

The Message of Acts: The Kingdom of God (part 6)

What is the Kingdom of God?

- A. *God is King of all His creation*
- B. *God is King over the nation of Israel*
 - *God Himself is their King*
 - *David and his descendents (“delegated kings” under God’s authority)*
 - *Ultimately the Messiah would come to rule over Israel*
- C. *Jesus the Messiah (the Christ, the Anointed One)*
 - *Is “the King of Israel”, the “King of the Jews”*
 - *His message was “the kingdom of God is at hand” (it is a present reality to those who respond)*
- D. *The present nature of the Messianic Kingdom is spiritual and heavenly*

The Jews in Jesus’ day expected an immediate fulfillment of the Messianic kingdom promises in deliverance from the Romans. Jesus announced that the kingdom had come, and confirmed it with many signs, but said that His kingdom was “not of this world”, that the kingdom is “within you”. Now, people have gone to the opposite extreme from the Jews, and said that there IS no earthly kingdom, that in effect, Jesus is not really the King of the Jews, because they generally rejected Him. They think that the kingdom is ONLY “now in our hearts, and heaven when we die”.

But Jesus also gave clear indication that there is still to be an ultimate culmination of his kingdom sometime in the future. He didn’t say exactly when it would arrive, but that we are to wait expectantly, obediently, and fruitfully.

The Kingdom of God as a Future Reality

Sitting down in the Kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets

Mt. 8:10-12 Lk. 13:24-30

It will be at “the regeneration” (also called “the restoration”, “times of refreshing”, “the times of restitution of all things”, when “creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption”) at the end of the age and the second coming of Christ.

Mt. 19:28 Ac. 3:19-21. Rom. 8:19-23

It will be preceded by a worldwide spread of the gospel message, great persecutions, “the great tribulation”, heavenly signs, Christ’s return in glory, and the gathering together of the elect.

Mt. 24:4-14 – signs of the end

Mt. 24:21-34 – great tribulation, signs in the heavens, the Second Coming, gathering the elect

Mt. 24:42-51 – warnings to watchfulness and obedience, because we won’t know when He will come

Lk. 21:24-31 – foretells destruction of Jerusalem and the Dispersion of the Jews “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”. Then Jesus will come. Don’t know exactly when, but we can know when it is near.

Lessons from the “Kingdom Parables“

- **Mustard seed** - Mt. 13:31-32 – The kingdom starts small but grows large.
- **Leaven** - Mt. 13:33 – The kingdom starts small and its influence spreads to affect all the world, though not all the world will be in it.
- **Treasure in the field; goodly pearl** - Mt. 13:44-46 – Our first thought is that the kingdom is to be valued above all else, that we should forsake all to gain the kingdom. But it also shows that there is a time when the kingdom is here and available, and yet hidden to most people.
- There will be a **significant delay** of unknown duration between the time of the NT and the end of the age, **during which time, good and evil will coexist**
 - **The Wheat and the Tares** - Mt. 13:24-30, 37-43 – In the end of this world, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.
 - **The Dagnet** - Mt. 13:47-50 – separation of good fish, bad fish
 - **The Wise and Foolish Virgins** - Mt. 25:1-13 – speaks of a delay, requiring preparation, and watchfulness
 - **The Sheep and the Goats Judgment** - Mt. 25:31-46 – v.31 – Son of man comes in glory with the angels, and sits on throne of glory. v.34 – Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand ... inherit the kingdom ... says to them on left, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire ...
 - **The Talents** - Mt. 25:14-30 – (see also Lk. 19:12)

Preview of Future Lessons:

The mystery of Gentiles' inclusion in the kingdom

Paradise

The Millennial Kingdom

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