



BAND of BROTHERS – WEEK 1: Kingdom Confusion

FALL 2021

*Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.  
**Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**"*  
– Matthew 6:9-10 ESV

"We do not live in a godless world. Rather, we live in a profoundly anti-institutional one, where the proliferation of Internet creative culture and consumer capitalism have rendered us all simultaneously parishioner, high priest, and deity. America is not secular but simply spiritually self-focused. ...Anti-institutional, intuitional self-divinization is, at heart, the natural spirituality of Internet and smartphone culture." – Tara Isabella Burton, *Strange Rites: New Religions for a Godless World*

- **Thy Kingdom Come...**

- What did Jesus mean?
  - What kind of kingdom was Jesus talking about?
  - Has it already arrived, or does it come later?
  - Is it a physical or spiritual kingdom?
  - And why does any of this matter?
- Jesus talked a lot about the kingdom
    - He began His ministry talking about the kingdom

*From that time Jesus began to preach this message: "Repent, for **the kingdom of heaven is near!**"* – Matthew 4:17 NET

- And He ended His earthly ministry discussing the kingdom

*So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore **the kingdom** to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in*

*Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” – Acts 1:6-8  
ESV*

- And in-between, He connected the kingdom with “the gospel of God”

*Jesus came into Galilee, **proclaiming the gospel of God**, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”  
– Mark 1:14-15 ESV*

*“I must **preach the good news** [euangelizō: gospel] **of the kingdom of God** to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” – Luke 4:43 ESV*

- This was long before Jesus discussed His pending death and resurrection
  - And before He mentioned salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Him alone
  - The **good news** concerned the coming of the King and His kingdom
- But what exactly was Jesus talking about?
    - Why did Jesus come proclaiming that the kingdom was at hand?
    - What was He saying and how did the Jews of His day receive it?
    - What are the long-term ramifications of the kingdom’s coming?
    - Is it already here or is it yet to come?

“...the work of understanding the kingdom of God is a holy obligation.”  
– Nicholas Perrin, *The Kingdom of God: A Biblical Theology*

“You cannot know anything about Jesus, anything, if you miss the kingdom of God....you are zero on Jesus if you don’t understand this term. I’m sorry to say it that strongly, but that is the great failure of evangelical Christianity. We have had Jesus without the kingdom of God, and therefore have literally done Jesus in.” – Gordon Fee, *Jesus: Early Ministry/Kingdom of God*

- **A King without a kingdom**
  - When you think of Jesus, what comes to mind?
    - Savior
    - Son of God
    - Son of Man
    - Messiah
    - Sin substitute
    - Lamb of God
    - Teacher
    - Rabbi
    - Revolutionary
    - But the gospels present Jesus as King

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “**Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?** For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” – Matthew 2:1-2 ESV*

*And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “**This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.**” – Matthew 27:35-37 ESV*

- Jesus came preaching the arrival of the kingdom  
*Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God is at hand**; repent and believe in the gospel.” – Mark 1:14-15 ESV*

**engizō** – drawn near, come nigh, to join one thing to another

- With the arrival of Jesus, the kingdom of God invaded time and space
- The transcendent, unapproachable God drew near
- Jesus, the Son of God, took on human flesh

*Though he was God,  
he did not think of equality with God  
as something to cling to.  
Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;  
he took the humble position of a slave  
and was born as a human being. – Philippians 2:6-7 NLT*

*Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. – Colossians 1:15 NLT*

*No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father’s heart. He has revealed God to us. – John 1:18 NLT*

- The kingdom of God is key to understanding the gospel

The story of the Bible is the story of the King and his kingdom. As Dan McCartney says, the arrival of the kingdom of God is the “reinstatement of the originally intended divine order for the earth, with man properly situated as God’s vice-regent.” Jesus is the true human receiving, embodying, bringing, inaugurating, and fulfilling the kingdom promises. – Patrick Schreiner, *The Kingdom of God and the Glory of the Cross*

- **Christ the King**
  - Why did Jesus come?
  - Most of us would find this question easy to answer

*To die for our sins  
To pay our sin debt  
To give us eternal life  
So that we could go to heaven*

- And all these answers would be correct  
But few of us would say:  
*To be King  
To rule and reign  
To defeat the enemies of God  
To establish an earthly kingdom*

- **The gospel of Jesus Christ**

- Mark opens his gospel with these words:

*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.* – Mark 1:1 ESV

...which could just as easily be translated “the good news of Jesus the messianic king.” –  
Nicholas Perrin, *The Kingdom of God: A Biblical Theology*

- “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of “Messiah”
  - Mark is declaring Jesus to be the Messiah of Israel
  - That is the “good news” or gospel he is about to present

Yet Mark is not just interested in the fact of Jesus’ kingship but also in – the much more involved question of – *what kind* of king Jesus might be. In other words, for Mark it is not merely a question of **identity** (Is Jesus the king or not?), but also a question of **modality** (If he is, what kind of king is he?), and **functionality** (If he is, what will he do?).  
– Nicholas Perrin, *The Kingdom of God: A Biblical Theology*

- But we tend to read the gospels through a modern, western mindset
- We fail to understand the Old and New Testament history regarding the kingdom of God and the coming King
- That will be our goal over the next 11 weeks
- We have misunderstood the significance of Jesus as King
- We tend to focus on Jesus as Savior and neglect to understand His role as King, both now and in the future
- Jesus sent others to declare the same message of the gospel of the kingdom

### The 12

*These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘**The kingdom of heaven is at hand.**’”* –  
Matthew 10:5-7 ESV

## The 72

*“Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘**The kingdom of God has come near to you.**’” – Luke 10:8-9 ESV*

- And the disciples would continue to preach the same message after Jesus was resurrected

*Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did....But when they believed Philip as **he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ**, they were baptized, both men and women. – Acts 8:4-5, 12 ESV*

- This was all in keeping with Jesus God-ordained purpose

*“I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; **for I was sent for this purpose.**” – Luke 4:43 ESV*

- **Establishing expectations**

- When we hear the phrase “kingdom of God” or “kingdom of heaven,” we tend to think of heaven
- It’s that place we’ll go to when we die
- But was that the Jewish concept of the kingdom?
  - They had a different view of the kingdom than we do
  - Theirs was based on centuries of prophetic promises
  - They lived with an expectation of the Messiah’s arrival

*“Those who have been rescued will go up to Mount Zion in Jerusalem to rule over the mountains of Edom.*

*And **the LORD himself will be king!**” – Obadiah 21 NLT*

*For the LORD will remove his hand of judgment and will disperse the armies of your enemy.*

*And **the LORD himself, the King of Israel, will live among you!***

*At last your troubles will be over,*

*and you will never again fear disaster. – Zephaniah 3:15 NLT*

*In the end, the enemies of Jerusalem who survive the plague will go up to Jerusalem each year to worship **the King, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies**, and to celebrate the Festival of Shelters. Any nation in the world that refuses to come to Jerusalem to*

worship **the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies**, will have no rain. – Zechariah 14:16-17 NLT

*I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. **He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world**, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. **His kingdom will never be destroyed.*** – Daniel 7:13-14 NLT

- The Jews fully expected a king
- He would be a warrior-king like David
- He would be a Jewish King over a revitalized Jewish nation
- He would be a great emancipator and deliverer
- He would be all-powerful and all-righteous
- His kingdom would have no end
- In other words, he would be the fulfillment of the promise God had made to David thousands of years earlier

*“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and **I will establish his kingdom.** He shall build a house for my name, **and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.** I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son....And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. **Your throne shall be established forever.**”* – 2 Samuel 7:12-16 ESV

- **Next Week: The King of Creation**

**For Further Discussion**

- When you think of a king, what comes to mind, and how do those ideas influence your concept of Jesus?
- Why do you think the church has been so willing to talk about Jesus as our Savior but not as our Sovereign?
- What did Jesus mean when He told us to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven?”



## WEEK 2 HOMEWORK: The King of Creation

FALL 2021

In this week's lesson, we will attempt to establish God as the Creator-King over the universe. In Genesis 1, God is presented as the sovereign ruler over all that He has created. But not long after His creation of the world and the two individuals to whom He would give the responsibility to act as His vice-regents, things would take a dramatic turn for the worst. We will investigate what happened when Adam and Eve decided to be the masters of their own fates and the rulers over their own kingdom.

- Read Psalm 96:7-10. What do these verses tell us about God and His kingship?
- Now read Psalm 47. How does this passage describe the kingship of God?
- Read Genesis 1. Take some time to consider how these verses communicate God's sovereignty and authority as the ruler over all that He has made. Write down words, phrases, or verses that declare the kingship of God.
- Take a few minutes to read and meditate on the following quote:  
"God created simply because he chose to do so. We can be more specific along these lines. In particular, we notice that when God takes care of business, he does so *as a king*. The divine word is spoken and immediately fulfilled; God speaks ("Let there be light..."), and it is done. The first readers of Genesis would have understood this right away; in speaking

creation into existence, God is acting like a king. God is not just a king, but *the* king of the cosmos.” – Nicolas Perrin, *The Kingdom of God: A Biblical Theology*

- Describe the ways in which we can see God’s kingship or rule in creation?
  
- Go back and look more closely at verses 26-30. What do you think it means when God says, “let them have dominion...”? What gave God the right to assign this responsibility to Adam and Eve?
  - What do you think it means that Adam and Eve were made in the image of God, in His likeness?
  
  - Read the following quote and consider its implications for humanity being made in God’s image. Write down your thoughts.  
“...we know from ancient Near Eastern backgrounds that kings would regularly leave 2-D Or 3-D “images” and/or “likenesses” of themselves in territories and cities where they sought to establish their reign...By creating Adam and Eve in the divine image, God intended to stake out legal territory, establishing a jurisdiction through the image-bearing presence, wherever humanity might be found.” – Nicolas Perrin, *The Kingdom of God: A Biblical Theology*
  
- Now read the account of the fall found in Genesis 2:15-17 and Genesis 3:1-19.
  - When Eve listened to the lies of the serpent, she was disobeying the sovereign will of the King. Why is this significant?
  
  - What do you think was the serpent’s hidden agenda in verse four of chapter 3? Why would knowing good from evil make them like God?
  
  - The serpent was really offering Adam and Eve autonomy or self-rule. He was not promising them divinity, but the chance to decide for themselves what was right or wrong. They could become their own kings. How do we see this played out today?