

Conversation Starter

For the week of March 30 to April 5, 2008

This Week's Theme: A New And Different Kingdom

- Reading #1: Matthew 10:7
- Reading #2: Daniel 4:3
- Reading #3: Romans 5:5
- Reading #4: Exodus 19:6
- Reading #5: Revelation 16:10
- Reading #6: Isaiah 42:9
- Reading #7: Ezekiel 36:26-27
- Reading #8: Revelation 21:1-6
- Reading #9: John 13:34

When the word "kingdom" is used in the Bible, it can refer to many different types of kingdoms. For example, there are the numerous earthly kingdoms ruled by people, there is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 10:7), there is reference to an eternal kingdom (Daniel 4:3), there is God's kingdom within our hearts (Romans 5:5), there is the kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6), and the kingdom of the beast (Revelation 16:10). Words of prophecy found throughout the Bible always point to the future whether it is the very near future or a far-off time. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God said: "... *new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.*" (Isaiah 42:9) And what are some of these new things? (1) God, speaking through the prophet Ezekiel, was pointing to a time when His kingdom would be in the hearts of people: *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws.* (Ezekiel 36:26-27) (2) And as we learn from Reading #8, there will be a time when a new and different kingdom will be established with Jesus as its King. In this kingdom there will be a new heaven and a new earth where there will be no more death or mourning, crying or pain. So while we wait for the establishment of this new and different kingdom let us live in such a way that people will know we have God's kingdom within our hearts – which is another new and different kingdom. As Jesus said: *A new command I give to you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.* (John 13:34)

1. How does God's kingdom enter into our hearts?
2. What was your life like before God's kingdom was within you? (ie. before you committed your life to Christ?)
3. How has your life changed since becoming a Christian? (ie. since becoming a member of God's kingdom?)
4. Since members of God's kingdom are to "love one another", when do you find it difficult to "love" others?
5. What must you do in order to see the fruit of God's love grow in your life?
6. How are you getting ready for the new and different kingdom that is coming where there will be no more death or mourning, crying or pain? Are you ready for Christ's return?
7. What do you think living in the new and different kingdom with Jesus as its top leader will be like? How will it be different from various earthly kingdoms that exist today?

Prepared by: The Rev. Robert Roe
Prepared on: March 30, 2008