

The Message of Acts: The Kingdom of God (part 4)

What is the Kingdom of God?

- A. *God's Kingship in general (an eternal kingdom, over all creation, human governments, and history)*
- B. *Over the nation of Israel*
 - *God alone (direct and invisible kingship)*
 - *Then through David and his descendents (delegated, visible kingship)*
 - *Ultimatey, the Son of David/Son of God is the Messiah (direct, visible kingship)*
 - *Prophecies that predict the Messiah as King of Israel*
 - *"Day of the Lord" Prophecies of God reigning literally from Jerusalem, teaching His Word and judging the peoples of the world in righteousness, a time of deliverance from enemies, peace, long life, absence of war, no fear of wild animals, and nations willingly coming to Jerusalem to worship the King.*

So in understanding the Kingdom of God, this brings us historically to the end of the Old Testament.

Jesus, the King of Israel

Why do we believe that Jesus is this Messiah King? (Christians hold him as Messiah, but do we recognize him as the King, the King of Israel?). Besides the multitude of verses that call him Christ, or the Son of God (both of which imply his being the king, from Ps. 2), he is expressly called the King of Israel.

Mt. 1:23 – "Emmanuel" means "God with us" (in Hebrew)

Mt. 2:2 - (the wise men) Where is he that is born King of the Jews?

Mt. 2:5-6 – (quotes **Mic. 5:2**) Bethlehem ... out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Lk. 1:31-33 - ... JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Jn. 1:49 – Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.

Mt. 21:5 (quotes Zech. 9:9) Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

Mt. 27:37, 42 – written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. ... If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

So when Jesus was born, and even during His earthly ministry, people had an expectation that he would be the King of Israel in fulfilling the prophecies of a mighty deliverer of the nation, ushering in that period of peace and righteousness (and throwing off the Roman yoke).

Note 1: For the most part we will look in Matthew, but most references occur also in Mk. and Lk.

Note 2: Mark and Luke use the term "kingdom of God" as stressing who the King is, while Matthew uses the term "kingdom of heaven" as stressing the seat and nature of the kingdom, but they are really the same, and so are used interchangeably.

The message of John the Baptist and Jesus

Mt. 3:1-2 – (John the Baptist) Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mk. 1:15 – The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel.

Mt. 9:35 – Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Jesus' Commission to the Twelve, and the Seventy

Mt. 10:6-8 – Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Lk. 10:9-11 – heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you ..

The Kingdom of God as a Present Reality

Mt. 12:28 – But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

Mk. 9:1 - ... stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

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.

Lk. 23:42-43 – Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. ... To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

But many of the things Jesus taught didn't seem to mesh with the common perceptions and expectations of a political/military Messiah. A new facet of God's kingdom is revealed, that God's rule begins in the heart of individuals.

Not everyone will be in the Kingdom

Mt. 5:3 – Blessed are the **poor in spirit**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Mt. 5:10 – Blessed are they which are **persecuted for righteousness' sake**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Mt. 5:19-20 – who is least or greatest in the kingdom of heaven; must **exceed Pharisees** to enter into it

Mt. 6:9-13 –Thy kingdom come, ... **(it should be desired and prayed for)**

Mt. 6:33 – Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ... **(it must be earnestly sought)**

Mt. 7:21 – Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that **doeth the will** of my Father which is in heaven.

Mt. 18:1-4 – Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? (he that **humbles self** as a child)

Mt. 19:14 – Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

(humility, simplicity, faith)

Mt. 19:23-24 – a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. ... easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. **(not greedy or covetous)**

(note the equivalence here bet ween “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God”)

Mt. 21:31 – the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. **(repentance, not religiosity)**

Mk. 12:34 - ... Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. **(sincere seeking of truth)**

Jn. 3:3-5 – Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Preview of Future Lessons:

Lessons from the “kingdom parables”

Jesus' teachings of the Kingdom of God as being future

Keys to understanding the dual nature of the kingdom (present and future; invisible vs. visible)

The mystery of Gentiles' inclusion in the kingdom

Paradise

The Millennial Kingdom

The Eternal Kingdom (new heavens, new earth; the new Jerusalem)