

Focus on the Kingdom

“Entering and Reigning in the Kingdom” Iain MacMillan

www.inthebeginning.org

2 Corinthians 4:4

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel (the good news of Christ’s coming kingdom) of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Remember that THE LIE = the dead being alive in heaven right now. It was started by Satan way back in Genesis and still lives on today.

Genesis 3:4

⁴ "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

John 8:44 (KJV)

⁴⁴ Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie (THE LIE), he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (Of what? of THE LIE)

Mark relates that in the beginning of his ministry Jesus preached the good news about the kingdom:

Mark 1:14-15

“Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel’”

What about Luke?

Luke 8:1

¹ After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him,

Read for Review:
Matthew 4:17, 23;
Luke 4:43.

What about His twelve Apostles? What did they preach?

Luke 9:1-2

¹ When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

After His death and resurrection, during those 40 days before he ascended into heaven Jesus Christ was seen by His followers. Notice that even then He continued to preach the good news.

Acts 1:3

³ After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. (About what??)

Read for Review:
Matthew 3:2 - What John the Baptist taught
Acts 8:12 - What Philip taught.

What about the apostle Paul, what did he teach?

Acts 14:22 (Paul and Barnabas)

²¹ They preached the good news (what did they preach?) in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, ²² strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Later, in Ephesus,

Acts 19:8

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.

Read for Review:

Psalm 145:10-13: What King David spoke of

Daniel 2:44; 7:27: What the prophet Daniel spoke of

So now that we have established WHAT they all taught let's look at WHAT IS this coming kingdom

What does the Bible say? What is the Kingdom of God?

The word translated "kingdom" throughout the New Testament is the Greek word *basileia*, which denotes "sovereignty, royal power, [and] dominion" (*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 1985, "Kingdom").

So what will it be like? Have you ever wondered why is it called the "good news"?

Through the scriptures God reveals many specific details of what the earth will be like when Christ rules, let's look at a few of them:

It will be a world where peace will reign:

Micah 4:1-4

¹ In the last days
the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established
as chief among the mountains;
it will be raised above the hills,
and peoples will stream to it.

² Many nations will come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths."
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

³ He will judge between many peoples
and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.
⁴ Every man will sit under his own vine
and under his own fig tree,
and no one will make them afraid,
for the LORD Almighty has spoken.

Read for Review:
Isaiah 11:1-5, 9

Wild animals will be tame:

Isaiah 11:6-8

⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.
⁷ The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
⁸ The infant will play near the hole of the cobra,
and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest.

An abundant earth

Isaiah 35

¹ The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus, ² it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.
³ Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;
⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,
"Be strong, do not fear;

- your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you."
- ⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
- ⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.
- ⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.
- ⁸ And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness.
The unclean will not journey on it;
it will be for those who walk in that Way;
wicked fools will not go about on it.
- ⁹ No lion will be there,
nor will any ferocious beast get up on it;
they will not be found there.
But only the redeemed will walk there,
- ¹⁰ and the ransomed of the LORD will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Read for Review:

Amos 9:13-14;

Ezekiel 34:26-27

Jesus Christ will rule the world

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Appendix

3 common questions:

1. Is the church the kingdom?

Many Christians today believe that the Church is the kingdom of God and say such things as, “We have to build the kingdom” or, “We have to sow into the kingdom.” But although there is a connection between the two, they are not identical. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and we are the body:

Ephesians 1:22-23

²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

1 Corinthians 12:27

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Christ rules His Church, so in that way it is under His sovereignty and power.

The Bible, however, never uses the term “kingdom” to apply directly to the Church. Instead, it refers to God’s prophesied world-ruling government.

2. Is the Kingdom within you?

Some Christians believe that Jesus Christ taught that the Kingdom of God was something that existed only in the inside of you: in your heart or in your mind. They use a section from Luke to prove this:

Luke 17:20-21:

²⁰ Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, ²¹ nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

The Greek word for "within," is *entos*, and is better translated: "in the midst of" (*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 1985, "Within").

Several translations, including the New American Standard Bible, translate Christ's words as "the kingdom of God is in your midst."

The Pharisees were the ones seeking to destroy Christ so it doesn't make any sense that he would tell them that God's Kingdom was something that existed within their hearts or minds. Rather Christ was pointing out that the Pharisees did not have the spiritual discernment to recognize his message that the kingdom of God was at hand and being offered to them there and now.

Matthew 23:13

¹³ "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to."

To emphasize this point, Christ, referring to Himself as their Messiah, said "the kingdom of God is among you" (New Revised Standard Version)

The Pharisees did not recognize Jesus as the coming Messiah of that kingdom. So here Jesus is warning them that the kingdom was closer than they realized because he was actually there proclaiming it to them. Scripture gives no basis here for believing that the kingdom is inside of us.

3. How is the kingdom of God “at hand”?

Have you ever wondered what Christ meant he said that the kingdom of God was “at hand”?

Mark 1:15 (KJV)

¹⁵ And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Mark 4:11-12 (KJV)

¹¹ And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

¹² That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them

A mystery is something that has never been revealed before up until this time; it’s a secret that was kept hidden.

The mystery here was:

“Whereas God’s prophets long ago proclaimed to His people that apocalyptic events would accompany the establishment of the Messiah’s Kingdom and thus their salvation, what was unknown was His unexpected prior coming to earth without these apocalyptic events as a lowly and suffering servant—Jesus, the Son of God—Who proclaimed beforehand the message of repentance for the forgiveness of their sins; those who are God’s people and accept His message by faith will receive the blessings of the Kingdom, but to those who are God’s people and reject His message will suffer grave consequences.” (Bill Ramey)

Placing ourselves in the historical context of what the Jews knew at that time, we realize that the disciples believed that when the Promised Messiah would come, he would come in all of his glory and immediately set up his kingdom on earth (**Luke 19:11**); that he would immediately redeem Israel and overthrow the Roman Empire and set up his own governmental system.

But instead he came quietly as a lowly servant and proclaimed the message of the kingdom. (That's why even John the Baptist had to inquire of Jesus if he was really the Messiah). As Christ sowed this message he taught his disciples that there would be 4 different responses among those that belonged to him, only one of which would produce lasting fruit. (remember the Parable of the Sower last week?)

What those awaiting his arrival didn't know was that the kingdom would not be set up immediately, but that Christ would have to suffer, die and then return at a later, unknown time, to rule as King. (**Luke 9:44-45; Luke 18:31-34**)

Those that accepted the message of the kingdom would have to wait and prepare themselves for it and continue to walk by faith until the time of his Appearing when they then would be rewarded for their faithfulness.

Christ's proclamation of the kingdom made it "at hand" although he is not yet crowned king; he does have the title of king but not yet the office.

How You Can Enter the Kingdom? (By no means an exhaustive list!)

1. I would encourage you all to listen to the series that we are already in at church: Entering and Reigning in the Kingdom
2. When we hear and understand the gospel of the kingdom of God, Jesus expects us to repent and believe the good news about this kingdom
3. Seeking God's kingdom must become our highest priority, no matter what the difficulties. Paul said,

Acts 14:22.

“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God”

4. **Hebrews 10:25**

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (What day? The day when Christ returns to inaugurate his kingdom)

We must make it a priority in our lives to come together to hear the word and to encourage each other.

5. Put on the whole armor of God. Remember what we read in Eph 6? That's to protect us so that we will be able to persevere until the end.
6. Go to Christ, our High Priest to confess our sin and to find mercy and grace to do the will of the Father.
7. Pray daily to Our Father that He will deliver us from the evil one, who can steal the word of the kingdom from our hearts.

Focus on the Kingdom

Revision

DAY 1 (THURSDAY):

Review page 1

What did Christ continue to proclaim while he was on earth?

QUESTIONS:

DAY 2 (FRIDAY):

Review page 2

“Read for Review” scriptures in blue on page 2

QUESTIONS:

DAY 3 (SATURDAY):

Review page 3.

“Read for Review” the scripture in blue on page 3.

QUESTIONS:

DAY 4 (SUNDAY):

Enjoy church!

Review the scriptures from church given in your handout

DAY 5 (MONDAY):

Review pages 4 and 5

“Read for Review” the scriptures in blue on page 5

QUESTIONS:

DAY 6 (TUESDAY):

Review pages 6 and 7.

“Read for Review” the scriptures in blue on page 6

QUESTIONS:

DAY 7 (WEDNESDAY):

Read Appendixes on pages 8-9 (No. 1 and 2 “Common Questions”)

QUESTIONS:

DAY 8 (THURSDAY):

Read Appendix on page 10-11 (No.3 – “Common Questions”)

QUESTIONS:

DAY 9 (FRIDAY):

Review page 12 (7 points to entering the kingdom)

QUESTIONS:

KINGDOM TIMELINE CHART

Preparation

DAY 10 (SATURDAY):

Review the attached chart on the Kingdom Timeline

QUESTIONS:

DAY 11 (SUNDAY):

Review notes from this morning's teaching.

Pray for your pastor that God will protect him and continue to strengthen him to proclaim the word with great boldness.

DAY 12 & 13 (MONDAY & TUESDAY)

Continue to review the chart on the Kingdom Timeline in preparation for Wednesday.

QUESTIONS:

