

Encouragement for the Disciples
Matthew 16:27—28

If someone were to ask you why Jesus came to earth the response would probably be to die for the sins of mankind. This certainly is accurate but I wouldn't stop at His death. Anyone can die but no one has been resurrected as Jesus Christ has. Coming back to life sets Him apart from all others and gives us the hope of eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:12—19; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:13—14). While on earth He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom to all of Israel (not to the Gentiles: Matthew 10:6; 15:24) in order to gather the Little Flock of believing Israel out of the nation of Israel. It was this group that Jesus was preparing to get through the seven-year Tribulation so that He could set them up in the Millennial Kingdom at His Second Coming. Israel will then reign with Christ in ruling the world.

This Kingdom will be a heavenly government set up on this earth with Christ ruling the world from Jerusalem with the 12 Disciples. The Gospel (good news) of the Kingdom was being preached because the good news had arrived that it was time for the much prophesied Kingdom to come into being. This is why it was said to be at hand (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7). Obviously, the Kingdom never materialized, all because Israel rejected the offer. With their rejection of the Kingdom came the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ and the Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20:24). The Good News of the Kingdom should no longer be preached because of the new revelation given to Paul.

By understanding that the Kingdom was the focus of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John it helps us see what was going on in the Disciple's minds. The one question that was foremost on their minds was if He was now going to set up the Kingdom (Acts 1:6). Matthew 16 and 17 need to be interpreted within this context.

Second Coming (verse 27)

After Peter pronounces Jesus as the Christ and after Jesus announces that He must go to Jerusalem and die He says that His disciples must be ready to die with Him. Those who are not willing to die (especially relevant during the turmoil of the Tribulation) are not true disciples. They may save their physical life but lose their soul. With that teaching Jesus emphasizes to the Disciples how the Millennial Kingdom will come into being. Those who put Christ first will be saved.

Jesus had just called Himself the Son of Man and now says the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels. I believe this coming is recorded in Revelation 6:12—17 when the sky is rolled back and people during the Tribulation are able to see God the Father and the Lamb coming in power and might. It is at this time that the angels will be sent out to reap the earth with the tares being bundled up and burned and the wheat going into the Kingdom (Matthew 13:49; 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26). The "holy ones" who will come back with Christ are the angels, not the saints or believers (Psalm 89:5, 7; Job 15:15). There is no absolutely clear reference of believers coming back with Christ but it is clearly stated that angels will be coming back with Him (Matthew 16:27; 24:31).

When Christ comes back to earth He will repay every man according to his deeds. This is the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20:11. I believe this judgment is shown in Revelation 2:23 where God destroys those who have been worshiping other gods. In fact each of the churches listed in Revelation are being judged for their works and those who are not doing the works are condemned. This is not the case for the Body of Christ. We will be judged, but it is not a judgment unto condemnation rather it will be for reward (Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:12—15).

Will not taste death till... (verse 28)

This is an interesting verse that has some people confused and leads others down the road of bad doctrine. It also gives critics reason to condemn Scripture as fallible. These who are Preterists (believe that all

prophecy has been accomplished except for the setting up of the Eternal Kingdom) use this verse to support their doctrine. They say the book of Daniel was fulfilled in the first century B.C. while Revelation was fulfilled in the first century A.D. The Tribulation, according to them, happened around 70 A.D. with the destruction of the temple. They believe God stopped working with Israel and is now working with the Church in her place. This verse is used as proof that God's spiritual Kingdom was set up and that we are now in this Kingdom, after all, all the Disciples have died so His Kingdom must have been set up shortly after Jesus said this. They also use Matthew 10:23 as a support verse.

There are others who understand this verse was fulfilled at the Transfiguration, which comes up right after this passage. Jesus told Peter, James and John that they would not see death until they saw the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. The Transfiguration shows Jesus in His glorified state, probably as He will appear when he takes the throne. To support their view, they point to 2 Peter 1:16—18 when he recalls his experience on the mountain with Christ. Peter says he made know the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, a clear reference to Christ in the Second Coming when Christ will take the throne.

The problem with the first view is that they are not properly lining up historical events with Scripture. Daniel has a very specific timeline of events that began around 445 B.C. His 70 weeks of years were to finish at the end of the Tribulation. Since God quit dealing with Israel as a nation at the stoning of Stephen, Daniel's prophetic clock has stopped. It will resume after the Rapture of the Church. Only those who rightly-divide Scripture, giving to Israel what is Israel's and to the Church what is the Church's can accurately interpret God future plan.

Those who see a fulfillment in the Transfiguration seem to miss an important point in 2 Peter 1:16. In this verse Peter is merely stating that he is proclaiming Christ's power at His Second Coming and then said he saw Christ's majesty at the Transfiguration. Matthew 16:28 clearly states that Jesus was talking about Him coming back to set up His Kingdom. Luke 9:27 makes it absolutely clear that they were to see the actual Kingdom of God. The Transfiguration does not fulfill this event and Peter never claimed this event was a fulfillment of the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom.

I believe this can be best explained by understanding this verse has an unstated conditional statement. We are very familiar with these types of statements. If I say we are going to have a picnic on Saturday we understand it to be contingent upon the weather. There will be no picnic if there is bad weather. Everything points to having a picnic but it may not happen. This same idea can be applied to the statement that Jesus made to Peter, James and John. It was absolutely possible that they would see the Kingdom being set up after they survived the Tribulation. When Jesus spoke this, He probably did not know about the Father's plan to set Israel aside and raise up Paul with the Mystery ([Matthew Lesson 7](#)). According to Daniel's timeline the Tribulation would begin within several months followed by the Second Coming and the setting up of the Kingdom. All of this was contingent upon Israel accepting Jesus as their Messiah. When He was rejected, the Father pulled the plug of Israel's prophetic program and instituted a new, previously unannounced program called the Mystery. The Disciples died without seeing the Kingdom set up because the unstated condition of Israel accepting Jesus as Messiah never happened. [Matthew Lesson 33](#) has more details.

For previous notes and additional mid-Acts materials please visit www.MidActsTruths.com