

Kingdom Come: Power

Acts 1:1-11

- **What would Ventura County look like if Jesus were King?**
- **And what should the Church look like since Jesus is king?**

- Intro...

- '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 presented himself to them, 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. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." Then they gathered around him and 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." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." **(Acts 1:1-11 NIV)**

Prayer

- After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples, over a period of 40 days, and He spoke to them about the **Kingdom of God**, and the coming of His Holy Spirit.
- As we start this **Kingdom Come** series, I want to first answer three questions about the Kingdom:

1. **What is it?**
2. **Where is it?**
3. **When is it?**

WHAT is the Kingdom of God?

- **The Kingdom of God is God's reign through God's people over God's place.** (ref. Jeremy Treat)
- **It's GOD's reign. He's the King. This is not about our agenda or our ideas.**

- **And** we can't just show up with Kingdom **principles** and expect the Kingdom of God to show up with us.
- There is no Kingdom without the King being present.
- We discover the Kingdom people and Kingdom place part of this, as we journey through the book of Acts.

WHERE is the Kingdom of God?

- The Kingdom of God is wherever King Jesus is reigning.
- **Where Jesus has Kingship, there is His Kingdom.**
- In **Luke 17** Jesus was asked when the Kingdom was coming? Jesus responded: **"The coming of the Kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the Kingdom of God is in within you (among you)." (Luke 17:20-21)**
- As we'll see in the book of Acts, it's not just OVER THERE.
- The Kingdom of God is wherever Jesus has been given **reign, as King.**

WHEN is the Kingdom of God?

- The Kingdom of God is already and not yet.
- Which means that we have both a theology of suffering and of healing. Of pain and glory.
- Because the Kingdom of God is "already" we pray for and believe that God still saves and heals, and restores, and reconciles.
- God still performs miracles, and is actively working in His church, manifesting His presence and power in and through the lives of His people. It is already.
- But because the Kingdom of God is also "not yet", we believe that there will still be pain and suffering and division, and evil in this world, and it will be so, until Jesus returns.
- But no make no mistake. He WILL return. And when He does, He will establish His Kingdom, IN FULL, here on earth, as it is in Heaven. And will reign, on earth, JUST LIKE He does in Heaven.
- Right now Satan has been allowed some influence and power, but there is coming a day, when that will be stripped away, and Jesus will sit on throne of the new Heaven and New Earth.
- It's the day when every wrong will be made right. Every tear will be wiped away, and there will be **no more** suffering, pain, or even death.
- **THAT is the day that we find the disciples speaking about in our passage.**
- **"Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?" (v.6)**
- "Jesus you've been telling us about this coming Kingdom for your entire ministry on earth. And now even after your resurrection, you've been telling us about the Kingdom for 40 days straight. We know you're gonna sit on a throne SOMEDAY. Is that time NOW, Lord?"

- I want that too. And so do you. We want King Jesus to return and establish His Kingdom INFULL, just like it is in Heaven.
- **We want evil ERADICATED, and God’s Kingdom to COME.**
- It’s a good question the disciples asked: “**Lord, are you gonna bring your Kingdom soon?**”
- **Jesus doesn’t respond to the question, as one might expect**
- ‘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.” Then they gathered around him and 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.**’ (vv.4-8)
- For 40 days, He appears to His disciples. And it seems that He really just talked about two things: **The Kingdom of God, and the Spirit of God.**
- And we can assume that He related one to the the other, because this is what the OT prophets did.
 - **[God] will pour out [his] Spirit on your offspring...**” (Is. 44)
 - There was a connection between God bringing His Kingdom, and God pouring out His Spirit.
 - The idea of the OT prophets was that the **Spirit of God would make the rule of God a living and present reality to his people.** (ref. John Stott)
- “Lord, are you at **this time** going to restore the **Kingdom** to Israel?” (v.6).
- Jesus responds to their question by saying: “You will receive **POWER**, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”
- I imagine his disciples.... “**POWER!**”
- James and John... “Remember when we asked Jesus if we could sit on his right hand and left hand?”
- **Disciples assumption (God pouring out His Spirit = Kingdom coming)**
- **And they weren’t necessarily wrong.**
- Jesus WAS going to bring His Kingdom, but it wasn’t going to look like THAT.
- The disciples were living under cruel and oppressive tyranny.
 - **They needed the Kingdom of God to come. And God wanted to bring His Kingdom.**
 - **But it wasn’t going to look the disciples expected.**
- **And it isn’t always going to look like what WE expect.**
- **3 distinctions, from our text, of what God’s Kingdom IS, and ISN’T:**

- **1. The Kingdom of God is not offered to SOME, but to ALL.**
- The disciples assumed that, when Jesus talked about His Kingdom, that it ONLY had to do with Israel.
 - “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?” (v.6)
 - How does Jesus respond?
 - “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.” (v.8)
- Jesus WAS bringing His Kingdom to the people of Israel, and it WOULD start in Israel’s capital city of Jerusalem. But it wouldn’t stop there. It would go to the ends of the earth. To the nations.
- **And it was going to come TO nations, not the other way around.**
- Johannes Blauw in *The Missionary Nature of the Church* talks about: OT perspective was one of **concern for** the nations (God made them, and they will come and bow down TO him), but not of **mission to** the nations (where God’s people would go out TO the nations).
- It isn’t until the NT, that the missiology of everyone coming TO the center, is replaced with the idea that the “center goes out TO everyone”.
- Everything changed after Jesus rose from the dead — He received universal authority, and then He commanded us to GO!
- “...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, (now see this “GOING” language:) and in all Judea and Samaria, and TO the ends of the earth.” (v.8)
- The Kingdom of God WAS coming, and it WAS coming for ALL nations, but it was going to be brought TO THOSE NATIONS.
- **2. The Kingdom of God does not advance through warriors, but through witnesses.**
- “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...”
- Jesus wasn’t asking them to DO something, but to WITNESS something — namely ALL that HE had said and done.
- Contrary to what some of them may have thought, this POWER He was giving them, wasn’t for the purpose of **fighting, but of testifying.**
- And it wasn’t so that the nations could be **enslaved, but saved.**
- They also assumed that the **origin** of this Kingdom would be PHYSICAL in nature, like all the other Kingdoms on earth.
- And that where God would establish this Kingdom would be would be physical and geographical, in nature.
- They were hoping and assuming that Jesus would sit on an **earthly** throne, like the Warrior King David did, and that He would finally free them from the **earthly** oppression of Rome.
- Jesus WOULD advance His Kingdom, and it would AFFECT physical places.

- But it would not originate in the physical, but in the spiritual. And it would not come through a place, but through a people — and not a WARRIOR — but a WITNESSING people.
- What did that look like **specifically**? The books of Acts shows us.

3. The Kingdom of God is not established through natural, but supernatural power.

- “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?” (v.6)
- How does Jesus respond?
- “...you will receive **power** when **the Holy Spirit** comes on you...” (v.8a)
- Francis Schaeffer, was asked what he thought **the greatest obstacle was, for the modern Church.**
- **What was most surprising about his response, was what he DIDN'T say.**
 - He didn't say that the greatest obstacle was secularism, or pagan religions, or materialism, or Christian consumerism.
 - He didn't say it was politics or even compromise.
 - He didn't say it was a lack money and resources, or even the shrinking boldness and presence of Christians in the public square.
- **His answer:**
- “The real problem is this: the church of the Lord Jesus, individually or corporately, tending to do the Lord's work in the power **of the flesh rather than the Spirit.** The central problem is always **in the midst** of the people of God, not in the circumstances surrounding them. If we do not want to waste our lives, then we must understand the importance of having a humble, quiet heart and the **power of the Holy Spirit.**” - **Francis Schaeffer**
- **The greatest obstacle and hindrance for the modern church is “ministry in the flesh”**
 - A person living outside of the purpose of God and the power of His Spirit — THAT **Francis Shcaeffe** says, is **THEE** biggest problem in the modern church.
- “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?” (v.6)
 - “Because Lord we NEED Your Kingdom.!”
 - We feel it now. And they felt it then.
 - Jesus says: “You DO need my Kingdom. But here's how it will come:”
- “... you will receive **power** when **the Holy Spirit** comes on you...” (v.8a)=
- We need to recognize here, that Jesus was not diverting attention away from the disciples' question about the Kingdom coming. He was answering it, **explicitly.**
- **Jesus telling His disciples that they would receive power, WAS His response to their question about the Kingdom.**
 - “The exercise of power is inherent in the concept of a Kingdom. But power in God's Kingdom is different from power in human kingdoms. The reference to the **Holy Spirit defines its nature.**” (John Stott)
- Jesus WAS bringing His Kingdom, but it wouldn't come by the authority and power of an earthly throne, but by the authority and power Holy Spirit, in and through His people.

- And we see this played out through the gospels in the life of Jesus? Not only did He SPEAK about the Kingdom. He DEMONSTRATED what it looked like every time he spoke. Every time He loved. Every time He healed. Every time He forgave.
 - We know what it looked like in the life of Jesus. It's all over the gospels.
- **But what does this look like in the lives of His FOLLOWERS?**
- The book of Acts shows us.
- **Every chapter in the book of Acts is a demonstration of the Spirit's power.**

- Jesus will bring His physical Kingdom to earth someday, and it will be glorious.
- But, His Kingdom is not just **then**. It is also RIGHT now. **It is already and not yet.**
- And while we are here in the “**not yet**” part, God wants to manifest His Kingdom, in and through our lives.
- The first verse of this book begins with Luke saying, **I wrote another book about all that Jesus BEGAN to do and teach...**

- The gospels record what King Jesus **began** to do. But His work IS NOT done. King Jesus is still on the move. He's still bringing His Kingdom. And He doing in and THROUGH His people.

- **What would VC look like if Jesus were King? More specifically:**
 - ... your neighborhood
 - ... your school
 - your company/workplace
 - ... you relationships
 - ... you family
 - This is what we need, and it's what Jesus wants. It's what He told us to pray for when He said, **"Pray for the Kingdom to come just like it is in Heaven."**
- **What can WE do, to participate in the coming of that Kingdom?**
- **Receive the Holy Spirit.**

- **Jesus isn't asking you to DO. He asking you to RECEIVE. Receive the power of the Holy Spirit.**

- The first people to believe that Jesus rose from the dead were 11 male disciples and a few women.
- But in just three centuries, the church grew to over 30 million people— HALF of the Roman empire.
- It was **Kingdom of God** manifesting in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
- God was bringing His Kingdom, and He was doing it, through His people, by **power of His Holy Spirit. It all began, when the church received the power of the Holy Spirit. And we need His power today.**