmos about the revelation of Jesus Christ. In Revelation 11:15, page 1927, John continued to describe the events in heaven and earth as God revealed them to him. John spoke as if he were a witness standing in the future while the events unfolded around him. In contrast, many Old Testament prophets looked at future events from their present perspective, whereas John was transported into the future and watched the events in real

time. So, as we look at Revelation 11:15, page 1927, we see John hearing about the kingdom of God as it comes to earth in the future.



Revelation 11:15, Page 1927

Then the seventh angel sounded, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”

In Revelation 11:15, page 1927, we see the heavenly proclamation by the seventh angel that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. This event signals the worship of the twenty-four elders that declare that God has taken His great power and has begun to reign. His reign enrages the nations, but God meets human rage with divine wrath. ((The Greek word here for “enraged” (“ὀργίσθησαν”) emphasizes a total response of rage in the nations, caused by a force outside of themselves. God had responded to the evil nations with His own “wrath” (“ὀργή”).)) In contrast to the divine wrath poured out upon the nations, God takes this time to reward His bond-servants the prophets, the saints and all who fear God’s name. It will also be the time to destroy all who destroy the earth. ((The Greek term here for destroy (“διαφθεῖραι”) refers to work of a moth in Luke 12:33 which destroys garments by eating them away and in 2 Corinthians 4:16 to the decay of the outer man and in Acts 2:27 to describe the fact that Jesus will never undergo bodily decay.))



Revelation 19:11-16, Page 1937

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called "the Word of God." And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with Him may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron, and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

In Revelation 19:11-16, page 1937, we see the Lord Jesus, followed by the armies of heaven, coming to earth to strike down the nations. We may also recognize the fulfillment of the Matthew prophecy that the Apostle John would not taste death until he had seen the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, coming in His kingdom. As John witnessed the events of Revelation 11:15 and Revelation 19, he truly saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. Now we can turn to the Mark 9:1 prophecy also fulfilled by the Apostle John.



Revelation 20:6, page 1938

Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of

Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

In Revelation 20, pages 1938-1939, we see the millennial kingdom of Christ established upon the earth. He rules with power, and the saints reign with Christ ((In 2 Timothy 2:12, page 1862, Paul taught that all believers will reign with Christ, if they endure. In Revelation 20:6, we see a small preview of the saints fulfilling the promise from God for all believers to reign with Christ.)) as priests of God and of Christ. ((In 1 Peter 2:4, page 1895, Peter described all believers as “living stones . . . being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Therefore, the saints on earth continue this same type of ministry as holy priests serving God in the millennium. Likewise, in 1 Peter 2:9, page 1895, Peter again declared that all believers are part of the “royal priesthood” who “proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Therefore, the millennial service of saints builds upon the priesthood of all believers which they enjoyed before the millennial reign of Jesus Christ.)) Therefore, we see that the Kingdom of God has come with power during the millennium, and the Apostle John has witnessed its power as a holy priest and royal priest reigning with Jesus. Therefore, the Matthew, Mark and Luke prophecies have been fulfilled by the John in the Book of Revelation. Now we can turn to another disciple standing before Jesus who did not taste death until he saw both the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom, and the Kingdom of God had come with power.

The Fulfillment in the Apostle Peter

The Apostle Peter heard the prophecy from Jesus concerning some of the disciples not tasting death until they saw both the Son of Man coming in His kingdom and the Kingdom of God after it came in power. As we will observe below, Peter wrote about both prophecies and we can read about them in his

epistles.



2 Peter 3:10, page 1903

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

In 2 Peter 3:10, page 1903, Peter revealed that the day of the Lord will come like a thief. Jesus had used similar language in Matthew 24:43, page 1546, concerning a thief coming and catching the head of the house unprepared. ((Isaiah 66:15-16, page 1175, also depicts God using fire to judge and destroy all the flesh of His enemies.)) Jesus continued in Matthew 24:43, page 1546, to describe the coming of the Son of Man “at an hour when you do not think He will.” Peter, however, expanded upon the basic teaching of Jesus and added a brief chronology in 2 Peter 3:10, page 1903. Peter added in 2 Peter 3:10, page 1903, that during the day of the Lord, “the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.” Please recall that Jesus had described the coming of the Son of Man (referring to Himself) as the unexpected thief surprises the head of the household. Jesus specifically emphasized that the people did not think He would come when He did. Therefore, from 2 Peter 3:10, we see that Peter also did not taste death until He saw the coming of the Son of Man. Furthermore, also in 2 Peter 3:10, we see the Kingdom of God after it has come with power, as prophesied in Mark 9:1, page 1574.



Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise, we are looking for a new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

In 2 Peter 3:11-13, page 1903, Peter elaborated upon the revelation and promise of God regarding the future, and particularly seeing the Kingdom of God after it has come with power. Peter portrayed not only the destruction of the heavens by burning, ((The Greek word for “burning” (“πυρούμενοι”) means, in this case, to be burned with intense heat, as in the refining fire hot enough to separate different metals. Likewise, the term “elements” (“στοιχεῖα”) refers to the elements or basic structures of creation, but Peter also stressed the total destruction of heaven and earth, even down to the most basic elements of sub-atomic particles.)) but Peter also clearly had revelation about the events after the Kingdom of God had come in power. So, we conclude that Peter, like John, fulfilled both of the prophecies of Jesus recorded in Matthew and Mark. ((Peter also recorded other less obvious references to future events related to the Kingdom of God. Consider 1 Peter 1:13 (Peter apparently saw the revelation of Jesus Christ, referring to the Son of Man coming in His kingdom); 1 Peter 2:12 (Peter described the day of visitation, where the Gentiles will glorify God because they observed the good deeds of believers—a reference to both the Mark and Matthew prophecy); 1 Peter 3:22 (Peter saw that Jesus had ascended into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him—a future view of the Kingdom of God); 1 Peter 4:5 (Peter knew that Jesus was ready to judge the living and the dead, events that will happen after the

Kingdom of God has come in power); 1 Peter 4:7 (Peter understood that the end of all things was near—he anticipated the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom;) 1 Peter 4:13 (Peter foresaw the revelation of the glory of Christ—fulfilled when the Son of Man comes in His kingdom); 1 Peter 5:1 (Peter prophesied about the glory he and other believers would partake of when the glory of Christ will be revealed); 1 Peter 5:4 (Peter promised that when the Chief Shepherd appears, elders who have served well will receive the unfading crown of glory—fulfilled after the Kingdom of God has come in power); 1 Peter 5:10 (Peter proclaimed that the God of all grace would perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish believers because they had been called to the eternal glory of God in Christ—fulfilled after the Kingdom of God has come in power); 2 Peter 1:11 (Peter knew about the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—fulfilling both the Mark and Matthew prophecies); 2 Peter 3:7 (Peter knew about the present reservation of the heavens and earth for destruction by fire in the future—fulfilled after the Kingdom of God had come in power).))

Conclusion

Jesus prophesied that some of His disciples would not taste death until they see: (1) the Son of Man come in His kingdom and (2) the Kingdom of God after it has come in power. From the passages we have looked at above, we can see how Peter and John fulfilled the prophecies based upon their writings in Scripture. Other disciples may also have had such vision of the future, but we do not have them recorded in Scripture (at least that I could find). May God get all glory from the wonderful ways that He reveals Himself and our Lord Jesus Christ to all generations through the Word of God. ((I was reading Psalm 111:2 lately: “Great are the works of the LORD; they are studied by all who delight in them.” I enjoy studying the great works of the LORD, because I delight in them. Perhaps you enjoy the study of the great works of God in

the same way, just as God proclaimed thousands of years ago.))