

## **“THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS WERE UNTIL JOHN”**

**Lk.16:16**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. My text is Lk.16:16, “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”
2. To help set the stage for our study of Lk.16:16 we note some N.T. statements concerning “the law and the prophets,” Mt.7:17; 11:13; Ac.24:14; 26:22,23; Rom.1:1,2; 3:21; 1Pet.1:9,10.
3. Now to Lk.16:16, the meaning and significance of the statement, “The law and the prophets were until John.”
  - a. In what sense was the law and the prophets until John the Baptist?
  - b. It can’t mean the law was abolished when John the Baptist came, because the Scriptures teach it was abolished when Jesus was crucified, which was after John was already dead, Mk.14:1,2; Mk.6:14-16-28; Col.2:14; Eph.2:14,15; Heb.9:15-17; 10:9,10.
  - c. It can’t mean the kingdom came when John came; for there was no king then; if no king, then no kingdom. The kingdom didn’t come until Pentecost, Ac.2; Cf. Isa.2:2,3; Ac.11:15.
4. What, then, is the meaning of Lk.16:16?

### **II. DISCUSSION**

#### **A. “SINCE THAT TIME THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS PREACHED,” THE SECOND CLAUSE IN LK.16:16 IS THE EXPLANATION AND THE ANSWER.**

1. He means: The law and the prophets were preached until John the Baptist came. Since John came, the kingdom of God is preached.
  - a. The NASV renders it: “The law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached and every one is forcing his way into it.”
  - b. But what does the expression “and every man presseth into it” mean? Cf. Mt.11:12.

- (1) W.E. Vine, III, 208, BIAZO, : “in the Middle Voice, to press violently or force one’s way into, is translated ‘presseth’ in Lk.16:16, A.V., R.V., ‘entereth violently,’ a meaning confirmed by the papyri. Moulton and Milligan also quote a passage from D.S. Sharp’s Epictetus and the N.T., speaking of ‘those who (try to) force their way in;’ the verb suggests forceful endeavor.”
  - (2) Arndt-Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon, 140: “...everyone enters (or tries to enter) the kingdom with violence, Lk.16:16.”
  - (3) The N.T. in Jno.6:15 explains how men attempted to “press into it,” or “force their way into it,” but to no avail: “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.”
2. He means that up until John came the law of Moses was preached; that is, that this was where the *emphasis* was placed in the preaching and teaching.
  3. It means that after John came the *emphasis* was no longer placed on the law of Moses in the preaching and teaching, but rather on the kingdom of God; **there was a shift in what was preached!** John’s mission dictated this. See Isa.40:3-5; Mal.3:1; Mt.3:1-3; Mk.1:1-5.
    - a. Jesus, on occasion, taught the law of Moses, Mt.19:16-19.
    - b. But the **emphasis** of his teaching was on the kingdom of God.
    - c. True, the law of Moses was in force up until the cross of Christ, Col.2:14.
    - d. True, Jesus, during his personal ministry, taught the people to keep the law of Moses, Mt.8:1-4; 23:1-3.
    - e. True, the teaching of Christ, the doctrine of Christ, the gospel of Christ, the faith of Christ, which was no part of the law of Moses, did not go into force unto after Jesus died on the cross, Heb.9:15-17.
    - f. Nevertheless, the preaching of both John and Jesus, during his earthly ministry, was **primarily** the kingdom of God, or the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**B. VARIOUS EXAMPLES OFFERING SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE LORD’S STATEMENT IN LK.16:16, “SINCE THAT TIME THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS PREACHED.”**

1. Example of John's preaching as proof, Mt.3:1,2; Lk.3:1-6,15-18; Jno.1:6-8.
2. Examples of Jesus' preaching as proof.
  - a. The very first statement in the book of Mark is: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," Mk.1:1.
    - (1) Then Vv.2-8 tell of the coming of John the Baptist and his work.
    - (2) Vv.9-11 then tell of Jesus coming to John to be baptized.
    - (3) Vv.14,15 declare: "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand," repent ye and believe the gospel."
  - b. Matthew tells us:
    - (1) "From that time Jesus began to preach...the kingdom of heaven is at hand,"Mt.4:17.
      - (a) What time? V.12.
    - (2) "...Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom..." Mt.4:23.
    - (3) What Jesus said to Peter about building his church and giving him and all the apostles the keys of the kingdom of heaven to bind and to loose, Mt.16:18,19; 18:18.
  - c. In Lk.4:43, Jesus said, "I must preach the kingdom of God."
  - d. Lk.9:1,2, tells of Jesus sending his twelve "to preach the kingdom of God."
    - (1) This was before his death on the cross. And they, like both John and Jesus, would be preaching the kingdom was at hand.
    - (2) Of course, not until after the death, burial, resurrection, ascension and coronation of Jesus did anyone preach that the kingdom of God had come or was in existence, Ac.2.
  - e. In Lk.9:60, Jesus told other to "preach the kingdom of God."
  - f. The kingdom of God was preached in promise (or as at hand) by both John and Jesus, Mt.3:1,2; Mt.3:17.
  - g. Jesus taught in parable what the kingdom is like:
    - (1) "...The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed,; Mt.13:31.
    - (2) "...The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven," Mt.13:33.

- (3) “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field,” Mt.13:44.
- (4) “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls...,” Mt.13:45.
- (5) “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net,” Mt.13:47.
- h. Jesus taught his disciple to pray for the kingdom to come, Mt.6:9,10; Lk.11:1,2.
- i. Jesus taught how to live in the kingdom:
  - (1) To seek it first, Mt.6:33.
  - (2) To forsake all for the kingdom, Lk.18:28-30.
- 3. Jesus, before the cross, and the apostles of Christ, both before and after the cross, preached the same gospel:
  - a. About how to become citizens of the kingdom, or about how to become citizens in the kingdom and/or members of the Lord’s church, Mt.7:21; Mk.16:15,16; Jno.3:1-5; Cf. Ac.2:36-38; 8:12,13; 22:16; 1Cor.12:13; 1Pet.1:22-25; 3:21; Eph.5:25,26.
  - b. About how to worship under the new order of things in the kingdom or the church, Jno.4:19-24; Cf. Ac.2:41,42.
  - c. About how to worship in observing the Lord’s supper, Mt.26:26-29; Lk.22:29,30; Cf. 1Cor.11:23-29; Ac.2:41,42; 20:7.
  - d. About discipline in the church, Mt.18:15-18; Cf. Rom.16:17,18; 1Cor.5; 2Th.3:6-15.
  - e. About marriage, divorce and remarriage, Mt.5:31,32; 19:3-12; Mk.10:2-12; Lk.16:18; Cf. Rom.7:1-4; 1Cor.7.
  - f. About the final judgment, Mt.13:41-43; 25:31-46; Jno.5:22-29; 12:48; Cf. Ac.10:42; 17:30,31; 2Cor.5:10; 2Th.1:6-10; 2Tim.4:1.

### III. CONCLUSION

- 1. The only thing they preached different about the kingdom of God before the cross and after the cross is:
  - a. Before the cross, they preached the kingdom of God **was at hand**.
  - b. After the cross, they preached the kingdom of God **was or is in existence; the kingdom has come**, Ac.2; Col.1:12-14; Heb.12:28,29; 1Cor.15:22-27.
- 2. Truly, “The law and the prophets were unto John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached...,” Lk.16:16.

--- credit to Wendell Wisner

3. Note: This leads us to and helps prepare us for a study of a second lesson directly related to this one, which is: What John's Mission Involved, And/Or The Significance Of The Coming Of The Holy Spirit – to be considered in a study of Mt.3:1-12 to follow.