The Kingdom Of God: Exploring The Inaugurated Kingdom Of God

Timothy Reisz
Last updated: 2020

Everybody knows about "eschatology," right? This million-dollar word refers to "the last things" or "the end times." And you've seen a chart or two spanning beside the aisle and speaking about "seven and only seven" a right that says "the end is near." Hell's teaching eschatology. That tabloid at the supermarket that claims Nostradamus predicted that Jesus will come back three weeks from now on Thursday at 3:00 in a Kentucky diner? Eschatology. The Left Behind novels that have probably done more to mess popular Christian eschatology than anything else. Well, you know, the stuff about the antichrist and the tribulation and Armageddon and the Rapture. Jesus's seven sermons on Revelation books about the how-precisely-events in the Middle East fulfill biblical prophecy, speculation about literally every single American President and whether he "could be the Anti-Christ." Books and movies that propagate the notion that Christians should be "salt and light" in the world at large. Check out the "prophecy" section at your local Christian bookstore, and you'll be assured that eschatological speculation is alive and well in the Christian world.

And it's should be. Who wouldn't be fascinated with the future? If God has really planned it all out, and there is some actual history in coming before Christ comes, who wouldn't want to know what God has planned about the future a priority? But sadly, as with so much in the church, anything we deem important becomes a tool-for-power-and-control, which battle-lines are drawn. So if Christians in the past never have fought about the end, is there a thread 1,000 plus Kingdom to come before the eternal state? Battle lines have been drawn, and Christians have fought about eschatology for centuries. Hell's teaching eschatology is the opposite of the Bible's eschatology. Hell's teaching eschatology is fatalistic, focused on signs and dates, and sensational, and impersonal. It has zero plots the timing of some of the small details. At the same time, in the Bible, eschatology is wrapped up with the notion of "The Kingdom of God." But just how important is "Kingdom" in the Bible? Let's take a look.

The Importance of the Kingdom

The message of Jesus's ministry is wrapped up with the concept of "the Kingdom of God." The Kingdom of God was undoubtedly the primary message of Jesus during his earthly ministry. This week we will dive into the Kingdom of God, exploring what it means, and what it means for us today in our day and age.

Jesus's teaching about the Kingdom of God's paper-thin importance. Mark provides a summary of Jesus's ministry in Galilee: "Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. He said, 'The time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!'" (Mark 1:14-15). That's not an obscure passage. It's not a passage that's easily forgotten. It's not a passage that's easily ignored. It's not a passage that's easily misinterpreted. It's not a passage that's easily misunderstood. It's not a passage that's easily misapplied. It's not a passage that's easily misused. It's not a passage that's easily misquoted

The truth is, this reality infuses our lives with hope. None of us need be told that we live in a broken world. The fallenness of man is the single most empirically verifiable element of theology. Life is painful, hard, and full of betrayal and tragedy. But the coming of Jesus, and the coming of the Kingdom with him, means that the bleak present is infused with the power of a glorious future. The blessings and hopes and dreams of the Age to come are our inheritance now. in our sickness, sadness, sorrow, in our defeat, discouragement, depression, disease, and death, the Kingdom of God that has already come brings hope in the darkness. We will look in our next blog at the already kingdom in more depth. But we can end for now by hearing Gordon Fee explain the relevance of living as an *already/not* yet people;

> Jesus came and announced with his ministry that the coming kingdom was at hand (e.g., Mark 1:14–15; Luke 17:20–21). He drove out demons, worked miracles, and freely accepted the outcasts and sinners —all signs that the end had begun (e.g., Matt 11:2–6; Luke 11:20; 14:21; 15:1–2). Everyone kept watching him to see if he really was the Coming One. Would he really bring in the messianic age with all of its splendor? Then suddenly he was crucified—and the lights went out.
>
> But no! There was a glorious sequel. On the third day he was raised from the dead, and he appeared to many of his followers. Surely now he would "restore the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6). But instead he returned to the Father and poured out the promised Spirit. Here is where problems show up for the early church and for us. Jesus announced the coming kingdom as having arrived with his own coming. The Spirit's coming in fullness and power with signs and wonders and the coming of the new covenant were signs that the new age had arrived. Yet the end of this age apparently had not yet taken place. How were they to understand this?
>
> Very early, beginning with Peter's speech to the astonished onlookers in Acts 3, the early Christians came to realize that Jesus had not come to usher in the "final" end but the "beginning" of the end, as it were. Thus they came to see that with Jesus' death and resurrection, and with the coming of the Spirit, the blessings and benefits of the future had already come. In a sense, therefore, the end had already come. But in another sense the end had not yet fully come. Thus it was already but not yet.
>
> The early believers, therefore, learned to be a truly eschatological people. They lived between the times —that is, between the beginning of the end and the consummation of the end. At the Lord's Table they celebrated their eschatological existence by proclaiming "the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). Already they knew God's free and full forgiveness, but they had not yet been perfected (Phil 3:10–14). Already victory over death was theirs (1 Cor 3:22), yet they would still die (Phil 3:20–21). Already they lived in the Spirit, yet they still lived in the world where Satan could attack (e.g., Eph 6:10–17). Already they had been justified and faced no condemnation (Rom 8:1), yet there was still to be a future judgment (2 Cor 5:10). They were God's future people. They had been conditioned by the future. They knew its benefits and lived in light of its values, but they, as we, still had to live out these benefits and values in the present world....
>
> The hermeneutical key to much in the New Testament, and especially to the ministry and teaching of Jesus, is to be found in this kind of "tension." Precisely because the kingdom, the time of God's rule, has been inaugurated with Jesus' own coming, we are called to life in the kingdom, which means life under his lordship, freely accepted and forgiven but committed to the ethics of the new era and to seeing them worked out in our own lives and world in this present age.
>
> Thus when we pray, "Your kingdom come," we pray first of all for the consummation. But because the kingdom—the time of God's rule—that we long to see consummated has already begun, the same prayer is full of implications for the present. And, of course, by implication this means that by the Spirit we are now to live out the life and values of the "age to come" that has already been set in motion through the resurrection.
> (Fee, G. D., & Stuart, D. (2014). How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth (Fourth Edition, pp. 152–153). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.)

If You Enjoyed it, Share This Blog!

Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn

And Subscribe to The Blog Here!

Blog RSS

SEE ALSO

How The Gospel Reshapes Your Worth...
The church does just tolerate...

Single Not Dead: A Holy Handling Of The Single...
The possession of your sex...

Jesus > The Bible (Part 2)
Jesus is the core of the...

Exegesis	Bible	Kjv
Kjvo	Kjv Only	Textual Criticism
Gifts	Gospel	Fundamentalism
Preservation	Resurrection	Textus Receptus
Reformation	Luther	Neo-Fundamentalism
New Testament	Tongues	Apologetics
Church History	Eschatology	Kingdom
Tr Only	Tyndale	Apostolic Fathers
Commentaries	Easter	Gospels
Jesus	Luke	Sex
The Shire	Theology	Tr
Anabaptist	English Bible	Holy Week
Inaugurated Eschatology	King James Bible	King James Only
Lord Of The Rings	Luke-Acts	Missions
Objections To Christianity	Preaching	Protestant
Single	Singleness	Slander
Slavery	Song Of Songs	Technical Commentaries
Textual Essays	Translation	Acts
Already/Not Yet	Anabaptists	Apostles
Bible Study	Biblical Commentaries	Burgon
Ccm	Charismatic	Charity
Christmas	Christology	Chronology Of The Life Of Christ
Church History \	Contemporary Issues	Cross
Cursing	D. A. Carson	Demonization
Die Hard	Doctrine Of Preservation	End Times
Exegesos	Exegsis	Faith
Fathers	Fundamentaism	Gordon Fee
Gospel Contradictions	Greek	Hands
Historical Jesus	Historical Theology	History
Homosexuality	Journal Of Travels	Kingdom Chronicles
Kingdom Of God	Kjvonly	Lewis
Liturgy	Marriage	Matthew
Matthew	Minimal Facts	Music
Nt	Oh My God	Omg
Paraphrase	Pastor	Paul
Philosophy	Polycarp	Praying
Psalms	Radicals	Reformers
Satire	Sermon Notes	Sex Drive
Sexuality	Single Life	Singles
Spiritual Gifts	Spirituality	Strongs
Synoptic Problem	Taking The Lords Name In Vain	Tattoo
Text	The Doctrine Of Preservation	The Power Of The Tongue
The Singer	Translation Methods	Tro
Webster's	William Tyndale	Word Studies
Words	Worship	

2 Comments

Sort by Oldest

Add a comment...

Derrick Pemberton
Great! I look forward to your explanation of the kingdom now.
Like · Reply · 4y

Timothy Berg
Jonathan Pennington notes; "Even though all the different parts of the Old Testament at times look like a jumbled mess of strings and knots going every which way, in reality, when one turns the well-designed tapestry of the Bible over and looks at it clearly, we can see that the seeming mess is really a clear, intricate, and beautiful picture. And there is flowing throughout this woven picture a dominant purple thread, that of God's kingdom from creation to new creation."

Pennington, J. T. (2012). Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction (p. 199). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
Like · Reply · 4y

Facebook Comments plugin

Preacher_of_the_word@hotmail.com

Student, Preacher, Teacher

Like 3

Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn