

April Youth Bible Study Synopsis

Topic: "Eschatology- Kingdom of God"
Place: Manu, Manju, & Maya's house
Date: Friday, April 29, 2005
Time: 7:00pm

The April Youth Bible study was held on Friday, April 29, 2005, at the residence of Manu, Manju, & Maya Sebastian. The topic chosen for the Bible study was "Kingdom of God". The Bible study started at 7:30pm. 11 youth members were present including Achen. Reena Abraham, Vinu Abraham, Sheena Abraham, Nibi Mathai, Nisha Mathai, Benoy Thomas, and Divya Jacob were also present from Rockland CSI, bringing the total attendance to 18.

We started with an opening prayer led by Reena Abraham and sang 8 songs before proceeding to the Bible study. The two speakers who volunteered were:

- 1) 1st Corinthians 15:19-28 - Ajo Cherian
- 2) Revelations 21:1-7 - Philips Ninan

Ajo started by stating that the central theme of Jesus' ministry was the Kingdom of God and that God would redeem Israel. The concept of the Kingdom of God was rooted in Israel's religious history. Jews believed it would come as a form of a real King to Israelites. Isaiah 11:6,9 describes the "Kingdom". One metaphor in that passage is that animals that were predator and prey would live in harmony.

Jesus believed that the kingdom is near and all of his actions characterized the Kingdom of God. John the Baptist had also urged about the Kingdom of God but not as extensively as Jesus did. Jesus taught that the kingdom would come slowly like a mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32) at times, and other times he taught that it is already in our midst. In Luke 17:20-21, Jesus answers to the Pharisees who question him about the timetable of God's kingdom by replying back "...the reign of God is already in your midst."

Jesus calls those who want this new kingdom to repent (Matthew 18:3). He also taught that those who hear the Kingdom's call should be aware of the cost. In the parable of the banquet (Luke 14), we see the servants making excuses to the rich owner in not showing up for the dinner. Just like this, Jesus doesn't want excuses when he invites us to his Kingdom. Jesus went around to everyone (blind, crippled, lame), not just to rich kings. Jesus first coming was to establish the Kingdom of God.

1st Corinthians 15 is known as the "resurrection chapter" of the Bible. Paul says that there will be no more pain, sickness, etc. in our resurrection bodies. Paul says in Philippians that Jesus will transform our bodies like to be like His glorious body (3:21). Jesus did more than just teach about the Kingdom of God, he showed it to us. We can all see glimpses of the Kingdom of God and show it to others, by trying to live good Christian lives like Jesus did.

Philips went next and stated that Revelations 21:1-7 introduced the eternal stage. This passage introduced 7 new things.

- 1) New Heaven
- 2) New Earth
- 3) New Jerusalem
- 4) New Things
- 5) New Paradise
- 6) New Place of God's Throne
- 7) New Source of Light

Verse 1 says that God will create a New Heaven, Verse 2 says that the New Jerusalem is the city of righteousness and that God has been preparing this city. Verse 3 explains that God will wipe every tear and all

sorrow will be removed Verse 5 talks about a new way of life for his people. Verse 6 includes Alpha & Omega. The father-son relationship is a big concept throughout the Bible and can be seen again in verse 7.

Achen wrapped up the Bible study by stating that the Kingdom of God is a central idea in the Bible. The one thing that Jews are waiting for is the Messiah to come to reestablish the Kingdom of David. John the Baptist said to repent for the Kingdom of God is near but Jesus took this message and expanded on it by saying the Kingdom of God is already here.

Achen explained that people always thought that the word kingdom referred to a geographical region but that is not true in the context of the Kingdom of God. Matthew is the only gospel that says “Kingdom of Heaven” rather than “Kingdom of God”. The Jews never used the term “Kingdom of God” because it was too holy for them so they referred to Kingdom of Heaven, though both are considered the same.

Several parables were used to convey that the Kingdom of God is among you. Achen explained that the Kingdom is growing as more and more believers accept Christ. When the disciples questioned Jesus about when he would establish his kingdom, Jesus replied in Acts 1:6-7 that the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will know the exact time. In Revelations, we find that the Kingdom is established in the fullest extent and that God will complete what he started.

The important question we should ask ourselves is “How can we get a part of this Kingdom?” John 3:1-3 says “Unless you’re born again, you can’t enter the Kingdom of God.” Also in Ephesians 2:8-9 it says that you have been saved by God’s grace and that salvation is a gift to everyone. Isaiah 11:6,9 talks about the new relationship with God, people, animals, etc. is given. The whole Kingdom of God concept was there in the beginning and it will go to completion when Jesus Christ comes back.

Vinu asked “What happens to those who don’t receive salvation?” Achen replied back by saying that God will judge those people. In Romans, it says God will judge those differently who hear the word of God and reject it from those who never heard the word of God. Ajo asked “Are we currently in the Kingdom of God?” Achen replied by saying that we are not fully in the kingdom of God, but that it has started and that Paul says that it is completed when Salvation is achieved. Hebrews 9:27-29 says “Everyone must die once, and after that be judged by God...He will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are waiting for him. Ajo also asked “When Jesus comes, will this world continue to exist with people living?” Achen answered by saying that in 2nd Peter 3:9-11 that this world will be melt in fire and in Revelations 22, that God will make everything new again. There are several theories relating to the end of the world (ie. Millennium theory and Post-Millennium theory) and that many scholars have different theories as to that question.

Ajo thanked Achen for his spiritual guidance especially in the youth Bible studies for the past three years. When asked what would be any suggestion from Achen for these youth Bible studies, Achen replied by saying to take subjects in advance, at least 6 months in advance in order to avoid any last minute searching. Overall, Achen commended the youths for taking an active role especially when it comes to Bible studies.

We then proceeded to the prayer requests as Justin asked for prayer requests and three people prayed with Achen saying the concluding prayer and benediction.

-Justin: Pray for Achen and Kochamma as they are preparing to depart on May 14th to Madras.

-Reena: Pray for Robin Samuel who is serving in Iraq

-Justin: Pray for all those who are preparing for final exams in high school and college

-Reena: Pray for the Seaford Praise & Worship, CT Retreat in May, and Rockland Praise & Worship

-Philips: Pray for his friend Jacob and his family, whose father passed away to cancer

-Reena: Pray for the Unity CSI meeting in Chicago

-Reena: Pray for Suja Aunty (Rockland) whose father passed away.

The Bible study ended at 9:05pm. Afterwards, Justin thanked all those who came and to Ajo and Philips for presenting and to Achen for the past three years in leading the Bible study. Dinner was served by the host family.

For his Glory,

Justin Cherian, Youth Secretary