

Kingdom Come Series ©

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

Week 2: God's kingdom revealed in this age

G Strauss Sept. 2008

I. Review:

- A. God rules eternally- His Kingdom is eternal
- B. God will make His rule fully known in our history in the age to come
- C. The “mystery” of the Kingdom- Jesus infiltrates this age with Kingdom power.
Rom 16:25-27
- D. After Jesus said “go”, believers “went” for about 300 years. Long gap till modern missions movements. Christendom becomes predominant political force.
- E. The struggle of dualism in the church-
 - 1. The “world” sphere- concerned with morality, functional humanism, programs designed to provide efficient solutions
 - 2. The “spiritual” sphere- concerned with Christian culture, personal spirituality, abstract and mystical worship, theoretical teaching

II. The population has grown exponentially.

AD 33	200 million
1000	300 million
1830	1 billion
1930	2 billion
1960	3 billion
2002	6 billion

- A. Since the 1700s the missions movements have only kept up with population growth maintaining about 33% to 35% penetration. This means the absolute number of non-Christians has grown exponentially.
- B. There are more people going to hell than going to heaven.
- C. Current estimates: 2.1 billion Christians, 1.5 billion Muslim, 1.1 billion atheists, agnostics (humanists)
- D. Over 20 centuries Christians have announced 1,500 global plans to evangelize the world; most failed; 250 plans focused on AD 2000 fell massively short of stated goals. From the command of Jesus to this present day, 67% of all humans have not heard the name of Jesus.
- E. we tend to exaggerate the impact of the gospel: recent reports about the impact of short term mission efforts showed the whole population of Honduras has been “saved” at least 3 times over.

III. We need a reality check!

- A. God's kingdom has infiltrated this age but obviously has not overtaken it as an irresistible force.
 - 1. Biblically, our history is divided into two ages.

Eph 1:21, Gal 1:3-4, Matt 24:3

This “age” began at the fall. The “age to come” refers to God’s eternal reign on earth (see week 1)

2. Because of the ministry of Jesus, this age has now been infiltrated by the blessings of the age to come. The Kingdom has “come near” and **is offered as a gift: Matt 10:5-8**
3. The Kingdom is at work offering men the benefit of God’s rule but without abolishing the social structures of man or sin from the earth: Matt 22:21, Dan 4:17
4. Current reality of the Kingdom is in the inner spiritual redemptive blessing, and new birth. Rom 14:17, Jn 10:10, I Cor 13:12

B. The Kingdom behaves like the wind: Jn 3:3-8

1. Nicodemus wants to know the nature of Jesus work
2. Jesus uses play on words (wind & spirit) to describe the Kingdom being like the wind:
 - a. not visible physically but **powerful**
 - b. you know it is there by its impact- **irresistible**
 - c. may show up anywhere, anytime- **unpredictable**
3. we can only enter it by being born of water and the spirit (wind)

C. God allows His rule to be actively opposed and challenged

1. Adam and Eve, Noah, children of Israel,
2. Evil remains because of blindness, darkness, and unbelief- NOT because it is irresistible
John 3:17-21, Heb 3:12, 16-19,
3. Satan is a defeated enemy but still the ruler of this age.
Eph 6:10-13, I Peter 5:8, Matt 4: 3-11, (temptation by Satan- confronted by the enemy on his turf)
4. **Submission to the Sovereign God who is allowing His will to be challenged by a defeated enemy makes us a target.**
5. God does not make it easy for those who are following Him in His kingdom now. He just makes it possible to follow Him- blessing is God’s divine enablement to follow Him. I Cor 10:13
6. The gospel is actively resisted. Matt 13:22, I Cor 1:18

D. Satan is “destroyed” in five steps:

1. cast out of heaven Rev 12:9,
2. cursed in the garden Gen 3:14,
3. death defeated at the resurrection Heb 2:14-15,
4. thrown into the abyss during the millennium Rev 20:2-3
5. thrown into the lake of fire at the final judgment Rev 20:10

IV. We must view Missions in light of God’s overall redemptive plan and how He has positioned His Kingdom in this age.

-A. It is not just you He loves- get used to it! He loves the whole world.

Jn 3:16

- B. God is not totally preoccupied with us. His highest good for the world is the demonstration of His own glory! Is 42:5-8, John 17:5, 2 Cor 4:3-4
- C. The gospel of the Kingdom is God's chosen message for us to use to expand the influence of the kingdom. Rom 1:16
- D. The bible reminds us that we live in this present evil age but should live in light of the world to come: Lu 12:27-34, Lu 11:2 (thy will be done), I Peter 2:11-12, II Peter 3:11-13
- E. This present evil age is pivotal to living out our mission. It is not a mistake. It is essential for the world to see the love of those who are following God: to see us motivated by love not power
- F. Jesus did not send us to go and fix- He sent us to go and love. We must be motivated by love, not our ability to control. You fix machines- you love people. John 15:12, 2 Cor 5:13-15, 1 John 4:10-11

Next week-

How did Jesus present the kingdom and why? He was presenting the kingdom in a form that no one expected and used tools that were fitting for the task.

Study Matt 13

Study guide for International participants

1. What do we learn about the kingdom from Jesus training for his first missionary group He sent out in Matt 10:5-8?
2. What does Matt 22:21 teach us about Jesus attitude towards human institutions vs the kingdom of God?
3. In John 3:3-8, Jesus discusses what He is doing with Nicodemus. How does He describe the kingdom and what it requires for us to enter? How is this different from the way the kingdom will come when Jesus returns? Note that Jesus uses a play on words: the word for spirit and wind are the same.
4. What is the reason for the persistence of evil according to John 3:17-21, and Hebrews 3:12-19?
5. God allows His reign to be opposed during this age. What are consequences for us who follow Him? Ephesians 6:10-13, I Peter 5:8, Matt 4:3-11, I Corinthians 10:13
6. What does John 3:16 tell us about how we should respond to the world?
7. What is God's primary concern according to Isaiah 42:5-8, John 17:5, and 2 Corinthians 4:3-4?
8. What should be our main motive since we can't fix the world according to John 5:12, 2 Corinthians 5:13-15, and John 4:10-11?