According to veteran missionary and author, Denzil R. Miller, a correct understanding of the kingdom of God can profoundly affect both our lives and our ministries. When we understand that the kingdom of God is a present reality in the world today, and when we understand that kingdom power can be actively at work in our lives and ministries, a tremendous confidence comes into our hearts. We are encouraged to preach with power and pray with boldness. And when we understand that the King is coming again to set up His eternal Kingdom in the earth, we are inspired to work to see that the nations hear the message of His salvation.

Denzil R. Miller is director of the Acts in Africa Initiative, a ministry aimed at helping the African church mobilize for Spirit-empowered missions. He holds a doctor of ministry degree from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary. Miller has written several books on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and in the work of missions.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction................................................................. 5

UNIT I: INTRODUCING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. The Meaning of the Kingdom of God ......................... 9
2. A Historical Overview of Thought on the Kingdom......... 19
3. The Kingdom of God: A Present Reality..................... 29
4. The Kingdom of God: A Future Prospect .................... 39

UNIT II: EXPLORING THE KINGDOM OF GOD (PART 1)

5. The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament ................. 49
6. The Kingdom of God and the Theocratic Covenants ....... 61
7. The Kingdom of God in the Ministry of Jesus ............. 73

UNIT III: EXPLORING THE KINGDOM OF GOD (PART 2)

8. The Kingdom of God in Apostolic Proclamation and Teaching ............................................. 85
9. Life in the Kingdom of God ........................................ 97
10. The Sermon on the Mount and the Kingdom of God ..... 111
UNIT IV: PENTECOSTAL INSIGHTS ON
THE KINGDOM OF GOD

11. The Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God ………………. 129
12. The Kingdom of God and Global Mission ……………… 141
13. Pentecostal Perspectives on the Kingdom of God …….. 155

Appendix 1: Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan ….. 163
Appendix 2: Review Questions ……………………………….. 169
Selected Bibliography ……………………………………….. 189
Other Books by Denzil R. Miller ……………………………... 191
INTRODUCTION

The kingdom of God. It’s a subject often mentioned, yet little understood in the church today. We often pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). But do we really understand what we are praying? We sing about “kingdom authority,” but do we really know what that authority is? I once heard a preacher proclaim, “We are not church people, we are kingdom people!” Many in the congregation, including myself, stood to their feet, and shouted, “Amen!” But what does it mean when we say that we are kingdom people? Thinking back, I do not believe either the preacher or the congregation understood what he was talking about.

This lack of understanding concerning the kingdom of God is somewhat understandable since it is a neglected subject in most Bible schools and seminaries today. When I was in Bible college, the subject of the Kingdom was hardly ever mentioned. When it was mentioned, it was usually in reference to the coming millennial kingdom of Christ. While this emphasis is good, it is only a small part of what the Bible teaches about the kingdom of God. Today, the silence on the subject remains. I know of hardly any schools that teach a course on the subject. That is why I have written this book, to address this need in the church.

Although the kingdom of God is an oft-neglected subject, it is one of the most prominent topics in the Bible. It is found in every book in the Bible—although it is not specifically called the kingdom of God in every book. It is an overarching theme of the Old Testament where God is declared to be the “King.” It was the central theme of the preaching and teaching of Jesus, and a cardinal theme of the New Testament church. The kingdom of God should also be a central theme in our teaching and preaching today.

A correct understanding of the kingdom of God can profoundly affect both our lives and our ministries. When we understand that the
kingdom of God is a present reality in the world today, and when we understand that kingdom power can be actively at work in our ministries, a tremendous confidence comes into our hearts. We are encouraged to preach with power and pray for people with renewed boldness. And when we understand that the King is coming again to set up His eternal Kingdom in the earth, we are inspired to work to see that the nations hear the message of His salvation.

Pentecostals have a unique contribution to make to the study of the kingdom of God. Their emphasis on the presence and power of the Spirit is an essential element in the advancement of the Kingdom in the earth. Pentecostal missiologist, Paul Pomerville stated, “When the Kingdom theme is treated apart from the role of the Holy Spirit, mission theology is severely impaired, even distorted” (1985, 146). In the last section of this study, we will pay particular attention to the unique insights Pentecostals have made in a truly biblical understanding of the kingdom of God.

This is a revised and expanded edition of my first book by the same name. In addition to some minor updates, I have expanded the chapter on “The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament” into two chapters, calling the second chapter “The Kingdom of God and the Theocratic Covenants.” I have also added a new chapter on “The Sermon on the Mount and the Kingdom of God.”

As you study these lessons, open your heart to the Lord. Submit yourself to Him as your Lord and King, and commit yourself anew to His mission in the earth. Join your heart with the heart of Jesus, in declaring to the nations, “The time has come…. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:14-15).

~ Dr. Denzil R. Miller
~ UNIT I ~

INTRODUCING

the KINGDOM of GOD
The MEANING of the KINGDOM of GOD

The message of the kingdom of God has been called the “master thought” of Jesus (Kuzmic, 522). It was the central theme of His preaching and teaching. Until recent years, however, it has been an almost forgotten theme in evangelical and Pentecostal studies. It is not without significance, however, that in the gospels the word “church” occurs only three times in two verses (Matthew 16:18; 18:17). The word “kingdom,” however, occurs 127 times in 119 verses. Note these facts concerning the kingdom of God:

- It is the subject of most of Jesus’ parables.
- It is a major theme of the book of Acts, which begins and ends with an emphasis on the kingdom of God (1:3, 6; 28:23, 31).
- It is referred to seventeen times in the New Testament epistles (i.e., Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20; 6:9-10; 15:50; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 1:12-13; 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 4:1, 18; Hebrews 1:8; 12:28; James 2:5; 2 Peter 1:11).
As we shall discover in this study, the kingdom of God is a prominent theme in Scripture, in both the Old and the New Testaments.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD DEFINED

When the Bible speaks of the kingdom of God, it is not talking about a geographical region such as the United Kingdom or the Kingdom of Swaziland. It cannot be identified with any country anywhere in the world today, or for that matter, at any other time in history. The kingdom of God is, rather, the rule or reign of God. It is God’s sovereign rule over His creation. As we shall see more clearly as we move through this study, the kingdom of God can be viewed in three ways:

- as the rule or reign of God,
- as a present kingdom already at work in the world, and into which people are now entering, and
- as a future kingdom into which the righteous will enter at the end of the age.

The Hebrew word translated “kingdom” in the Old Testament is malkûth; the word used in the Greek New Testament is basileia. Both mean the same thing: a rule, realm, reign, or kingship.

The two main names for the Kingdom found in the New Testament are kingdom of God and kingdom of heaven. In the gospels, these two names are used interchangeably as seen in Matthew 19:23-24: “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of

---

1Throughout this book, when referring directly to the kingdom of God, and not using the modifying phrases “of God” or “of heaven,” the word “Kingdom” is capitalized.
And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle that for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (italics added). The two terms are simply different ways of saying the same thing. The phrase “kingdom of heaven” is used only in Matthew (33 times). This is possibly because Matthew was writing to Jews who thought it disrespectful to use God’s name too often. In parallel passages one gospel writer will use “kingdom of God” while another uses “kingdom of heaven” (See Figure 1.1 below). Other New Testament terms used for the kingdom of God are as follows:

- “my Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29)
- “kingdom of the Son of Man” (Matthew 13:41)
- “kingdom of Christ and of God” (Ephesians 5:5)
- “kingdom of light” (Colossians 1:12)
- “kingdom of the Son he loves” (Colossians 1:13)
- “His kingdom” (1Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Timothy 4:1)
- “His heavenly kingdom” (2 Timothy 4:18)
- “the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2Peter 1:11)
- “kingdom of our Lord and His Christ” (Revelation 11:15).

THE DURATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

What is the duration of the kingdom of God? That is, when did it begin and when will it end? In answering this question, it is helpful to look at the Kingdom in two ways: the kingdom of God in eternity and the kingdom of God in history.
### Gospel Passages Showing the Parallel Use of “Kingdom of Heaven” and “Kingdom of God”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark and Luke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew 4:17</strong>: From that time on Jesus began to preach, &quot;Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Mark 1:14-15</strong>: &quot;The time has come,&quot; he said. &quot;The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew 5:3</strong>: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.</td>
<td><strong>Luke 6:20</strong>: Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew 11:11</strong>: I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.</td>
<td><strong>Luke 7:28</strong>: I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew 13:11</strong>: He replied, &quot;The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you . . .&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Luke 8:9-10</strong>: He said, &quot;The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you . . .&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew 13:31-33</strong>: He told them another parable: &quot;The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, . . .” He told them still another parable: &quot;The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Luke 13:18-21</strong>: Then Jesus asked, &quot;What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed,...” Again he asked, &quot;What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew 19:14</strong>: Jesus said, &quot;Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Mark 10:13-16</strong>: He said to them, &quot;Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these (cf. Luke 18:16-17).&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew 19:23-24</strong>: Then Jesus said to his disciples, &quot;I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Mark 10:23-25</strong>: Jesus . . . said to his disciples, &quot;How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!&quot; . . . It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.&quot; (cf. Luke 18:23-25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: The Meaning of the Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God in Eternity

The kingdom of God is everlasting! It endures from eternity past into eternity future. Daniel described the kingdom of God as “a kingdom that will never be destroyed” (Daniel 2:44). He also said that “the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever” (7:18). David prayed to God, “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations (Psalm 145:13). The angel told Mary about her son, Jesus, that “the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end” (Luke 1:32-33). The eternal duration of the kingdom of God is illustrated in Figure 1.2 below.

![The Eternal Duration of the Kingdom of God](image)

**Figure 1.2**

The Kingdom of God in History

Although the kingdom of God is eternal, it has appeared in time, that is, in history. According to renewal theologian J. Rodman Williams, the kingdom of God manifests itself in history in three
ways: in preparation, in establishment, and in completion (Williams 289-295). The kingdom of God is seen in *preparation* in the Old Testament, where God is portrayed as King of Israel and as King over all creation. There, the Kingdom prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah. We will look at this aspect of God’s kingdom in Chapter 5. Next, the Kingdom is seen in *establishment* in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus began His ministry by declaring that the kingdom of God was at hand (Mark 1:15). Christ now establishes His kingdom reign in the lives of those who will repent and believe the gospel. For them, He is, indeed, Lord and King! (John 12:13). Finally, the kingdom of God will come in *completion* at the second coming of Christ, when Jesus sets up His eternal kingdom on earth. At that time, “the kingdoms of this world [will] become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Revelation 11:15, NKJV). The kingdom of God in history is illustrated in Figure 1.3 below.

Figure 1.3
TWO TENSES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In the New Testament, the kingdom of God is shown in two tenses: present and future. We can say that it is a kingdom that has come and is coming. It is now, but not yet. Let’s look at these two aspects of the kingdom of God:

The Kingdom of God Has Come

Mark wrote, “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’” (1:14-15).

The kingdom of God came in the person of Jesus Christ. Speaking of Jesus, John said, “Our hands have touched . . . the Word of life” (1 John 1:1). On another occasion Jesus told some Pharisees, “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21), or as the NASB better translates, “the kingdom of God is in your midst.” The kingdom of God was in their midst because Jesus was in their midst. On one occasion, after He had driven a demon out of a man, Jesus said, “But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28). We will discuss this present aspect of the kingdom of God in more detail in Chapter 3.

The Kingdom of God is Coming

Not only does the New Testament teach that the kingdom of God has already come in the person of Jesus, it also teaches that the kingdom of God is coming in the future. The Kingdom will come in fullness at the second coming of Christ. At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke to His disciples of this future expression of the Kingdom. He said, “I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God” (Mark 14:25; cf. Matthew 26:28-29). In the future kingdom Jesus will reign
Chapter 1: The Meaning of the Kingdom of God

for all eternity. We will also discuss this aspect of the Kingdom in greater detail in Chapter 3.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE CHURCH

The question arises: What is the relationship between the kingdom of God and the church? The church and the kingdom of God are not the same, as some have taught. The church is, however, the primary expression of the kingdom of God in the present age. Someone has rightly said, the Kingdom creates the church—the church bears witness to the Kingdom. The church is the instrument and agent of the Kingdom.

The kingdom of God is greater and more enduring than the church. The kingdom of God stretches from eternity to eternity. It has as its subjects all the saints of all the ages, including angels. The church, however, lasts only from Christ’s first until His second coming. It has as its members those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, while it is possible for one to be a subject of the Kingdom and not be a member of the church, it is not possible for one to be a member of the church and not be a subject of the Kingdom. The church and the Kingdom are compared in Figure 1.4 below.

The church’s mission is to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations before the second coming of Christ, the King (Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10). This proclamation is to be done in kingdom power. That power is available to all believers through the empowering work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-8).
CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have defined the kingdom of God as the rule or reign of God. It is one of the most important subjects in Scripture, and was the main theme of Jesus’ teaching and preaching. It is also a key theme of the Bible. The Kingdom is both present and future. In these last days the church is the agent of the Kingdom, and has been commissioned to preach the gospel of the Kingdom in all the world before Christ comes again. In the next chapter, we will look at how the doctrine of the kingdom of God has been viewed in the history of the church.
Chapter 1: The Meaning of the Kingdom of God
In the last chapter we defined and discussed some of the various aspects of the kingdom of God. In this chapter we will look back in time. We will see how the doctrine has been understood in different periods of church history. In doing this we will discover how one’s view of the kingdom of God can affect how he or she understands and does missionary work.

PENTECOST TO REFORMATION

The Early Post-Apostolic Church

During post-apostolic times (AD 100-300), the church underwent great persecution. As a result, it adopted what one author has called a “persecution mentality.” Over time, it developed a tendency to withdraw from worldly affairs, and began to look at the kingdom of God as only in the future. These persecuted believers looked forward to the day when Christ would return. At that time, He would deliver them from their trials and set up His reign on earth. The post-
apostolic church further saw the kingdom of God as a spiritual kingdom that dwelt in the hearts of believers.

**The Church after Constantine**

In AD 313, the Roman Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Roman Empire. As a result, the church acquired a privileged status in society. As time went by, it began to see itself as being the same thing as the kingdom of God. Church leaders began to use the phrase “one God, one Logos, one Emperor, one Empire.” As the state church, it became the servant of the empire, although, at times, it even ruled over the empire. During this era, the church began to think of the kingdom of God as the same as the earthly reign of the Caesar or the Pope.

**The Medieval Church**

The medieval church existed during the Middle Ages, extending from the end of the Roman Empire (AD 400) until the beginning of the Protestant Reformation (AD 1517). During this era, the church largely followed the teachings of Augustine in his book, *The City of God*. Augustine taught that the kingdom of God was the visible church of his day. This view of the Kingdom led to the merging of church and state. The results were tragic. Joining with the state, the church attempted to create a “pure” Holy Roman Empire by force. The Crusades became the church’s way of doing missions. During the Crusades, the church did many evil things in trying to rescue the Holy Land from the Muslims. Christian missions still suffers the ill effects of the Crusades.

**REFORMATION TO PRESENT**

**The Reformation Church**

The Reformation took place during the sixteenth century. At that time, many people left the Roman Catholic Church and formed the
Chapter 2: A Historical Overview of Thought on the Kingdom of God

Protestant churches. The leaders of this movement were called “reformers.” As opposed to the teaching of the Catholic Church, these reformers identified the kingdom of God with the invisible church. They taught that the Kingdom was primarily a religious concept. Like the post-apostolic fathers, they taught that the kingdom of God is in the hearts of believers.

One reformer, John Calvin, went further in his thinking. He taught a christocratic (meaning the government or rule of Christ) theology of the kingdom of God. In Geneva, Switzerland, he started a community where the church had control over all the affairs of people. Life in this community was based on the values of the kingdom of God as Calvin saw them.

The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were times of debate concerning the meaning of the kingdom of God. The debate, however, had little to do with the life and mission of the church. Some teachers, such as Albrecht Ritschl (1822-89) and his followers, were influenced by Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. These teachers held a social or evolutionary view of the Kingdom. They said that the kingdom of God was at work in the evolutionary progress of human history. They believed that history was progressing toward higher levels of civilization and morality. The idea of Christ’s second coming was lost. This was the view of most liberal Protestants in the late nineteenth century. It became a part of the religious ideology of humanism, the teaching that man can solve his own problems by human reason, apart from the help of God.

The Twentieth Century

At the beginning of the twentieth century, certain theologians rejected the evolutionary teaching about the kingdom of God. Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer developed what became
known as a “thoroughgoing eschatology” of the kingdom of God. They maintained that the kingdom of God had not yet come; it was only in the future. They said that it is wrong to say that the kingdom of God came in the ministry of Jesus. He, rather, expected an entirely future apocalyptic coming of the Kingdom. According to these teachers, Jesus believed that this would occur during His own lifetime. They further denied that Jesus and His message came from God.

Charles H. Dodd taught a different doctrine concerning the kingdom of God. He called his teaching “realized eschatology.” He said that the kingdom of God is already present. It came with the appearance and ministry of Jesus. Dodd taught that Jesus’ teachings about a coming kingdom are not to be taken literally. They are, rather, to be taken only as symbols for the kingdom of God that was already present. In this view, there is no room for the second coming of Christ.

Evangelical theologians recognize that there is some truth in each of these teachings about the kingdom of God. They, nevertheless, ultimately rejected both, since each is one-sided and ignores an important part of Jesus’ teaching on the subject. Studies by evangelical scholars, such as Herman Ridderbos and George E. Ladd, show that Jesus spoke of both a present and a future coming of the Kingdom. According to Ladd,

For Jesus the Kingdom of God was the dynamic rule of God which had invaded history in his own person and mission to bring men in the present age the blessings of the messianic age, and which would manifest itself yet again at the end of the age to bring this same messianic salvation to its consummation. (Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom*)
This is the view of the kingdom of God taught in this book. It is the view held by most contemporary Pentecostal scholars. Pentecostals, however, emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in the kingdom of God more than non-Pentecostals, as is later explained in this book.

PENTECOSTAL THOUGHT ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Early Pentecostal Thought

Early Pentecostals had little to say about the kingdom of God. This is because much of their eschatology was influenced by dispensational writers. Dispensationalism is the teaching that God deals with mankind in different ways during different eras of sacred history, called dispensations. Among other things, non-Pentecostal dispensationalists teach that God no longer works miracles today as He did in New Testament times. Pentecostal teachers such as Ralph Riggs, Frank Boyd, Finis J. Dake, and John G. Hall taught that salvation history consisted of seven distinct dispensations: Innocence, Human Government, Law, Grace, Tribulation, Kingdom, and Eternity. In this way of thinking, the kingdom of God was thought of as being mainly in the future. It was mostly related to the millennial reign of Christ. The present reality of the Kingdom was barely noticed.

In time, however, Pentecostal scholars began to see that some of the teachings of dispensationalism were opposed to the Pentecostal teachings of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and modern-day miracles. For instance, dispensationalists teach that the Jews rejected Jesus’ offer of the kingdom of God; therefore, the promise of David’s restored kingdom has been put off until the Millennium. The fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-29) has also been delayed until the second coming of Christ. Therefore, according to dispensationalist teaching,
Pentecost was only a temporary blessing of power to the early church. Dispensationalists say that the power of Pentecost is not available to the church today. Pentecostals strongly reject this view.

Other Assemblies of God theologians, such as Ernest S. Williams and Stanley Horton, closely identified the kingdom of God with the church. They said that the church is “spiritual Israel” and the Spirit is active in the church today.

Contemporary Pentecostal Thought

In recent years, evangelicals and Pentecostals have shown more interest in the kingdom of God. Some Pentecostal scholars have written about how the teaching of the kingdom of God affects missions. In 1966 Pentecostal missiologist, Melvin L. Hodges wrote about the importance of the Kingdom in a New Testament theology of missions. He said, “The church is the present manifestation of the kingdom of God in the earth, or at least the agency that prepares the way for the future manifestation of the Kingdom. Its mission, therefore, is the extension of the church throughout the world…. It is the Holy Spirit who gives life to the church and imparts gifts and ministries as well as power for their performance.” For most Pentecostals this was a new way of thinking about the kingdom of God.

Other Pentecostal theologians saw the vital connection between “signs and wonders” and the advancement of the kingdom of God. For instance, in 1986 Assemblies of God missionary Ruth A. Breusch wrote a series of ten articles for the *Mountain Movers* magazine, entitled “The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.” Writing from a Pentecostal point of view, she talked about the kingdom of God and its relationship to the mission of the church. She said that, in this age, God has chosen the church as His means of advancing His Kingdom throughout the earth. The Spirit is present in the Kingdom to empower the church for the task of world harvest. More recently,
Peter Kuzmic and others have written convincingly of the role of the Spirit’s power in advancing the kingdom of God in the world.²

In 1985, Paul A. Pomerville wrote that the biblical theme of the kingdom of God provides a theological underpinning for Pentecostal theology. According to Pomerville, the kingdom of God represents the dynamic reign of God in the world. It is God’s supernatural breaking into history in the person of Jesus Christ (Pomerville, 134-135. He further equated the kingdom of God with “the activity of God” (134). He said that Pentecostal theology answers the question, “How is the kingdom of God advanced?” The answer is that the kingdom of God is advanced in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit (147-148).

One recent development among some Pentecostals and charismatics is the “kingdom now” theology. This theology is a departure from the premillennial end-time teachings of most Pentecostals. Kingdom now theology focuses on the church Christianizing society, that is, making society ever more Christian. It rejects the teaching of the rapture of the church. The teaching has generated controversy in Pentecostal circles.

In their early years, Pentecostals often overlooked biblical teaching on the kingdom of God. Today, however, there are many references to the kingdom of God in Pentecostal and charismatic writings. Pentecostal perspectives on the kingdom of God will be discussed in Unit IV.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have discovered that throughout history the church has held different views concerning the kingdom of God. What lessons can we learn from this new understanding? We learn that how one views the kingdom of God greatly influences how he or she views the mission of the church. If one sees the kingdom of God as only future, as did the post-apostolic church, he tends to withdraw from society and hope for the coming of Christ to deliver him from the world. If one sees the state church as the kingdom of God, as did the medieval church, he tends to believe that it is the role of the state to Christianize society. As a result, he can become passive in his personal participation in the mission of God. If one sees the kingdom of God as only present, as did some nineteenth century theologians, he works only for the betterment of society and doesn’t worry about preparing people spiritually for the coming of Christ. If one, however, sees the kingdom of God as both present and future, and if he believes that the Kingdom is present in the power of the Spirit, he is encouraged to go to the nations in the Spirit’s power, preaching that people must prepare themselves for Christ’s soon coming when He will judge the nations and set up His eternal kingdom in the earth.

How the kingdom of God has been viewed throughout church history is summarized in Figure 2.1 below:
### Figure 2.1
**Summary of Teaching on the Kingdom of God**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church Era or Group</th>
<th>Teachings on the Kingdom of God</th>
<th>Contributing Causes to the Teaching</th>
<th>Effects of the Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Early Post-Apostolic Church | The Kingdom is in the future.  
The Kingdom is inward and spiritual. | Persecution resulting in a “persecution mentality” | Withdrew from the world.  
Looked for future deliverance |
| The Church After Constantine | The church and the Kingdom are the same. | Christianity was declared the official religion of the Roman Empire. | Thought of the kingdom of God as the earthly reign of the Pope or Caesar. |
| The Medieval Church | The state-church and the Kingdom are the same. | Followed Augustine’s *City of God.*  
Merged church and state. | Tragic results:  
Attempted to create a “pure” Holy Roman Empire.  
The Crusades. |
| The Reformation Church | The Kingdom is the invisible church.  
The Kingdom is an inward spiritual reality. | Partly as a reaction against the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. | Little interest in evangelizing the nations. |
| The Church in the 18th and 19th Centuries (Albert Ritschl) | The Kingdom is evolving in the progress of society. | Influenced by Darwin’s theory of evolution | Did not look for Christ’s coming.  
Believed the church was to work for the betterment of society. |
| Twentieth century (Weiss and Schweitzer) | Taught a “thorough-going eschatology.”  
The Kingdom is only future. | A reaction against the evolutionary view of Ritschl. | The doctrines had little effect on society. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twentieth century (Dodd)</th>
<th>Taught a “realized eschatology”: The kingdom is only present.</th>
<th>Effects of higher criticism.</th>
<th>The doctrines had little effect on church or society.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelicals</td>
<td>The kingdom is present and future. Its purpose is to advance the mission of God.</td>
<td>The writings of Ridderbos, Ladd, and others. A renewed interest in the kingdom of God.</td>
<td>Desire to advance the kingdom of God through missions before Jesus comes again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Pentecostals</td>
<td>Largely overlooked the kingdom of God as present. Strong emphasis on the coming kingdom.</td>
<td>Influenced by their study of dispensationalist writers.</td>
<td>Preached much about the second coming of Christ. Believed the world must be reached with the gospel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Pentecostals</td>
<td>The Kingdom is both present and future.</td>
<td>The writings of Hodges, Breusch, Ladd, Pomerville, Kuzmic and others. A Pentecostal adaptation of the evangelical view.</td>
<td>Emphasis on the power of the Spirit to advance the kingdom of God in the earth. Belief in power ministry. Inspired to preach the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations. Confidence in confronting the powers of Satan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingdom Now Theology</td>
<td>The kingdom of God is present now. The church must gain dominion over the world before Jesus comes again. Postmillennialist.</td>
<td>The teachings of Earl Paulk and others.</td>
<td>Political and social action becomes as important as evangelism and missions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have described the kingdom of God as a kingdom that has come and is coming. It has both a present and a future aspect. We will now look at these ideas in more depth. In the next chapter, we will look at the future aspect of the kingdom of God. But first, in this chapter, we will investigate the kingdom of God as a present reality. In doing this we will look at three facts about the Kingdom as a present reality:

- The Kingdom came in the person of Jesus Christ
- The Kingdom comes in the power of the Holy Spirit
- The Kingdom is coming today.

THE KINGDOM CAME IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus’ Announced of the Presence of Kingdom

John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. He said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matthew 3:2-3).
Chapter 3: The Kingdom of God: A Present Reality

He meant that Jesus would soon begin His kingdom ministry. When Jesus began His ministry, He repeated the announcement of John. “Repent,” he declared, “for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matthew 4:17). The word translated “near” in the NIV can also be translated “at hand,” as in the NKJV. Jesus was saying that God’s kingdom was near enough to reach out and touch. By touching Jesus, one could touch the kingdom of God! On another occasion Jesus told the Pharisees, “The kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:21, NASB). Because Jesus was in their midst, the kingdom of God was also in their midst.

John the Baptist once became discouraged. He sent his followers to ask Jesus if He was really the Messiah. Jesus told them, “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it” (Matthew 11:12, cf. Luke 16:16). Jesus wanted them to know that the kingdom of God had already come, and that it was on the move. As Jesus went about His ministry, He was advancing the kingdom of God.

**Jesus’ “Nazareth Manifesto”**

Near the beginning of His ministry, Jesus went into a synagogue in Nazareth of Galilee. There He presented His “Nazareth Manifesto” (Luke 4:18-19). A manifesto is a public declaration of one’s goals and plans. Jesus said,

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Jesus was quoting from the messianic prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2. By doing this, He was claiming to be the Messiah. He was also claiming the Messiah’s authority. He said that He would fulfill His ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. “The Spirit of the Lord is on
me,” He declared, “because he has anointed me to preach the good news” (Luke 4:18).

Jesus’ anointing, however, was not like the anointing of some earthly rulers. Theirs was with mere oil. His was with the Spirit of the Lord. Christ’s fivefold agenda of ministry included the following:

- He would preach the good news to the poor.
- He would proclaim freedom to the prisoners.
- He would proclaim recovery of sight to the blind.
- He would release the oppressed.
- He would proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

How did Jesus go about fulfilling this agenda for ministry? He aimed primarily at people’s spiritual needs. He realized that people were spiritually poor and blind (Matthew 5:3; 11:5; 15:14; 23:16-19; 26:11; Luke 6:39; John 9:39-41). They were held in spiritual captivity and oppression (Luke 11:21-22; 13:16; John 8:34). He set them free by preaching the gospel to them, and ministering to them in the power of the Spirit (Matthew 12:28; Mark 1:14, 25; Luke 6:17-19; Acts 10:38).

While Jesus focused primarily on people’s spiritual needs, He did not neglect their physical and emotional needs. He healed their emotional brokenness and their physical blindness (Matthew 15:30; Luke 6:21; 7:21). He also showed great concern for the physically poor (Mark 14:5; Luke 12:33; 14:13). Jesus’ kingdom ministry, however, was not political. He did not lead a revolution or a political movement, even though He could have if He had wanted to (Matthew 26:53; John 6:15; 18:36).

In His Nazareth Manifesto Jesus also revealed the time of His kingdom ministry. He said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (v. 21, italics added). Christ’s kingdom ministry was in the present. The “year of the Lord’s favor” had arrived (v. 19). It was a
time of Jubilee, a time when people would be released from bondage and debt, and thus a time of great rejoicing for the people (cf. Leviticus 25:8-55). The Messianic Age had dawned and Jesus had come to “preach the good news of the kingdom of God” (Luke 4:43).

THE KINGDOM COMES IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus Performed His Ministry in the Power of the Spirit

As noted above, Jesus began His kingdom ministry by announcing that the Spirit’s anointing was upon Him (Luke 4:18-19). In this announcement, Jesus revealed that the Spirit of God was the source of His kingdom power.

Jesus’ entire ministry was done in the power of the Spirit. In fact, He did not begin to minister until He was first empowered by the Spirit (Luke 3:21-23). Luke states that immediately after His baptism “Jesus…began his ministry” (Luke 3:23, NKJV). Note what Luke says about how Jesus performed His ministry in the Spirit’s power:

- **He was anointed by the Spirit:** “When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove…. Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry” (3:21-22).
- **He was full of the Spirit and led by the Spirit:** “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert…” (4:1).
- **He began ministering in the power of the Spirit:** “Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit…” (4:14).
- **He publicly announced His Spirit-anointed ministry:** “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me…” (4:16-19).
• *He taught with the Spirit’s authority:* “They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority…” (4:32).

• *He healed the sick by the Spirit:* “And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick” (5:17). “And the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all” (6:18-19).

• *He drove out demons by the Spirit’s power:* “But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.” (11:20). The “finger of God” is the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28).

**Peter Summarized Jesus’ Kingdom Ministry**

Peter summarizes Jesus’ ministry in Acts 10:38, where he points out that Jesus’ entire kingdom ministry was done under the Spirit’s anointing. He noted “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.”

**THE KINGDOM MINISTRY OF THE EARLY CHURCH**

Jesus performed His kingdom ministry in the Spirit’s power. He also ensured that the ministry of the church was done in the same way. As Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, His departing words to His disciples were about the power of the Spirit and the kingdom of God:

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he
gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” 6 So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:1-8, emphasis added)

Note how in the passage above Jesus gave orders to the apostles “through the Holy Spirit” (v. 2). He also “spoke about the kingdom of God” (v. 3). What were the kingdom issues Jesus spoke about? He spoke of the importance of being baptized in the Holy Spirit and of being His witnesses to the ends of the earth (vv. 4-8). When the disciples asked about the coming Kingdom, Jesus called their attention back to the present work of the Kingdom. While the future coming of the kingdom is an important issue, their present work was to preach the gospel to all nations in the power of the Holy Spirit before He returns (vv. 7-8, 11).

At Pentecost Jesus transferred His kingdom power to the church. (We will talk about this more in Chapter 11.) He once prophesied that the kingdom of God would soon come in power (Mark 9: 1). He also promised His followers power to do the same works He had done (John 14:12, 16). Later, He commanded them to not begin their kingdom ministry until they had first been “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:3-5). He then poured out His Spirit on them on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 33). As a result, they were empowered for kingdom ministry.
The story of Philip’s ministry in Samaria is one example of such kingdom ministry: he was full of the Spirit (Acts 6:5), he preached a message of the kingdom of God (8:12), and he ministered in the power of the Spirit with signs following (vv. 6-8). Because of these things, many people came to know Christ as Savior (vv. 8, 12). Another example of kingdom ministry is the missionary ministry of Paul (cf. Acts 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31; cf. Romans 15:17-20).

THE KINGDOM IS COMING TODAY

Imitators of Christ

In everything we do, we are to be “imitators of Christ” (1 John 5:17). This includes both the way we live or lives and the way we conduct our ministries. We are to adopt Jesus’ agenda for kingdom ministry, and we are to imitate His methods. His methods included two important activities: Spirit-anointed proclamation and Spirit-empowered demonstration. Don Williams notes,

If we adopt Jesus’ agenda for ministry, we will pray down the anointing power of God, and with his Spirit upon us evangelize the poor, bring release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, liberate the oppressed, and announce to the world, this is the “favorable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19). (Don Williams, 139)

Our Kingdom Prayer

Jesus taught us to pray a “Kingdom Prayer.” This prayer is popularly called the Lord’s Prayer. In this prayer, Jesus taught us to pray “Your kingdom come” (Matthew 6:10). What does it mean to pray that God’s kingdom will come? When we pray “Thy kingdom come,” we are asking God for at least four things:
• For people to be born again (John 3:3-8).
• For people to be filled with the Spirit (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:3-8).
• For people to be healed and delivered by the power of God (Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20).
• For Jesus to come again (Luke 22:18; Revelation 12:10; 22:20).

**Tasting the Powers of the Age to Come**

Jesus and the apostles talked about “This Age” and “The Age to Come.” (We will discuss this subject more in Chapter 4.) The writer of Hebrews speaks of those who had “tasted of the powers of the age to come” (Hebrews 6:5). In this verse, he ties the two ages together. He says that in this age we can experience the powers of the coming age. George Eldon Ladd comments, “The Age to Come is still future, but we may taste the powers of that Age. Something has happened by virtue of that which belongs to the future has become present. The powers of the Age to Come have penetrated This Age.” This truth is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

![Figure 3.1](image-url)
What is this power of the age to come? It is the power of God manifested through the Holy Spirit. Today we taste the powers of the age to come when we are saved, filled with the Spirit, healed, or otherwise touched by the Spirit of God.

Also illustrated in Figure 3.1 are the various “comings” of the kingdom of God to earth. Note how the kingdom of heaven has broken into this age in different ways and at different times. The small arrows at the top left illustrate the many times when God’s presence and power has been manifested throughout history. The three big arrows pointing downward illustrate three major breakthroughs of the Kingdom: the Incarnation, Pentecost, and the Second Coming of Christ, which is yet to come. The grey arrow pointing from the right to the left illustrates how the powers of the age to come are often experienced in this present age.

We must remember, however, that in this age we are only “tasting” of the powers of the coming age. The kingdom of God is really here, but it not fully here. Don Williams wrote,

The reason why this truth is so gripping is that it illumines so much of our present experience. It explains both our sense of triumph in Christ and the continuing spiritual warfare which we fight on many fronts. It explains the reality that we have died with Christ and, at the same time, the flesh still wars against the spirit. It explains why people are dramatically healed today by the power of God and also continue to get sick and die. It explains why we have strength through weakness and life through death. (Don Williams, 108)
Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed the present aspect of the Kingdom. Jesus announced that the kingdom of God had come. It had come because He, the King, had come! The kingdom of God also comes when the power of God is manifested today through people being saved, delivered, healed, and baptized in the Holy Spirit. We can help advance the kingdom of God by imitating the ministry of Jesus. We should minister in the Spirit’s power, just as He did.

Although the Kingdom has come in reality, it has not come in all of its fullness. That will only happen when Jesus comes again and sets up His Kingdom on earth. We will discuss this future aspect of the kingdom of God in the next chapter.
The KINGDOM of GOD
A FUTURE PROSPECT

In the last chapter we discussed the present manifestation of the kingdom of God. In this chapter, we will discuss its future manifestation. We also discussed two scriptural ages: “This Age” and the “Age to Come” (Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; 1 Corinthians 2:6-8; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 1:21; Hebrews 6:5). These two ages are compared in Figure 4.1.

![Figure 4.1: The Two Ages Compared](attachment:image.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“This Age”</th>
<th>“The Age to Come”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Began with creation.</td>
<td>Will begin with Christ’s second coming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will continue until Christ’s second coming.</td>
<td>Will continue forever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assault on Satan’s kingdom began with Christ’s first coming.</td>
<td>The assault on Satan’s kingdom will be consummated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is characterized by strife and evil (Ga 4:1).</td>
<td>Will be characterized by righteousness, peace, and joy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the table note that This Age began with creation and will continue until the second coming of Christ. The Age to Come will begin at Christ’s second coming and will continue forever. During This Age Jesus has already invaded the kingdom of Satan in the power of the Spirit. There remains, however, a future completion of the Kingdom in the Last Days. Then Satan will be defeated and there will be a complete victory over all evil. This final destruction of Satan’s kingdom will occur at the beginning of the Age to Come.

It is helpful to know that the two ages correspond to the two manifestations of the Kingdom. This fact is illustrated in Figure 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 4.2</th>
<th>Two Ages—Two Manifestations of the Kingdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>This Age</strong></td>
<td>The present manifestation of the Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Age to Come</strong></td>
<td>The future manifestation of the Kingdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We now turn to the topic of this chapter—the kingdom of God as it will be manifested in the future. Here we will discuss three issues concerning the future coming of the Kingdom:

- The nature of Jesus’ coming to set up His future Kingdom,
- The character of the future Kingdom that Christ will establish, and
- The time of Christ’s coming to establish His future Kingdom.
THE NATURE OF JESUS’ COMING TO SET UP HIS FUTURE KINGDOM

Two things can be said about Jesus’ coming to establish His future kingdom:

**His Coming Will Be Apocalyptic**

Jesus’ second coming to establish His everlasting Kingdom will be apocalyptic. By this we mean that it will be accompanied by great cataclysmic events, including signs in the heaven and on earth. For instance, His coming will be sudden and unexpected. Jesus said, “For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man” (Matthew 24:27). You can read about His glorious coming in Revelation 19:11-21. It will be in mighty conquering power. He will come with the armies of heaven and lead them as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (v. 16).

No one knows the time when Jesus will come (Matthew 24:36). We must, therefore, be ready at all times (Matthew 24:44, Luke 12:33-48). We must also be about the Master’s business of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom to the nations.

**His Coming Will Be with Judgement and Reward**

When Jesus comes again, He will come with both judgement and reward. He will judge those who rejected Him, and reward those who believed in and obeyed Him. A final separation will take place. Jesus said, “At that time I will tell the harvesters: ‘First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn’” (Matthew 13:30). The wicked will thus be judged and they will “go away into eternal punishment” (Matthew 25:46). Ultimately, and will be consigned into “eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (v. 41). The righteous, however, will enter into the joy of their Lord (vv. 21-23).

For the righteous, there will be a glorious “messianic banquet,” and a great “rewards ceremony” given in their honor. This event is
known as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Matthew 8:11; 22:1-2; 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 14:15-24; 22:28-30). Jesus said that the righteous will “go away…to eternal life” (Matthew 25:34). They will inherit the Kingdom “prepared for [them] since the creation of the world” (v. 24). They will then “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43). Further, in the coming Kingdom the righteous will share Christ’s fellowship and His authority to rule (Matthew 26:29; Luke 22:29-30).

**THE CHARACTER OF FUTURE KINGDOM THAT CHRIST WILL ESTABLISH**

The future Kingdom will come two phases. It will begin with a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, called the Millennial Kingdom. It will then continue with the eternal reign of God and Christ in the new heaven and the new earth. This phase of the kingdom of God is sometimes called the Eternal Kingdom. Let’s look first at the character of the Millennial Kingdom, and then at the character of the Eternal Kingdom.

**The Millennial Kingdom**

The Bible teaches four things about the Millennial Kingdom:

1. *Christ will reign.* In the Millennial Kingdom the Son of Man will sit on His “glorious throne” (Matthew 19:28; cf. 25:31; Revelation 3:21; 11:17), the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of God and Christ (Revelation 11:15), and He will reign over the nations for a thousand years. At that time, Christ will rule the nations with an “iron scepter” (Psalm 2:8-9; Revelation 2:27; 19:15). This means that He will rule with unchallenged authority. Believers will reign with Him (Luke 19:17, 19; 1 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 5:10; 20:4-6). His reign will be a time of universal peace and righteousness (Psalm 72:7; Isaiah 2:4; 11:4-5; Jeremiah
23:5-6, cf. Hebrews 7:2). During that time, Satan will be bound and will no longer able to deceive the nations (Revelation 20:1-3).

2. *Israel will be restored.* Before the thousand-year reign of Christ, Israel will be regathered to Palestine from throughout the earth (Isaiah 11:10-12; Jeremiah 16:14-15; 30:10; Ezekiel 36:24; 37:1-14). As a nation, Israel will repent, receive Christ as her Messiah, and be converted (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-29; Zech. 12:10-11; Romans 11:15, 25-27).

3. *It will be a time of universal peace and blessing.* During the millennial reign of Christ, the world will be transformed, nature will be delivered from the curse of sin (Romans 8:19-22), rain will be plentiful, and the soil will be fertile (Isaiah 35:1-2, 6-7; Ezekiel 34:26-27). Sickness will decrease dramatically and physical healing will be granted to many. Human life will be prolonged (Isaiah 35:5-6; 65:20). It will be a time of security and great prosperity (Micah 4:2-5). War will cease, and joy and happiness will prevail (Isaiah 2:4; 51:11). The knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth (11:9).

4. *It will conclude (and the Eternal Kingdom will begin) with three great acts:*

- Satan’s kingdom will be vanquished. At the end of the Millennial Kingdom Satan will lead a final rebellion against God, at which time he will be crushed and totally defeated (Revelation 20:7-10). At that time, the wicked will be judged and condemned (vv. 11-15).

- Christ will then hand over the Kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). Having put all enemies under His feet (vv. 24-25), Christ will reign with God for eternity (vv. 27-28; Revelation 22:5). At that moment the end will come.

- Death will be finally and completely conquered (1 Corinthians 15:26).
The Eternal Kingdom

The character of the Eternal Kingdom is described in Revelation 21:1-22:5. This phase of the Kingdom will begin with a New Heaven and a New Earth (vv.1-3). In this New Heaven and New Earth, God will live with men and “they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (v. 3). It will be a place of eternal joy and “there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things [will] have passed away” (v. 4). All things will be made new, and the saints of all the ages will inherit eternal life (vv. 6-7).

There will also be a New Jerusalem, which will come down from God out of heaven (v. 10). It will be a place of great beauty and splendor, and will be an eternal home for the saints of all ages (vv. 11-21, 24, 27; cf. John 14:1-3). The Father and the Son will be its temple, and the glory of God and the Lamb will be its light (vv. 11, 22-24; 22:5). Nothing that “defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie” will be allowed into the city (v. 27).

Besides a New Heaven, a New Earth, and a New Jerusalem, there will be a crystal clear River of Life which will flow from the throne of God through the city (Revelation 22:1-2). The nations will be healed, and there will be no more curse in the earth. Christ will rule from the city, and the saints will reign with Him forever and ever in His Eternal Kingdom.

THE TIME OF CHRIST’S COMING TO ESTABLISH HIS FUTURE KINGDOM

When will this future kingdom be? It will come only after the present work of the Kingdom is finished. First, the gospel of the Kingdom must be preached in all the world as a witness to every people group (Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10). Once this happens, the Kingdom in its present state can then become the Kingdom in its future state. This Age will give way to The Age to Come. These two
aspects of the kingdom of God will be separated by two dramatic events: the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. These events are illustrated in Figure 4.3 below:

![Figure 4.3](image)

Christ’s coming will follow the preaching of the gospel to all nations. Twice the disciples asked Jesus about the time of His coming Kingdom:

- In Matthew 24:3 they asked, “What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?”
- Later, in Acts 1:6, they asked, “Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

On both occasions Jesus answered by telling them that they must preach the gospel to the ends of the earth:

- To the first question, He answered, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14)
- To the second He answered, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon
you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in Judea and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:7-8)

The coming of Christ and the end of the age will follow the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom in the power of the Spirit to the ends of the earth. These two “ends” will happen at the same time.

Peter said that we can “hasten the coming day of the Lord” (2 Peter 3:12). How can we do this? By obeying “the commandment given by our Lord and Savior” (v. 2). To what command is Peter referring? He is likely referring to Christ’s command to preach the gospel to all nations and people (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Today, we call this command the Great Commission. Remembering this, Peter writes, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (v. 9). We can thus hasten the Lord’s coming by preaching the gospel to all nations.

CONCLUSION

The kingdom of God has two tenses, a present tense and a future tense. It is a kingdom that has come, and yet it is still coming. In this chapter, we looked at the future tense of the Kingdom when Jesus will come again. When He comes He will set up His kingdom in all the earth. It will begin with a thousand-year reign on earth. This is called the Millennial Kingdom. After that, it will become an Eternal Kingdom and will last forever. In the next chapter, we will begin a biblical survey of the kingdom of God by looking at what the Old Testament teaches about the subject.
~ UNIT II ~

EXPLORING

the KINGDOM of GOD

Part 1
Thus far in our study we have defined and illustrated the biblical concept of the kingdom of God. Most of our scriptural support has come from the New Testament. In this chapter and the next, we will look at what the Old Testament has to say about the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is the overarching theme of the Bible, and the Bible is the story of redemption. God desires to bring all people into His kingdom. However, because God’s kingdom is holy and people are sinful, they are unable to enter. Through redemption, God makes sinful people holy. He then ushers them into His kingdom as its willing, acceptable, and useful subjects.

The reign of God as presented in the Old Testament provides the foundation for the gospel, which Jesus and the apostles preached in the New Testament.

The phrase “kingdom of God” does not appear in the Old Testament. However, the phrase the “kingdom of the LORD” (Hebrew: malkuwhth Yehovah) does appear, but only once
The Old Testament, nevertheless, speaks often of God’s dominion and rule. David wrote that “dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations” (Psalm 22:28, cf. 103:19). He further stated that God is “exalted as head over all” (1 Chronicles 29:11). According to the Psalmist, God’s kingdom is “an everlasting kingdom,” marked by “mighty acts” and “glorious splendor” (145:11-13).

The Old Testament was a time of preparation for the coming Messiah-King. As such, it was a time of anticipation and hope. In this chapter, we will look more closely at the concept of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament. In doing this, we will discuss six topics:

- God as King in the Pentateuch
- God as King in the Historical Books
- God as King in the Psalms
- God as King in the Prophetic Books
- Messianic Expectations of the Coming King
- Intertestamental Views of the Kingdom.

**GOD AS KING IN THE PENTATEUCH**

The first five books of the Bible were written by Moses and are known as the Pentateuch. Like other parts of the Bible, the Pentateuch has much to say about God’s rule over His creation.

**The Creator-King**

The Bible opens with the declaration, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). This revelation sets the stage for all that follows in Scripture. Because God is the Creator, He has the right to rule over His creation. God’s crowning act of creation was the creation of mankind. He made man and woman in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27). Therefore, because all people of all nations have been created by God, they are called upon to humbly
worship Him as their Sovereign Creator-King. David declared, “All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name” (Psalm 86:9; cf. 96:9).

**The Creation of Humans**

Immediately following the story of creation is the story of Adam and Eve. They were created by the hand of God (Genesis 2:7, 21-22). God placed them in a beautiful garden He had created for them. As His created beings, they were to serve Him and do His will. In Eden, God, the Creator and Sovereign Ruler, delegated to Adam and Eve dominion over the earth:

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” (Genesis 1:26)

Adam and Eve’s life in Eden before the fall is an early example of the blessedness of life in the Kingdom. It illustrates mankind’s ideal relationship to God, to one another, and to creation. It was from this blessed state that humankind fell through sin. Their fall created a disruption in kingdom existence. From that time, humanity has lived in rebellion against God. The rest of the Bible is the story of God reestablishing His righteous reign over humans and over His creation.

In the Pentateuch God made two important covenants with His people. The first one is called the “Abrahamic Covenant” (Genesis 12:1-3); the second is called the “Mosaic Covenant” (Exodus 19:5-8). In the next chapter, we will discuss these and two other “theocratic covenants” in detail. For now, it is important to understand that the Creator-King chooses to exercise His sovereign rule over His people by entering into covenants with them. A covenant is a solemn contract between two or more individuals. It describes the terms of their relationship with one another.
In making these covenants with His people, God the King is saying, if you are to be a citizen in my kingdom, you will be required to conduct yourself in certain prescribed ways. In establishing His covenant with Israel, Jehovah reminded them, “I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy” (Leviticus 11:45).

GOD AS KING IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

God’s intention for all people is that they submit their lives to Him as their Sovereign Ruler. That is what He intended for the nation of Israel. They, however, wanted a king like the nations around them. Early in Israel’s history, the elders in Israel came to Samuel with a request. They said, “Give us a king to lead us.” This request disturbed Samuel, so he went to the Lord in prayer. The Lord answered him, “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king” (1 Samuel 8:7). God wanted to be their King, but they chose an earthly king to rule over them “such as all the other nations have” (v. 5; cf. 10:18-19).

The rest of the Historical Books tell the story of what happened because of Israel’s rejection of God’s reign over them. It is a sad story of rebellion, strife, and eventual captivity. It is a warning to us today of what happens when we choose to rule our own lives rather than let God rule them.

GOD AS KING IN THE PSALMS

In the Psalms, God is called the “King” twenty-one times. For instance, He is called “King forever and ever” (10:16), “the King of glory” (24:7-10), “the great King over all the earth” (47:2, 7), and “the King above all gods” (95:3).

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3 Psalm 2:6; 5:2; 10:16; 24:7-10; 29:10; 44:4; 47:2, 6-7; 48:2; 63:11; 68:24; 84:3; 95:3; 98:6; 99:4; 145:1; 149:2).
In addition, eight times God is said to reign over His creation (Psalm 9:7-8; 68:16; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; 146:10). For instance, David wrote, “The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice” (Psalm 9:7-8).

In the “Enthronement Psalms” God is presented as King. Let’s look more closely at two of those Psalms:

**Psalm 2—The Son Who is King**

*Read Psalm 2.*

This Psalm of David, like so many others, identifies Jehovah as King over all creation. In it, David refers to God as “the One enthroned in heaven” (v. 4). From heaven, Jehovah scoffs at those who would foolishly plot against Him.

The Psalm also speaks of the coming Davidic king, the promised Messiah. It calls Him the Lord’s Anointed One (v. 2). Jehovah then announces the enthronement of this coming Messiah-King. He declares, “I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill” (v. 6). God then calls the King his Son and promises to give Him the nations as His rightful inheritance (vv. 7-8). This coming King will ultimately rule over the nations with an iron scepter (v. 9). At that time, the kings of the earth will worship and serve Him (vv. 10-12).

Peter quoted from this Psalm in his prayer for boldness in Acts 4:25-27. There, he identifies Jesus as God’s Anointed One (v. 27), and he acknowledges God’s sovereign rule over all (v. 28). Paul also quoted from Psalm 2 in his sermon in Antioch Pisidia during his first missionary journey. There, he cited verse 6, which calls Jesus the “begotten” (Gk: *gennaō*) Son of God. (Acts 13:33, KJV). This passage reminds us of how Jesus called himself “the only begotten Son” (John 3:16, KJV).
Psalm 47—God is King Over All the Earth

Read: Psalm 47

Psalm 47 is another Enthronement Psalm. The writer begins this Psalm by calling on all nations to “shout to God with cries of joy” (v. 1). They are to do this because Jehovah is “the great King over all the earth” (v. 2) and He “reigns over the nations” (v. 8). The Psalmist then calls on Israel to “sing praises to our King” (v. 6). Seven times in nine verses he identifies God as King:

- He is “the Lord Most High” (v. 2).
- He is “the great King over all the earth!” (v. 2).
- He is the One who “has ascended amid shouts of joy” (v. 5).
- We are to “sing praises to God…our King” (v. 6).
- He is “the King of all the earth” (v. 7).
- He “reigns over the nations” (v. 8).
- He is “seated on his holy throne” (v. 8).

The Psalm ends by declaring that the nobles of the nations and “the kings of the earth belong to God” for “he is greatly exalted” (v. 9).

Throughout the Psalms, people are called to worship God as King, and Sovereign over all creation. For instance, in Psalm 145, David speaks of the “glorious splendor” of God’s kingdom and calls on the people to praise and extol Him:

All your works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you. They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting

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4 Other Enthronement Psalms are 93, 96, 97, and 99.
kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. (Psalm 145:10-13)

Such declarations lay the foundation for the New Testament proclamation that “Christ is King!” (Luke 19:38; 23:3; John 1:49), and “Jesus is Lord!” (Acts 10:36; Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:11).

GOD AS KING IN THE PROPHETS

Like the Psalmists, the Old Testament prophets saw Jehovah as King over all creation. Let’s look at what three of the prophets had to say about God and His kingdom.

Isaiah—The High and Exalted King

Isaiah announced that Jehovah was the high and exalted King. One day Isaiah went into the temple. There, he saw the Lord “high and exalted, seated on a throne” (Isaiah 6:1). Isaiah cried out, “My eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty” (6:5). Later in his prophecy, Isaiah twice delivers a message directly from Jehovah to Israel. In these messages, He reminds Israel that He is their King and Redeemer:

- “I am the LORD, your Holy One, Israel’s Creator, your King” (43:15).
- “This is what the LORD says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God” (44:6).

Jeremiah—God Rules Over the Nations

Jeremiah also has much to say about God being King. In a prayer to God, he recognizes His kingship over the nations. “Who should not fear you, King of the nations?” he prays, “This is your due. Among all the wise leaders of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like you” (Jeremiah 10:7). On another occasion Jeremiah
exhorts Israel, “The LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King” (10:10). Two times in Jeremiah, Jehovah declares himself to be the “the King, whose name is the LORD Almighty (46:18; 51:57).

**Daniel—The King of Heaven and Earth**

The prophet Daniel presents Jehovah as the King of heaven and earth. He tells the story of how Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, refused to acknowledge God as ruler of the universe. Instead, he exalted himself, declaring that he had built Babylon by his own power and for his own glory (4:30). Immediately, a voice came from heaven, telling Nebuchadnezzar that, because he refused to acknowledge Jehovah’s supreme authority as King of the universe, his kingdom would be taken away from him. The voice declared,

“You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes” (v. 32).

Nebuchadnezzar became insane, and for the next seven years, he lived like an animal in the wilderness. At the end of the seven years, Nebuchadnezzar looked to God, and his sanity was restored. He then declared, “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven” (4:37). He further declared, “His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation” (v. 34). He now recognized God as “the Most High…sovereign over all kingdoms on earth” (v. 17) and acknowledged that God’s “kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation” (v. 3).
Chapter 5: The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament

MESSIANIC EXPECTATION OF THE COMING KING

Not only did the prophets see Jehovah as King, they looked forward to the coming of the Messiah King. For instance, Isaiah prophesied,

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

This passage reveals four truths about the coming Messiah: (1) His name will be exalted, (2) He will reign on the throne of David, (3) He will rule with justice and righteousness, and (4) His government will be without end. Jeremiah also prophesied concerning the coming Messiah-King:

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days, Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.” (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

This passage adds these five facts about the Messiah: (1) He will be a “righteous Branch,” (2) He will be a king, (3) He will reign wisely and do what is just and right, (4) He will bring salvation and safety to Judah, and (5) His name will be called “the LORD our Righteousness.”

Daniel spoke vividly of the Messiah’s future reign. We have already talked about how he interpreted one of King Nebuchad-
nezzar’s dreams. On another occasion, the king had a second dream. In this dream, he saw a great statue with a head of gold, arms and chest of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and feet of iron mixed with clay. Then, in his dream, the king saw a rock that was “cut out, but not by human hands,” The rock struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay. As a result, the great statue was broken into thousands of pieces and carried away by the wind. The rock then grew into a great mountain that filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:31-35).

God revealed to Daniel the meaning of the king’s dream. The different parts of the statue represented different kingdoms that were to appear in human history. They will all come to nothing. The final kingdom, however, will be eternal and universal. The stone that destroyed the other kingdoms, and grew into a kingdom that filled the earth, is a kingdom that God will establish. It is the kingdom of the Messiah, and it will endure forever (v. 44).

Today, we know that Jesus is the Messiah who will sit on the throne of David and will rule the nations as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16).

INTERTESTAMENTAL VIEWS OF THE KINGDOM

The period between the Old and New Testaments is known as the Intertestamental Period. During that time, the Jews clung to the Old Testament promises concerning the coming Messiah. They believed that Messiah would come and deliver them from Gentile domination. They looked for Him to come in great power, overthrow the Gentiles, set up His kingdom, and restore justice to God’s chosen people. They believed that the Messiah would be a Davidic king, that is, He would set on the throne of David.

Jesus came during a time of great messianic expectation (Luke 2:25, 38). It was a time when the Jews looked longingly for their promised Messiah. They thought that His coming would herald the
coming of the kingdom of God (23:51). This helps to explain why the people were so ready to hear the message of John the Baptist (Mark 1:4-5; Luke 3:15). Jesus, however, failed to meet their expectations for the Messiah, although at times they thought He might. For instance, after feeding the five thousand, the people tried to make him their king by force (John 6:14-15). Even His disciples shared these false hopes (Luke 24:21, Acts 1:6).

During the intertestamental period there were different views concerning the coming of the Messiah. The Pharisees believed that the Messiah would come if all Jews would obey the law perfectly for one day. The Zealots thought the Messiah would come only if all Jews would join in an armed rebellion against Rome.

The way Jesus came disappointed them both. Rather than come as the Conquering King, Jesus came as the Suffering Servant. The Jews had largely ignored this part of messianic prophecy. They were disappointed when He came in humility, poverty, and meekness. This was very different from their hopes and expectations.

The Jews were the natural “sons of the kingdom” (Matthew 8:11-12, NKJV). When Jesus came, He offered the Kingdom to them, but they rejected it (Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 27:20-26). The kingdom of God was thus taken from the Jews and given to “a nation bearing the fruits of it” (Matthew 21:43), that is, the church (1 Peter 2:9) made up of both believing Jews and Gentiles. The church, the new Israel (i.e., the new seed of Abraham (Romans 4:13-18), therefore, inherited from Israel its special mission to take the message of God to the nations (Matthew 28:18-20).

CONCLUSION

The kingdom of God is a major theme of the Old Testament. Although the term itself is not used, the idea fills its pages. Throughout the Old Testament God is seen as the King of Israel and the Sovereign Ruler over all of creation. The Hebraic idea of God’s
reign over all creation and over His people laid the foundation for the proclamation of the “gospel of the kingdom” in the New Testament (Mark 1:14-15). The apostles’ message that “Jesus is Lord!” is another way of proclaiming that “Christ is King” as prophesied in the Old Testament.
The KINGDOM of GOD and the THEOCRATIC COVENANTS

As we mentioned in the last chapter, one way God establishes His kingdom on the earth is by making and fulfilling covenants. In the Old Testament, God made several “theocratic covenants” with His people. Theocratic covenants are related to the government of God and contribute to the fulfilling of God’s mission, the *missio Dei*. Four important theocratic covenants are

- The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3)
- The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:5-6)
- The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:11-16)
- The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Let’s look at each of these theocratic covenants and see how God used each one to advance His kingdom on the earth.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The Abrahamic Covenant is found in Genesis 12:1-3. It reads,

The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.
I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

The Abrahamic Covenant is the first of the theocratic covenants. In this covenant, God promised to bless Abram (Abraham) in seven ways:

1. He would make Abraham into a great nation.
2. He would bless him.
3. He would make his name great.
4. Abraham would be a blessing to others.
5. God would bless those who bless Abraham.
7. Through Abraham all peoples on earth would be blessed.

Of these seven promises, the last is the greatest and most important. So, we will focus our attention on that promise. It says that through Abraham “all peoples on earth will be blessed.” The other six blessings are merely the means through which the seventh will be fulfilled. Figure 6.1 below cites other occasions when God repeated and clarified His covenant with Abraham.

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**Figure 6.1**

**The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3)**

The “Sovereign LORD” reconfirmed His covenant with Abraham when He appeared as a “smoking firepot with a blazing torch” and passed through the pieces of Abraham’s sacrifice (Genesis 15:8, 17). God was symbolically pledging His life as a guarantee of His promise to Abraham. He was telling Abraham that He was making himself personally responsible for fulfilling the covenant. He was, in effect, saying, if I do not fulfill my promise, I will die. This, of course, is impossible.

Then in Genesis 17, when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, Jehovah appeared to him yet another time and confirmed the covenant. This time God made it clear that His covenant was an everlasting covenant. He made this promise to Abraham:

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. (v. 7)

In another passage, God revealed to Abraham that this blessing of all nations would come through a promised “Seed.” God declared, “Through your offspring (‘seed,’ KJV) all nations on earth will be blessed” (Genesis 22:18; cf. 26:4).

The idea of a redemptive seed is an important concept in Scripture. God first mentioned the promised seed when He cursed the serpent after he had tempted Adam and Eve: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15, NKJV). In Galatians, Paul identified that Seed as Christ:

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)
Jesus, then, is the Seed who will crush the head of Satan, and He is the Seed of Abraham who will bless all nations of the earth.

Someone has called Genesis 12:3 the “purpose statement of the Bible.” It declares God’s plan for all mankind. God wants all nations to know Him and be blessed. The rest of the Bible is the fulfillment of that plan. God accomplishes His plan through His kingdom. As His kingdom advances, His plan is fulfilled. Through His kingdom, God establishes His redemptive reign among all nations.

The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional covenant. This is shown by God’s repeated statement, “I will,” which occurs six times in Genesis 12:2-3. Since the covenant is unconditional, its provisions will be accomplished no matter what man does. Its fulfillment depends solely on the faithfulness of God. The Abrahamic Covenant thus becomes the basis of three other theocratic covenants which follow. See Figure 6.1 at the end of this chapter for a comparison of the four theocratic covenants.

The rest of the Old Testament repeatedly refers back to God’s covenant with Abraham. The New Testament does the same. It also points out that Jesus Christ is the Seed through whom the covenant is fulfilled. The Abrahamic Covenant further reminds us of God’s aim to bless all the peoples of the earth. His kingdom exists to accomplish that end. Therefore, we, as citizens of that eternal kingdom, must commit ourselves to accomplishing God’s mission. We must boldly announce to the nations that their rightful King has come—and that King’s name is Jesus Christ, the chosen Seed of Abraham (1 Peter 2:4-5).

THE MOSAIC COVENANT

God made a second theocratic covenant with His people. It is called the Mosaic Covenant and is found in Exodus 19. God called Moses to come up on Mount Sanai. There, He gave Moses a message to carry to the people of Israel. Moses was to remind them how
Jehovah had “carried [them] on eagles’ wings” and had brought them out of Egyptian bondage and unto himself (v. 4). Then Moses was to deliver to the leaders of Israel this message from God:

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Exodus 19:5-6)

Moses obeyed God and called the elders to the people to a meeting. There, he delivered the message to them. Upon hearing the message, they all responded, “We will do everything the LORD has said” (v. 8).

God made this covenant with Israel to help fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant. Israel would become God’s “treasured possession”—but not for themselves alone. God had promised Abraham that through his seed “all peoples on earth will be blessed.” For this reason, God called Israel to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (v. 6).

The function of priests is to stand between God and the people. Priests take the burdens and needs of the people and present them to God. They also declare God’s message to the people. As a “kingdom of priests” Israel was to represent God to the rest of the nations of the world. Israel’s duty was to proclaim the wonders of God to the Gentile nations and to take the needs of the nations to God through intercessory prayer. They were also to live in such a way that the pagan nations around them would see God’s blessing on them and turn to worship Him. This was not the work of the priestly class only but the whole nation of Israel. Together they were to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

We, the church, are also a kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9). It is our duty as the new Israel to be a light to the nations. We are to proclaim the gospel to all nations in the power of the Holy Spirit.
before the return of Jesus (Acts 1:8). This is not the work of a special “missionary class” of people only, but the duty of whole church of God. We are to be a “kingdom of missionaries” who will “declare [to the nations] the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).

As a “holy nation,” Israel was to be a testimony to all nations of the nature and character of God. In this way, they would be a “light to the Gentiles” concerning the beauty and uniqueness Jehovah (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). The Law of God, which stood at the center of the Mosaic Covenant, called Israel to holiness. It governed the personal, religious, and social lives of God’s people. It was given so that the people would know how to conduct themselves until “the Seed”—Christ—came (Galatians 3:17-19). At the heart of God’s moral Law was the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17).

The Mosaic Covenant is sometimes called the Sinaitic Covenant. This is because God made this covenant with Israel on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:3). Unlike the covenant that God made with Abraham, this covenant was conditional. We see this in God’s “if-then” statements to Israel: “If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession” (Exodus 19:5). Israel’s part of the covenant was to obey God and do His will; God’s part was to respond by blessing Israel and making them His “treasured possession” out of all nations (v. 5).

Sadly, however, Israel failed in its responsibility as a “kingdom of priests” and a “light to the nations” (Isaiah 51:4). In response, God sent His prophets to remind them of the covenant He had made with them at Sinai. The prophets were, in a sense, representing God in a “covenant lawsuit” against the Israel. They called on Israel to repent and recommit themselves to their priestly duty as mediators between God and the nations of the earth.

Today, God is raising up prophetic voices across Africa. These prophetic voices will remind the African church of their calling to be
a “kingdom of priests” and a light to the unreached people of Africa and the nations of the earth. They will call the church back to its God-given mission to stand in the gap between God and the lost peoples of the earth. In this role, they will call on the church to be empowered by the Spirit to fulfill that task (Acts 1:8). Is God calling you to be one of those prophetic voices?

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

The Davidic Covenant is another important theocratic covenant in the Old Testament. This covenant emphasizes the fact that the kingdom of God is an eternal kingdom. It is found in 2 Samuel 7:4-16 where the prophet Nathan spoke a word to King David:

The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring [“seed,” NKJV] to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son…. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever. (vv. 11-16; cf. 1 Chronicles 17:1-15)

Here, God made a covenant with David. As with the Mosaic Covenant, the purpose of this covenant was to further fulfill the covenant God made with Abraham, that is, to bless all nations through Abraham’s seed (Genesis 22:18). In the Davidic Covenant, God made a three-part promise to David. He promised him

1. A land forever (v. 10),
2. An unending dynasty (vv. 11, 16), and
3. An everlasting kingdom (vv. 13, 16; cf. Psalm 89:3-4, 29-37).
The fulfillment of each part of the promise had as its goal the blessing of the nations. The land provided a permanent base for missionary operation. The unending dynasty would ultimately lead to the reign of Jesus, the seed of David, the Savior of the world (Luke 1:32; John 4:42). And the everlasting kingdom would be the kingdom that Jesus Himself would establish. He would rule over that kingdom throughout eternity (Luke 1:33). When David heard the prophecy of Nathan, he exulted,

> You have spoken also of your servant’s house for a great while to come, and this is instruction [Hebrew: *torah*] for mankind, O Lord GOD! (v. 19, ESV)

David was likely using the word *torah* in the sense of a charter or a covenant. He was saying that this new revelation of an eternal Davidic kingdom was to be the means by which God would fulfill His previous covenants with His people. It was indeed a charter for all humankind! God’s universal, eternal kingdom would be established through a chosen descendent of David.

In the very first verse in the New Testament, Jesus is called “the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1). As the son of David, Jesus’ kingdom will last forever (2 Samuel 7:10-16). As the son of Abraham, it will be universal (Genesis 12:3). It will include individuals from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation on the earth (cf. Revelation 5:9; 7:9). Like the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant is unconditional. Notice how in verses 9-15 God says, “I will” eight times!

When John the Baptist began his ministry, he announced, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matthew 3:2). Jesus began His ministry with the same message. He too proclaimed, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (4:17). Later, when Jesus sent out the Twelve on their preaching mission, He commanded them,
“As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near’” (10:7).

Today, we should do the same. We should go out and announce that the kingdom of heaven has invaded the kingdoms of the earth. We should tell the people that Jesus has come, and that He is coming again. He is the promised Son of David who will reign on David’s throne forever and ever. Then, we must invite people to enter that kingdom by repenting of their sins and believing the good news.

THE NEW COVENANT

The fourth theocratic covenant is the New Covenant. In the Old Testament, this covenant was prophesied as being in the future. It is found in Jeremiah 31:31-34, and reads,

“The time is coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord: “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

In this passage God declared, “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel” (v. 31). This covenant would be different from the Old Covenant, that is, the Mosaic Covenant. The Old Covenant was written on tablets of stone, but the New Covenant would be
written on the hearts of God’s people (Jeremiah 31:33; cf. 2 Corinthians 3:2-3). It had four provisions:

1. *People will be regenerated.* God will put His “law in their minds and write it on their hearts” (v. 33).

2. *The knowledge of the Lord will be widespread.* “No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest” (v. 34).

3. *People will receive full pardon for their sins.* “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (v. 34).

4. *The Holy Spirit will minister personally to people.* This is implied in the statements that they will be regenerated and taught personally by God (v. 34, cf. Ezekiel 36:25-27; 2 Corinthians 3:1-3, 6).

The New Testament teaches that Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:6, 9:15; 12:24). It further teaches that the New Covenant it is an eternal covenant (Hebrews 13:20); and it was established when Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 11:25-26; cf. Luke 22:20).

This covenant remains in force today. It accomplishes what the Old Covenant could not accomplish. It gives to people new hearts and the ability to obey the commandments of God. It has also opens the way for all people of all nations to be in covenant relationship with God through Christ. Speaking for God, Jeremiah declared, “They will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest…for I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (31:34).

Today, we are living in the time of the New Covenant. It is the time when we can confidently announce to all that the King has come, and His name is Jesus! Through His perfect life, His death on
the cross, and His resurrection from the dead, He has provided salvation for all people. Now, if they will turn from their sin and believe in Him, they can become new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). As the prophet promised, they will be given “a new heart and a new spirit” (Ezekiel 36:26). God will put His Spirit in them. Then, He will move them to follow decrees and carefully keep His laws (v. 27).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter and the last, we have seen that the kingdom of God is a major theme in the Old Testament. Although the Old Testament uses different terminology than the New, the idea of the reign of Jehovah fills its pages. God is presented as the Sovereign Ruler over all of creation and the King of Israel. One way He advances His Kingdom in the earth is by making and fulfilling covenants with His chosen people.

In four important theocratic covenants, God demonstrated that His mission will be fulfilled through a “Seed” and a kingdom. The Seed is Jesus, who was the promised Messiah-King. He is the seed of Abraham and will re-establish and rule over the restored Davidic kingdom. This kingdom will be both universal and eternal. The church, the New Israel, is now responsible to proclaim the message of that universal-eternal Kingdom to all nations before the second coming of Christ.

In the next chapter, we will examine the kingdom of God in the ministry and teaching of Jesus.
### Figure 6.2
**The Theocratic Covenants and the *Missio Dei***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covenant</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of Covenant</th>
<th>Promises related to the <em>Missio Dei</em></th>
<th>Related Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Universal in scope</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mosaic Covenant</strong></td>
<td>Exod.19:5-8</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>Israel was called to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” They would be a witness to the Gentile nations.</td>
<td>Isa. 42:6; 49:6; Rom. 15:16; 1Pet. 2:9, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Davidic Covenant</strong></td>
<td>2 Sam. 7:4-16 (1Chr. 17:1-15)</td>
<td>Unconditional.</td>
<td>God will establish David’s throne as an “everlasting kingdom.” This kingdom will be ruled by David’s “seed” (Christ).</td>
<td>Psa.2:6-8; 72:8; 89:3-4, 29-37; Isa. 9:6-7; Matt.1:1; Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 5:9; 7:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eternal in duration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Covenant</strong></td>
<td>Jer. 31:31-34; 33:1-1-9; Ezek. 36: 24-38)</td>
<td>Unconditional.</td>
<td>Fulfills the Old (Mosaic) Covenant. God’s law will be written on people’s hearts. All will know and honor God (Jer. 33:9)</td>
<td>Ezek.36:24-38; 1Cor. 11:25-26; Heb.8:1-13; 9:15; 12:24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The **KINGDOM** of **GOD** 

*in the*

**MINISTRY** of **JESUS**

The kingdom of God was the central theme of Jesus’ ministry. As was noted in the last chapter, the first verse of the New Testament calls Jesus “the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1). By referring to Jesus in this way, Matthew was reminding his readers that the life and ministry of Jesus was a fulfillment of the Abrahamic and the Davidic covenants.

You will remember that the Abrahamic Covenant promised the blessing of all nations (Genesis 12:3), and the Davidic Covenant promised an eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7:14-16). Jesus will fulfill both covenants. He is the promised Seed who will bless all nations, and He is the King who will reign on the throne of David. According to John V. York, “Understanding this is a key to reading the Gospels as disclosures of the mission of God” (York, 66). In reading the gospels, it helps to understand that these two concepts are the key themes gospel writers are addressing.

In this chapter, we will look more closely at the kingdom of God in the ministry and teaching of Jesus. In doing this we will examine three key topics:
Jesus’ announcement of the kingdom of God,
Jesus’ teaching concerning the kingdom of God, and
Jesus’ ministry as a demonstration of kingdom power.

JESUS’ ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

John the Baptist announced that the kingdom of God was near (Matthew 3:2). He called on the people to “prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him” (Mark 1:3). He also said that the one coming after him would “baptize [people] with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (v. 11; cf. John 1:32-33).

Jesus’ announcement of His own ministry echoed that of John’s. He declared, “The time has come, the kingdom of God is near. Repent, and believe in the good news!” (Mark 1:14-15). The time had arrived for the fulfillment of the Jewish messianic prophecies. Jesus’ announcement summed up His teaching concerning the kingdom of God. It contained two emphases:

1. **God has acted in history:** “The kingdom of God is at hand.” God invaded human history in the person of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Spirit.
2. **Man must respond to what God has done:** “Repent and believe the gospel.” Every demonstration of the Kingdom demands a response. Man’s required response to the gospel is twofold. He must “repent” and “believe the gospel.” Repentance is directed toward God, and faith is directed toward Christ, the subject of the gospel (Acts 20:20-21).

JESUS’ TEACHING CONCERNING THE KINGDOM

Jesus had much to say about the kingdom of God. He taught about the purpose of the Kingdom and about the “mysteries of the Kingdom.” He often taught about the kingdom of God in parables. He
further taught about the Kingdom as being an “upside-down” kingdom and about a “great reversal” that will occur in the future. Let’s look at these five areas of Jesus’ teaching concerning the Kingdom:

**The Purpose of the Kingdom**

Jesus taught that the purpose of the kingdom of God is to fulfill the mission of God. He summed up God’s plan to fulfill that goal in Matthew 24:14: “And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” According to this verse, God’s plan for achieving His mission is threefold:

1. It involves preaching the gospel in kingdom power.
2. It involves preaching the gospel in every part of the world (Greek: *oikoumene*, the inhabitable earth) (cf. Acts 1:8).
3. It involves preaching the gospel to every nation (Greek: *ethne*, ethnic grouping) (cf. Revelation 5:9; 7:9).

In Matthew 24:14 Jesus told us where history is headed. He also told us what must happen before the end of the age comes and God sets up His eternal kingdom. The gospel must first be “preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations” (cf. Mark 13:10). Then—and only then—will the end of the age come. Then, “the kingdom(s) of the world [will] become the kingdom(s) of our Lord and of his Christ” (Revelation 11:15). At that time, Jesus will “hand over the kingdom to God the Father” (1 Corinthians 15: 24), and, together, “they will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:3, 5).

Someone asked, “Why does God allow the kingdom of Satan to continue? Why doesn’t He simply destroy Satan’s kingdom and be done with it?” It is because God’s goal is not just to defeat the kingdom of Satan. He could easily do that. God’s goal is to get people
out of the kingdom of Satan, lest they be destroyed with it. The purpose of His Kingdom is to accomplish that aim.

**The Mystery of the Kingdom**

Jesus spoke of the “mystery” (or “mysteries,” Matthew 13:11) of the kingdom of God. He said to His disciples, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God…” (Mark 4:11, NKJV). In the New Testament, a “mystery” is a part of God’s eternal plan that was once hidden but has now been revealed (cf. Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:3; 9-11; Colossians 1:26). The mysteries of the Kingdom are those truths about the kingdom of God that were not revealed to the Hebrew prophets but have now been revealed through Christ and the apostles. According to George Eldon Ladd, “This is the mystery of the Kingdom: Before the day of harvest, before the end of the age, God has entered into history in the person of Christ to work among men, to bring to them the life and blessings of His kingdom” (“Gospel of the Kingdom,” A69-A70). He notes further that the Kingdom “comes to men today as disciples of Jesus still take the Gospel of the Kingdom into all the world.”

**Parables of the Kingdom**

One way that Jesus taught about the kingdom of God was through parables. He often began His parables with the phrase, “The kingdom of heaven is like…” Parables that begin in this way (and the ones grouped with them) are known as the “Parables of the Kingdom.” Most of these kingdom parables are found in Matthew 13 and Mark 4. Jesus told these parables to teach about the mission and character of His Kingdom (Matthew 13:10-11). The Parables of the Kingdom are listed in Figure 7.1 on the following page.

A major theme of the kingdom parables is harvest. In Figure 7.1 the first, second, third, fourth, tenth, and eleventh parables deal with harvest, indicated by the symbol (H). Three other important parables containing a harvest theme are
Chapter 7: The Kingdom of God in the Ministry of Jesus

- The Eleventh Hour Harvesters (Matthew 20:1-16)
- The Tenants (Matthew 21:33-43; Mark 12:1-12)
- The Unfruitful Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9).

**Figure 7.1**

**Jesus’ Kingdom Parables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parable</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Sower (H)</td>
<td>13:3-9, 18-23</td>
<td>4:2-9, 13-20</td>
<td>8:5-8; 11-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Weeds (H)</td>
<td>13:24-30, 36-43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Yeast (H)</td>
<td>13:33</td>
<td></td>
<td>13:20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Hidden Treasure</td>
<td>13:44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Pearl</td>
<td>13:45-46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The Net</td>
<td>13:47-51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. New Treasures and Old</td>
<td>13:52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Lamp on a Stand</td>
<td>4:21-25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The Growing Seed (H)</td>
<td>4:26-29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The Mustard Seed (H)</td>
<td>4:30-32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(H) Indicates parables with a harvest theme

In the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23; Mark 4:2-9, 13-20) the farmer sows the seed, which is the word of God. The seed falls on different types of soil, resulting in different types of harvests. According to York, “This parable is central to Jesus’ teaching and
hence to understanding the kingdom of God. It is placed at the beginning of three major parables in all three Synoptic Gospels. In Mark 4:13 Jesus asks, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?” (York, 67). York concludes, “Harvest is central to the teaching of Jesus and the kingdom of God.” (67). Why is harvest a key theme of Jesus’ kingdom parables? Because harvest is the key concern of the missio Dei. The kingdom of God exists to carry out that mission. We will discuss this issue in more detail in Chapter 12.

The harvest theme is found in other teachings of Jesus. One day while He was on a preaching mission, Jesus told His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:37-38). On another occasion, He gave seventy-two disciples the same instructions (Luke 10:1-2). On yet another occasion, at a well in Sychar, He won a Samaritan woman to Himself. He then said to His disciples, “Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35). Harvest is an overarching theme in Jesus’ kingdom teaching, including His parables.

The Upside-Down Kingdom

Donald B. Kraybill has described the kingdom of God as an “upside-down kingdom.” This means that the rules and principles governing the kingdom of God are often just the opposite of the rules and principles governing the world. For example, Jesus’ disciples were once arguing about which one was the greatest among them. Hearing their argument, Jesus said, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all” (Mark 9:35). Figure 7.2 illustrates this upside-down principle of leadership. It shows the difference between how the world views leadership and how Jesus views leadership in the kingdom of God.
Figure 7.2

In the world’s system, the leader is expected to be the one on top. He or she controls others, and receives most of the glory and benefits. In the kingdom of God, the leader is the one who is on the bottom. He or she serves and blesses others. This seems illogical—upside-down!—yet is it still true. A truth such as this is called a paradox. Jesus’ teachings about the Kingdom contain other paradoxes, such as,

- To get, one must give (Acts 20:35; Luke 6:38).
- To live, one must die (John 12:24).
- To become great, one must humble himself or herself (Matthew 18:4; 23:8-12)
- To be first, one must become last (Mark 9:35)
- If you love your life you will lose it, but if you hate your life and you will gain it (John 12:25).
Many of Jesus’ teachings are in direct contradiction to the wisdom of the world. Here are some examples from His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-8, cf. Luke 6:20-49):

- “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Matthew 5:3).
- “Blessed are those who mourn” (5:4).
- “Blessed are the meek” (5:5).
- “Blessed are those who are persecuted” (5:10).
- “Blessed are you when people insult you” (5:11).
- “Blessed are you when...people falsely say all kinds of evil against you” (5:11).
- “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (5:39).
- “If someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well” (5:40).
- “If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two” (5:41).
- “Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (5:42).
- “Love your enemies” (5:43).
- “Pray for those who persecute you” (5:43).

(Note: We will discuss the Sermon on the Mount in more detail in Chapter 10)

The nature of all worldly kingdoms is for kings to exploit their subjects and the kingdoms around them. They seek to use them for the benefit of their leaders and their prominent citizens. The nature of the kingdom of God, however, is to bless its subjects and ultimately to bless all nations of the earth.
The Great Reversal

Jesus also taught about what has been called the “Great Reversal.” It is a time in the future when things will be reversed and wrong will be made right. Then the proud and mighty will be put down and the humble of heart will be exalted. Jesus said,

The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (Matthew 13:41-43)

Many who have been called great in this world will be small in the kingdom of God. And those who were small in this world’s eyes will be become great in the Kingdom.

JESUS’ MINISTRY: A DEMONSTRATION OF KINGDOM GRACE AND POWER

Jesus taught about the kingdom of God, not only with His words, but also with His works. His works were a demonstration of the grace and power of the Kingdom. Jesus once told the Jews, “Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father” (John 10:37-39). Jesus’ selfless life and His miraculous works were indeed living sermons about the kingdom of God.

Through the miracles He did, Jesus taught at least three important lessons about the kingdom of God:

- the Kingdom is present,
- the Kingdom is powerful, and
the Kingdom is compassionate, that is, it is concerned with the problems and needs of suffering people.

The same three lessons are taught today as miracles are manifested in kingdom ministry.

CONCLUSION

In His teaching and preaching, Jesus taught much about the kingdom of God. He taught of a kingdom that is different from the kingdoms of the world. Its nature is to bless rather than to exploit. Its purpose is to fulfill the mission of God and to preach the gospel to all peoples and nations. The kingdom of God was the central theme of Jesus’ ministry. He taught about it in parables. And through His love and miracles, He demonstrated the Kingdom’s presence, power, and compassion. Like Jesus, we too must proclaim the kingdom of God with our words and our works. In the next chapter, we will discuss the kingdom of God in the ministry and preaching of the apostles.
~ UNIT III ~

EXPLORING

the KINGDOM of GOD

Part 2
The KINGDOM of GOD in APOSTOLIC PROCLAMATION and TEACHING

In the last chapter, we looked at the kingdom of God in the Synoptic Gospels. In this chapter, we will look at the Kingdom in the Gospel of John, the Acts of the Apostles, the New Testament epistles, and Revelation. In these writings, there are fewer mentions of the kingdom of God than in the Synoptics. Some liberal theologians have therefore concluded that the apostles changed the message of the kingdom of God into a religion about Jesus. Is it true? Did the early church set aside Jesus’ message of the Kingdom and replace it with another message? As we will discover in this chapter, this is not the case, for the message of the Kingdom still fills these books.

There is, however, a subtle change of wording that takes place in some of the apostles’ writings, as we will see in this chapter. If we are to understand the place of the kingdom of God in the New Testament church, we must understand this change. In this chapter, we will
examine the kingdom of God in apostolic proclamation and teaching. In doing this we make and defend two statements:

- The apostles proclaimed the kingdom of God, and
- The apostles sometimes used different terminology concerning the Kingdom.

THE APOSTLES PROCLAIMED THE KINGDOM OF GOD

As with Jesus, the message of the kingdom of God was a key theme of the apostles’ preaching and teaching. This fact is demonstrated in four ways:

- In the apostles’ preaching in the book of Acts,
- In Paul’s teaching in his epistles,
- In the teaching of the other apostles in their epistles, and
- In the teaching of John in the book of Revelation.

Let’s look at each of those ways:

The Kingdom of God in the Book of Acts

The kingdom of God is a key theme in the book of Acts, where it is mentioned eight times (1:3, 6; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31), and Jesus is portrayed as the King three times (2:30; 5:13, 31). In fact, the kingdom of God is mentioned twice in the first six verses of the book. There, Jesus “appeared to [His disciples] over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God” (v. 3). Then, in verse 6, the disciples ask Jesus a question about the Kingdom: “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He answered them that the God would restore the Kingdom in His own time. Acts thus begins with a clear emphasis on the kingdom of God.

Not only does the book of Acts begin with an emphasis on the kingdom of God, it ends with the same emphasis. In the closing
verses of Acts Luke writes, “For two whole years Paul...preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (28:30-31, cf. v. 23). So, like a picture frame, the kingdom of God frames the entire book.

Look again at Acts 1:3, where Luke states that during the forty days between Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, He spoke “of things concerning the kingdom of God.” What were these important kingdom themes about which Jesus spoke? During those forty days, Jesus taught on three key kingdom themes:

- He taught about the church’s responsibility to take the gospel to all nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8).
- He taught about the need to be empowered by the Spirit to accomplish the missionary task (Matthew 28:20; Mark 16:17-18; Luke 24:49; John 20:22; Acts 1:3-8).

These three kingdom themes are repeated throughout the book of Acts. Other mentions of the kingdom of God in Acts include the following:

- *Philip’s preaching in the city of Samaria*: “But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (8:12).
- *Paul’s and Barnabas’ preaching in Galatia*: “‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,’ they said” (14:22).
- *Paul declaring Jesus to be king in Thessalonica*: The Jews accused Paul and the Christians, saying, “They are all defying
Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus” (17:7).

- **Paul’s teaching in Ephesus**: “Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God” (19:8).

- **Paul’s testimony to the Ephesian elders**: “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again” (20:25).

- **Paul’s message in Rome**: “From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus…. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (28:23, 31).

**The Kingdom of God in the Epistles of Paul**

Paul also had much to say about the kingdom of God in his epistles.

*In Romans*, he taught that Jesus was “born of the seed of David” (1:3), and that the “kingdom of God is…righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (14:17).

*In 1 Corinthians*, Paul wrote that “the kingdom of God is not in word but in power” (4:20). He further taught that “the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God” (6:9-10). He promised the believers in Corinth that someday Christ will “deliver the kingdom of God to the Father” (15:24), and that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (15:50).

*In Galatians*, Paul taught that those who walk in the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God (5:21).

*In Ephesians*, he wrote that Christ was raised up “far above all principality and power and might and dominion” and that He has become “head over all things” to the church (1:21-22). He also taught
that the disobedient will have no “inheritance in the kingdom of God” (5:5).

In the Thessalonian letters, Paul wrote the believers telling them that we are “live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory” (1 Thessalonians 2:12) and that we are to seek to be “counted worthy of the kingdom of God” (2 Thessalonians 1:5).

In 1 Timothy, the apostle calls God “the King eternal” (2:17) and Jesus “the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (6:15). He also calls Jesus the “seed of David” (2:8).

In 2 Timothy, he says that Jesus “will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom” (4:1). Finally, He spoke of the Lord and “His heavenly kingdom” (4:17).

So, as one can readily see, to accuse Paul of abandoning the message of the kingdom of God is a foolish statement. The kingdom of God was at the heart of all of his preaching and teaching.

The Kingdom of God in the Other Epistles

Other New Testament writers spoke of the kingdom of God. The writer of Hebrews, for instance, wrote about Christ’s throne and Kingdom (1:8). He said that all things have been put under subjection to Him (2:8), and that the saints will someday receive “a kingdom which cannot be shaken” (12:28).

James said that we are “heirs of the kingdom” (2:5).

Peter wrote that Christ is at the right hand of God where “angels and authorities and power” have been made subject to Him (1 Peter 3:22). He also wrote of “the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:11).

Finally, Jude wrote of God’s kingly authority: “To God our Savior…be…dominion and power, both now and forever” (v. 25).

The Kingdom in the Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation also has much to say about the kingdom
of God. Several times in the book, Jesus is pictured sitting on a royal throne (1:4; 5:13; 12:5; 14:3). God is also seen sitting on a throne in heaven (7:9-11). In Revelation, Jesus holds the “key of David” (3:7) and is called the “ruler over the kings of the earth” (1:5). Further, John says that Jesus has made His followers “a kingdom and priests” and they shall forever reign under Him (1:6; 5:10).

When the seventh angel of Revelation sounds his trumpet, a loud voice in heaven cries out, “The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever!” (11:15). John further wrote that Christ will someday “rule all nations with a rod of iron” (12:5).

After the red dragon is defeated in heaven, another loud voice cries out, “The kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come” (12:10). At one point in the narrative the victorious saints sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, calling Jesus the “King of the saints” and saying that “all nations shall come and worship before [Him]” (15:4). Twice Jesus is called “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” (17:14; 19:16). Finally, the saints will live and reign with Christ a thousand years in His Kingdom (20:4, 6).

What shall we conclude from our study thus far in this chapter? We conclude that the theme of the kingdom of God is an important teaching, not just in the Synoptic Gospels, but also throughout the New Testament. We also conclude that the idea of the kingdom of God is the same in Acts, in the epistles, and in Revelation as it is in the Gospels.

A CHANGE IN TERMINOLOGY

Although John, Luke, and Paul taught much about the kingdom of God, there is an interesting fact about their teaching on the subject. A close examination of their writings reveals how a subtle change in kingdom terminology takes place. The apostles begin to use different
Chapter 8: The Kingdom of God in Apostolic Proclamation and Teaching

(yet synonymous) terms in place of the phrase “kingdom of God.”

Jesus signaled the change in the story of the Rich Young Ruler. Read the following passage carefully noting how the terms in bold type are used interchangeably:

Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments”… When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” Jesus said to them, “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first” (Matthew 19:16-30, emphasis added).

The relationship between these highlighted terms is diagramed in Figure 7.1 below. By using these phrases synonymously, Jesus was signaling a change in the terminology of the kingdom of God.
Synonymous Terms in the Apostolic Kerygma

In Acts, the term “the gospel,” or the single word “Jesus,” is sometimes used to mean “the kingdom of God.” The meaning and message, however, are the same. Peter Kuzmic wrote,

The person of Jesus and his accomplished work of redemption rightfully replaced the kingdom in Christian proclamation. The proclaimer of the kingdom became the proclaimed One. This is not a betrayal but an expression of faithfulness to the original message of Jesus in whom the kingdom was present. (Kuzmic, 1988, 524-526)\(^1\)

Kuzmic then quotes Lesslie Newbigin: “The news is that ‘the kingdom of God’ is no longer merely a theological phrase. There is now a name and a human face…. The apostle would have denied the central message of Jesus if he had not made that shift of language from ‘kingdom’ to ‘Jesus.’”

Both Philip and Paul are examples of this truth. Luke writes that “Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ

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\(^1\) Note: Many of the teachings in this chapter are adapted from Kuzmic’s article.
there” (Acts 8:5). He then enlarges by saying that Philip “preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (v. 12). Comparing these two verses, we discover that to “proclaim the Christ” and to preach “the good news of the kingdom of God” are the same. Both are declaring “the name of Jesus Christ” (v. 12).

Another example is found in the ministry of Paul in Acts. At the conclusion of the book, Luke writes that Paul “explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus” (Acts 28:23). He then says that Paul was “preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 31). Again, as with Philip, we can see how “preaching the kingdom of God” is the same as teaching and preaching about Jesus Christ. We therefore conclude: When, in the book of Acts, Luke says that the Christians preached Christ, or preached the gospel, we can know that they were at the same time proclaiming the message of the kingdom of God.

**John’s Adaptation of Terms**

In his gospel, John often substituted the phrases “life” or “eternal life” for “kingdom of God.” This can be seen by looking closely at Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus in John 3. There, He says to Nicodemus, “I tell you the truth, no one can see [or ‘enter,’ v. 5] the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (v. 3). Then, in verses 15-16, He describes the same experience with different words: “Everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” Finally, in verse 17, Jesus calls the same experience being saved: “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (NKJV). These relationships are illustrated in Figure 8.2 below.
From Figure 8.2 note how in John 3:3-5 being born again results in one entering the kingdom of God. Then, in verses 15 and 16, believing results in eternal life. These parallel statements are describing the same experience. Finally, notice how both believing and being born again results in one’s being saved, another parallel expression.

What can we conclude from this exercise? We conclude that being born again is synonymous with believing in Christ, and that entering the kingdom of God is synonymous with having eternal life. And both are synonymous with being saved.

Although John uses the phrase kingdom of God only four times in his gospel (3:3, 5; 18:16), he uses the synonymous terms “life” and “eternal life” thirty-three and sixteen times respectively. And when John speaks of (eternal) life, He is, in effect, speaking of entering into and living in the kingdom of God. Therefore, contrary to the claims of some, John has much to say about the Kingdom.

**Paul’s Adaptation of Terms: “Jesus is Lord!”**

It is important that we see another change in kingdom terminology is Paul’s epistles. He often replaces the word King—
often used in the Old Testament and the Gospels to describe God and Christ—with the word *Lord*. Early in its history “Jesus is Lord!” became the anthem of the New Testament church (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Philippians 2:11). In keeping with this theme, in Paul’s writings “the “Lordship of Christ” became synonymous with the “Kingship of Jesus.”

Why did Paul make such a change? Possibly because he was the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 15:15-16). He thus “contextualized” the message of the Kingdom to his Gentile audience. He used dynamic equivalent terms, that is, language more familiar to those living under Roman rule. Throughout the Roman Empire, the Caesars claimed to be Lord instead of King. Thus, “Christ is King” became “Jesus is Lord,” although the meaning remained the same.

**CONCLUSION**

The kingdom of God was a central theme of apostolic preaching and teaching. Although the terminology sometimes changed, the message remained the same. To believe in Christ and receive eternal life meant to enter the kingdom of God. To proclaim that “Jesus is Lord” meant to proclaim Him as King. The message of the kingdom was not lost by the early church as some have claimed. It was simply repackaged for its new Gentile audience.

In the next chapter we will be looking at how those who have submitted to the King and entered His Kingdom, should conduct their lives.
CHAPTER 9

LIFE in the KINGDOM of GOD

Every kingdom has laws and principles which govern its society. The kingdom of God is no different. In this chapter, we will look at some of those laws and principles. In doing this, we will discuss how a follower of Jesus is to live his or her life in the kingdom of God. We will address three aspects of kingdom life:

- Entering the kingdom of God,
- The quality of life in the Kingdom, and
- The responsibilities of life in the Kingdom.

ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

On several occasions, Jesus talked about what one must do to enter the kingdom of God. At times He was obviously referring to entering the Kingdom in its present form (Mark 1:14; John 3:5). At other times He was clearly talking about entering the Kingdom when it comes in the future (Mark 9:47). Sometimes, however, it is unclear
which aspect of the Kingdom Jesus was talking about. Let’s look at what Jesus taught about entering both the present Kingdom and the Kingdom to come.

**Entering the Present Kingdom**

Jesus talked about certain attitudes and actions necessary for one to enter the kingdom of God:

**Attitudes.** Two attitudes Jesus specifically mentioned were humility of heart and trust in God. Concerning humility of heart, He said, “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3; cf. Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17). One must, therefore, humble himself or herself and become like a child to enter God’s kingdom.

Concerning trust in God, Jesus said to His disciples, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:24-25). It is hard for the rich to enter the Kingdom because they are accustomed to trusting in their riches to get what they want. Nevertheless, when Jesus’ disciples asked Him, “Who then can be saved?” He answered, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God” (v. 27; cf. Matthew 19:23-26; Luke 18:24-25).

**Actions.** There are also some specific actions one must one take to enter the Kingdom. Jesus insisted that one must first be born anew. “I tell you the truth,” He said, “no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again…. No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:3-5). To be born again one must do two things: he or she must repent of their sins, and they must put their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation (Acts 20:21: Hebrews 6:1).

These two elements—repentance and faith—are seen in the preaching of Jesus and Paul. Jesus began His ministry by saying,
“The time has come…. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:14-15, italics added). Paul told the Ephesian elders, “I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus” (Acts 20:21).

Reader, have you truly entered into the kingdom of God? If not, you should repent of your sins now. Admit that you are a sinner, ask God to forgive you and turn from your sins. You must also put your faith in Christ, invite Him into your life, and receive Him as Lord and Savior. Jesus promised, “Whoever believes in [Me] shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

**Entering the Coming Kingdom**

To enter the coming Kingdom, one must first have entered the present Kingdom through faith. Entering the coming kingdom, however, also requires that one continue in faith. It is not enough to simply enter the present Kingdom and then do nothing else. One must persist in faith if he or she is to enter the Kingdom which is to come. Jesus said, “He who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10:22). Paul said, “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22). Peter wrote,

> Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10-11)

Continuing in the faith involves several things. It involves faithfully doing the will of God (Matthew 7:21-23, note the phrase “in that day”). It also requires casting off everything that hinders (Mark 9:45-47; Hebrews 12:1) and living a life of true righteousness (Matthew 5:20). Finally, continuing in the faith involves remaining faithful during trials and tribulations (Acts 14:22).
THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE KINGDOM

Let’s now look at the quality of life in the Kingdom.

A Superior Quality of Life

The Bible describes life in the Kingdom as one of blessing, both in this life and in the life to come. Jesus said, “No one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life” (Luke 18:29-30). Those who have entered the Kingdom can confidently expect “strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow” (Chisholm and Runyan).

Kingdom Life Described

We can learn about the quality of life in the kingdom of God by examining these various ways the Bible describes this kingdom life. There are at least seven:

1. A kingdom of life. Jesus described the kingdom of God as a kingdom of life. To enter the Kingdom is to find eternal life (cf. John 3:5; 16-17). Eternal life speaks of more than just the duration of life; it also speaks of a higher quality of life. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). Life in the Kingdom is a life lived in all of its fullness!

2. A kingdom of light. The kingdom of God is also a kingdom of light. Those who follow Christ have been called “out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9). Jesus is “the light of the world” (8:12) and “the true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world “ (1:9; cf. 12:46). He promised, “Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). The children of the kingdom are thus called the “children of light” (Luke 16:8; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5). As a result, they “share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light” (Colossians 1:12). Light speaks of truth, understanding, and
Chapter 9: Life in the Kingdom of God

knowledge (Luke 11:35; John 3:20-21; 8:12; 2 Peter 1:19). Life in the Kingdom is therefore a life of true knowledge and understanding!

3. A kingdom of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). Nine times in the Beatitudes Jesus describes life in the Kingdom as “blessed” (Matthew 5:3-6). He then tells His followers to “rejoice and be glad,” even in the midst of persecution (v. 12). Jesus further promises to give His disciples peace greater than the world can give (John 14:27), a peace which “transcends all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). Life in the Kingdom is a life of joy and peace that comes from the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21; Acts 13:52; Romans 8:6; 14:17; 15:13; Galatians 5:22; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).

4. A kingdom of righteousness. The kingdom of God is not only a matter of Spirit-given peace and joy, it is matter of “righteousness… in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). Righteousness can be defined in two ways. First, righteousness is an internal state of being in right relationship with God. Secondly, righteousness involves external action, or right living. It is living one’s life according to the standards of God’s kingdom. Jesus told His disciples, “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5: 20).

Life in the Kingdom demands a high standard of morality. We must be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). As mentioned above, the righteousness of the kingdom of God is not merely an outward righteousness, like that of the Pharisees (Matthew 5:20), it is an inward purity of life that comes from having a renewed heart (2 Corinthians 5:17). The law said that we are not to murder (Exodus 20:13); Jesus says that we are not to get angry with our brother (Matthew 5:21-22). The law said we are to not commit adultery
(Exodus 20:14); Jesus says we are not to lust after a woman (Matthew 5:27-32). The law said that we are not to break our oaths, but Jesus says we are to live lives of such integrity that oaths are unnecessary (Matthew 5:33-37).

Our righteousness, however, is not our own, it is the righteousness of Christ, attained through faith in Him and imparted to us by the Holy Spirit (Romans 4:3-6; 14:17). Life in the Kingdom is thus a life of true inward purity.

5. A kingdom of love and compassion. Paul spoke of “the kingdom of the Son of his love” (Colossians 1:13, NKJV). The kingdom of God is not like the kingdoms of the world. The kingdoms of the world are built on self-ambition, greed, and pride. The kingdom of God is built on love and compassion. Jesus, the King, demonstrated such love and compassion for people. He did this in many ways.

Once, when He saw the people “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd,” He had compassion for them. He then told His disciples to “pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 10:38). On another occasion, when He saw a crowd of people, He was moved with compassion and healed the sick among them (Matthew 14:14). On yet another occasion, His compassion compelled Him to feed a multitude of hungry people (Matthew 15:4 14-16; Mark 8:2).

One time Jesus was moved with compassion and taught the people (Mark 6:34). He knew that their greatest need was to know about His loving heavenly Father. Again, He had compassion on a bereaved mother and comforted her by raising her son from the dead (Luke 7:13-15). Finally, moved by compassion, Jesus cast a demon out of a tormented boy (Mark 9:22-26). We, too, as members of Christ’s kingdom of love—and as imitators of our compassionate King—must demonstrate compassion for others (1 John 3:16-17). And that compassion must move us to do something.
To help us understand how such compassion looks in real life, Jesus gave us the example of the Good Samaritan who compassionately cared for the man who had been beaten by robbers (Luke 10:30-37). Jesus was teaching that it is more important for us to show compassion for others than it is for us to carry out our religious duties. He therefore commands us to “go and do likewise” (v. 37).

6. A kingdom of generosity. Because the kingdom of God is a kingdom of compassion, it is also a kingdom of generosity. The word “give” is found 199 times in the New Testament (120 in the gospels). When Jesus sent out the disciples, He instructed them, “As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:6-7). Life in the kingdom involves generously sharing the blessings of the King with others.

7. A kingdom of spiritual power. Paul wrote that “the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power” (1 Corinthians 4:20). Before Jesus returned to heaven, “He appeared to [His disciples] over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). What kingdom truths did Jesus speak about during those forty days? We find out in the next five verses:

Once, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my
witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:4-8)

Jesus taught His disciples that one can personally experience the power of the kingdom of God when he or she is baptized in the Holy Spirit. It is power enough to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth!

A Glimpse of Life in the Kingdom

What does this kingdom life look like when it is put into practice? Luke gives us a glimpse of kingdom life in the New Testament church soon after the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

This passage points out some of the activities and characteristics of kingdom life in the post-Pentecost church. These activities include the following:

- **Teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayer.** “They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (v. 42).
• Wonders, miraculous signs, and awe. “Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles” (v. 43).

• Unity and generosity. “All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need” (vv. 44-45).

• Joy, praise, and favor. “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people” (vv. 46-47).

• Numerical growth. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (v. 47).

We can expect the same quality of spiritual life when we are filled with the Spirit and when we live according to the principles of the kingdom of God.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LIFE IN THE KINGDOM

Blessing Brings Responsibility

Living in the kingdom of God is not only about being blessed; it also has its responsibilities. Three of those responsibilities are as follows:

1. To seek first the kingdom of God. Those who live in the Kingdom have the responsibility of giving the kingdom of God priority in their lives. Jesus said, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

2. To act on the teachings of the King. Our responsibility is not only to hear the words of Jesus; we must also act on what He says. Jesus said, “Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man…but everyone who hears these words
of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man…” (Matthew 7:24-26). Wisdom is not in hearing the words of the King, but in putting them into practice.

3. To do the will of the Father. Those living for the kingdom of God do not seek their own will but the will of God. Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). It is not enough to simply go to church and sing, “He is Lord!” with the rest of the worshipers. The person living for the Kingdom must do the will of his Lord.

Two Categories of Responsibility in the Kingdom

Jesus said: “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of God has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it” (Matthew 11:12). From this verse, we can divide our kingdom responsibilities into two categories: those involving laying hold of the Kingdom and those involving advancing the Kingdom, as follows:

1. Laying hold of the Kingdom. Jesus said that forceful people are “laying hold” of the kingdom of God. This phrase speaks of one’s personal experience in the Kingdom. Kingdom blessings are not passively received; they must be aggressively pursued. Each believer is individually responsible for appropriating the blessings of the Kingdom for himself or herself. Jesus taught that we must seek the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). The Greek word here translated “seek” (zeteo) was again used by Jesus when He said, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10). Just as ardently as Jesus sought the lost, we must seek His kingdom.

The main asset by which we lay hold of the kingdom of God is faith. Jesus said, “Have faith in God “ (Mark 11:22). He then taught about the power of faith:
I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, “Go, throw yourself into the sea,” and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (v. 23)

Faith is the currency of the Kingdom. It is the means by which we appropriate its many blessings.

The New Testament has much to say about other personal responsibilities in laying hold of the kingdom of God. These responsibilities include the following:

- We must be willing to “sell all” to attain the Kingdom (Matthew 13:44-45).
- We must “worship God acceptably with reverence and awe” (Hebrews 12:28).
- We must “be all the more eager to make [our] calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10-11).
- We must be willing to forgive others as the King has forgiven us (Matthew 6:12; 14).
- We must live a life of righteousness and holiness (Matthew 5:20; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:5).
- We must seek to be counted worthy of the kingdom of God (2 Thessalonians 1:5).
- We must remain constantly prepared for the King’s appearing (Matthew 25:1-13).
- We must be prepared to endure persecution and hardship (Matthew 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:18).

2. Forcefully advancing the Kingdom. Jesus also spoke of our responsibility in extending the Kingdom to others. He said that “from
the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing” (Matthew 11:12). As servants of the King, we must aggressively advance His kingdom. Five times during the forty days between His crucifixion and His ascension, Jesus commanded His church to take the gospel to all people, all places, and all nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:49; John 20:22; Acts 1:8). This is the primary way we advance the Kingdom in the earth, by preaching the good news to everyone! We will discuss this issue more in Chapter 10.

In forcefully advancing the Kingdom we must, in the power of the Spirit, preach the gospel “in the whole world as a testimony to all nations” (Matthew 24:14). To do this we must pray to the Lord of the harvest “to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:38). The church must then fully cooperate with God in sending missionaries to the nations (Mark 16:15; Acts 13:3; Romans 10:15).

Beyond these things, our responsibility in forcefully advancing the Kingdom includes the following:

- Like salt and light, we must influence the world around us (Matthew 5:13-16).
- We must pray for the manifestation of God’s kingdom on earth (Matthew 6:10).
- We must faithfully do the business of the King as we wait for His return (Luke 19:11-15).
- We must do spiritual warfare against the kingdom of Satan (Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:12).
- We must boldly demonstrate the power of the Kingdom through miracles, signs, and wonders (Mark 16:15-18; Luke 9:1-2; 10-11; 10:9-11; 16:17-20).
We must live a life of love and compassion toward those in need, especially to those of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).

You can learn more about life in God’s kingdom versus life in Satan’s kingdom by studying Appendix 1, “The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan,” at the back of this book.

CONCLUSION

Someday, all of those who have served Christ will reign with Him in the coming Kingdom. Until then, we are to faithfully live as His servants in the Kingdom that has already come. This life involves both blessings and responsibilities. Our primary responsibility is to be witnesses of the King. We are to preach the gospel to all nations before He returns again. In the next chapter, we will talk about the role of the Holy Spirit in the kingdom of God.
In the last chapter, we studied life in the kingdom of God from various perspectives. We looked at how one may enter the Kingdom in both its present and future forms. We further discussed the superior quality of life in the Kingdom, and we looked at some of the responsibilities of citizenship in God’s kingdom.

In this lesson, we will continue our study of life in the Kingdom by focusing on one sermon of Jesus. It is known as the “Sermon on the Mount” and is found in Matthew 5-7. This sermon contains Jesus’ most complete teaching on life in the Kingdom. In it, He teaches us how we are to live as citizens of God’s kingdom (4:7, 23; ref. 3:1-3). Jesus taught similar lessons in His “Sermon on the Plain” found in Luke 6:17-49. However, in this chapter, we will focus our thoughts on His sermon in Matthew.

Before you proceed with this chapter, you should put down this book and carefully read Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5-7.
In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus specifically mentions the Kingdom eight times (5:3, 10, 19 [twice], 20; 6:10, 33; 7:21). He further mentions “God’s throne” and the “city of the great King” one time each (5:34-35). You will note that, in his gospel, Matthew prefers the term “kingdom of heaven” to the term “kingdom of God” used by the other Evangelists. (This has already been discussed this in Chapter 1 and in Figure 1.1.)

The “Constitution of the Kingdom”

Some have suggested that the Sermon on the Mount could appropriately be called the “Constitution of the Kingdom.” Just as a modern constitution lays down the basic rules and principles governing life in an earthly kingdom, the Sermon on the Mount lays down some fundamental rules and principles governing life in God’s heavenly kingdom.

Three key sayings of Jesus seem to get at the heart of what He is teaching in His sermon:

- “Let your light so shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (5:16).
- “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” (5:20).
- “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (6:33).

You would do well to memorize these three passages.

Citizens of the Kingdom

Sometimes our shallow understanding of what it means to be a Christian affects the way we view the kingdom of God. It further affects the way we approach the Sermon on the Mount. We often think of salvation in terms of the “plan of salvation.” In this context,
we talk about “praying the sinner’s prayer” and “receiving Jesus into our hearts.” Certainly, these concepts convey certain redemptive truth. Nevertheless, they are only a partial understanding of what it means to become a citizen of Christ’s kingdom.

Not only has a truly born-again follower of Christ “received Jesus into his heart” and “been saved,” he or she has seen the kingdom of God (John 3:3), and they have entered into it (v. 5). They are now citizens of a new kingdom—the kingdom of heaven. And they must now live as full citizens of that Kingdom. They must order their lives according to its ideals and precepts. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus deals with some of these essential ideals and precepts.

In this chapter, we will examine those precepts. We will not have space to look at every aspect of those values point-by-point. We will, nevertheless, seek to glean many of the important kingdom principles that flow from Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

**Context of the Sermon**

It is important that one understand the context out of which Jesus preached His Sermon on the Mount. The story begins in Judea with the arrest of John the Baptist. In response, Jesus withdraws with His disciples into Galilee (Matthew 4:12). Luke tells us that Jesus entered Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14). Soon after He arrived, He attended the synagogue in Nazareth where He announced,

> The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

Matthew adds that Jesus began to declare publicly, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (4:17). He went around teaching in other Galilean synagogues and “preaching the good news of the
kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people” (v. 23; cf. Luke 4:43).

As news of His miraculous Galilean ministry spread, multitudes gathered from throughout the region. They brought with them those who were suffering from pain, demon possession, seizures, and paralysis—“and he healed them” (Matthew 4:24).

Then one day Jesus saw the host of people who had come to witness His miracles and hear His message. He “went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them” (Matthew 5:1-2). What follows is His Sermon on the Mount. In summary, Jesus’ Sermon of the Mount was taught in the context of His proclamation of the kingdom of God and His demonstration of its mighty kingdom power.

Exemplified in the King

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus discusses five great kingdom issues:

- Kingdom Blessing,
- Kingdom Influence,
- Kingdom Righteousness,
- Kingdom Directives, and
- Kingdom Application.

As you study this sermon, take note of how Jesus’ life exemplifies each of the kingdom principles He teaches. In other words, Jesus practiced what He preached. Or better said, He preached what He practiced. His message emerged out of who He was.

Let’s now look more closely at Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

KINGDOM BLESSING

*Read Matthew 5:1-12*

Jesus begins His sermon with an extended promise of kingdom
blessing. Historically, this passage has been called the Beatitudes. Eight times Jesus begins His sentence with the word “blessed.” In doing this, He is emphasizing that citizenship in His Kingdom brings extraordinary blessing into one’s life. The blessing He describes, however, is more than a temporary state of happiness brought on by favorable circumstances. It is rather a state of ongoing shalom.

Shalom is the Hebrew word that Jesus likely used when He first spoke these blessings. It carries with it the meaning of blessing on many levels. It includes such things as wholeness, health, peace, safety, healing, welfare, and joy.

The blessings Jesus mentioned in the Beatitudes include the following:

- Inclusion in the kingdom of heaven along with a share in its destiny:
  - “theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (v. 3, 10).
  - “they will inherit the earth” (v. 5).
  - “they will be called the children of God” (v. 9).
  - “great is your reward in heaven” (v. 12).
- Comfort and joy, even in the face of severe persecution:
  - “they will be comforted” (v. 4).
  - “rejoice and be glad” (v. 12).
- God’s mercy:
  - “they will be shown mercy” (v. 7).
- Infilling of the Holy Spirit:
  - “they will be filled” (v. 6).
- Revelation of God and His purposes:
  - “they will see God” (v. 8).

Unlike many “blessing preachers” in Africa who promise “God’s favor” and “financial breakthroughs” in exchange for contributions to their ministries, Jesus connects blessing with godly character and
righteous living. He does not link blessing to one’s circumstance or one’s position in life. He rather speaks of blessing in the midst of persecution, reviling, and loss. In the Beatitudes, Jesus ties shalom-blessing to the following:

- One’s spiritual attitude:
  - “the poor in spirit” (or the humble) (v. 3).
  - “those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” (v. 6).

- One’s godly character:
  - “the meek” (v. 5).
  - “the merciful” (v. 7)
  - “the pure in heart” (v. 8)

- One’s righteous works:
  - “those who mourn” (v. 4).
  - “the peacemakers” (v. 9).
  - “those who are persecuted because of righteousness” (v. 10).

Thus, while the kingdom of heaven is a realm of blessing for its inhabitants, those blessings are dependent upon one’s living out the ethics and godly requirements of the Kingdom. We should seek blessing based on the sure promises of God not on the vain pronouncements of false teachers.

**KINGDOM INFLUENCE**

*Read Matthew 5:13-16*

God wants the citizens of His kingdom to be influencers. They are to be like salt and light. Just as salt flavors and preserves, and light warms and reveals, kingdom citizens are to affect those around them.

Unproductive Christians, however, are like salt that has lost its saltiness or a lamp that has been placed under a basket. They are not doing what they were created to do. Christians who fail to apply the
principles of the Kingdom to their lives become like unsavory salt or a hidden torch. They are good for nothing and fit only to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

Conversely, Jesus wants us to be like a city situated on a hilltop whose light cannot be hidden. Our kingdom assignment is to let our light shine before men, in such a way that “they may see [our] good deeds and praise [our] Father in heaven” (v.14).

KINGDOM RIGHTEOUSNESS

As representatives of Christ’s kingdom, Christians are required to live by certain moral principles. Jesus called this the way of righteousness (5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33). Today, we often use the word ethics. Both words speak of moral goodness. This moral goodness includes both internal purity and external acts of goodness.

Superior Righteousness

Read Matthew 5:17-20

These principles of righteousness found in the Sermon on the Mount are based on God’s moral law, which has always been. Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (5:17). The Law that God gave in the Old Testament was part of the Mosaic Covenant the He made with His chosen people Israel. He was to be their King, and they were to be His missionary people. As God’s missionary people, they were to live as He expected. Their righteous conduct, and God’s blessing on them, would serve as a light to the nations and would draw them to God (Isaiah 51:4; 60:3). The Ten Commandments stood at the heart of God’s moral law (Exodus 20: 1-17).

The laws of Christ’s kingdom are found in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere in the New Testament. They do not do away with the laws of God as they were presented under the Old Covenant.
They rather fulfill them and surpass them. They are the next step in the establishment of God’s kingdom in the earth. Just as the butterfly does not replace the caterpillar but emerges from it, the law of Christ does not replace the Law and the Prophets but emerges from them.

Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17). He continued, “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” (v. 20). The Law of Moses spoke primarily to people’s outward acts. The Law of Christ also speaks to their inward motives and attitudes. Righteousness in Christ’s kingdom is not merely a matter of keeping religious rules. It grows out of a living relationship with God through Christ (Hebrews 8:10). The Law of Christ can only be kept through spiritual regeneration and the empowerment of the Spirit (Romans 8:3-4).

Jesus summed up the requirements of His kingdom when He said, “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” (v. 20).

Superior Ethics

Read Matthew 5:21-37

Jesus gives four representative examples demonstrating how the ethics of His kingdom surpass the ethics of the Old Covenant. The Law of Moses condemned murder, the Law of Christ condemns uncontrolled anger. The Law of Moses condemned adultery, the Law of Christ prohibits lust. The Law of Moses allows oaths, the Law of Christ demands truthfulness as a way of life.

More than murder (5:21-26). The Old Testament Law prohibited murder. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus confirms and expands that prohibition. He said, “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry
with his brother [KJV adds “without cause”] will be subject to judgment” (v. 21-22). Rather than harbor bitterness against those who have offended us, we must go to them and seek reconciliation (v. 24).

More than adultery (5:27-29). The Law of Moses commanded, “Do not commit adultery” (v.27). Jesus, however, taught that there is also an adultery of the heart and eyes. He said, “I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (v. 28). We must not only flee physical adultery, we must guard against infidelity of the heart. (vv. 29-30).

More than a contract (5:31-32). Under the Law, Moses allowed divorce. “Anyone who divorces his wife,” Jesus said, “must give her a certificate of divorce” (v. 31; cf. Deuteronomy 32:1-3). However, in the kingdom of God, Jesus forbids any divorce except for marital infidelity (v.32).

More than oaths (5:33-37). The Law of Moses allowed people to swear oaths under certain conditions. However, under His new kingdom law, Jesus forbids His followers to swear oaths at all (v. 34). He charges, “Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” (v. 36). We are to be people of such integrity that we only speak the truth. Our word is to be our bond.

Superior Conduct

Read Matthew 5:38-6:34

Living as citizens of God’s kingdom demands that we conduct ourselves in ways that are superior to the world’s ways. We should not take our cue from society, or even our religions traditions. We should conduct our lives the way that Jesus conducted His. This includes the way we respond to injustice, the way we treat of our enemies, and the way we give, pray, and invest our time and money.

Responding to injustice (5:38-41). As citizens of Christ’s kingdom, we should expect persecution. Sometimes evil people may
even strike us, steal from us, or compel us to work without pay. Jesus teaches that we must respond these injustices as our King responded. He did not retaliate, and neither must we—even though the Old Testament Law allowed it (v. 38). Rather, “If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles” (vv. 39-41). Jesus sums up His words by saying, “Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (v. 42).

Relating to one’s enemies (5:43-48). Human reasoning teaches us that we should love our neighbor and hate our enemies (v. 43). However, in Christ’s kingdom we are to respond to our enemies in a completely different way. We are to respond as Jesus responded. Even as He hung on the cross, Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Now, He commands us, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (v. 44). In doing this, we will become children of our Father in heaven who “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (v. 45).

Living generously (6:1-4). True citizens of Christ’s kingdom are to be generous people, and they are to give to others out of sincere and humble hearts. They should not give just to receive personal blessing from God. Neither should they give to receive praises from people. Jesus warns, “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them” (Matthew 6:1). Those who give in such a way will lose their heavenly reward.

Jesus tells us how He wants us to give: “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others” (v. 2). Our giving must be done in secret, then our heavenly Father will reward us openly (vv. 3-4).
Praying sincerely (6:5-15). Prayer is an important part of kingdom life. In His sermon, Jesus tells us how we are to pray. Like our giving, our praying is not be done for outward show. Otherwise, we will be like the hypocrites who seek the praises of men (v. 5). On the contrary, we are to pray to God in secret. If we will do this, “Then [our] Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward [us]” (v. 6). And we are not to babble like pagans, repeating phrases over and over. We are to simply ask of the Father in faith, for, Jesus explains, He “knows what you need before you ask him” (v. 8).

Jesus then gives us a pattern for prayer. This prayer has come to be known as the “Lord’s Prayer.” Here it is from the King James Version, since that is the way it is most often quoted:

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” (vv. 10-13)

Here, Jesus is not giving us a prayer to be memorized, and then repeated over and over without thinking. He has already warned against such praying. He is rather giving us a model prayer, one that can serve as a pattern, or an outline, to guide us when we pray.

Jesus is showing us that we should begin our prayers with worship and adoration. We should then pray that God’s will be done in our lives and ministries, and that His kingdom will be manifested in this world. Jesus is further teaching that we should trust God to supply our daily needs, and we should regularly repent of our sins and ask God to forgive and cleanse us. As we ask for God’s forgiveness, we should forgive others. Finally, Jesus is teaching us that, when we pray, we should ask God to deliver us from the snares of the “evil one” (v. 13). If we will follow this pattern, our prayers will become more effective, and our lives will be enriched.
Chapter 10: The Sermon on the Mount and the Kingdom of God

Fasting properly (6:16-18). Kingdom people will live spiritually disciplined lives (Galatians 5:23). One of those spiritual disciplines is fasting. Our fasting, however, like our giving and praying, should not be for outward show. Jesus tells us that when we fast, we should not try to “look somber” and disfigure our faces so people will know we are fasting. Rather, we are to conduct ourselves in such a way that it will not be obvious to others that we are fasting. Again, if we will do this, our Father, “who sees what is done in secret,” will reward us openly (v.18).

Investing wisely (6:19-24). As followers of Christ, we are to invest our time, talents, and money into God’s kingdom. By doing this, we will be storing up treasures in heaven. Jesus tells us, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (v. 21). If we invest our time and treasures into achieving earthly success, our hearts will be earthbound. But if we invest in the kingdom of God, our hearts will be heavenly-focused. Our giving must therefore proceed from of a life filled with God’s light (vv. 22-23).

Jesus further taught that one’s giving is an indication of whom one’s master and king is. He challenged, “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (v. 24). The way we invest our money is an indication of who is the master of our lives.

Living confidently (6:25-34). Further, as citizens of the kingdom of God, we are to live lives filled with confidence in our heavenly Father. We are not to fret over food and clothing. We are rather to trust God to supply our needs. Just as God takes care of the birds and the flowers, He will take care of His beloved children. Therefore, we are to confidently “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to [us] as well” (v. 33). More than any other, this statement sums up Jesus teaching in His Sermon on the Mount.

122
KINGDOM DIRECTIVES

Jesus continues His Sermon on the Mount by issuing seven “kingdom directives.” A directive is an authoritative statement meant to give direction on how one might best live his or her life. Again, Jesus is showing us how we may live our lives just as He lived His.

Do Not Judge

Read Matthew 7:1-5

As citizens of God’s kingdom, we are not to degrade our lives by judging others. Jesus gives two reasons for this. First, in judging others we bring judgement on ourselves: “For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged” (v. 2). Secondly, since we ourselves are transgressors, we are not qualified to judge others when they transgress. Jesus asks, “How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?” (v. 4). Even Jesus Himself did not come to judge people but to save them. He declared, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:17).

Do Not Throw Your Life Away

Read Matthew 7:6-7

Citizens of Christ’s eternal kingdom are to live their lives with sacred purpose. Jesus said, “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet and then turn and tear you to pieces” (v. 6). Our most sacred possession is our lives. This includes our time and energy. We are not to squander our lives seeking temporal blessing. This is like throwing pearls to pigs. Rather, we are to invest our lives in God’s kingdom as did Jesus. He testified, “I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.” (John 5:30).
Trust Your Heavenly Father

*Read Matthew 7:7-11*

As loyal subjects of the King, we are to place our entire trust in our heavenly Father. Jesus tells us that we can confidently ask God for what we need knowing that He will answer our prayers. He promised, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (v. 7). Even earthly parents take pleasure in giving good gifts to their children and protecting them from harm. Then, “how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (v. 11). One of the greatest gifts that God gives His children is the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).

Treat Others with Dignity and Respect

*Read Matthew 7:12*

Jesus gives us an essential guideline for effective kingdom living. “In everything,” He says, “do to others what you would have them do to you” (v. 12). This commandment of Jesus is known as the Golden Rule. It can serve as the definitive measuring stick for how we should treat others. By applying this rule to our relationships with others, we can be assured that we are treating them as Jesus our King would treat them. What’s more, if we will faithfully follow this kingdom directive, we will fulfill the purpose of the Law and the Prophets (cf. Matthew 22:39-40).

Enter Life through the Narrow Gate

*Read Matthew 7:13-14*

Jesus turns again to the topic of how one enters into the kingdom of heaven. One must enter, He says, through the “narrow gate,” and he or she must travel the “narrow road.” The narrow gate is faith in Christ alone for salvation. Jesus declared, “I am the way and the truth
and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6; cf. Acts 4:12). The narrow road is the way of life Jesus has described here in His Sermon on the Mount.

**Do Not Be Deceived by False Prophets**

*Read Matthew 7:15-20*

There are many false prophets in the world. This is especially true in Africa today. These men and women boldly claim that they have been sent from God. However, Jesus warns us, “Watch out for false prophets” for they are “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (v. 15).

How can we know these false prophets? Jesus says that we can know them by their fruit. That is, we can know them by the way they live their lives and by the message they preach. False prophets live self-centered and ungodly lives, and they preach a message contrary to the message of faith and holiness preached by Jesus and the apostles. Jesus calls these people “thorn bushes” and “bad trees.” We must strongly oppose these false prophets because they lead people into hell.

**Do the Will of God**

*Read Matthew 7:21-23*

Only those who do the will of the King are true citizens in His kingdom. Jesus explained, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (v. 21). On the Day of Judgment, many who on earth appeared to be powerful members of Christ’s kingdom will be exposed as evildoers. Jesus said, “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (vv. 22-23). The chief responsibility of any citizen of Christ’s kingdom is to do the will of his or her Father in heaven.
KINGDOM APPLICATION

Put These Principles into Practice

Read Matthew 7:24-27

Jesus ends His sermon with a call to action. It is not enough, He says, to merely listen to His words. We must put them into practice. If we will do this, we will be like “a wise man who built his house on the rock” (v. 24). But if we refuse, we will be “like a foolish man who built his house on the sand” (v. 26). Then, when the storms come and the wind blows, the one who has built his life on human wisdom will be destroyed. However, the one who has built his life on the kingdom principles found in Jesus’ teaching will be preserved. In the words of James, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (James 1:22).

CONCLUSION

In summary, we should carefully pattern our lives and ministries on the life and ministry of Jesus. When we teach and preach, we should say only those things that are taught in the Bible. And, we must be empowered by the Spirit and live out the truths that we preach.
~ UNIT IV ~

PENTECOSTAL INSIGHTS
on the
KINGDOM of GOD
Throughout the Bible, the kingdom of God is described as a kingdom of power. King David prayed, “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power…Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom” (1 Chronicles 29:11-12; cf. Psalm 145:11). Paul wrote, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power” (1 Corinthians 4:20). Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God; He also came demonstrating the Kingdom’s power. He revealed that the source of His kingdom power was the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:28; Luke 4:18-19).

In this chapter, we will examine the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the kingdom of God. In doing this, we will address three significant kingdom issues:

- The Holy Spirit in the kingdom ministry of Jesus,
- The kingdom of God and Pentecost,
- The Holy Spirit and the kingdom ministry of the church.
Jesus’ Two Kingdom Goals

Jesus came to earth with two great kingdom goals. These goals are disclosed in John the Baptist’s announcement of His ministry:

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” … Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.”” (John 1:29, 32-33, emphasis added)

According to this passage, Jesus’ ministry would involve two great redemptive acts: First, as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,” Jesus would lay down His life as a sacrifice for all mankind. In doing this, He would open the way for all people to be saved. He is, indeed, “the Savior of the world” (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14).

Next, as the One who would “baptizes with the Holy Spirit,” Jesus would empower His church to take that same message of redemption to the nations. Not only would Jesus pay the price for the world’s redemption, He would give His followers the power they needed to carry that message to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Jesus’ Ministry in the Spirit

Jesus was anointed by the Spirit. He thus performed His kingdom ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist testified concerning Him, “For he whom God has sent speaketh the
words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him…” (John 3:34-35, KJV). Jesus thus began His ministry with a pronouncement:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

In this pronouncement, Jesus outlined the content and character of His earthly ministry. He would proclaim the good news in the Spirit’s power. This proclamation would result in people being healed, delivered, and set free from their bondages.

The power of the Kingdom was present in Jesus’ ministry through the Holy Spirit who anointed Him. This anointing came upon Him immediately after He was baptized in water (Luke 3:22). Peter noted “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

It was through the power of the Spirit that Jesus defeated Satan. Soon after His baptism, He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Jesus, however, was “full of the Spirit,” and was “led by the Spirit” (Luke 4:1). As a result, He was able to defeat the devil. After this, He “returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit” (v. 14). Jesus told how He defeated the demonic powers. He said, “If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28; cf. Luke 11:20).

Jesus even faced the agonies of the cross by the power of the Spirit. Hebrews 9:14 says that “through the eternal Spirit, [Jesus] offered himself unblemished to God.” The Holy Spirit gave Him the
strength He needed to face the agony of the cross! In the same way, the Holy Spirit gave Stephen the power and courage to face martyrdom (Acts 7:54-59).

The Holy Spirit also raised Jesus from the dead. Paul spoke of “the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead” (Romans 8:11). By His death and resurrection, Jesus ushered in a New Covenant and a New Age (Hebrews 9:15; 12:24). He thus set up “a kingdom which cannot be shaken” (12:28), and made the way for us to taste the powers of the age to come (6:5).

**Jesus’ Final Command to His Disciples**

Jesus not only performed His own ministry in the power of the Spirit, He commanded His disciples to do the same. They were to wait to be empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). He promised them that they too would be clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49). This would happen when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5). They would thus inherit Jesus’ kingdom ministry, and be empowered to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. The disciples received this kingdom power on the Day of Pentecost:

> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:1-4)

We, too, can receive that same power by asking God for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9-13). He will empower us just as He empowered those first disciples.
THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND PENTECOST

The Day of Pentecost was an important day in the history of the Kingdom. On that day, God empowered His church to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Let’s take a closer look at the relationship of the kingdom of God to the outpouring work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The Kingdom Coming in Power

Jesus linked the kingdom of God to Pentecost. Before He was crucified, He told His disciples, “I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1). This was a prophecy concerning the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He again linked the kingdom of God to the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Luke writes, “He appeared to [His disciples] over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3, emphasis added). It is interesting that the translators of the King James Version end this statement of Jesus with a colon (:). When a writer uses a colon at the end of a sentence, he is signaling to the reader that an explanation or expansion of the thought is to follow. Luke thus reveals Jesus’ final teaching on the kingdom of God:

[Jesus] gave them this command, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit…. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.” (Acts 1:4-5, 8-9)
Pentecost embodies the “already” aspect of the Kingdom’s coming. You will remember that the disciples had inquired about the “not yet” aspect of the Kingdom. They had asked Jesus, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (v. 6). Jesus did not answer their question, but pointed them back to the “already” business of the Kingdom, that is, witness to the nations in Pentecostal power (vv. 7-8). The empowering of the Holy Spirit is thus a crucial matter in the present work of the Kingdom.

The Transfer of Kingdom Power

At Pentecost, Jesus transferred His kingdom power to His disciples. The Spirit who had anointed and empowered His ministry would anoint and empower theirs. Bible scholars note that this transfer of power from a Spirit-endowed leader to his follower(s) is part of a recurring “transfer motif” seen in the Old Testament (Stronstad, 20-22). In Scripture, a motif is a recurring historical pattern. Such patterns give us insight into how God works in and through His people.

This motif can be observed in the ministry of Moses. For example, God transferred the Spirit who was upon him to the seventy elders in the wilderness (Numbers 11:10-30). On another occasion, God transferred Moses’ charismatic authority to Joshua (27:16-20; 34:9). The transfer motif is also seen in the way God transferred the Spirit who was upon Elijah to Elisha, his servant (2 Kings 2:9-15).

Much the same thing happened at Pentecost. There, Jesus transferred His kingdom power to His disciples. Peter Kuzmic said, “The Pentecostal narrative is the story of the transfer of the charismatic Spirit from Jesus to the disciples..... Having become the exclusive bearer of the Holy Spirit at His baptism, Jesus becomes the giver of the Spirit at Pentecost” (1988, 525). This transfer of kingdom power had a twofold effect on the disciples:
• *Public witness.* The disciples immediately began to proclaim the gospel with great power and results (Acts 2:14ff, 41, 47).

• *Powerful demonstrations.* Their preaching was accompanied by demonstrations of supernatural power (v. 43).

Following the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, Peter stood and announced that Joel’s prophecy was being fulfilled. God was pouring out His Spirit on “all people” (2:17). The Spirit’s power was now available to all who would repent and follow Christ. Peter emphasized that the gift of the Spirit was for “all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (v. 39). Kuzmic comments:

The power of the kingdom was no longer to be limited to Jesus and the apostolic circle. The Pentecostal promise of God—”I will pour out my Spirit on all people”—was fulfilled. This means that in and through the church the Spirit is to continue and to universalize the kingdom ministry of Jesus himself. (1988, 524).

At Pentecost, the church experienced the “powers of the coming age” (Hebrews 6:5). We can experience that same power today when we open our lives to the Spirit of God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE KINGDOM MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

A New Kingdom Community

At Pentecost, Christ, the Anointed One, founded a new Spirit-anointed community whose purpose was to carry out the mission of the kingdom of God. The church became the visible Spirit-empowered representative of God’s eternal kingdom.
Chapter 11: The Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God

Characteristics of the New Kingdom Community

What are some characteristics of Christ’s new kingdom community? In Acts chapters 1 and 2, the new Spirit-anointed community is depicted in six ways:

1. A Kingdom Community. The empowering of the church on the Day of Pentecost occurred in the context of “things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). The church is thus the present representative of God’s Kingdom on earth. It was established to declare the good news of the Kingdom to all nations before Christ returns (Matthew 24:14). In doing this, it would demonstrate the power of the kingdom of God (Mark 3:13-15; 16:15-20).

Through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, believers are empowered for kingdom ministry (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:4-8; 2:4). Roger Stronstad comments, “Through the exercise of this power the disciples became partners with Jesus in manifesting the kingdom of God—liberating captives from the bondage to the spirit world and restoring many others to health” (Stronstad, 51).

2. An Eschatological Community. When we say that the church is an eschatological community we mean that it is a last-days community. At Pentecost, Peter quoted the prophet Joel. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter changed Joel’s word “afterward” (cf. 2:28) to “last days” (Acts 2:17). Why did he do this? He was announcing that the outpouring of the Spirit was an end-time, or eschatological, event.

The last days began with Christ’s first coming and will continue until His second coming. They are a time when salvation is being offered to all people (Acts 2:21). Both the outpouring of the Spirit and the expectation of Christ’s soon coming were great motivating factors for the New Testament church. These truths should also motivate the church today.

3. A Pneumatic Community. By being filled with the Spirit, the church became a pneumatic community. Pneumatic means having to
do with the Holy Spirit. A distinguishing characteristic of the church is that it is a community of people in whom God’s Spirit dwells—and upon whom His Spirit rests. Pentecost was the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church (Acts 2:1-4). Even today, God will pour out His Spirit on any church that will seek His face and commit themselves to His mission (2:20, 39; 5:32).

As a Spirit-anointed and empowered community, the church is called to

• be baptized in the Holy Spirit (Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; Ephesians 5:18).
• preach the gospel with power (Acts 2:14-39; 4:33; 6:10).
• demonstrate the presence of the kingdom through “mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God” (Romans 15:19; Acts 4:32).
• reap a harvest of souls (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4 5:14).
• take the gospel to all nations (Acts 1:8).

4. A Prophetic Community. The church is also a prophetic community. A prophetic community is a group of people who are filled with the Spirit and declare the message of God by the Spirit’s power and inspiration. At Pentecost, Peter announced that the church would be such a community:

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. *Your sons and daughters will prophesy*, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and *they will prophesy* (Acts 2:17-18, italics added).
On that day, the Old Testament hope that all of God’s people would be prophets became a reality:

- **Moses wished for it:** “I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!” (Numbers 11:29).
- **Joel predicted it:** “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy…” (Joel 2:28-29).
- **Peter announced it:** “This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy” (Acts 2:16-18).

In this same passage, Peter identified speaking in tongues as prophetic speech. When he said, “*This* is what was spoken by the prophet Joel…. Your sons and daughters will prophesy,” he was referring—at least in part—to the speaking in tongues of the newly Spirit-baptized disciples (Acts 2:16-17). Peter thus identified speaking in tongues as prophetic speech. Speaking in tongues became a distinguishing sign of the new prophetic community (10:44-46; 19:6).

5. **A Charismatic Community.** Because the church is a Spirit-anointed community, it should also be a charismatic—or Spirit-gifted—community. The disciples’ reception of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost resulted in a great outburst of charismatic activity. This activity included signs, wonders, healings, and Spirit-baptisms (Acts 2:43; 3:1-9; 4:31). The charismatic nature of the church is exhibited throughout the New Testament.
6. A Missionary Community. Jesus commissioned the church as a missionary community. He said that the primary purpose of the Pentecostal outpouring would be to empower His people for missionary witness to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The missionary nature of Pentecost can also be seen by the following:

- *The occasion of the Spirit’s outpouring:* The Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1). Pentecost was a harvest festival, celebrating the first fruits of the grain harvest in Palestine (cf. Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:14-15). Pentecost thus marked the beginning of the worldwide harvest of souls through the Spirit-empowered kingdom ministry of the church.

- *The sign of the Spirit’s reception:* At Pentecost, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:4). What were the tongues in which these disciples were speaking? They were speaking in the tongues of the surrounding Gentile nations (vv. 8-11). This sign reminds us that the purpose of Spirit-baptism is empowerment to proclaim Christ in all nations (1:8). Today, each time a disciple is filled with the Spirit and prays in tongues, he or she is reminded of the primary purpose of the gift of the Spirit—the evangelization of the nations.

- *The result the church’s empowering:* Having been filled with the Spirit, the disciples immediately began their missionary work of preaching the gospel (Acts 2:14ff). Before the day had ended, three thousand people, representing at least fifteen Gentile nations, were saved (vv. 8-11 41).
From the beginning, the church has been a Spirit-empowered missionary community. It should continue as the same until Jesus comes again.

CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit plays a prominent role in the work of the kingdom of God. It is He who anoints, empowers, equips, inspires, and sustains the church in its kingdom mission of taking the gospel to all nations. In the next chapter will look in more depth at the relationship between the kingdom of God to the task of global missions.
The KINGDOM of GOD and GLOBAL MISSION

God, by virtue of creation, is sovereign ruler of the universe. His will is for all people of all nations to know and serve Him. In previous chapters, we stated that the purpose of the kingdom of God is to fulfill the mission of God, that is, to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations before Jesus comes again.

In this chapter, we will review some of the things we have explored in previous chapters. We will do this in order to highlight how the kingdom of God relates to God’s mission to redeem the nations. In doing this, we will discuss in a bit more detail the relationship between the kingdom of God and global missions. We will address three issues:

- The global mission of the Kingdom,
- The gospel of the Kingdom and the Great Commission, and
- Proclaiming the gospel to the nations.

THE GLOBAL MISSION OF THE KINGDOM

Let’s review what the Bible says about the mission of God.
The Missio Dei

As previously mentioned, the mission of God is sometimes called the missio Dei, which is simply the Latin rendering of the same phrase. According to John V. York, the missio Dei is “God’s plan to bless the nations through the gospel of Jesus Christ” (2000, 20). Stated another way, God’s mission is to call unto Himself a people for His name out of “every tribe and tongue and people and nation” on earth (Revelation 5:9; 7:9). This plan will be accomplished through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross and by the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations in Pentecostal power (Matthew 24:14; Acts 1:8).

The Theme of the Bible

Many have debated the theme of the Bible. Some say that the Bible has no theme at all. Others say that the theme of the Bible is “redemption” or “the kingdom of God.” According to York, the theme of the Bible is “the advance of the Kingdom of God through the preaching of the gospel” (2000, 20). He states,

God has planned for [the] testimony about Jesus Christ be given to the entire inhabited earth (Genesis 12:3; 28:18-20).… I believe that the advance of the Kingdom through the preaching of the gospel (rather than the “kingdom” in some abstract sense) is best seen as the theme [of the Bible]. The Bible tells the story of an advancing Kingdom, the mission of the triune God: providing redemption, finding the lost, and then using them to mediate kingdom blessings to those yet lost. (21)

The Bible’s first clear statement of God’s mission is found in His promise to Abraham: “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:3). Fulfilling this promise thus becomes the theme of the entire Bible. God later told Abraham, “Through your offspring [seed] all nations on earth will be blessed” (Genesis 22:18). That
“Seed,” as we have already learned, is Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world (Galatians 3:16).

The Purpose of the Church

The kingdom of God exists to fulfill the mission of God. In this age, the church is the agent of God and instrument of the Kingdom in the earth. The church, therefore, exists for the same purpose as the Kingdom—to fulfill the missio Dei. York has stated,

God will bless all nations through Jesus Christ, the long promised seed and heir to the throne of David. His kingdom will include those from every nation, tribe, language, and people, and it will last forever. The church in all ages has been mandated to announce the good news of Christ’s kingdom to the whole world. (2000, 215)

The church fulfills the mission of God by doing “missions.” Missions is all that the church does to take the gospel to the lost in all the world in the power of the Spirit.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

Jesus has commanded His church to proclaim the gospel to all nations. This command is called the Great Commission. The Great Commission is found five times in the New Testament, once in each gospel and once in Acts (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:49; John 20:21-22; Acts 1:8). It is also implied in Jesus’ prophecy in Matthew 24:14 (cf. Mark 13: 10).

The Sign of His Coming

Jesus’ disciples once asked Him, “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3). Jesus answered their question by first listing the conditions that would characterize
the entire age: false messiahs, wars, rumors or wars, international conflicts, famines, earthquakes, persecution, apostasy, false prophets, wickedness, and spiritual callousness. He then said, “And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14). He thus identified the definitive sign of His coming—the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom throughout the world as a witness to every nation.

Certainly, we must study prophecy, and we must be aware of the signs of the times. However, it is not enough that we simply study end-time prophecy, and then do nothing about it. We must be about preaching the gospel to all people everywhere before Jesus comes again.

In Matthew 24:14 the Greek word translated “world” (oikoumene) means the inhabitable earth. The word translated “nation” (ethne) means tribe, ethnic group, or people group. Jesus was therefore saying that the gospel of the Kingdom must be preached in all the inhabited earth as a witness to every tribe and people group before His coming and the end of the age. In Mark 13:10 Jesus’ words are even more emphatic: “The gospel must first be preached to all nations” (emphasis added). This is the clear task of the church.

It is useful to compare Jesus’ prophecy in Matthew 24:14 with His statement of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20. Such a comparison reveals three striking similarities, as is illustrated in Figure 10.1 below. Note the following about the figure:

- Both verses speak of the primary task of the church—proclaiming the message of Christ to the lost.
- Both speak of the global scope of the task—reaching “all nations” with the gospel.
- Both speak of the duration of the task—we are to continue until “the end of the age.”

144
## The Gospel of the Kingdom Defined

Jesus spoke of the “gospel of the Kingdom.” But what does this phrase mean? There are two evangelical views concerning its meaning. The first is the dispensationalist view held by C. I. Scofield, editor of the *Scofield Study Bible*, and others. Scofield taught that the gospel of the Kingdom is the good news that God is going to set up the Davidic kingdom on the earth, and that Christ will rule over this kingdom for one thousand years. This gospel was first preached by John, Jesus, and the apostles, but was rejected by the Jews, and will not be preached again until the great tribulation period. The gospel of the Kingdom is, therefore, somehow different from the gospel we

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The primary task of the Church</th>
<th>Matthew 24:14</th>
<th>Matthew 28:19-20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached...</td>
<td>Therefore go and make disciples...</td>
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<tr>
<th>The scope of the task</th>
<th>...in the whole world as a testimony to all nations</th>
<th>...of all nations...</th>
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<tr>
<th>A description of the task</th>
<th>...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey every-thing I have commanded you.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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| The duration of the task | ...and then the end will come. | And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. |
Chapter 12: The Kingdom of God and Global Mission

preach today, which, according to the dispensationalist view, is “the gospel of the grace of God” (Scofield, 1343).

Another definition of the gospel of the Kingdom is given by George Eldon Ladd. This is the view held by most evangelical scholars today. Ladd writes, “The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Gospel which was proclaimed by the apostles in the early Church” (Ladd, 1959, 125). According to Ladd, the gospel of the Kingdom is the announcement of what God has done and will do. It is His victory over His enemies. It is the good news that Christ is coming again to destroy forever His enemies. It is a gospel of hope. It is also the Good News of what God has already done. He has already broken the power of death, defeated Satan, and overthrown the rule of sin. The gospel is one of promise but also of experience, and the promise is grounded in experience. What Christ has done guarantees what he will do. This is the gospel which we must take to the world (130).

Tom Marshall, a Pentecostal, expresses the dynamic character of the kingdom in his definition. He writes, “The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Gospel of salvation with the addition of the powers of the age to come. Jesus went through the cities and villages ‘teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom and healing every disease and sickness’ (Matthew 9:35)” (1991, 51).

The Proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom

Jesus Himself proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom (Mark 1:15). At the beginning of His ministry, He announced,

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)
In his gospel, Luke connects this proclamation of the “year of the Lord’s favor” with the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom, for in the same chapter Jesus announces, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God in other towns also, because that is why I was sent” (v. 43). Note how in both passages Jesus explains why he was sent: to “proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” and to “preach the good news of the kingdom.”

The proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom involves being anointed by the Holy Spirit. It further involves preaching good news to the poor, announcing freedom to captive and recovery of sight to the blind, and proclaiming liberty to those who are oppressed by the devil (v. 33-36). To preach the gospel of the kingdom is to proclaim that “the time of the Lord’s favor has come” (NLT). Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom included gracious words (v. 22), authoritative teaching (v. 31), powerful deliverances (vv. 33-36, 41), and miraculous healings (vv. 38-40). Our proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom should mirror that of Jesus.

In the New Testament, the gospel is called by various names (see Figure 12:2 below); however, we must remember that there is only one gospel. It is the same gospel preached by Jesus and the apostles. It is described by Paul as the message of salvation through Jesus. At its center is the message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-6). We are to preach this, and no other, gospel (Galatians 1:6-11).

What, then, are we to think about the many different names for the gospel? They simply describe different aspects of the same message. In the New Testament the term “gospel of the Kingdom” is used interchangeably with “the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15). They are the same. The term “gospel of the Kingdom,” however, reminds us that Jesus is the King who has come in the power of the Holy Spirit to set up His everlasting Kingdom among men.
Figure 12:2

**Names of the Gospel in the New Testament**

1. The gospel (Mark 11:15; Luke 4:18, and many other places)
2. The gospel of God (Rom. 1:1; 2Cor. 11:4, 7; 1 Pet. 4:17).
3. The glorious gospel of the blessed God (1 Tim. 1:11)
4. The gospel of His Son (Rom. 1:9)
5. The gospel of Christ/Christ’s gospel (Rom. 1:15, 16; 15:19, 29; 1 Cor. 9:12; 2Cor. 2:12; 3:12; 9:13; Gal. 1:7; Phil. 1:27; 1Thess. 3:2)
6. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2Thess. 1:8)
7. The gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4)
8. The gospel about Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1; Rom. 15:19)
9. The gospel of your salvation (Eph. 1:13)
10. The gospel of God’s grace (Acts 10:24)
11. The gospel of peace (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15)
12. The truth (Gal. 3:1, cf. v. 8)
13. The mystery/the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:4-6, cf. 6:19; Col. 1:26)
14. The mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16)
15. The message (2 Tim. 4:17)
16. The testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:2)
17. The unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8)
18. The word (Eph. 1:14, cf. vv. 14-18; Heb. 4:2)
19. The word of God (Rom. 10:17, KJV; 1 Thess. 2:13, cf. vv. 2, 4, 8-9; Rev. 1:2)
20. The word of the Lord (2 Thess. 3:1)
21. The word of faith (Rom. 10:8)
22. The word of Christ (Rom. 10:17)
23. The word of life (Eph. 2:16)
24. The word of the truth of the gospel (Col. 1:5)
25. Christ (Phil. 1:15; cf. vv. 14-18)
26. The gospel of your salvation (Eph. 1:13)
27. My gospel (Paul) (Rom. 2:16; 16:25; 2 Tim. 2:8)
28. Our gospel (2 Cor. 4:3; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2 Thess. 2:14)
29. The everlasting gospel (Rev. 4:16).
30. The gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:14)
What conclusions can we draw concerning the gospel of the Kingdom? The gospel of the Kingdom is the same gospel that Jesus and the apostles preached couched in the context of the following kingdom realities:

- It is the message about Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.
- The heart of the message is the death burial and resurrection of Christ.
- It must be preached in the power of the Holy Spirit with signs following.
- It is a direct challenge to the kingdom of Satan.
- It is to be preached to all nations.

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL TO THE NATIONS

Jesus said that the gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to all nations before the end of the age. Let’s look more closely at the proclamation of the gospel in all the world.

**Must Be Proclaimed**

The gospel is meant to be proclaimed. Certainly, we must study about the gospel, as we are doing in this book, but we must not stop there. The purpose of the gospel is proclamation. Someone has said that “The first word in Gospel is ‘Go.’” It’s true! Jesus said “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15).

The gospel was the first word on the lips of the evangelists and apostles in Acts. Luke says that “Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there” (Acts 8:5). After Peter and John had ministered to the believers in Samaria they “returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages” (Acts 8:25). In Ephesus, “Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8).
In his epistles, Paul said that he was “eager to preach the gospel” (Romans 1:15), and that it was his “ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known” (Romans 15:20). He felt that preaching the gospel was a sacred trust given to him by God (Galatians 2:7). In one place he said, “Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16, NASB). It was his desire to preach the gospel to “the regions beyond” (2 Corinthians 10:16), that is, the places where it had not yet been preached.

Jesus has commanded us, His missionary people, to proclaim the gospel to all nations, people, and places (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). When He was training the Twelve, He sent them out to preach the gospel (Luke 9:1). “So,” Luke says, “they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere” (v. 6; cf. Matthew 10:5-8). Later, Jesus sent out seventy-two others to proclaim the gospel. He told them to “Go!” for “the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few” (Luke 10:2-3). We too have been commissioned by Christ to proclaim the gospel to all who will hear.

Must Be Demonstrated

The gospel of the Kingdom is not only to be proclaimed, its power is to be demonstrated with signs following. Jesus set the pattern by combining preaching with a demonstration of kingdom power. Matthew wrote, “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people” (4:23; cf. 9:35). Jesus instructed His disciples to follow the same pattern: “When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1).

Later, when He sent out the seventy-two, Jesus told them, “Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near
you.”” (Luke 10:9). This was the pattern they were to follow in their ministries—proclamation must be accompanied by demonstration (Mark 3:13-15; 16:15-20). It was the pattern that was followed by the early church (Acts 8:5-6; 19:8-13; Romans 15: 18-20; 1 Corinthians 2:4). And it is the pattern for proclaiming the Kingdom until Jesus comes again.

Further, Jesus and the apostles taught that the kingdom of God comes in power. In fact, that is the only way the Kingdom can come. Any advance of the kingdom of God will be resisted by the kingdom of Satan (John 10:10; Ephesians 6:12). The powers of darkness, therefore, must be overcome in the power of the Spirit and in the authority of Christ’s name (Matthew12:28-29; 16:18-19; Mark 16:17; Luke 11:20-22).

Paul taught that the Kingdom is a demonstration of God’s power in action. He said, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter to talk but of power” (1 Corinthians 4:20). Jesus said that the Kingdom advances by force: “From the time of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing” (Matthew 11:12). The kingdom of God advances through anointed preaching of the gospel, challenging and overcoming the powers of darkness, a demonstration of signs and wonders, intercessory prayer, and acts of aggressive faith.

Our source of kingdom power is the Holy Spirit. That power is received when one is baptized in the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8), and is released as one walks and ministers in faith and in the power of the Spirit. Without this divine enabling, one should not attempt to do the work of the Kingdom (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4).

Must Be Displayed

As we take Christ to the nations, not only must the gospel of the Kingdom be proclaimed, and its power manifested, the superior life of the Kingdom must be displayed. This is how Jesus bore witness to
God’s kingdom. His persuasive power came from three sources:

1. *His anointed words.* Jesus’ words were different. The people testified, “No one ever spoke the way this man does” (John 7:46). His words were touched by the Spirit of God (John 6:63). They were “gracious” and spoken with authority (Matthew 7:29; Luke 4:22). As a result, the people gladly heard what He had to say.

2. *His mighty works.* The people were amazed as they observed His miraculous healing and deliverance ministry. As a result, news about Him spread quickly, and many people came to listen to His message about His Father’s kingdom (Matthew 4:23-25; 9:33;13:54; Mark 1: 25-28; 2:12; 5:18-20; Luke 5:24-26; 9:42-43; 11:14-15).

3. *His beautiful life.* Jesus’ pure life and love for others was well known (Mark 10:16-17: Luke 23:4; John 11:35-36). His beautiful life attracted people and opened their hearts to hear His message.

Like Jesus, our witness to the world must involve not only anointed preaching and a demonstration of God’s power; it must also involve holy and compassionate lives. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would cause us to “be witnesses unto” Him (Acts 1:8, KJV). Being a witness unto Christ involves more than just talking; it also involves living the kind of life Jesus lived—a life of purity and compassion. Such a life is manifested through the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Paul testified that he had won the Gentiles to Christ by his preaching, by the miracles God did through him, and “by the good way [he had] lived before them” (Romans 15:18-19, TLB). All three elements—anointed words, mighty works, and a beautiful life—are necessary as we seek to bear witness to the nations concerning Christ’s Kingdom.

**CONCLUSION**

The church of Jesus Christ exists to fulfill the mission of God. It has therefore been commissioned by Christ to preach the gospel to all
nations before He comes again. Jesus said that the gospel of the Kingdom would first be preached in all the world as a witness to every people, and then the end would come. As we go preaching the gospel, we must present it to the lost in three ways: through anointed proclamation, through powerful demonstrations, and through godly living.
In this book, we have examined the biblical teaching concerning the kingdom of God. We have discovered that different church communions hold different views, or have different emphases, concerning the subject. In this chapter, we will highlight some unique Pentecostal perspectives on the subject.

As stated in Chapter 2, Pentecostals hold to an evangelical view concerning the kingdom of God. However, because of their more supernatural orientation toward life and ministry, Pentecostals have some unique insights into the subject. We will divide our discussion of these insights into two categories:

- A Pentecostal approach to the kingdom of God, and
- The kingdom of God and Pentecostal ministry.

A PENTECOSTAL APPROACH TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The concept of the kingdom of God is very important in Pentecostal thinking. According to Peter Kuzmic, “The biblical motif
of the kingdom of God provides the essential theological framework for understanding the contemporary Pentecostal-charismatic phenomenon” (1998, 526). Let’s look briefly at some features of that theological framework.

Interpreting Kingdom Passages

Pentecostals often stress the fact that power is a principal feature of God’s kingdom. Paul wrote, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power” (1 Corinthians 4:20). The Church Age—or the Age of the Spirit—is marked by two key features:

- *The proclamation of the gospel.* The church’s primary task is to proclaim the gospel to all nations before the soon coming of Christ (Matthew 24:14).
- *The dynamic work of the Spirit.* The church’s work is to be carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Both characteristics are hallmarks of the modern Pentecostal movement.

Pentecostals often see the activity of the Spirit in kingdom passages that others overlook. For instance, some evangelical commentators say little about the role of the Spirit in advancing the kingdom of God in the earth. Pentecostal missiologist Paul A. Pomerville challenged,

Even evangelical approaches to the Kingdom theme can neglect the role of the Holy Spirit for a number of reasons. George Eldon Ladd’s otherwise excellent survey of the kingdom of God theme in *The Presence of the Future* (1974) is an illustration. He is unusually silent on the role of the Holy Spirit…. In what appears to be an almost studied manner he avoids the mention of the third person of the Trinity. (1985, 147)
In the Pentecostal view, however, the presence of the Kingdom is characterized by the dynamic activity of God the Holy Spirit.

**Life and Ministry in the Kingdom**

Pentecostals take great encouragement from the doctrine of the kingdom of God. They are inspired by both its present and future aspects. First, they believe that the kingdom of God is presently manifesting itself in kingdom power. They, therefore, expect to minister through the enablement of the Holy Spirit. Because of this, they are emboldened to face seemingly impossible challenges in ministry.

Pentecostals are also encouraged by the future aspect of the Kingdom. They believe that the present-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the world is a sign that the last days are drawing to an end, and that the second coming of Christ is imminent. They further believe that the purpose of the current global outpouring of the Spirit is to empower the church to evangelize all nations before Christ’s soon coming (Acts 1:8-11).

From their beginnings, Pentecostals have tied the outpouring of the Spirit to the second coming of Christ and world missions. Early Pentecostal leaders such as Charles Parham and William Seymour emphasized enablement for missions as the primary purpose of the twentieth-century Pentecostal outpouring. Church historian Gary B. McGee has noted that, “By 1910, some 185 Pentecostal missionaries had been marshaled over a four-year period from the outset of the 1906-1909 Azusa street revival” (McGee, 612). McGee stated further, from William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Mission “a new missiological paradigm would emerge for the twentieth century” (612).

Early Pentecostals often talked about the “Latter Rain.” They preached that the twentieth-century outpouring of the Spirit was a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy that God would pour out His Spirit on
the world in two stages: first as a “former rain,” and then as a “latter rain” (Joel 2:23, KJV). They contended that the former rain occurred on the Day of Pentecost and that the latter rain is today’s worldwide outpouring of the Spirit. They often noted that the latter rain comes just before the final harvest, that is, just before the second coming of Christ. They also noted how Joel indicated that the latter rain outpouring would be in greater abundance than the former outpouring of the Spirit. These beliefs inspired early Pentecostals. They believed that Jesus was coming soon and that God had given them power to preach the gospel to all nations before Christ returned.

Today we are the twenty-first century heirs of the Pentecostal mandate to reach all nations in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we are to fulfill our reason for being, we must once again come to terms with both the present and the future aspects of the kingdom of God. In the present, we must seek God for a fresh outpouring of His kingdom power. We must also cultivate a renewed expectation of the King’s soon return in the near future.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY

Because of their dynamic understanding of the kingdom of God, Pentecostals have developed a unique approach to ministry. Let’s look at three aspects of that approach:

**Pentecostal Expectations in Ministry**

Pentecostals view the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost as the definitive sign of the coming of the new age, the Age of the Spirit. They also view it as a dynamic reality in the life and ministry of the twenty-first century church. Pentecostals, therefore, expect the Kingdom to be continuously manifested until the end of the age. They thus expect supernatural help from the Spirit as they participate in fulfilling the *mission Dei*. This means that they anticipate
demonstrations of kingdom power. These supernatural demonstrations include powerful Spirit-anointed proclamation, Spirit baptisms, prophetic utterances, healings, deliverances, and miraculous interventions. A favorite verse of Pentecostals is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

A Pentecostal Model for Ministry

Pentecostals further believe that supernatural manifestations are an integral part of gospel ministry. As discussed in Chapter 7, Jesus not only proclaimed the gospel of the Kingdom, He demonstrated its power with accompanying signs. The apostolic church imitated the ministry of Jesus. Today Pentecostals look to both Jesus and the early Christians as models for kingdom ministry. They believe that demonstrations of power are a necessary component of true kingdom ministry. As they imitate the ministries of Jesus and the apostles, Pentecostals are prepared to challenge the kingdom of Satan in the power of the Spirit. With great boldness, they confront the powers of darkness and penetrate new areas with the gospel.

The Scope of Pentecostal Ministry

Pentecostals further believe that their kingdom mandate is to preach the gospel to all nations before the soon coming of Jesus Christ. Citing the final words of Jesus, they believe that this mandate can only be accomplished through the enabling power of the Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). They further believe that this enabling is for all believers, and that it comes through a powerful experience subsequent to the new birth called the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8; 2:4).

This belief has catapulted Pentecostals into all the earth preaching the full gospel of Jesus Christ. With an estimated 750 million Pentecostal/Charismatic believers in the world today, Pentecostalism has become what is possibly the greatest missionary movement in the two thousand year history of the church. Today, however,
Pentecostals face a challenge. They must decide whether or not they will remain true to their original calling to take to gospel to the nations in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our prayer is that they will. A clear understanding of the kingdom of God, its mission, and its enabling power will aid them in this endeavor.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have closely examined the biblical teaching on the kingdom of God. We have discovered that the kingdom of God is God’s sovereign rule over His creation. We have also discovered that how one views the Kingdom dramatically affects how he or she approaches ministry. A correct view of the kingdom of God is thus essential to effective ministry.

One must understand that the Kingdom is both a present reality and a future expectation. The kingdom of God has come in the person of Jesus and in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It has not, however, come in its fullness. That will not happen until Jesus comes again and establishes His Kingdom reign in the earth.

In the Old Testament, God was viewed as both the King of Israel and the King of the nations. The Hebrew prophets predicted a day when God’s eternal kingdom would be set up in the earth. In that day, the Messiah, the son of David, would rule over all nations.

When Jesus came, He boldly announced that the kingdom of God had come. This is the present aspect of the Kingdom. Jesus also announced that the Kingdom would soon come in power. That happened on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church. Now, the Kingdom manifests itself in demonstrations of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

The kingdom of God exists to carry out the mission of God, also known as the missio Dei. The church, as the present-day agent of the Kingdom, exists for the same reason. God’s mission is to redeem and
call unto Himself a people out of every nation, tribe, and tongue on
earth. Jesus has therefore commanded the church to preach the gospel
of the Kingdom to all nations before His soon return. When Christ
does return, He will set up the eternal kingdom of David, and He will
reign forever and ever.

What a wonderful privilege we have as God’s kingdom people. We have
the privilege of cooperating with Him in fulfilling His mission in the earth. He has given us His Spirit to empower us to accomplish the task. As his “sent ones” we must pray, “Thy kingdom
come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” And we must
work with the Spirit to see that prayer fulfilled.
## Appendix 1: THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE KINGDOM OF SATAN

From the Life in the Spirit Study Bible (Life Publishers)

### A. The Nature of the Kingdoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Kingdom of God</th>
<th>Kingdom of Satan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rulership</td>
<td><strong>a. Rule by God—Theocracy</strong> 2Ch 20:6; Ps 95:3; Da 4:17,32; 1Ti 1:17</td>
<td><strong>a. Rule by Satan—the god of this age</strong> Jn 12:31; 14:30; 2Co 4:4; Eph 2:2; Jn 5:19</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>b. God’s rule through his Son</strong> Ps 110:1; Isa 9:6-7; Da 7:13-14; Mt 28:18; Lk 1:32-33; Eph 1:20-22; Heb 1:3-8; Rev 1:5; 19:12-16</td>
<td><strong>b. Satan assisted by principalities, powers and rulers of this dark world</strong> Eph 1:12; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:15; cf. Da 10:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Character</td>
<td><strong>a. Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit</strong> Mt 5:33; Jn 18:36; Ro 14:17</td>
<td><strong>a. Centered in the things of this world</strong> Jn 2:15-17; 5:19; Rev 2:9,13</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>b. Divine power</strong> Lk 11:20-22; 1Co 2:4, 4:20; 1Th 1:5</td>
<td><strong>b. Disease, sickness, slavery</strong> Mt 10:1; Lk 9:1</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>c. Truth</strong> Jn 8:31-32; 14:6, 16-17; 15:26; 16:13; 17:17</td>
<td><strong>c. Deception</strong> Ge 3:4-5,13; Jn 8:44; Ro 1:25; 2Co 4:4; 2Th 2:10-12</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>d. Holiness</strong> 1Co 1:2; 2Co 6:17-7:1; Eph 4:24; Heb 12:10,14; 1Pe 1:15-16</td>
<td><strong>d. Sin and evil</strong> Ro 1:28-32; 1Co 6:9-10; Eph 2:1-3; Jn 3:7-10,12</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>e. Light</strong> Jn 1:4-9; 3:19; Ac 26:18; Col 1:12-13; 1Ti 6:16; Jn 1:5,7</td>
<td><strong>e. Darkness</strong> Lk 22:53; Ac 26:18; Eph Col 1:13; Jn 1:6; cf. 2Co 11:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Manifestation</td>
<td><strong>a. Salvation</strong> Mk 1:15; Ac 8:12; 1Co 5:10-11</td>
<td><strong>a. Destruction</strong> Jn 10:10; 1Pe 5:8</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>b. Baptism in the Holy Spirit</strong> Mt 3:2,11-12; Ac 1:3-8</td>
<td><strong>b. Filled with the spirit of the world</strong> 1Co 2:12; Jas 4:4; Jn 2:15</td>
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### Appendix 1: The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Kingdom of Satan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. The presence of Jesus</td>
<td>Mt 3:1-3; 4:17; Mk 1:14-15</td>
<td></td>
<td>d. The presence of evil spirits</td>
<td>Mt 8:28; 12:22-28; Mk 5:2-5,9; 6:17; Ac 9:16; Rev 18:2</td>
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### B. The People of the Kingdoms

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Kingdom of God</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Kingdom of Satan</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Entrance</td>
<td>a. Repentance and forgiveness</td>
<td>Mk 1:15; Ac 2:37-38; Uri 1:9</td>
<td></td>
<td>a. All unregenerate humanity</td>
<td>Ro 3:23; 5:12; Eph 2:2-3; Col 1:13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Humility</td>
<td>Mt 18:3; Mk 10:15</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Pride, independence</td>
<td>Ps 2:1-2; Pr 16:18; Ez 16:40-50; Da 4:30; Ob 3; Ro 1:30; 2Ti 3:2; Jude 16</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. New birth</td>
<td>Jn 3:3,5</td>
<td></td>
<td>d. Spiritual death</td>
<td>Ro 5:12,17; 6:23; Eph 2:1; Col 2:13</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Union with Christ</td>
<td>Ro 6:3-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>e. Separation from God</td>
<td>Eph 2:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Characteristics of Members</td>
<td>a. Children of God</td>
<td>Jn 1:12-13; 3:3-5; Ro 8:15; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5</td>
<td></td>
<td>a. Children of Satan</td>
<td>Jn 8:44; 1Jn 3:8-10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Faith and obedience</td>
<td>Mt 6:25-32; Jn 14:21; Ro 1:5; 16:26; Heb 11:6</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Unbelief and rebellion</td>
<td>Mt 17:17; Lk 12:46; 2Th 3:2; Tit 1:15; Rev 21:8</td>
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## Appendix 1: The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan

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<tr>
<td>2. Characteristics of Members (cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Eternal life</td>
<td>Walk in the light</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Walk in darkness</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Devoted to the truth</td>
<td>Humble and childlike, living righteously</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Love things of the world</td>
<td>Meekness and submission</td>
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<td>g. Love by the sinful nature</td>
<td>Freedom in Christ</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Wicked, disobedient and immoral</td>
<td>Holiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Arrogance and self-assertion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Bondage to sin and Satan</td>
<td>Hatred and hostility</td>
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<td>k. Decent</td>
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<td>l. Love</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>m. Bitterness</td>
<td>Goodly influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>n. Corrupting influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>o. Lust and immorality</td>
<td>Sexual purity and marital faithfulness</td>
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<tr>
<td>p. Greed and covetousness</td>
<td>Futility</td>
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<td>q. Unlovely</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Characteristics of Members (cont.)</td>
<td>r. Upright speech</td>
<td>Ex 20:16; Pr 10:19-21; Ec 5:2,5-7; Eph 4:29; 5:4; Jas 1:26; 3:1-2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>s. Inherit the kingdom</td>
<td>Mt 25:34-40; Jn 3:3-5; 1Co 6:11; Rev 21:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Duties</td>
<td>a. Worship only God</td>
<td>Ex 20:2-6; Mt 4:10; Jn 4:23-24; 1Th 1:9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Hate sin and Satan</td>
<td>Ps 139:21; Ro 12:9; Heb 1:9; 1Jn 2:15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c. Seek to advance God’s kingdom and his righteousness</td>
<td>Mt 6:31-33; 11:12; 28:19-20; Ac 1:6-8; 19:8; 28:23,31; Col 4:11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d. Do not love the world</td>
<td>Mt 6:19-24; Jn 17:15-16; Ro 12:1-2; 1Co 10:21-22; 2Co 6:14-18; 2Ti 3:1-5; Jas 4:4; 1Jn 2:15-17</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e. Wait for Christ’s return heaven</td>
<td>1Th 1:10; 4:13-18; 1Ti 4:8; Tit 2:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Power and dominion</td>
<td>a. Personal level</td>
<td>Lk 10:17; Jn 16:33; Ro 6:12-14; Ro 6:12,14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Family level</td>
<td>Dt 6:1-9; 1Co 11:3; Eph 5:22-6:4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c. Church level</td>
<td>Mt 5:13-20; 18:15-20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d. Business level</td>
<td>Lk 16:1-13; Col 3:23-25</td>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Characteristics of Members (cont.)</td>
<td>r. Corrupt speech</td>
<td>Pr 10:18; 15:28; Ro 3:13-14</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>s. Do not inherit the kingdom</td>
<td>1Co 6:9-11; Gal 5:21; Ep 5:5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Duties</td>
<td>a. Idolatry; living for self; ultimately worshiping Satan and antichrist</td>
<td>Da 11:30-33; 2Th 2:4; Rev 13:4,8,12,15</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Hate and persecute believers; hate Christ and righteousness</td>
<td>Jn 15:19; 16:3; 17:14; 2Ti 3:12; Rev 12:13,17</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Power and dominion</td>
<td>a. Personal level</td>
<td>Jn 8:23; Eph 2:1; 1Jn 3:8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Family level</td>
<td>Lk 16:27-31; 21:16; 2Ti 3:2-3,6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c. Organizational Level</td>
<td>Jn 12:31; Eph 6:12; Rev 13:1-11; 17:18</td>
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## C. The Warfare of the Kingdoms

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<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. All power belongs eternally to Christ</td>
<td>Mt 28:18; 1Jn 4:4</td>
<td></td>
<td>d. Satan has only temporary and limited power</td>
<td>Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Lk 22:53; Rev 20:7-9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e. Deliverance from sin and disease provided through the cross</td>
<td>Isa 53; 1Pe 2:24</td>
<td></td>
<td>e. Satan cannot withstand the power of the cross</td>
<td>2Co 4:10; Rev 12:10-11</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Final victory belongs to Christ</td>
<td>2Th 2:7-8; 2Pe 3:10-13; Rev 17:14; 19:11-21</td>
<td></td>
<td>f. Satan will be finally defeated and destroyed</td>
<td>Mt 25:41,46; Jn 16:11; Rev 20:10-14-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Believers' warfare with Satan</td>
<td>a. Believers hate sin and seek to destroy the works of the devil</td>
<td>Mt 12:29-30; Mk 3:27; Lk 11:21-23</td>
<td></td>
<td>a. Satan hates and persecutes believers</td>
<td>Jn 15:19; 17:14; Rev 12:13,17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. The weapons of believers are spiritual and not worldly</td>
<td>Mt 26:52; 2Co 10:4-5; Eph 6:10-17</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Satan uses the world, the sinful nature and the demonic against believers</td>
<td>2Co 11:3,14-15; Gal 5:17-21; Eph 6:11-12; 1Pe 2:11; 5:8; Rev 12:13,17; 13:15-18</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Believers are given authority to drive out demons</td>
<td>Mk 3:14-15; 6:7; 16:17; Lk 9:1-2; 10:17; Ac 5:16; 8:7; 16:18; 19:12</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. Demons try to destroy believers spiritually</td>
<td>Mk 9:17-18; Ac 8:7; 16:16-17; 1Pe 5:8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e. By the cross believers are dead to the world</td>
<td>Gal 6:14; Heb 11:25-26</td>
<td></td>
<td>e. Satan entices to sinful pleasures of the world</td>
<td>Php 3:19; 2Ti 3:4; 1Jn 2:16-17</td>
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Appendix 2

Review Questions

Chapter 1: The Meaning of the Kingdom of God

1. In what three ways can the kingdom of God be viewed?
2. What are the Hebrew and Greek words for “kingdom”? What is their meaning?
3. What are the two main names for the kingdom of God in the New Testament?
4. Why do we say that the names are used interchangeably?
5. Where is the phrase “kingdom of heaven” found? Why does this writer use this phrase?
6. What are some other names for the kingdom of God in the New Testament?
7. What do we mean when we say that the kingdom of God is everlasting?
8. When we say the kingdom of God has appeared in history, what time frame are we talking about?
10. What are the two tenses of the kingdom of God?
11. What did Jesus mean when He said, “the kingdom of God is at hand”?
12. Explain how the kingdom of God is a present reality.
13. When will the kingdom of God come in the future?
14. What do we mean when we say that the kingdom of God is greater and more enduring than the church?
15. From Figure 1.4
   • What is the duration of the Kingdom?
   • What is the duration of the church?
Appendix 2: Review Questions

- Who are the subjects of the Kingdom?
- Who are the subjects (members) of the church?

16. What is the church’s mission?
17. What power has the church been given to accomplish this mission?

Chapter 2: Historical Overview of Thought on the Kingdom

1. What caused the Early Post-Apostolic Church to develop a tendency to withdraw from worldly affairs?
2. How did this affect their view of the kingdom of God?
3. What did Constantine do, and how did it affect the church?
4. How did this influence the church’s view of the kingdom of God?
5. What book greatly influenced the medieval church? Who was the author? What did the book teach about the kingdom of God?
6. How did this view influence the relationship of the church with the state?
7. How did this view affect the church’s idea of doing missions?
8. What was the Reformation?
9. What was the reformers’ view of the kingdom of God?
10. How did John Calvin try to institute the kingdom of God into people’s lives?
11. How was Albrecht Ritschl and his followers influenced in their teaching about the kingdom of God through the writings of Charles Darwin?
12. How did Ritschl’s views concerning the kingdom of God relate the idea of the second coming of Christ?
13. What is humanism and how does it relate to Ritschl’s teaching?
14. Describe Weiss and Schweitzer’s “thoroughgoing eschatology” concerning the kingdom of God.
15. Describe Charles Dodd’s “realized eschatology” concerning the kingdom of God.
Appendix 2: Review Questions

16. How have evangelical theologians responded to these two teachings?
17. What did early Pentecostals think about the kingdom of God? What influenced their thinking?
18. What did Pentecostal scholars eventually realize about the teaching of dispensationalism?
19. How did Assemblies of God theologians, such as Williams and Horton see the kingdom of God?
20. What did Melvin L. Hodges teach about the church, the kingdom of God, and their relationship to missions?
21. What did Ruth A. Breusch write about the relationship between the church, the kingdom of God, and missions?
22. What did Paul A. Pomerville say about the relationship between the kingdom of God and Pentecostal theology?
23. How does Pomerville say that the kingdom of God is advanced in the world?
24. What is the “kingdom now” theology? How is it different from most Pentecostal theology concerning the kingdom of God?
25. How has Pentecostal teaching concerning the kingdom of God changed during recent years?

Chapter 3: The Kingdom of God: A Present Reality

1. How did John the Baptist and Jesus announce Jesus’ ministry?
2. What did Jesus say about the kingdom of God in Matthew 11:12?
3. Where in the Bible is Jesus’ “Nazareth Manifesto” found?
4. By quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2, what was Jesus claiming about Himself?
5. What was Jesus’ fivefold agenda for ministry as outlined in His Nazareth Manifesto?
6. How did Jesus go about fulfilling His fivefold agenda of ministry? What things did He do? What things did He not do?
Appendix 2: Review Questions

7. What did Jesus’ Nazareth Manifesto reveal about the time of His kingdom ministry?
8. What was the source of power for Jesus’ kingdom ministry?
9. List seven ways Jesus performed His ministry in the power of the Spirit?
10. What were Jesus’ parting words concerning the kingdom of God, according to Acts 1:3-8?
11. What were the two vital kingdom issues He talked about at this time?
12. When and how did Jesus transfer His anointing to His church?
14. How are we to be imitators of Christ in doing ministry?
15. When we pray “Your kingdom come” (Matthew 6:10), what four things are asking God for?
16. How can we in this age taste of the powers of the age to come?
17. From Figure 4.1, what are some of the ways the kingdom of God has come in the past and how will it come in the future? How does it come today?
18. According to Don Williams, how does the fact that the kingdom of God has not fully come explain our present experience?

Chapter 4: The Kingdom of God: A Future Prospect

1. Based on Table 3.1,
   • When did “This Age” begin? When will the “Age to Come” begin?
   • How long will “This age” endure? How long will the “Age to Come” endure?
   • What began with Christ’s first coming? When will it be consummated?
   • Characterize “This Age.” Characterize the “Age to Come.”
2. Based on Table 4.2,
   • How does This Age relate to the kingdom of God?
   • How does The Age to Come relate to the kingdom of God?
3. What do we mean when we say that the coming of the Kingdom will be apocalyptic?
4. According to Matthew 24:36, who knows when Jesus will return? What does this truth mean to us today?
5. What final separation will take place when Jesus comes again?
6. Describe two events that will take place for the righteous soon after Jesus comes.
7. What other blessing will the righteous receive?
9. Describe Christ’s reign in the Millennial Kingdom.
10. What will happen to Israel before Christ sets up His thousand-year reign on earth?
11. Describe the transformation that will take place in the world during the Millennial Reign of Christ.
12. List three great acts of God that will conclude the Millennial Kingdom and begin the Eternal Kingdom.
13. Based on this section, what four things can be said about the Millennial Kingdom?
15. Describe the New Jerusalem.
16. Describe the River of Life that will flow through the New Jerusalem.
17. What must happen before the future kingdom comes?
18. What two dramatic events will separate the present from the future manifestation of the Kingdom?
19. When Jesus’ disciples asked Him about the time of His coming, how did He answer them?
20. What two “ends” will happen together at the end of the age?
21. How can we “hasten the coming day of the Lord”?
Chapter 5: The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament

1. How is the kingdom of God described in the Old Testament?
2. Why do we say that the Old Testament was a time of anticipation and hope concerning the kingdom of God?
3. How does creation relate to God’s sovereign rulership over the nations?
4. How is Adam and Eve’s life in Eden an early example of life in the Kingdom?
5. How to the “theocratic covenants” relate to the kingdom of God?
6. What was God’s intention for the nation of Israel? How did they subvert that intention?
7. How can the sad story of the Historical Books be a lesson for us today?
8. List four of God’s kingly titles in the Psalms.
9. What does Psalm 2 say about the coming Davidic king?
10. Where in the book of Acts is this Psalm quoted? Who do the apostles identify as the “Anointed One”?
11. How is Jehovah described in Psalm 47? How are the nations called to respond to Him?
12. How does Isaiah describe Jehovah in 6:1-5?
13. How does he describe Jehovah in Isaiah 43:15 and 44:6?
15. How does Daniel present Jehovah in his book?
16. Describe and explain Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. How does this dream relate to the kingdom of God?
17. What four truths did Isaiah reveal about the coming Messiah-King in 9:6-7?
18. How did Jeremiah describe the coming Messiah-King in 23:5-6?
19. What second dream did Nebuchadnezzar have? How did Daniel interpret the meaning of the rock that was “cut out, but not with human hands”?
20. Describe the people’s view toward the coming Messiah during the Intertestamental Period.
21. Why were the people so ready to hear the message of John the Baptist when he came announcing that “the kingdom of God is at hand”?
22. Describe the view of the Pharisees concerning the coming Messiah. Describe the view of the Zealots.
23. Why were the Jews disappointed with how Jesus, the Messiah came?
24. How has the church inherited the Jews’ special mission of taking the message of God to the nations?

Chapter 6: The Kingdom of God and the Theocratic Covenants

1. Name four important theocratic covenants in the Old Testament.
2. Where is the Abrahamic Covenant found in Scripture?
3. Of its seven promises, which one is the most important? Why?
4. How did God later reconfirm His covenant with Abraham?
5. How did God tell Abraham that the blessings of all nation would come? (Genesis 22:18 and 26:4)
6. Where in the Bible is the first mention of a redemptive seed?
7. With whom did Paul identify this seed? (Galatians 3:16)
8. Which verse in the Bible has been called the mission statement of the Bible? Why?
9. Why do we say that the Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional covenant? What is the significance of it being unconditional?
10. Where in Scripture is the Mosaic Covenant found?
11. What was God’s purpose in making this covenant with Israel?
12. What was the function of priests in the Old Testament?
13. What were Israel’s duties as a kingdom of priests?
14. What was the purpose of Israel being a “holy nation?”
15. How has the church inherited Israel’s duty as a “kingdom of priests” and a “holy nation”?
16. Why was the Law of God given to Israel?
17. Why is the Mosaic Covenant also called the Sinaitic Covenant?
18. Why do we say that the Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant?
19. What was Israel’s responsibility concerning the Mosaic Covenant? What was God’s?
20. How did Israel fail to keep the Mosaic Covenant?
21. What was the message of the Old Testament prophets to the nation of Israel?
22. Describe the nature of the “prophetic voices” that God is raising up in Africa today.
23. Where in Scripture is the Davidic Covenant found?
24. What was the purpose of this covenant? Who were the parties?
25. List the three parts of the promise that God made to David.
26. What was the purpose of each part of the promise? Explain your answers.
27. How was the Davidic Covenant a charter (torah) for mankind?
28. What is the significance of Jesus being called “the son of David, the son of Abraham” in Matthew 1:1?
29. What is our responsibility concerning the Davidic Covenant today?
30. Where is the fourth theocratic covenant, the New Covenant, found in Scripture?
31. How is this covenant different from the Old Covenant?
32. List the four provisions of the New Covenant.
33. Who is the mediator of the New Covenant?
34. When and how was the New Covenant established?
35. How does the New Covenant accomplish what the Old Covenant could not do?
36. Based on Figure 5.1 answer the following questions:
Appendix 2: Review Questions

- Which covenants were unconditional? Which were conditional?
- How does each covenant relate to the *missio Dei*?

37. Describe how the Jews thought about the Messiah during the Intertestamental Period?

38. Why did Jesus fail to meet the Jews expectations for the Messiah?

39. What did the Pharisees believe concerning the coming of the Messiah? What did the Zealots believe?

40. How did Jesus disappoint them both?

41. Why was the kingdom taken away from the Jews?

42. To whom was it given?

43. What is the mission of the church today?

Chapter 7: The Kingdom of God in the Ministry of Jesus

1. How did both John the Baptist and Jesus announce the Kingdom?

2. What were the two emphases of Jesus’ teaching concerning the kingdom of God?

3. What is the purpose of the kingdom of God?

4. What is God’s mission?

5. Where in Scripture does Jesus sum up God’s plan to fulfill His mission?

6. What are the three parts of God’s fulfilling His mission according to Matthew 24:14?


8. According to Matthew 24:14, what must happen before the end of the age comes?

9. Why does God not simply destroy the kingdom of Satan and be done with it?

10. What is a mystery in the New Testament?

11. What are the mysteries of the Kingdom?
Appendix 2: Review Questions

12. Name one of the main ways Jesus taught about the kingdom of God.
13. Where in the gospels are a number of Kingdom Parables found?
14. Why did Jesus tell these parables?
15. Name a major theme of the Kingdom Parables.
16. From Figure 6.1 list six parables containing a harvest theme.
17. According to John York, which parable is central to understanding the kingdom of God? Where is it found in Scripture?
18. Why is harvest a key theme in Jesus’ kingdom parables?
19. Cite three passages where the harvest theme is found in Jesus’ teaching.
20. What do we mean when we say that the kingdom of God is an “upside-down kingdom”?
21. How is the kingdom leader different from the worldly leader?
22. List five paradoxes of the Kingdom.
23. List 13 of Jesus’ teaching in His Sermon on the Mount that are in opposition to the wisdom of the world?
24. How is the nature of worldly kingdom different from the nature of the kingdom of God?
25. Describe the “great reversal” that is coming.
26. How did Jesus teach about the kingdom of God through His works?
27. List three important lessons Jesus taught about the kingdom of God through His works.

Chapter 8: The Kingdom of God in Apostolic Proclamation

1. How do some liberal theologians say that the apostles changed the message of Jesus concerning the kingdom of God?
2. Is their claim true? Why or why not?
Appendix 2: Review Questions

3. What change must one realize takes place in the writings of the apostles before he or she can understand the place of the Kingdom in the New Testament church?

4. List four ways it can be demonstrated that the message of the kingdom of God was central to the apostles’ teaching and preaching.

5. How many times is the kingdom of God mentioned in the book of Acts?
   List these references.

6. How many times is the kingdom of God mentioned in the first six verses of Acts?

7. How does Acts end with an emphasis on the kingdom of God?

8. What can we conclude from these facts?

9. Name three kingdom themes about which Jesus spoke during the forty days between his resurrection and his ascension.

10. Cite six other mentions of the kingdom of God in Acts.

11. What does Paul say about the kingdom of God in Romans?

12. What does Paul say about the kingdom of God in 1 Corinthians?

13. What does Paul say about the kingdom of God in Galatians and Ephesians?

14. What does Paul say about the kingdom of God in 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, and 2 Timothy?

15. What does Paul say about the kingdom of God in Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, and Jude?

16. List ten things the book of Revelation teaches about the kingdom of God.

17. What conclusions can we draw from what we have learned thus far in this chapter?

18. What subtle change is made in teaching about the kingdom of God in the writings of Luke, Paul, and John?

19. List six synonymous terms used by Jesus in Matthew 19:16-30. What can we conclude from this exercise?
20. According to Peter Kuzmic, what change in kingdom terminology did the apostles make?
21. What conclusion can we make concerning the terminology of the Kingdom by comparing Acts 8:5 with Acts 8:12?
22. What conclusion can we make concerning the terminology of the Kingdom by comparing Acts 28:23 with Acts 28:31?
23. What three synonymous phrases did John use in John 3:3-17?
24. What conclusions can we draw from this understanding?
25. What substitution did Paul make in his epistles for the Old Testament and Gospel word “King?”
26. What was the “anthem” of the New Testament church?
27. Why did Paul change the phrase “Jesus is King” to “Christ is Lord?”

Chapter 9: Life in the Kingdom of God

1. What two attitudes did Jesus say were necessary for one to enter the kingdom of God?
2. In John 3:3-5 what did Jesus say one must do to enter the kingdom of God?
3. What two elements must be present for a person to be born again?
4. What must one do to enter the coming Kingdom?
5. What is involved in doing this?
6. How does the Bible describe life in the Kingdom?
7. How is the kingdom of God a “kingdom of life”?
8. What do we mean when we say that the kingdom of God is a kingdom of light?
9. What is the source of one’s joy and peace in the Kingdom?
10. Define righteousness.
11. Describe the high standard of righteousness that we are to live in the Kingdom.
12. How do the standards of Jesus concerning righteousness differ from the standard of the Law?
13. How is the righteousness of Christ imparted unto us?
14. How is the kingdom of God different from the kingdoms of the world?
15. How did Jesus respond when He saw people “harassed and helpless?”
16. List several ways that Jesus responded to people with compassion.
17. What does the parable of the Good Samaritan teach us about how we should respond to people in need?
18. Since the kingdom of God is a kingdom of compassion, it is also a kingdom of ______________.
19. Where in the Bible is the kingdom of God seen as a kingdom of power?
20. Where does this kingdom power come from?
22. List three responsibilities of living in the Kingdom.
23. In Luke 19:10 Jesus taught that the kingdom of God must be ________ pursued.
24. What is the means by which one appropriates the blessings of the Kingdom?
25. List eight other responsibilities of laying hold of the kingdom of God.
26. What is the primary way we advance the kingdom of God in the earth?
27. List five places in Scripture where Jesus commanded His church to preach take the gospel to all nations.
28. List three things we must do to advance the Kingdom in the whole world.
29. List six additional responsibilities we have in forcefully advancing the kingdom of God.

Chapter 10: The Sermon on the Mount and the Kingdom of God

1. How is the Sermon on the Mount connected with the kingdom of God?
2. How many times does Jesus mention the Kingdom in His sermon?
3. Why do some people call the Sermon on the Mount the “Constitution of the Kingdom”? 
4. What three sayings of Jesus are at the heart of His Sermon on the Mount?
5. How is the “plan of salvation” concept only a partial understanding of what it means to be a citizen of God’s kingdom?
6. Jesus said that when we are born again we are able to see the kingdom of God and to enter into it (John 3:3-5). What are the implications of these truths?
7. Describe the context out of which Jesus preached His Sermon on the Mount.
8. What do we mean when we say that Jesus’ life exemplified what He taught in the Sermon on the Mount?
9. In the Beatitudes, how many times did Jesus speak of being “blessed”?
10. What is the meaning of shalom blessing?
11. What kind of blessings come from living in God’s kingdom?
12. What are some of the conditions for receiving blessing in God’s kingdom?
13. What two illustrations does Jesus use to describe how citizens of the Kingdom are to be influencers?
14. What word does Jesus use to characterize the moral principles we are to live by as representatives of His kingdom?
15. How does Jesus describe the relationship between His teaching on righteousness and the same teachings of the Old Covenant?
16. How does our righteousness under the New Covenant compare with the righteousness that was required under the Law?
17. What enables us to keep the Law of Christ?
18. How did Jesus sum up the requirements for living righteously in His kingdom?
19. What four examples did Jesus give to show how the ethics of His kingdom surpass the ethics of the Old Covenant?
20. How did Jesus say we, as citizens of His kingdom, are to respond when we are treated unjustly?
22. How are we to relate to our enemies?
23. What instructions did Jesus give concerning how we are to give our offerings to God? How are we to pray? How are we to fast?
24. Why did Jesus give us the Lord’s Prayer? How can we use it in our daily prayers?
25. How can we best invest our time, talents, and money?
26. Why, as citizens of God’s kingdom, does Jesus tell us not to fret over such things as food and clothing?
27. What statement, more than any other, sums up Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount? (6:33)
28. List the seven “kingdom directives” that Jesus gives in His sermon.
29. What did Jesus mean when He said, “Do not throw your pearls to pigs”?
30. Why can we trust our heavenly Father to answer our prayers?
31. What does the Golden Rule teach about how we should treat other people?
32. What did Jesus mean when we must “enter through the narrow gate”?
33. Jesus warned against false prophets. How can we identify false prophets today?
Appendix 2: Review Questions

35. What warning does Jesus give concerning those who think they are citizens in the Kingdom but are not?
36. What final application does Jesus make to teach that we must do more than listen to His words?
37. Describe the people’s response to His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

Chapter 11: The Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God

1. What were Jesus’ two great kingdom goals?
2. How does John the Baptist describe those two goals in John 1:29-33?
3. Describe the content and character of Jesus’ kingdom ministry?
5. How did John the Baptist testify concerning Jesus anointing in John 3:34-35?
6. How did Peter describe His ministry in Acts 10:38?
7. How did Jesus defeat Satan?
8. How did the Spirit aid Jesus in His work of redemption on the cross?
9. Explain how Jesus’ disciples inherited his kingdom ministry.
10. How did they receive power to perform kingdom ministry? How may we today?
11. Cite two passages in which Jesus tied the kingdom of God to Pentecost.
   Explain your answer.
12. Explain how Pentecost relates to the “already” and “not yet” aspects of the kingdom of God.
13. What is meant by the concept of “transfer motif?”
14. Describe three instances in the Old Testament where the Spirit was transferred from a charismatic leader to his followers.
15. When and how did Jesus transfer His kingdom power to His disciples?
16. What were the two effects of this transfer on the disciples?
17. To whom is God’s kingdom power available today? How did Peter announce this fact?
18. What powers did the church experience at Pentecost? How can we experience that same power today?
19. What kind of community did Christ launch at Pentecost? What was its purpose?
20. How is the church depicted as a kingdom community in Acts?
21. How can believers be empowered to do Kingdom ministry?
22. What do we mean when we say that the church is an eschatological community?
23. Describe the last days.
24. What do we mean when we say that the church is a pneumatic community?
25. List six responsibilities of the church as a pneumatic community.
26. What do we mean when we say that the church is a prophetic community?
27. Cite three Scripture passages indicating that God’s people are to be a prophetic people.
28. What is the distinguishing sign of God’s prophetic community? Explain your answer.
29. What do we mean when we say that the church is a charismatic community?
30. What causes a church to become a charismatic community?
31. How is the Pentecostal outpouring related to the church missionary calling?
32. List six ways that Christ’s Spirit-anointed community is depicted in Acts.
33. List three facts that demonstrate the missionary nature of Pentecost.
Chapter 12: The Kingdom of God and Global Mission

1. What is meant by the Latin term the *missio Dei*?
2. What is God’s mission?
3. How is God’s mission accomplished?
4. According to John York, what is the theme of the Bible?
5. What promise did God make to Abraham that reveals the theme of the Bible?
6. What is the purpose of the church?
7. How is the church related to the kingdom of God?
8. How does the church fulfill its mission in the earth?
9. Memorize the six Great Commission passages mentioned above.
10. What is the definitive sign of Christ’s coming?
11. What is the main purpose we study end-time prophecy?
12. How does Matthew 24:14 define the mission of the church?
13. According to Figure 10:1,
   - What is the primary task of the church?
   - What is the scope of the church’s task?
   - What is the duration of the church’s task?
14. Describe the dispensationalist view concerning the gospel of the Kingdom.
15. Describe the view concerning the gospel of the Kingdom held by most evangelical scholars today.
16. What is Tom Marshall’s definition of the gospel of the Kingdom?
17. According to Figure 10.2, how many names are used to describe the gospel in the New Testament? How many gospels are there?
18. What unique truth does the term “gospel of the Kingdom” remind us about the gospel?
19. State five kingdom realities that form the context for preaching the gospel of the Kingdom.
Appendix 2: Review Questions

20. What is our main responsibility concerning the gospel of the Kingdom?
21. What did Jesus do with the gospel of the Kingdom?
22. Describe how Philip, Peter, and Paul preached the gospel of the Kingdom?
23. What is our responsibility today concerning the gospel of the Kingdom?
24. Describe how Jesus set the pattern for preaching the kingdom of God.
25. How did Jesus instruct His disciples concerning the pattern?
26. What should be our pattern today concerning preaching the kingdom of God?
27. What is the only way that the kingdom of God can come? Explain your answer.
28. From what experience do disciples receive kingdom power? How important is this experience?
29. State three sources of Jesus’ persuasive power?
30. How must our witness to the world be like Jesus’ witness to the world?
31. Explain how “being a witness unto Christ” involves more than just words.

Chapter 13: Pentecostal Perspectives on the Kingdom of God

1. List two characteristics of the Church Age or Age of the Spirit.
2. How do these two characteristics relate to the modern Pentecostal movement?
3. How have Pentecostal scholars criticized the non-Pentecostal understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the advancing the kingdom of God?
4. How are Pentecostals encouraged by both the present and future aspects of the kingdom of God?
Appendix 2: Review Questions

5. Describe the early Pentecostal teaching concerning the former and latter rain in Joel 2:23.

6. How has this teaching encouraged Pentecostals to take the gospel to the nations?

7. In what two ways must twenty-first century Pentecostals come to terms with the present and future aspects of the kingdom of God?

8. In what ways do Pentecostals expect the kingdom to be manifested until the end of the age?

9. Describe a Pentecostal model of ministry based on their understanding of the kingdom of God.

10. How does this model for ministry affect the way they confront the powers of darkness and penetrate new areas with the gospel?

11. According to Pentecostal belief, what is the necessary element in accomplishing the church’s kingdom mandate?

12. How is this enabling power received? Who is it for?
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Walking with the Holy Spirit: Thirty Days of Spiritual Discovery (2017)

These books can be purchased on the author’s website: www.DenzilRMiller.com
According to veteran missionary and author, Denzil R. Miller, a correct understanding of the kingdom of God can profoundly affect both our lives and our ministries. When we understand that the kingdom of God is a present reality in the world today, and when we understand that kingdom power can be actively at work in our lives and ministries, a tremendous confidence comes into our hearts. We are encouraged to preach with power and pray with boldness. And when we understand that the King is coming again to set up His eternal Kingdom in the earth, we are inspired to work to see that the nations hear the message of His salvation.

Denzil R. Miller is director of the Acts in Africa Initiative, a ministry aimed at helping the African church mobilize for Spirit-empowered missions. He holds a doctor of ministry degree from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary. Miller has written several books on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and in the work of missions.

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