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Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, The Whole Counsel of God



By Steven J. Hogan

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The gospel message is a kingdom message and you can't separate the two. Understanding the gospel is understanding the truth of an eternal life and the truth of an everlasting kingdom. Look at how God says it in Rev. 1:5-7 – *"To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood – and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with the clouds…"*

The gospel message describes the entirety of your Christian life, from the moment you are saved and enter His kingdom (John 3:5) through all eternity, from this church age, this spiritual kingdom, to the kingdom ages (Rev. 20-22). And this is how Jesus taught. *"Jesus was… teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom*" (Matt. 4:23). We previously saw from the book of Acts that Paul and others taught the same way. In this post we will continue to learn about the gospel of the kingdom, a relevant and essential subject.

Jesus was with His disciples, and *“speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God”* (Acts 1:3). That’s quite the statement, that the summary of Jesus’ teaching during those 40 days was the kingdom of God. And it wasn’t just the spiritual kingdom, the church, it was more than that. The text goes on to say that Jesus’ disciples, who knew God’s promises to Israel about a physical kingdom, ask Jesus if He was *“restoring the kingdom to Israel”* at that time. (Acts 1:6). It’s obvious that the disciples really wanted Jesus to restore the kingdom to Israel.

If there was to be no kingdom, if God’s promises to the Jews were canceled, then this would have been the perfect time for Jesus to say so. But He doesn’t do that! Jesus’ answer is that they didn’t need to know when it was going to happen, followed by His instruction to focus on being His witnesses to the world (Acts 1:8), on building the spiritual kingdom of God. Matt. 16:18

During those 40 days, Jesus’ purpose was to help His disciples understand the gospel of the kingdom, to teach them about the entirety of the kingdom age, from the spiritual kingdom to the physical kingdom. God further assures them of its reality in the future by sending two angels to tell them that His Son would be coming back (Acts 1:11-12). And it is at that time that Jesus raptures the church, judges the world, and begins His 1000-year kingdom. Rev. 11:15, Rev. 20

What else do we learn in Acts and other passages about the kingdom of God?

* **Acts 8:12** – *“… when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ…”* Philip was one of the apostles who heard Jesus talking about the kingdom of God, and was now himself preaching this gospel. He was sharing the truth about Christ, sin, salvation, and the church, the spiritual kingdom (Rom. 14:17). And he surely told them about Christ returning to set up His physical kingdom on earth.

* **Acts 19:8** – *"He entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God."* The truth of God's kingdom was on Paul's heart and lips. For three months, he communicated this comprehensive, big-picture message. He was powerfully proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom in the synagogue, reasoning with the Jews about the good news concerning the present and future reign of Christ in our lives, and His future reign over this world. After that, and for two more years, Paul focused on His disciples, continuing to teach them the transforming truth of God's kingdom.

* **Acts 20:24-25** – *"… that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom…"* Paul preached the gospel of God's grace and he was *"preaching the kingdom."* He taught people the necessity of God's grace during this church age and the kingdom ages. God's grace is His power, and is what we need if we are to be active and fruitful members of His holy, eternal, God-glorifying kingdom.

* **Acts 28:23** – *"Paul… was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus."* **Acts 28:31** – *"He stayed two full years… preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ."* The gospel message preached by Paul was not two separate messages, about Jesus and about the kingdom. It was a unified message that Jesus, as Lord and King, is to spiritually rule in our hearts and over the church during this present age, and to physically rule over the world in the coming kingdom ages. Paul knew the overarching importance of this kingdom message and he kept preaching it.

* **Matthew 6:33** – *"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."* Our work on earth is to seek God's kingdom, to work with Christ in building His spiritual and internal kingdom during this church age. And we should all have an eternal perspective, that our present-day kingdom work relates to and results

in a visible, everlasting kingdom. In this future kingdom, we will wholeheartedly worship and serve the King and have intimate fellowship with the believers. *"They will receive you into the eternal dwellings."* Luke 16:9

*** Matthew 6:9-10** – *"Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* A major theme in this well-known prayer is that we are to pray for the coming of God's kingdom, which means both the present spiritual kingdom and the future physical kingdom. We are to pray for Christ to be King in people's hearts during this church age and in the kingdom ages. We are now seeing God's *"will being done on earth as it is in heaven"* in the church in a limited way. But in the kingdom ages, His will is always and fully carried out all over the world. Phil. 2:9-11

*** Matthew 24:14 –** *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come."* What are we to do when the Antichrist is ruling the earth and persecuting Christians? We are to preach *"the gospel of the kingdom… to all the nations."* We are to proclaim the entirety of the gospel. We are to tell people how they can be part of God's eternal kingdom, how they can be saved, sanctified, glorified, and reign with Christ during the kingdom ages.

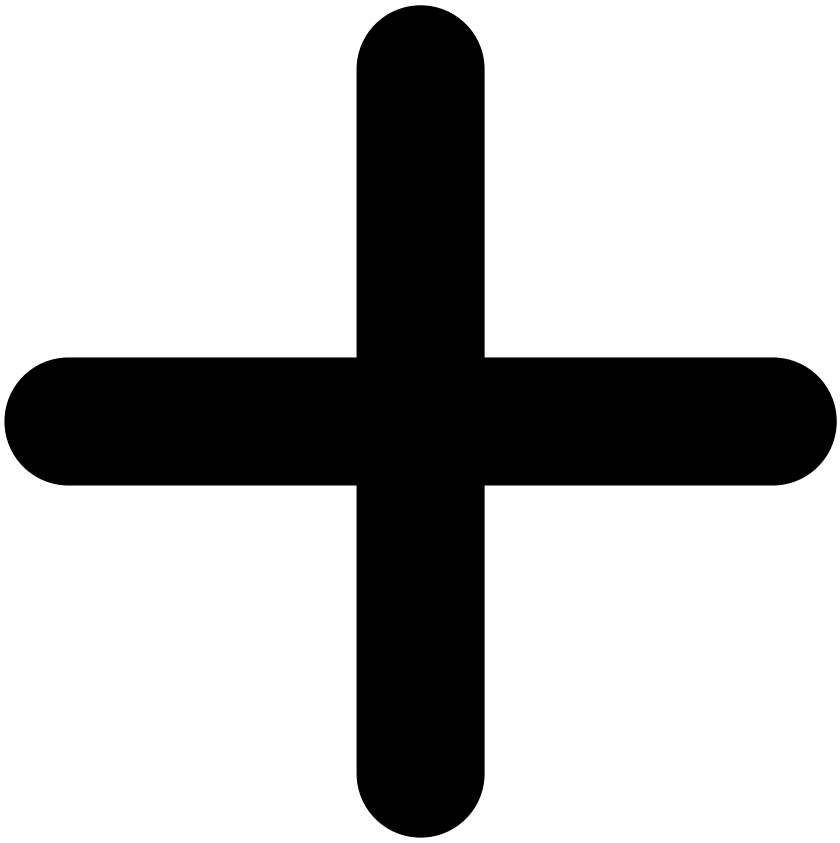
*** Luke 21:28, 31** – *"Lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near… so also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near."* In this prophetic passage about the end-times, Jesus tells the disciples that redemption is near, redemption referring to being glorified at His coming. Then Christ says that the kingdom of God is near, this referring to a short time later when He begins reigning over this renovated earth. That we now live in the end times means that two life-changing, world-changing events will soon take place, the completion of our salvation, and the beginning of Christ's kingdom on earth.

We have been talking about the gospel of the kingdom, the good news that speaks of the entirety of our eternal life. We have talked about Christ dying for our sins and our need to believe in Him to be spiritually and physically saved with the result that we will be fit and ready to live with Him and for Him in the coming kingdom ages.

"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word…" (2 Tim. 4:1-2). What do we learn from Paul's final words to Timothy and to all preachers of God's word? Pastors are to preach God's word in view of, in light of Christ's appearing and His kingdom.

At His appearing we will be judged, be rewarded for our work on earth. We will also be glorified, be completely saved, able to wholly live for Christ from that point through the kingdom ages, through eternity future. From Sunday to Sunday, pastors are to keep the big picture in mind and teach believers all the truths of God's word. They are to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God. Living for Christ in hopes of a glorious future must be repeatedly taught and fixed in the hearts of all God's people. *"I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable… I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God."* Acts 20:20, 27

Might we all have this eternal perspective of the kingdom of God. Knowing these truths will definitely and positively affect your relationship with God and how you live for Him. Here are two more posts on the kingdom of God: *"Kingdom Instructions for the Church"* and *"The Present Church Age and the Future Kingdom Age."*



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