

You Will Not Taste Death

by Frank Viola

Jesus once spoke to His disciples and said, "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom" (Matthew 16:28, NIV).

How could this be since the Son of Man (Jesus) didn't return before the death of those Jesus spoke to?

I believe Jesus was referring to the day of Pentecost, when Jesus Christ returned in the power of the Holy Spirit and the ekklesia was born (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4). As we've already seen, the kingdom came when the ekklesia invaded the earth. That happened on the day of Pentecost.

(Jesus promised that He would return in the Spirit in John 14-16. Note John 14:18 – "I will come to you.")

Interestingly, in Matthew 16:27 (the verse just before 16:28), Jesus made reference to what would happen during His second coming.

For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

Why does Jesus speak about His second coming in verse 27 and the day Pentecost in verse 28?

It's because the Old Testament prophets foretold Christ's first coming and His second coming as one event.

We live in the parenthesis of those two events, but the Old Testament prophets saw them as one event.

For this reason, Jesus could talk about His death, resurrection, ascension, the pouring out of His Spirit, and His second coming as one phenomenon. That's what I believe He was doing in Matthew 16:27-28.

A good example of this is found in Joel chapter 2.

Joel was clearly speaking about the last day when Christ returns. But Peter applied Joel's prophesy to what happened at Pentecost (see Acts 2). Joel saw both events as part of the same phenomenon.

Thus the prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" was initially fulfilled at Pentecost when the kingdom came in power through the birth of the ekklesia.

Yet that prayer will be fully answered when Jesus returns to completely establish His kingdom on earth.

Because the Lord's prayer *has* and *will be* answered, we thank God for answering it already, yet we keep praying it in view of its full and final realization.

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