

Kingdom Come Series ©

A study in the sovereignty of God and what it means for missions

Week 1: God's eternal kingdom

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I. Intro: The history of missions

Missions is in a transitional time in history

- Jesus sends the apostles on a mission. Matt 28:18-20 A.D. 33. Gathered in Jerusalem then scattered 70 AD (first time called "christians" in Antioch).
- thousands of churches maintain this mission despite persecution
- Edict of Milan A.D. 313: Constantine declares Christianity the official state religion. Persecution ends, all citizens of Rome declared Christian, universal church formed with clergy/laity distinction to maintain order of the new institution, non-citizens considered heathen and war was means to conversion. The dark ages.
- Renaissance and the Reformation A.D. 1517: 14th – 16th century set the stage for decentralization of religion and its return to the common people. No missions in the new protestant movement as they focus on separation from the Catholic Church.
- Count von Zinzendorf and the Moravian movement early 1700s: persecuted within the church for pietistic belief and desire to do missions.
- William Carey 1792: reads accounts of Moravians bravery and effectiveness and starts modern missions movement.
- 2 great waves of missions in India and China. At the same time, the Enlightenment (1800s to early 1900s) results in the separation of the power of the church from the power of the state and reason prevails over revelation as the mediator of truth. Parachurch organizations are primary facilitators of the missions movements.
- The "modern" period begins with loss of credibility of the church in the world of science and business. Instead of confronting this, the church retreats and tries to define its own cultural distinctions. This only serves to reinforce the Dualism (the separation of things spiritual from things material) that was already weakening the church. Christian educational institutions are overtaken by worldly scholarship.
- Postmodernism in 21st century challenges assumptions and redefines truth.

II. The "history" of God's Kingdom

A. God's Kingdom exists in all eternity

God's rule, authority, and Kingship is eternal and comprehensive. Ps 145:11-13, Ps 90:2, Ps 103:19, Ps 45:6

1. The Kingdom of God is:

- Eternal
- Glorious
- Powerful
- Active (even though we have no idea what this looked like before God created the world)

2. Use of the term "Sovereign God" emphasizes the rule of God over His Kingdom not just His omnipotence. God is The Sovereign.

Nebuchadnezzar understood since he too was a "sovereign". Dan 4:34-37

B. God says He will fully display His Kingdom on earth.

The Kingdom in “the age to come”:

- The perfect, irresistible manifestation in history of God’s rule in power and glory: Daniel 2:44, Matt 25:31-32
- God dwelling in our midst: Rev 22:1-5, Rev 21:3
- Transformed earth: Rom 8:20-22
- Sufficiency for all to live peacefully: Is 11:6-9
- Transformed bodies: II Cor 5:1-4
- Transformed world systems: Is 2:2-4, Rev 11:15
- No more physical death: I Cor.15:50-57
- Sin and lawlessness put away: Matt 13:41-43
- Perpetual beauty: Rev 21:10-11

III. Our expectations vs God’s plan for the Kingdom

A. The disciples and the nation of Israel had great expectations of the long awaited Messiah.

1. Miracles were supposed to be the prelude to the overthrow of the gov’t and bring in the kingdom of God for the nation of Israel.
2. Disappointed in Jesus and they completely misunderstood His role as Messiah bringing the Kingdom of God “near” but not in its full power and glory.
3. This was an unexpected twist in the story to those waiting for the Kingdom (the mystery of the Kingdom): Rom 16:25-27
4. Jesus left a small band of believers with the monumental task of making Himself known throughout the world. Missions is the intended response to the Kingdom being “near”.

Study guide for international participants:

1. Use the following references to help you describe the kingdom of God in all eternity.

Psalms 145:13, Psalms 90:2, and Psalms 45:6.

-what do these verses say about the characteristics of God's kingdom?

-what do these verses say about how is God's kingdom demonstrated

2. Use the following verses to help you describe the kingdom of God as it will be on earth in the future

Psalms 103:19, Matthew 25:31-32, Psalms 145:11-13, I Corinthians 15:24-28, Daniel 2:44, and Psalms 45:6-7

-where will God dwell according to Revelation 22:1-5?

-What will happen to the earth and the environment according to Romans 8:20-22 and Isaiah 11:6-9?

-What will happen to our bodies according to II Corinthians 5:1-4?

-What will happen to our societies according to Isaiah 2:4, Revelation 11:15, and Revelation 21:24-26?

-What will happen to physical death, sin, and lawlessness according to I Corinthians 15:50-57 and Matthew 13:41-43

3. How does God describe the times we live in now in the following verses?

Galatians 1:3-4, II Corinthians 4:3-4, I Peter 5:8, Ephesians 2:1-2

-What are some of the consequences of the fact that God allows His enemies to challenge His rule even though they have already been defeated?