

# The Kingdom

What did Jesus mean when he said the Kingdom of God was at hand Or maybe a better question would be, what did the average 1<sup>st</sup> Century Galilean think it meant when he said it? This idea of "The Kingdom" is central to understanding Jesus' message. Jesus believed and acted on at least two vital points that need to be discussed. First, he understood that the creator God did not intend Israel to be just an "example" of a nation living under God, but rather a means through which the entire creation would be reconciled back to God, saved. Second, Jesus believed his purpose was to bring Israel's history to a great climactic end. Not the end of the space-time cosmos, but rather one in which Israel herself would be saved from their foreign oppressors, God would at last bring his love and justice, his mercy and truth, and one in which God would bring renewal and healing to all creation. This "Kingdom" Jesus speaks of, was inaugurated with one single act, the Resurrection.

-(**Luke 24|13-51**) *God's Faithfulness*: Fulfillment at last!

- What did Jesus' death and resurrection represent?  
**(Jesus' death was the fulfillment of God's covenant to Israel. While they never lived up to their end of the bargain, God never skipped a beat. He, in Jesus, gave Israel a King in the line of David, a temple or place where heaven and earth overlap, and an end to exile and freedom from their oppressor. BUT, it was not exactly how the Jews thought it was would be. Jesus was all human and all god, thus being the perfect king, one that not only would now rule over the entire earth, but since he could do so from heaven, his kingdom will never. The temple was the place where the Jews could come and worship God. It was a place where heaven and earth overlapped. Jesus, in so many words throughout the New Testament, states that he is the temple and in him, being completely human and completely God, heaven and earth overlapped. Finally, the ending of exile was probably the biggest sign to the Jewish people, that God had finally acted to vindicate them, but their exile was from**

**God's true enemy sin, not from any empire, which many Jews of that day thought it would be.)**

-(**Mark 15|31-39**) *The man behind the curtain*: "God with us"

- What did the ripping of the temple curtain represent?  
**(The separation between God and his people, was no longer necessary, seeing how Jesus took care of sin and now everyone had access to God in a very personal way. It was also an invitation for all to come into the new temple, Jesus, to see God for who he truly was and still is.)**

-( **Sermon mt 5-7** ) *The Call to a Renewed People*: Repent and Believe.

-Dramatic play that was looking for actors

-Repent today verses, Repent then

- Josephus "repent and believe in me"
- Give up what you think and trust in what is

-Renewal=new temple completion and

-Not ending Judaism and starting something new, but rather a return from exile for the true people of God. The reconstruction of Israel.

-(**Col 1|2-15**) *Never forget where we come from*: Flood, Exodus, and Exile.

- How is baptism like circumcision? (ref. Genesis 17)  
**(Both are your covenantal signs of belonging to God's kingdom. Circumcision was entrance into being God's people, as baptism is now that entrance. If you were not circumcised pre-Christ or baptized post-Christ, then you were not considered one of God's people.)**

-(**1 Peter 3|18-21** and **Exodus Story**)

- What does baptism symbolically represent?  
**(The Flood and Exodus stories. Leaving behind the enemies of God, in the water, to become his people. Leaving behind your exile and coming into God's covenant promise. Now baptism, represents those things by leaving behind the true enemy of God, sin, and becoming part of his Kingdom by entering through the door, now open to all who believe, of baptism.)**

- What would happen if we could just believe and not get baptized, for salvation?

**(We would not understand where we came from and what God has been doing throughout time for us. He has been preparing us, by allowing our people, Israel, to go through similar situations, so when the time came to fulfill the covenant, we all would recognize without a doubt that the Kingdom has come, but salvation is available. We also would never have a definite sign (like circumcision) that we have entered into God's Kingdom and he recognizes us as one of His people. Baptism is a gift from God. It is something he created to give us assurance of our salvation and assure that he has finally fulfilled the covenant he promised us so long ago.)**

**- (Romans 6|1-7)**

- How does being buried with Christ in baptism, symbolize the flood or the exodus?

**(In order for Good to survive, evil needs to be destroyed. The flood took sin and destroyed it. The exodus waters destroyed the enemy of Israel, which represented their old way of life. Likewise, in baptism when we die, we no longer can live for sin, it has been destroyed. We have had exodus from our old way of life into a new one. Also, sin we were a slave to sin, just like Israel was a slave to the Egyptians, when we die or exit our old life, we are no longer a slave to our enemy, sin, but rather free to serve God as his people.)**

- What is the hope of a baptized believer, this scripture speaks of?  
**(Resurrection! That some day we will be united with Christ in his resurrection. This day comes when Jesus comes back and makes all things new (2 Pet 3|13, Rev 21|5). These new things include our bodies. We will be just like the resurrected Jesus, the gospels speak. We will kind of be the same, but very much different! In baptism, you are reaching into the future and asking God to judge you now, but not by your life, but Jesus', thus "being buried with him". You are asking God to enter you into the "age to come", now. While**

**everyone else (non-Christians) will have to wait to the end of the space-time cosmos.)**