COGMA

Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE
67

The Coming of Jesus Christ

STUDY GUIDE 6 OF 6:

The Kingdom of God Is Now

An overview of its nature, entrance and present reality.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

COGMA therefore strongly advises that you prayerfully study the content of each Study Guide with the heart of a Berean (**Acts 17:10–12**).

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PREFACE

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The Kingdom of God was central to the preaching of Jesus Christ. Yet many Christians have been taught to expect its establishment at some future time, when Jesus Christ will return physically to the earth and reign from an earthly throne. This expectation raises an important question: Did Jesus teach His followers to wait for a future earthly Kingdom, or did He proclaim a Kingdom that would come during their lifetime?

The prophets foretold an everlasting Kingdom that would never be destroyed. John the Baptist announced that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and Jesus proclaimed that the time was fulfilled. He also promised that some of the people standing before Him would live to see the Kingdom of God come with power.

Jesus declared in **Mark 9:1**:

> *"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."*

This promise must be understood within its historical setting. Jesus was speaking directly to people who were alive during His earthly ministry, and He said that some of them would still be living when they saw the Kingdom come with power. The coming of the Kingdom was therefore not an event to be postponed for thousands of years.

The New Testament confirms that believers had already entered that Kingdom. Paul did not describe their entrance as a future expectation but declared that God had already delivered them from the power of darkness and translated them into the Kingdom of His dear Son. The Kingdom was therefore a present spiritual reality for born-again believers.

The Kingdom of God is not an earthly government established through political authority, military power or national boundaries. It is the spiritual Kingdom of Jesus Christ, entered through the new birth, in which the risen Lord dwells within His people and reigns by His Spirit. Those who are born again already belong to the Kingdom because they possess the King within.

This Study Guide follows the Scriptures from the prophetic promises concerning the Kingdom to their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. It examines when the Kingdom came, who belongs to it, how Jesus Christ reigns and what His present Kingdom means for those who are born again. The emphasis throughout will remain upon Jesus Christ as the King and present spiritual reality of His Kingdom.

The purpose is not simply to correct a mistaken expectation about the future. It is to establish the greater truth that Jesus Christ is King now, His Kingdom is present, and every born-again believer has already entered that Kingdom through His saving grace. The Kingdom of God is not still waiting to come.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Jesus' promise about the Kingdom's power establish its timeframe?

Personal Reflection

Do you live as though Christ's authority belongs only to the future rather than recognising Him as King now?

Action Step

Identify one choice in which you have postponed listening to Jesus. Explain how you will respond to His present authority rather than waiting for a later Kingdom.

INTRODUCTION

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Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ repeatedly spoke about the Kingdom of God. He proclaimed its nearness, described its nature and taught His disciples concerning those who would enter it. The Kingdom was central to His message and closely connected with the fulfilment of God's promises concerning the Messiah.

Christians have different understandings of what the Kingdom of God means. Some associate it primarily with heaven after physical death, while others expect Jesus Christ to return physically and establish an earthly government centred in Jerusalem. Others understand the Kingdom as a present spiritual reality in which Jesus Christ reigns over His people. These different interpretations must be tested by Scripture.

The central issue is not whether Jesus Christ is King because Scripture clearly establishes His authority and dominion. We must consider what kind of Kingdom He came to establish, when that Kingdom would come, who would belong to it and how His reign would be experienced. These questions are important because our understanding of the Kingdom directly affects our understanding of the coming of Jesus Christ and the purpose of the New Covenant.

The Old Testament prophets foretold a Kingdom that would never be destroyed. John the Baptist later announced that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and Jesus continued that proclamation during His earthly ministry. Jesus also made specific promises concerning the Kingdom coming with power, requiring us to consider carefully the relationship between His words and the events that followed.

Scripture uses several expressions, including the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Christ. We must ask whether these are separate kingdoms or different expressions describing the same divine reign. We must also examine what Jesus meant when He declared that His Kingdom was *"not of this world."*

Another important question arises from Jesus' conversation with the Pharisees concerning the coming of the Kingdom. His answer concerned the manner in which the Kingdom would be recognised and must be understood within its historical setting. His words therefore require careful examination if we are to understand the spiritual nature of the Kingdom correctly.

The New Testament also connects entrance into the Kingdom with being born again. The apostles wrote of believers as already belonging to the Kingdom of God's dear Son, while Jesus

had previously spoken of the Kingdom coming with power. We must therefore ask how these declarations fit together and what they establish concerning the coming and establishment of the Kingdom.

Further consideration must be given to the people who constitute this Kingdom. Jesus spoke of the Kingdom being given to a nation bringing forth its fruits, while the apostles explained the relationship between Jews and Gentiles under the New Covenant. These teachings help establish the identity of God's people and the nature of their relationship with Jesus Christ their King.

Scripture also speaks of Jesus Christ reigning, of His Kingdom enduring for ever and of believers seeking first the Kingdom of God. These declarations concern more than the fulfilment of prophecy because they also affect the present life of everyone who belongs to Him. The Kingdom concerns the present reign of Jesus Christ and the life of those in whom He dwells.

This Study Guide will examine these subjects in their Scriptural setting, following the testimony of the prophets, the teaching of Jesus Christ and the writings of the apostles. Each section will contribute to a clearer understanding of the Kingdom and its place within God's completed work of redemption. The question before us is therefore not simply what the Kingdom of God will be, but what Scripture declares concerning the Kingdom of God now.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the prophets, Jesus and the apostles establish the Kingdom as a present reality?

Personal Reflection

Is a decision before you being governed more by habit, pressure or personal preference than by Jesus Christ?

Action Step

Name that decision and what His Word establishes. Explain the change you will make because you recognise the Kingdom as present now.

THE KINGDOM FORETOLD: IT SHALL STAND FOR EVER

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Long before Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, the prophets foretold the coming of a Kingdom unlike any earthly government. Nations would rise and fall, rulers would gain and lose their authority, and empires would eventually disappear. Yet God promised to establish a Kingdom that would never be destroyed because its foundation and authority would come from Him.

The prophecies of Daniel and Isaiah are particularly important because they reveal both the setting in which God's Kingdom would be established and the identity of the King whose reign would endure for ever. Daniel places the Kingdom within the succession of earthly empires, while Isaiah directs attention to the promised Son. Together, their prophecies provide an important foundation for understanding the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom Revealed to Daniel

During the Babylonian captivity, King Nebuchadnezzar received a dream concerning successive kingdoms. Daniel explained that the great image represented earthly powers, beginning with Babylon and followed by other kingdoms. The final earthly kingdom in this succession is understood to represent Rome, during whose dominion Jesus Christ came into the world.

Daniel declared in **Daniel 2:44-45**:

> *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."*

The expression *"in the days of these kings"* is significant. Daniel did not describe the establishment of God's Kingdom as an event detached from the succession of empires he had just explained. The prophecy places the establishment of the Kingdom within that historical setting.

The stone was *"cut out of the mountain without hands,"* distinguishing God's Kingdom from governments established through human power. Its origin was divine rather than political or military. Its permanence would not depend upon territorial boundaries, human succession or the strength of an earthly government.

The Everlasting Reign of the Promised Son

Isaiah also foretold the coming of a King whose authority would be everlasting. His prophecy connected the promised government with the birth of a child and the giving of a son. The prophecy therefore directs our attention to Jesus Christ.

Isaiah wrote in **Isaiah 9:6-7**:

> *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."*

Isaiah identifies the promised King as *"The mighty God, The everlasting Father,"* revealing the divine identity of Jesus Christ. The child genuinely born into humanity was the visible manifestation of the one true God. Through the promised Messiah, God would establish the everlasting reign foretold by the prophet.

The prophecy also connects His Kingdom with the throne of David. This promise does not require Jesus Christ to occupy a future earthly throne in Jerusalem. Its fulfilment must be understood through the New Testament testimony concerning His resurrection, exaltation and present authority.

The Throne of David and the Exalted Christ

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter explained the relationship between God's promise to David and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He did not direct his hearers towards a future earthly enthronement of Christ in Jerusalem. Instead, he proclaimed the risen and exalted Lord.

Peter declared in **Acts 2:29-30**:

> *"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;"*

Peter connected the promised throne directly with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. His declaration formed part of the apostolic proclamation that Jesus, whom the people had crucified, had been raised and exalted as Lord and Christ. The promised King had not failed to receive His Kingdom simply because He did not establish an earthly government.

Daniel foretold a Kingdom that would stand for ever, while Isaiah identified the promised King and the everlasting nature of His government. Peter then proclaimed the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ in fulfilment of the promises made to David. The prophetic promise and the apostolic proclamation therefore point to the same King and the same everlasting reign.

These Scriptures provide the prophetic foundation for understanding the Kingdom of God. The promised Kingdom belongs to Jesus Christ, derives its authority from God and cannot be overthrown by the rise or fall of earthly nations. Its King reigns with an authority that no earthly government can create or remove.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do Daniel and Isaiah describe the Kingdom's lasting divine authority?

Personal Reflection

When political conditions change, do you allow fear to displace your confidence in the everlasting reign of Jesus Christ?

Action Step

Identify a concern about earthly government. Explain how Christ's unchanging authority will govern the way you think, speak and respond.

ONE KINGDOM: OF HEAVEN, OF GOD AND OF CHRIST

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The New Testament uses several expressions when speaking about the Kingdom established through Jesus Christ. We read of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of God's dear Son. These different expressions have sometimes been understood as referring to separate kingdoms with different purposes or times of fulfilment.

The meaning of these expressions must be established by comparing the Scriptures in their proper setting. We must ask whether the New Testament presents several separate kingdoms

or different expressions describing the one divine reign revealed through Jesus Christ. Scripture itself provides the answer.

The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God

Matthew frequently uses the expression *"kingdom of heaven,"* while Mark and Luke commonly use *"kingdom of God."* Comparing their accounts of the same events and teachings shows how these expressions relate to one another. They describe the same Kingdom rather than separate divine governments.

Matthew recorded in **Matthew 19:14**:

> *"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

Luke recorded in **Luke 18:16**:

> *"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."*

Both accounts concern Jesus receiving little children. Matthew calls it the Kingdom of Heaven, while Luke calls it the Kingdom of God. The subject and teaching are the same, and there is no indication that Jesus was speaking about two different kingdoms.

The expression Kingdom of Heaven directs attention to the heavenly character and authority of the Kingdom, while Kingdom of God identifies the God to whom it belongs. Neither expression requires another kingdom with different members, another government or a separate time of fulfilment. They describe the same divine reign.

The Kingdom of Christ and of God

Paul uses another important expression when writing to the Ephesians. His wording brings the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of God together within the same statement. This must be understood in the light of the divine identity of Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:5**:

> *"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."*

Paul does not describe one inheritance in Christ's Kingdom and another inheritance in God's Kingdom. He speaks of *"the kingdom of Christ and of God"* as the one Kingdom in which an inheritance is found. The authority of Christ and the authority of God are not competing dominions.

This agrees with the revelation that Jesus Christ is the one true God revealed through genuine humanity. His Kingdom does not belong to another divine Person ruling beside God. The authority exercised through the risen and exalted Christ is the authority of the one God revealed in Him.

The Kingdom of His Dear Son

Paul uses another expression when writing to the believers at Colosse. He describes the Kingdom as belonging to God's dear Son and places that Kingdom directly within his

explanation of the salvation they had already received. His words speak of something God had already done.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:13**:

> *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"*

The Kingdom of God's dear Son is not presented as another government that will be established after the Kingdom of God. It is the Kingdom into which believers had already been translated through the saving work of Jesus Christ. The same King and the same divine authority are in view.

The significance of Paul's statement concerning their present entrance into the Kingdom will be examined more fully later. At this point, the important truth is that the Kingdom of His dear Son is not a separate Kingdom. It is another expression describing the reign of Jesus Christ.

One King and One Divine Authority

Scripture also connects the throne and reign of Jesus Christ directly with the authority of God. This relationship must be understood correctly because the biblical distinction between Father and Son must not be expanded into two separate divine rulers. There is one God and one divine authority revealed through Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 1:8**:

> *"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."*

The Son is addressed as *"O God,"* and His throne is declared to be *"for ever and ever."* Jesus Christ possessed genuine humanity, yet the one true God was fully revealed through that genuine human life. The King who reigns is therefore not a second divine ruler beside God.

The New Testament presents one Kingdom rather than several competing divine dominions. The different expressions direct our attention to its heavenly origin, its divine authority, its saving rule and its revelation through Jesus Christ. They describe different aspects of the same everlasting Kingdom.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. There is one King, one divine authority and one everlasting Kingdom.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why do the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Christ refer to one Kingdom?

Personal Reflection

Do you sometimes divide your trust between Jesus Christ and another source of spiritual authority?

Action Step

Identify where your confidence has been divided. Explain how you will turn to Jesus Christ as the one King, bringing your needs and decisions to Him.

MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD

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When Jesus Christ stood before Pontius Pilate, He was questioned concerning His kingship. The Roman governor understood kingship in terms of earthly authority, political power and territorial government. Jesus answered by making a clear distinction between the Kingdom He possessed and the kingdoms established by men.

His answer is essential to understanding the nature of the Kingdom of God. Jesus declared plainly that His Kingdom was *"not of this world."* We must therefore not interpret the promises concerning His reign as requiring an earthly government established through political authority, military power or national rule.

Jesus Before Pontius Pilate

Pilate questioned Jesus after the Jewish religious leaders had delivered Him for judgement. The accusation concerning His kingship raised the question of whether He represented a political threat to Roman authority. Jesus answered by explaining the nature and source of His Kingdom.

John recorded in **John 18:33-37**:

> *"Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."*

Jesus did not deny that He was a King. He openly acknowledged His kingship but explained that His Kingdom was *"not of this world"* and *"not from hence."* Its authority did not originate with earthly rulers, nor was it maintained through armies or political force.

His words *"then would my servants fight"* reveal the difference between His Kingdom and earthly governments. Human kingdoms commonly defend their authority through physical power, but Christ's Kingdom is established upon divine truth. Those who belong to Him are identified by hearing His voice and receiving His truth, not by allegiance to an earthly state.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does Jesus' answer to Pilate show about the source of His Kingdom?

Personal Reflection

When you face conflict, are you tempted to use pressure or personal power rather than speak truth with humility?

Action Step

Identify one disagreement in which your approach needs correction. Explain how you will respond in a way governed by the righteousness and peace of Christ's Kingdom.

Not an Earthly or National Government

The distinction Jesus made before Pilate also rejects the expectation that His promised Kingdom must eventually become a political government centred in Jerusalem. Such an expectation places the emphasis upon territory, national authority and physical rule. Jesus instead directed attention to the heavenly source and spiritual nature of His Kingdom.

Earlier in His ministry, people attempted to make Him their king through their own initiative. They wanted an earthly kingship that could be established through human action. Jesus refused the kind of kingship they were trying to impose upon Him.

John wrote in **John 6:15**:

> *"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."*

Jesus did not reject kingship itself because He is the promised King. He rejected the earthly manner in which the people sought to establish His rule. His mission was not to gain a political throne through popular support, national power or physical force.

This does not mean that His Kingdom lacks authority over human life. Its authority is spiritual and divine, reaching people wherever they live without depending upon national borders or geographical territory. Jesus Christ reigns over people through the spiritual life and authority that come from Him.

A Kingdom Governed by Spiritual Life

Paul also distinguished the Kingdom of God from outward things that could become the focus of religious disputes. His teaching directs attention to the spiritual reality experienced by those who belong to Jesus Christ. The Kingdom is known through the life and rule of God within His people.

Paul wrote in **Romans 14:17**:

> *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."*

In the surrounding verses, Paul was addressing disputes concerning eating and drinking among believers. His words do not reduce the Kingdom to inward feelings but show that outward practices are not the measure of a person's place within God's Kingdom. Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost belong to the spiritual reign of God.

These realities are found in Jesus Christ, who personally dwells within everyone who is born again. The Holy Ghost is not another divine Person operating separately from Him but the Spirit of Christ through whom His life is present within His people. The Kingdom is therefore experienced through the indwelling life and rule of Jesus Christ.

A person does not enter the Kingdom by changing nationality, geographical location or political allegiance. The Kingdom is entered through the saving work of Jesus Christ at the new birth. His life within produces the righteousness, peace and joy that belong to His reign.

The King's Authority Is Already Established

Although Jesus stood before Pilate without the outward appearance of an earthly monarch, His authority was not diminished. He did not need a palace, army or earthly throne to establish His kingship. Following His resurrection, He declared the extent of the authority He already possessed.

Jesus said in **Matthew 28:18**:

> *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."*

Jesus did not speak of authority that would first become His thousands of years later. He declared that *"all power"* had already been given to Him in heaven and in earth. His kingship and authority were already established.

His Kingdom therefore does not need to become an earthly empire in order to fulfil the promises of Scripture. Jesus Christ is King now, and His authority already extends over heaven and earth. His Kingdom is governed according to the spiritual nature He Himself declared.

Jesus Christ is King, but His Kingdom is not of this world. Its authority comes from God, its rule is spiritual, and its people belong to Him through the life He gives.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ rule His Kingdom through the spiritual life He gives?

Personal Reflection

Do disputes about outward religious practices distract you from the righteousness, peace and joy found in Christ's Spirit?

Action Step

Identify an attitude that needs to change in a disagreement. Explain how you will uphold truth while refusing pride, harshness or dependence upon outward ceremony.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS IN YOUR MIDST

BACK TO CONTENTS

During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ was questioned by the Pharisees concerning when the Kingdom of God would come. Their question reflected an expectation that the promised Kingdom would be recognised through visible events and outward changes. Jesus answered by challenging the manner in which they expected the Kingdom to appear.

His words in **Luke 17:20-21** require careful examination because the King was standing before the very people who questioned Him. We must consider His audience, the meaning of His expression and the difference between the Kingdom being present among them and Christ dwelling within those who are born again. These distinctions help us understand both the presence of the Kingdom during Christ's earthly ministry and its New Covenant reality.

The Question Asked by the Pharisees

Luke recorded in **Luke 17:20-21**:

> *"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."*

The Pharisees asked when the Kingdom would come, but Jesus answered by explaining how it would not come. They were looking for something that could be identified through outward observation, whereas Jesus declared that the Kingdom would not be recognised in that manner. Their expectation was directed towards what could be seen outwardly.

The expression *"Lo here! or, lo there!"* further challenges the idea that God's Kingdom depends upon a particular geographical location. Jesus directed their attention away from outward appearances and from a Kingdom defined by political or territorial expectations. His Kingdom could not be understood according to the ordinary features of earthly government.

His concluding words, *"the kingdom of God is within you,"* therefore require careful consideration. Jesus was speaking directly to the Pharisees, many of whom rejected Him and opposed His teaching. We must understand His words consistently with the spiritual condition of the people He was addressing.

Understanding the Expression ENTOS HYMŌN

The Greek expression translated *"within you"* in the KJV is ENTOS HYMŌN. The word ENTOS carries the sense of being inside or within, while HYMŌN means *"you"* in the plural. The KJV therefore preserves a genuine meaning of the expression.

Its interpretation, however, must take account of the audience Jesus was addressing and the teaching surrounding His words. Jesus was not speaking to born-again believers who already possessed His indwelling life. He was answering Pharisees whose unbelief and opposition He repeatedly exposed.

His statement therefore cannot mean that the Kingdom was already spiritually dwelling within every Pharisee standing before Him. Such an interpretation would conflict with their spiritual condition and with Jesus' own teaching concerning them. The words must be understood according to what was actually present among them.

The Kingdom was among them, or in their midst, because Jesus Christ, the promised King, was standing before them. They were in the presence of the One through whom God's Kingdom was being revealed, even though they did not recognise His divine identity or receive His words. The immediate setting therefore directs attention to the presence of the King among them rather than to an indwelling spiritual life within unbelieving Pharisees.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did Jesus' answer to the Pharisees point to the King in their midst?

Personal Reflection

Have familiar expectations prevented you from recognising what Jesus Christ has actually said about His Kingdom?

Action Step

Name one expectation you have brought to the Bible. Explain how you will set it aside and receive Christ's words in their context.

The King Was Standing Among Them

The significance of Jesus' answer becomes clearer when we remember who was standing before the Pharisees. They were asking when God's Kingdom would appear while questioning the very One through whom God's reign was being revealed. The promised Messiah and King was already in their midst.

Earlier, Jesus had connected the work of God in His ministry directly with the presence of the Kingdom.

Jesus declared in **Luke 11:20**:

> *"But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."*

Jesus spoke of the Kingdom as already confronting His hearers through His ministry. They did not have to wait for a distant political event before God's authority could be recognised. The works and authority of Jesus Christ were already revealing the Kingdom in their midst.

This does not mean that the full New Covenant experience of the Kingdom had already been established before Pentecost. The King was present and the Kingdom was being revealed through His ministry, while its establishment in New Covenant power through the indwelling Spirit would follow His resurrection and exaltation. These are connected stages in the fulfilment of God's promises concerning the one Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom Is Not Recognised by Outward Observation

Jesus' statement that the Kingdom *"cometh not with observation"* establishes an important principle for understanding His teaching. God's spiritual reign cannot be measured by the outward features commonly associated with earthly governments. Its presence does not depend upon armies, political institutions, national borders or an earthly throne.

The Pharisees could physically see Jesus standing before them, yet outward sight alone did not cause them to recognise the Kingdom He revealed. Their difficulty was therefore greater than a mistaken expectation concerning timing. They needed to recognise who Jesus Christ was and understand the divine authority revealed through Him.

This also explains why the Kingdom must not be turned into a future earthly empire. Its reality does not depend upon a visible throne in Jerusalem, restored national boundaries or military

rule. Jesus had already declared that the Kingdom did not come according to such outward observation.

Christ Within the Born-Again Believer

There is an important difference between the King standing among people during His earthly ministry and the King dwelling within His people under the New Covenant. The Pharisees could have Jesus Christ physically standing in their midst without possessing His life. Under the New Covenant, everyone who is born again receives Jesus Christ within.

Jesus promised His disciples that He would come to them and make His abode with them. That promise was fulfilled at Pentecost in A.D. 31 when Jesus Christ came as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people. The indwelling life of Christ then became the present spiritual reality of the Gospel Day.

Every person who is born again receives the Spirit of Christ and enters His Kingdom. The believer does not simply acknowledge a King who remains outside, but possesses the life of the reigning Christ within. His Kingdom is experienced through the indwelling life and rule of Jesus Christ.

Luke 17:20-21 therefore does not teach that unbelieving Pharisees already possessed the Kingdom inwardly. The Kingdom was present among them because Jesus Christ, the promised King, stood in their midst, while under the New Covenant that same Jesus Christ reigns within everyone who has been born again.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the King among the Pharisees differ from Christ within a born-again believer?

Personal Reflection

Are you depending upon nearness to Christian people, family history or religious activity instead of the new birth?

Action Step

Identify what has supplied your spiritual confidence. Explain the response you must make to Jesus Christ rather than assuming outward association gives you His life.

THE KINGDOM CAME WITH POWER

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The establishment of God's Kingdom was not left without a clear indication of its timing. John the Baptist announced that the Kingdom was at hand, Jesus repeated that announcement, and He later promised that some of His hearers would live to see the Kingdom come with power. These declarations direct us to events that would occur within the lifetime of those who heard Him.

The book of Acts provides the historical connection between that promise and the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. By comparing the words of Jesus with the testimony of the apostles, we can see how the promised Kingdom entered its New Covenant fulfilment. The Kingdom was not postponed for thousands of years.

The Kingdom Was at Hand

When John the Baptist began his ministry, he announced the nearness of the promised Kingdom. His message was not that the Kingdom would come in a distant age. He declared that it was *"at hand."*

Matthew recorded in **Matthew 3:1-2**:

> *"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Jesus subsequently proclaimed the same message. He connected the nearness of the Kingdom with the fulfilment of the appointed time. The prophetic promises were moving towards their fulfilment through Him.

Mark recorded in **Mark 1:14-15**:

> *"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."*

The expression *"at hand"* speaks of something near or approaching. Jesus also declared that *"the time is fulfilled,"* connecting His proclamation directly with the fulfilment of God's prophetic purpose. The Kingdom had been foretold centuries earlier, but its promised establishment was now near.

Jesus was not announcing a Kingdom that would remain unestablished for thousands of years after His ministry. His words placed the fulfilment within the period then unfolding. The promised Kingdom was approaching its New Covenant reality.

Some Standing Here Would See the Kingdom Come

Jesus later gave an even more definite statement concerning the timing of the Kingdom coming with power. He identified people standing before Him who would still be alive when the promised event occurred. His words place a clear limit upon the timeframe.

Jesus declared in **Mark 9:1**:

> *"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."*

The words *"some of them that stand here"* identify people belonging to His immediate audience. The expression *"shall not taste of death"* establishes that the Kingdom would come with power before some of those individuals physically died. Jesus therefore placed the fulfilment within their lifetime.

The question is not whether the Kingdom would come with power because Jesus said that it would. The question is where Scripture records the fulfilment of that promise. The answer must be found within the timeframe Jesus Himself established.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do 'at hand' and 'some standing here' establish the Kingdom's nearness?

Personal Reflection

Have you postponed obedience because you assumed God's Kingdom would only become real in a future age?

Action Step

Name one responsibility or response you have delayed. Explain what you will do now because Jesus Christ is already King.

The Disciples Asked About the Kingdom

Following His resurrection, the disciples were still thinking about the Kingdom. Their question showed that they had not yet fully understood how God's promise would be fulfilled. They still connected the Kingdom with the restoration of Israel.

Luke recorded in **Acts 1:6-8**:

> *"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

Jesus did not direct His disciples towards military conquest, political rule or the restoration of an earthly government. He directed their attention to the coming of the Holy Ghost and the power they would receive. The promised power was spiritual.

This corresponds directly with His earlier promise in **Mark 9:1**. There He spoke of the Kingdom of God coming with power, while in Acts He told His disciples that they would *"receive power"* when the Holy Ghost came upon them. The connection becomes clear in the events that follow.

Pentecost: The Kingdom Came With Power

The fulfilment of Jesus' promise is recorded in Acts 2. The disciples were gathered in Jerusalem when the Holy Ghost came as Jesus had promised. The power was not political, military or national but spiritual.

Luke recorded in **Acts 2:1-4**:

> *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

Pentecost in A.D. 31 marked the coming of the promised Kingdom in New Covenant power. The Holy Ghost was not another divine Person arriving to replace an absent Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Himself came as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people.

Jesus had already promised this coming.

Jesus declared in **John 14:18**:

> *"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."*

At Pentecost, that promise was fulfilled. The Kingdom proclaimed as *"at hand"* during His earthly ministry now entered its New Covenant reality through the indwelling Spirit. Jesus Christ came to live within His people.

This was the beginning of the Gospel Day. The King was not absent from His Kingdom but present within His people by His Spirit. Every person who is born again now enters that same spiritual Kingdom and possesses the life of the King within.

The Exalted King Was Proclaimed

Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost further established that Jesus Christ had been raised and exalted. The outpouring witnessed by the people was directly connected with the authority of the risen Lord. The promised power came from the exalted Christ.

Peter declared in **Acts 2:32-33**:

> *"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."*

The apostolic proclamation did not postpone Christ's kingship to another earthly age. Peter identified Jesus Christ as the risen and exalted Lord whose promised Spirit was now being manifested among His people. What the people were seeing and hearing was evidence of the fulfilled promise.

The Kingdom had been foretold by the prophets, announced as near by John and Jesus, and promised to come with power within the lifetime of those who heard Him. At Pentecost, that promise reached its New Covenant fulfilment. Jesus Christ came to dwell within His people as Spirit.

The Kingdom of God came with power at Pentecost in A.D. 31. Jesus Christ, the exalted King, now reigns through His indwelling Spirit, and His Kingdom continues throughout the Gospel Day.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Pentecost fulfil the promise of the Kingdom coming with power?

Personal Reflection

When you need guidance, do you seek a dramatic sign rather than trusting Jesus Christ who came as the Holy Spirit at Pentecost?

Action Step

Identify one present need and how you have approached it. Explain how you will turn to the indwelling Christ and heed His Word.

EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM

BACK TO CONTENTS

Having established that the Kingdom of God came with power at Pentecost, we must now consider how a person enters that Kingdom. Jesus Christ did not teach that membership depended upon natural descent, religious ceremonies or belonging to a particular nation. He declared that entrance into the Kingdom requires a spiritual birth.

This truth is essential because the Kingdom is spiritual in nature. Just as natural birth brings a person into earthly life, the new birth brings a person into the life and Kingdom of Jesus Christ. No outward qualification, religious heritage or ceremony can take the place of this saving work of God.

Nicodemus and the Necessity of the New Birth

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. He possessed religious knowledge and belonged to the nation that had received God's promises, yet Jesus directed his attention to a birth that natural ancestry and religious standing could not provide. His position and heritage did not give him entrance into the Kingdom.

John recorded in **John 3:1-3**:

> *"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

Jesus did not first ask Nicodemus about his ancestry or his position among the religious leaders. He went directly to the essential requirement: *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* Natural birth into Israel was not sufficient for entrance into the spiritual Kingdom.

Nicodemus belonged to Israel by natural birth, but that did not mean he had entered the Kingdom of God. Jesus established that something greater than natural descent was necessary. A person must receive spiritual life from God.

Born of Water and of the Spirit

Nicodemus initially understood Jesus' words in terms of another physical birth. Jesus therefore explained the distinction between what is born of the flesh and what is born of the Spirit. His answer remained centred upon the necessity of a new spiritual birth.

Jesus declared in **John 3:4-6**:

> *"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*

The expressions *"born again"* and *"born of water and of the Spirit"* belong to the same conversation concerning entrance into the Kingdom. Jesus was explaining the necessity of spiritual birth, not establishing an additional ceremonial requirement. His own conclusion is that *"that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*

Being born of water and of the Spirit must not be interpreted as teaching that water baptism produces the new birth. The new birth is God's saving work accomplished through Jesus Christ by His Spirit. Water baptism cannot impart spiritual life, place a person into Christ or provide entrance into His Kingdom.

Jesus distinguished natural birth from spiritual birth because the Kingdom cannot be inherited through the flesh. A person may belong to a religious family, possess Scriptural knowledge or participate in outward religious practices without being born again. Entrance into the Kingdom comes through the life of Jesus Christ, not through an outward ceremony.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did Jesus tell Nicodemus that entrance requires the new birth?

Personal Reflection

Has confidence in religious knowledge or family background caused you to overlook the personal necessity of being born again?

Action Step

Identify any false security that needs to be abandoned. Explain how you will respond to Jesus' words to Nicodemus and recognise the new birth as God's saving work.

Born of God, Not of Natural Descent

John's Gospel provides further confirmation that becoming a child of God depends upon divine birth rather than human descent or determination. Spiritual sonship does not come through ancestry, human effort or another person's decision. It comes from God.

John wrote in **John 1:12-13**:

> *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."*

The words *"not of blood"* exclude natural ancestry as the foundation of spiritual sonship. Those who become the sons of God receive Jesus Christ and are *"born ... of God."* The life required for entrance into the Kingdom must therefore come from Him.

This applies equally to Jew and Gentile. Both must receive Jesus Christ through faith and be born of God, and neither national identity nor religious heritage grants automatic membership in His Kingdom. There is one way into the Kingdom: the new birth in Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom is therefore composed of those who have received spiritual life from God. Its people are not united by earthly nationality, natural ancestry or outward religious identity. They are united by the life of Jesus Christ within them.

The Spirit Brings Believers Into One Body

Paul explains how this saving work relates to the one body of Christ. Everyone who belongs to Jesus Christ has received His Spirit and has been brought into the same spiritual body. There is no separate class of genuinely born-again believers waiting for a later Spirit experience.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:13**:

> *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

Paul includes *"we all."* The baptism of the Spirit is therefore not an experience reserved for a select group of believers after salvation. By one Spirit, everyone who belongs to Christ is brought into the one body.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost occurs at the new birth. At that moment, Jesus Christ comes to dwell within the believer, and salvation is complete in Him. Subsequent growth in understanding, obedience and maturity does not represent another work required to complete what Jesus Christ has already accomplished.

This establishes the relationship between the Kingdom and the Church. The Kingdom belongs to Jesus Christ, and His Church is the one spiritual body composed of those who have been born again. Every true member possesses His indwelling Spirit.

Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom

Paul also declares that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. In 1 Corinthians 15, his immediate subject is resurrection and incorruption, rather than the new birth itself. His statement distinguishes the mortal condition of the human body from incorruption and must be understood within that setting. This does not alter the truth Jesus established with Nicodemus: entrance into the spiritual Kingdom of God requires being born again.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 15:50**:

> *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."*

The Kingdom belongs to Jesus Christ, and those who enter it must be born of God. The new birth is not preparation for a Kingdom that remains unestablished. It is the means by which a

person enters the Kingdom that already exists and becomes part of the one body of Jesus Christ.

Every born-again believer has entered the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ is their King, His Spirit dwells within them, and they belong to His one spiritual body now.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does being born of God bring believers into the one body and Kingdom?

Personal Reflection

Does a person's nationality, language or social background affect whether you welcome them as belonging to Christ?

Action Step

Identify one barrier in your attitude to another believer. Explain how you will change your treatment of them because the new birth brings believers into one body.

TRANSLATED INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON

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Paul provides some of the clearest evidence that the Kingdom of God is a present reality. Writing to believers who were still living upon the earth, he declared that God had already delivered them from the power of darkness and translated them into the Kingdom of His dear Son. His words describe an accomplished spiritual change, not an event awaiting fulfilment in a future earthly age.

This testimony is important because it establishes the relationship between salvation and membership in Christ's Kingdom. Those who have received His saving life are not waiting to become subjects of His reign. They already belong to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Delivered From Darkness and Translated Into the Kingdom

Paul describes what God had already accomplished for the believers at Colosse. His words speak of deliverance from one dominion and entrance into another. The change had already taken place through the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:12-14**:

> *"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"*

Notice the expressions *"hath made us meet," "hath delivered us,"* and *"hath translated us."* Paul was not describing something that would happen to believers in a future age. Their deliverance and entrance into the Kingdom were already established facts.

The believers at Colosse had not been physically removed from the earth. They continued living in their communities, yet Paul declared that they had already been translated into the Kingdom. Their translation was therefore spiritual rather than geographical.

The word *"translated"* describes a transfer from one dominion into another. Through salvation, believers are delivered from the power of darkness and brought under the reign of Jesus Christ. This takes place through the new birth, not through physical relocation or the arrival of a future earthly government.

The Kingdom Belongs to Those Redeemed in Christ

Paul connects this translation directly with redemption and forgiveness of sins. He does not describe Kingdom membership as a reward received after another spiritual experience or after the believer's earthly life has ended. Entrance into the Kingdom belongs to the saving work already received in Jesus Christ.

The words *"In whom we have redemption"* establish that the believer's present standing rests entirely upon Jesus Christ. Through His completed saving work, those who are born again receive forgiveness, spiritual life and membership in His Kingdom. They possess the Person and therefore belong to His reign.

This also guards against the belief that salvation remains incomplete until another experience or future event occurs. The believer does not first receive a limited salvation and later enter the fullness of Christ's Kingdom. At the new birth, the believer receives the indwelling Christ and is complete in Him.

Spiritual growth follows as the life already received develops in understanding, maturity, obedience and fruitfulness. That growth does not provide another entrance into the Kingdom or complete a salvation that was previously unfinished. The believer grows because the life of Jesus Christ is already within.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do Paul's words show that believers have already been brought into Christ's Kingdom?

Personal Reflection

Do you measure spiritual growth as though you are still incomplete in Christ rather than growing through His life already received?

Action Step

Name one area needing growth and any self-reliant assumption it exposes. Explain how you will respond through Christ's indwelling life without treating growth as a second work of salvation.

Raised Together and Seated in Heavenly Places

Paul expresses the same present spiritual reality when writing to the Ephesians. He describes believers as having been made alive, raised together and seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. These are present spiritual realities flowing from salvation.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:4-6**:

> *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:"*

The believers addressed by Paul remained physically upon the earth, yet he declared that they had already been raised and seated in heavenly places in Christ. Their heavenly position did not require physical transportation into the sky. It came through their union with Jesus Christ.

They had been spiritually dead in sins, but God had quickened them together with Christ and raised them. Their new position was *"in Christ Jesus."* This is the same spiritual movement described in Colossians.

The parallel with **Colossians 1:13** is clear. Just as believers have already been translated into the Kingdom, they have already been raised together and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Both expressions describe their present spiritual standing through salvation.

The Apostles Already Possessed the Kingdom

John also speaks of his own membership in the Kingdom. Writing to the churches, he identifies himself as a brother and companion sharing in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. His words describe present participation rather than a Kingdom still waiting to be established.

John declared in **Revelation 1:9**:

> *"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."*

John was physically on the island of Patmos and experiencing tribulation, yet he testified that he was *"in the kingdom."* His geographical location and physical suffering did not alter his spiritual position. He already belonged to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom was therefore not restricted to a particular earthly territory, nor was its existence postponed until believers were free from persecution. John and the churches already shared in the spiritual reign of Jesus Christ. They belonged to His Kingdom while still living in this world.

A Kingdom Already Received

The writer of Hebrews confirms this present possession of God's Kingdom. He speaks to believers as people receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken or overthrown. Its permanence rests upon God rather than upon the strength of earthly institutions.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 12:28**:

> *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:"*

The believers were *"receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved."* This agrees with Daniel's prophecy that God's Kingdom would stand for ever. The promised Kingdom had become a present spiritual reality in the lives of God's people.

Taken together, these Scriptures establish a consistent testimony. Paul declared that believers had already been translated into the Kingdom, John testified that he was already in it, and Hebrews speaks of believers receiving a Kingdom that cannot be moved. The New Testament does not present born-again believers as waiting for the Kingdom to begin.

The Kingdom of God is not awaiting its establishment. Everyone who is born again has already been delivered from darkness, brought into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and given His indwelling life. Jesus Christ reigns now, and His people belong to Him now.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do heavenly places and a Kingdom already received describe present salvation?

Personal Reflection

When fear or uncertainty arises, do you behave as though your place in Christ's Kingdom has not yet been established?

Action Step

Identify one fear that unsettles your confidence. Explain how the completed work of Christ will change your response as someone already brought into His Kingdom.

THE KINGDOM GIVEN TO A NATION BRINGING FORTH ITS FRUITS

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Jesus Christ taught that the Kingdom of God would be taken from those who rejected Him and given to a nation bringing forth its fruits. His declaration marked an important transition from the privileges associated with natural Israel under the Old Covenant to the spiritual people established through Jesus Christ under the New Covenant. The question is not whether God abandoned His promises, but how those promises were fulfilled.

The New Testament identifies the people of the Kingdom through their relationship with Jesus Christ rather than through natural descent or membership in an earthly nation. Those who belong to Him through the new birth form the one spiritual people over whom He reigns. Natural ancestry does not provide a separate way into the Kingdom.

The Kingdom Taken and Given

During His ministry in Jerusalem, Jesus spoke the parable of the wicked husbandmen. The religious leaders had rejected God's messengers and were preparing to reject His Son. Jesus concluded His warning with a direct declaration concerning the Kingdom.

Jesus said in **Matthew 21:43**:

> *"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."*

Jesus addressed the religious leaders who were rejecting Him. His words established that the Kingdom would not remain the special privilege of an unbelieving nation simply because of natural ancestry. Relationship with the King, not physical descent, would determine who belonged to His Kingdom.

Notice that Jesus did not speak of establishing another kingdom. The same Kingdom would be given to a nation bringing forth its fruits. The change concerned the people who would belong to the Kingdom, not the creation of another divine government.

This does not exclude Jewish people from salvation. Jewish and Gentile people alike enter the Kingdom in the same way: through Jesus Christ and the new birth. The distinction is no longer between natural nations but between those who possess the life of Christ and those who do not.

A Chosen Generation and a Holy Nation

Peter applies language formerly associated with Israel to those who have been redeemed through Jesus Christ. His words identify the spiritual nation to which the privileges of God's Kingdom now belong. This nation is not defined by one earthly nationality.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 2:9-10**:

> *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."*

Peter describes believers as *"an holy nation"* and *"the people of God."* These expressions identify people who have received God's mercy and been called from darkness into His marvellous light. Their identity comes from the saving work of Jesus Christ rather than from an earthly nationality.

The Kingdom is therefore associated with a spiritual people whose standing is found in Christ. Geographical borders, political government and hereditary privilege do not create membership in this nation. Those who are born again belong to it because they possess the life of the King within.

The fruits of this nation also come from Jesus Christ. They are not human achievements by which someone earns entrance into the Kingdom. Love, holiness, righteousness and obedience are the fruit of His indwelling life already received through the new birth.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does a nation bringing forth fruit differ from natural religious privilege?

Personal Reflection

Do you sometimes serve in order to gain acceptance or recognition instead of serving through Christ's life within?

Action Step

Identify one motive that needs correcting. Explain how you will serve with humility, recognising that fruit follows new birth and does not purchase a place in the Kingdom.

Jews and Gentiles Made One in Christ

The New Covenant brings believing Jews and Gentiles together in one spiritual body. Paul explains that the former division between them has been removed through Jesus Christ. He does not preserve two separate covenant peoples with different saving programmes.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:14-16**:

> *"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:"*

Jesus Christ *"hath made both one"* and reconciled both *"in one body."* The distinction between Jew and Gentile no longer determines membership among God's redeemed people. Both enter the same body through the same saving work of Jesus Christ.

This does not erase natural ancestry or cultural identity. It establishes that neither ancestry nor culture provides an independent covenant standing before God. There is one Saviour, one Gospel, one Spirit and one body.

All who are born again belong to the one body of Jesus Christ. This is the spiritual people over whom the King presently reigns. Their unity is found in Him.

Abraham's Promise Fulfilled Through Christ

The promises made to Abraham also find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. Paul connects the inheritance with belonging to Christ rather than with physical descent alone. Those who belong to Jesus Christ are identified as Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 3:28-29**:

> *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

The decisive expression is *"if ye be Christ's."* Those who belong to Jesus Christ are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Their inheritance rests upon union with Christ rather than physical descent from Abraham.

The Gospel does not establish one saving Kingdom for natural Israel and another for Gentile believers. It brings people from every nation into the one spiritual Kingdom through Jesus Christ. All who are His share the same spiritual inheritance.

One People Under One King

The Kingdom given to the nation bringing forth its fruits is not a future political government awaiting the restoration of natural Israel. The New Testament identifies God's holy nation as the people redeemed through Jesus Christ and united in His one body. The King reigns over one New Covenant people.

This understanding does not diminish God's faithfulness to the promises made to Israel. It establishes that those promises find their fulfilment in the Messiah, through whom Jews and Gentiles alike may receive salvation. God's faithfulness is revealed in Jesus Christ.

The Church consists of those who are born again. It is not an earthly organisation whose membership automatically provides salvation, but the spiritual body of Jesus Christ formed through His completed saving work. Every true member possesses His indwelling life.

Jesus Christ Himself produces the righteousness and fruitfulness belonging to His Kingdom. His life within is the source of the love, holiness and obedience expressed through His people. The nation bringing forth the fruits of the Kingdom does so because the King lives within them.

The Kingdom belongs to one holy nation drawn from every people and nationality. All who are born again belong to Jesus Christ, share in Abraham's promise and live under the reign of the one eternal King.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How are believing Jews and Gentiles made one people under one King?

Personal Reflection

Is there a division of nationality, culture or former church background that you have allowed to affect your view of another believer?

Action Step

Name the division and why it must not govern your fellowship. Explain one way your response will show the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ.

HE MUST REIGN: THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND OF GOD

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The New Testament presents Jesus Christ as the reigning King whose authority is already established. His resurrection and exaltation were not preparations for a kingship that would begin thousands of years later. The apostles proclaimed Him as Lord and Christ, possessing authority in heaven and earth and reigning over His spiritual Kingdom.

Paul also speaks of Christ delivering up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and of the Son being subject when all things are subdued. These declarations must be understood without suggesting that Jesus Christ is a separate divine ruler or that His eternal divine authority will cease. The distinction concerns His genuine humanity, His mediating work and the completion of God's redemptive purpose.

Jesus Christ Reigns Now

Following His resurrection, Jesus declared the authority that already belonged to Him. He did not point towards a distant earthly throne that He would receive thousands of years later. He declared that all authority in heaven and earth had been given to Him.

Jesus said in **Matthew 28:18**:

> *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."*

The words *"All power is given unto me"* establish the authority of the risen Christ. His kingship was not waiting for a future earthly age before it could begin. Jesus Christ already possessed authority over heaven and earth.

Paul confirms this present reign when explaining the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 1:20-23**:

> *"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."*

Paul connects Christ's authority directly with His resurrection and exaltation. The expression *"right hand"* describes the position of divine power and authority. It does not establish another divine throne belonging to a separate God.

Jesus Christ is already *"far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion."* He is already Head over all things to the Church, which is His body. His present reign is therefore inseparable from the people in whom He dwells and over whom He reigns.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ's present authority establish His reign over His Church?

Personal Reflection

What current responsibility tests whether you recognise Christ as the present Head of His Church?

Action Step

Name one decision you must make or influence you exercise. Explain how you will submit that matter to His Word instead of treating authority as your own.

He Must Reign Until All Enemies Are Subdued

Paul gives further teaching concerning the reign of Jesus Christ and the completion of God's redemptive purpose. His words show that Christ is already reigning and that His reign continues while God's purpose is being fulfilled. The Kingdom does not begin after the enemies are subdued because the King reigns while they are being brought under His feet.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 15:22-28**:

> *"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."*

Paul's declaration *"For he must reign"* establishes the continuing reign of Jesus Christ throughout the fulfilment of God's redemptive purpose. The Kingdom is already established,

while the work of bringing people from spiritual death into life continues throughout the Gospel Day. Jesus Christ reigns while that saving work continues.

The expression *"Then cometh the end"* must remain within Paul's teaching concerning resurrection, redemption and the final defeat of death. It does not announce the beginning of a future earthly Kingdom. It describes the completion of the purpose for which Christ reigns.

Paul's declaration, *"For he must reign,"* establishes that Jesus Christ already possesses His Kingdom and is exercising His mediating authority. His reign continues until every enemy has been subdued, with death identified as the last enemy. Paul then describes the completion of that mediating work, when the Kingdom is delivered to God, even the Father, *"that God may be all in all."* The Kingdom is not awaiting its establishment, nor does its completion require another physical coming of Jesus Christ. The risen Christ reigns now, and His mediating work will accomplish the purpose for which it was given.

The Last Enemy Is Death

Paul identifies death as the final enemy to be destroyed. This is important because the reign of Jesus Christ is directed against everything opposed to the life and purpose of God. His Kingdom is a Kingdom of life.

Sin brought death into human experience, but Jesus Christ came to give life. Through His death and resurrection He accomplished redemption, and through the new birth He now brings spiritually dead people into His saving life. His reign is therefore seen wherever people pass from spiritual death into life in Him.

The final defeat of death belongs to the complete fulfilment of God's purpose. Paul's words do not require a future earthly reign of a thousand years. They direct attention to the victory of Jesus Christ and the certainty that nothing opposed to God's purpose will remain when that purpose is complete.

Christ reigns now while enemies remain to be subdued. His reign does not begin after death is defeated. He must reign until every enemy is brought under His feet.

The Son Subject That God May Be All in All

Paul's statement that the Son will be subject to God requires careful understanding. It must not be interpreted as though Jesus Christ were a lesser divine Person who will eventually surrender His authority to another greater divine Person. There is one true God.

The distinction concerns the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ and His mediating work of redemption. The Son is the complete and genuine human revelation of the one eternal God, possessing a true human body, soul, mind and will. The Father is the eternal Spirit who dwelt within the man Christ Jesus and was fully revealed through Him. The authority given to the risen Christ belongs to His mediating role and does not establish another divine Person or a separate divine Kingdom.

Jesus Christ possessed a genuine human will and lived in genuine obedience. Through His humanity He fulfilled the Father's purpose, suffered, died and accomplished the work of redemption. The subjection described by Paul must therefore be understood in harmony with that genuine humanity and the completion of His mediating work.

The expression *"that God may be all in all"* does not mean that the eternal God begins to reign only after the Son delivers up the Kingdom. Neither does it mean that Jesus Christ ceases to be God or loses His eternal divine authority. It describes the completed purpose of redemption when nothing remains opposed to the eternal authority of God.

Delivering Up the Kingdom Does Not End God's Reign

When Paul says that Christ will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, he is not describing one divine ruler handing a kingdom to another divine ruler. The language belongs to the completion of the redemptive work accomplished through the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ. The mediating purpose reaches its appointed fulfilment.

The eternal God does not cease to be revealed in Jesus Christ when that purpose is complete. The divine identity of Jesus Christ does not end, and His eternal authority does not disappear. What reaches completion is the mediating work for which the Son came.

This agrees with the whole New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ. The one true God acted through the genuine human life of the Son to accomplish redemption. When every enemy has been subdued, the purpose of that mediating work has been fulfilled.

One Eternal God, One Everlasting Kingdom

Isaiah had already declared that there would be no end to the government and peace of the promised Son. Paul does not contradict that prophecy when he speaks of the Kingdom being delivered up to God. Scripture must remain in harmony.

The distinction is between the completion of Christ's mediating work and the everlasting authority of the one true God. The redemptive purpose reaches its fulfilment, but the divine identity and eternal sovereignty of Jesus Christ do not cease. The one God remains eternally sovereign.

The Kingdom of Christ and of God is therefore not divided between competing rulers. The one eternal God has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, accomplished redemption through His genuine humanity and established His spiritual Kingdom through His indwelling life. There is one King and one divine authority.

Jesus Christ reigns now. His Kingdom is already established, His saving work continues to bring people into that Kingdom, and His eternal divine authority will never pass away.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ's reign continue while the enemies are brought under His feet?

Personal Reflection

Does opposition to the Gospel make you doubt the present reign and ultimate authority of Jesus Christ?

Action Step

Identify a discouraging situation. Explain how you will remain faithful and hopeful through Christ's indwelling life while His saving work continues.

SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

BACK TO CONTENTS

The Kingdom of God is not simply a subject of prophecy or a question of when Jesus Christ began to reign. It concerns the present life of everyone who belongs to Him. Because His Kingdom is already established, believers are called to live with their hearts and minds directed towards the King who dwells within them.

Seeking the Kingdom must not be confused with attempting to earn salvation through religious effort. The born-again believer has already entered the Kingdom and received the life of Jesus Christ. The Christian walk is the expression of that indwelling life as the believer learns to trust His Word and live under His rule.

Seek First His Kingdom and Righteousness

Jesus taught His disciples to place the Kingdom of God above the concerns that commonly occupy human attention. His instruction was given in the setting of His teaching concerning anxiety over daily necessities. He directed them towards confidence in God rather than anxious preoccupation with material needs.

Jesus declared in **Matthew 6:31-34**:

> *"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."*

Jesus was not teaching His followers to neglect their responsibilities or refuse to provide for their families. He was establishing the proper order of their lives by placing confidence in God above anxiety concerning material needs. The Kingdom and righteousness of God were to hold the primary place in their affections and decisions.

The words *"seek ye first"* do not mean that a born-again person must repeatedly seek entrance into a Kingdom already received through salvation. The believer already belongs to the Kingdom through the new birth. The instruction concerns living according to the reign of the King who is already present within.

Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost

Paul describes the spiritual character of the Kingdom in terms of righteousness, peace and joy. These are realities experienced under the reign of Jesus Christ rather than outward qualifications by which someone enters His Kingdom. The Kingdom is known through the spiritual life that comes from Him.

Paul wrote in **Romans 14:17**:

> *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."*

Paul was addressing differences among believers concerning outward matters. His teaching directed them towards the spiritual realities that should govern their relationships rather than

allowing disputes over food and drink to disturb their fellowship. Outward practices were not to become the measure of spiritual standing.

Righteousness is not produced by human effort apart from Jesus Christ, nor is peace produced simply by avoiding disagreement. These qualities arise from the life of Christ within the believer. His Spirit produces the righteousness, peace and joy that belong to His Kingdom.

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Christ, not another divine Person acting independently of Jesus. These spiritual realities are therefore the expression of the indwelling King. His life within produces what belongs to His reign.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does seeking first the Kingdom concern the present life of believers?

Personal Reflection

Which worry is competing for the first place in your thoughts and decisions?

Action Step

Name the worry and what it has led you to do. Explain how seeking first Christ's Kingdom will change your priorities and response to that concern.

The Kingdom Expressed Through the Life of Christ

Jesus explains that spiritual fruit comes from abiding in Him. The believer's conduct is therefore inseparable from the life received through the new birth. Fruit does not come from attempting to reproduce Jesus Christ through human effort.

Jesus declared in **John 15:4-5**:

> *"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."*

The branch does not produce fruit independently by attempting to resemble the vine. Its fruit comes from the life it receives through its union with the vine. The source of the fruit is the life flowing within.

In the same way, Christian conduct is not an external imitation of Jesus Christ. It is His own life within the believer producing the fruit of righteousness, love and obedience. The believer possesses the Person, and His life is expressed through them.

This does not remove the believer's responsibility to hear and obey His Word. It establishes the source of spiritual life and strength. The believer responds to Jesus Christ through faith, while His indwelling life supplies what human effort alone cannot produce.

Living Under the Reign of Jesus Christ

The present Kingdom affects the believer's attitudes, relationships, priorities and daily conduct. Recognising Jesus Christ as King means acknowledging His authority in every area of life. His Kingdom is therefore not separate from the ordinary decisions and responsibilities of the believer.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 3:1-2**:

> *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

Paul addresses believers who had already been raised with Christ spiritually. His instruction was not to obtain that standing through further effort but to direct their affections towards the heavenly reality they already possessed. Their conduct was to agree with their spiritual position in Christ.

The believer remains physically in the world, attending to ordinary responsibilities and serving others. Yet the governing influence of life is no longer to be worldly ambition or the pursuit of earthly recognition. Jesus Christ is the King, and His life within is to govern the believer's priorities.

His reign is expressed through love, truthfulness, humility and faithful service. These qualities are not attempts to earn a place in the Kingdom. They are the fruit of the King's life operating within His people.

The Kingdom Is a Present Responsibility

Seeking first the Kingdom concerns the believer's daily response to Jesus Christ. It is a continuing commitment to give His Word and His will their rightful place because He already reigns. The believer lives under the authority of the King already received at the new birth.

The Kingdom is not established in a person through outward religious performance, nor does spiritual maturity create a higher class of Kingdom membership. Every born-again believer possesses the same indwelling Christ, although believers continue to grow in understanding, maturity, obedience and practical experience. Growth is the development of life already received, not the completion of an incomplete salvation.

The call is therefore to live consciously under the reign of the King who has already come. As believers respond to His Word, His life is expressed through their conduct, relationships and service. The present Kingdom becomes visible through the fruit produced by the indwelling life of Jesus Christ.

We do not seek the Kingdom because it has not yet come. We seek first the Kingdom because Jesus Christ already reigns, and His life within us is to govern everything we do.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does abiding in Christ produce the fruit of His Kingdom?

Personal Reflection

Are you trying to produce spiritual fruit by effort alone instead of yielding to the life of Christ within?

Action Step

Identify one area in which your motives or conduct need change. Explain how you will abide in Christ and allow His life to guide you without treating service as the means of salvation.

CONCLUSION: THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAS COME

BACK TO CONTENTS

The Scriptures present a consistent testimony concerning the Kingdom of God. The prophets foretold the Kingdom, Jesus Christ announced that it was near, and the apostles proclaimed it as an established reality. The Kingdom was not postponed to a distant earthly age, nor did its establishment depend upon a future physical return of Jesus Christ.

Daniel foretold a Kingdom that would never be destroyed, while Isaiah identified the promised King whose government and peace would have no end. These prophecies directed attention to Jesus Christ, the promised Son of David. Through His resurrection and exaltation, His authority was openly proclaimed over the people of God.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus declared that the Kingdom was at hand. He explained that His Kingdom was not of this world and challenged the expectation that God's reign would be recognised through outward observation. His teaching revealed a spiritual Kingdom whose authority does not depend upon military power, political government or geographical boundaries.

Jesus also promised that some standing before Him would see the Kingdom of God come with power. At Pentecost in A.D. 31, that promise was fulfilled when Jesus Christ came as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people. The Kingdom entered its New Covenant fulfilment in power, establishing the present reality of the Gospel Day.

Entrance into this Kingdom is through the new birth. Natural ancestry, religious ceremonies and membership in an earthly organisation cannot impart the life of Jesus Christ. Every person who is born again receives His Spirit, enters His Kingdom and becomes part of His one spiritual body.

Paul declared that believers had already been delivered from darkness and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. John testified that he was *"in the kingdom,"* while the writer of Hebrews described believers as receiving a Kingdom that could not be moved. These declarations establish that the Kingdom was already a present spiritual reality for those who belonged to Jesus Christ.

The people of this Kingdom are drawn from every nation. Through Jesus Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles are brought together in one body, sharing the same salvation, the same Spirit and the same spiritual inheritance. The Kingdom belongs to those who are born again, and its fruit is produced through the indwelling life of Christ.

Jesus Christ reigns now. His mediating work fulfils the redemptive purpose of the one eternal God, whose divine authority will never cease. The Kingdom of Christ and of God is not divided between competing rulers but reveals the sovereign reign of the one true God manifested through Jesus Christ.

For the believer, this truth is more than the fulfilment of prophecy. It establishes the foundation of daily Christian life under the present reign of Jesus Christ. To seek first the Kingdom is to live under the authority of the indwelling King and allow His life to be expressed through righteousness, peace, love and obedience.

The Kingdom foretold by the prophets has come. The promised King has been exalted, the Holy Ghost has been given and believers have already entered the Kingdom through the new birth. The Person has come, and His Kingdom is present wherever His saving life reigns within His people.

Jesus Christ is King now. His Kingdom is here, His people belong to Him, and His reign is everlasting.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do prophecy, Pentecost and the apostles' testimony establish the Kingdom now?

Personal Reflection

When you hear that Jesus is King now, which personal choice or responsibility becomes most important to reconsider?

Action Step

Identify a response to His Word you have delayed. Explain how you will act faithfully because He already reigns and dwells within His people.

MODULE CONCLUSION: JESUS CHRIST HAS COME, AND HIS KINGDOM IS HERE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Throughout this module, we have examined the promises concerning the coming of Jesus Christ and their fulfilment in the New Testament. Beginning with His own words to the disciples, we have followed the testimony of Scripture concerning His promised return, the generation that would witness the fulfilment of His prophetic declarations, the meaning of being caught up together with Him and the establishment of His everlasting Kingdom.

These subjects are united by the fulfilment of Jesus Christ's promises. His coming at Pentecost in A.D. 31 established His personal indwelling presence among His people and brought the Kingdom into its New Covenant reality. This provides the foundation for understanding His present reign and the spiritual life enjoyed by everyone who is born again.

The Promise of His Coming Fulfilled

Before His crucifixion, Jesus promised His disciples that He would not leave them comfortless. His departure did not mean that they would remain abandoned or that His presence would be absent until a distant future age. He promised plainly that He would come to them.

Jesus declared in **John 14:18**:

> *"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."*

His promise was fulfilled at Pentecost in A.D. 31 when Jesus Christ came as the Holy Ghost to dwell within His people. The Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Ghost are not separate divine Persons. They identify the one Spirit through whom Jesus Christ personally dwells within every born-again believer.

This coming established the New Covenant reality Jesus had promised. His people would no longer know Him only through His visible earthly presence but through His own life dwelling

within them. The Christian life would now be the life of Jesus Christ expressed through His people.

The Generation That Witnessed Fulfilment

Jesus also gave definite time indicators concerning the events He foretold. His declaration that the generation then living would not pass before the fulfilment of His prophetic words must remain within its historical setting. His words were addressed to people who were physically present before Him.

Jesus said in **Matthew 24:34**:

> *"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."*

The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 marked the historical judgement upon the former Temple-centred order. The events surrounding that destruction confirmed the seriousness of Jesus' warning and brought the visible former order to its historical end after the New Covenant had already been established through Him.

His words belonged to the generation that heard Him. We must not remove the historical time indicators Jesus gave and transfer their fulfilment to an unspecified generation thousands of years later. His prophecy was fulfilled within the timeframe He established.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do Christ's promised coming and the generation Jesus addressed belong together?

Personal Reflection

Has an expectation of a future physical return affected the way you receive Jesus' words to the generation then living?

Action Step

Identify the assumption and the verses you must examine. Explain how you will correct the way you repeat or respond to claims about Christ's coming.

Gathered in Christ

The teaching concerning the dead rising and believers being caught up together must be understood within the spiritual language of Scripture. Paul was not announcing that born-again believers would suddenly disappear from the earth. He was describing the saving work through which spiritually dead people hear Jesus Christ, receive His life and are gathered into His one spiritual body.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:5-6**:

> *"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:"*

Paul describes people who were spiritually dead being quickened together with Christ, raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Their physical bodies remained upon the earth, yet their spiritual position had changed completely through the

saving work of Jesus Christ. They had been brought from spiritual death into life and raised into a heavenly position in Him.

The gathering is in Jesus Christ. Those who were spiritually dead are quickened and raised together with Christ, becoming members of His one spiritual body alongside those who already belong to Him. They share the same indwelling life and are seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is their present spiritual position, not an event awaiting another physical coming of Jesus Christ.

The Kingdom Is Already Established

The establishment of the Kingdom of God brings the teaching concerning the coming of Jesus Christ to its fulfilment. At Pentecost in A.D. 31, Jesus Christ came to dwell within His people, and His Kingdom was established in New Covenant power. The King is present within His people, and everyone who is born again belongs to His Kingdom.

The apostles then spoke of believers as people who already belonged to the Kingdom.

Paul declared in **Colossians 1:13**:

> *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"*

The believer's translation into the Kingdom is a present spiritual reality. Jesus Christ reigns within His people, and His Kingdom does not require a future earthly throne, a restored political nation or another age of salvation. Those who are born again already belong to the King.

Christ Within: The Fulfilment That Matters

The purpose of understanding these promises is greater than establishing the correct timing of prophetic events. It is to recognise what Jesus Christ has already accomplished and the greatness of the life He now gives. Prophecy leads us to the Person.

Every person who is born again receives the indwelling Christ, is baptised by His Spirit into His one body and is complete in Him. There is no later Spirit to receive and no future event required to complete salvation. Complete means complete.

The Christian life is not an attempt to imitate an absent Saviour from the outside. Jesus Christ lives within the born-again believer, and His own life is to be expressed through that believer. Holiness, love, service, faithfulness and obedience are the fruit of His indwelling life.

The Gospel Day that began at Pentecost continues as the everlasting Gospel is proclaimed. Through the new birth, people from every nation can enter the Kingdom Jesus Christ has already established. There is one Saviour, one Spirit, one body and one New Covenant people under one eternal King.

The module therefore ends where the promises of Scripture find their fulfilment: not in an anticipated physical return or a future earthly government, but in Jesus Christ Himself. His coming, His Kingdom and His saving life are present realities for those who are born again.

He promised, *"I will come to you,"* and He has come. He promised that His Kingdom would come with power, and it has come. He promised life to those who believe, and His life now dwells within everyone who is born again.

Jesus Christ has come. His Kingdom is here. His people are complete in Him, and His reign is everlasting.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ giving life and gathering believers into one body show that His Kingdom is here?

Personal Reflection

Which truth about Christ's present Kingdom has most changed your understanding of salvation and belonging to His people?

Action Step

Name one attitude or practice you will change because Christ has come and gathers believers into His one body. Explain how His life within supplies the basis for that response.

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

Why is the Kingdom of God present now? Explain how Daniel's everlasting Kingdom and Jesus' promise that His hearers would see it come with power are fulfilled at Pentecost.

2. Understanding

Why do the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Christ describe one Kingdom? Use Jesus' answer to Pilate to explain its spiritual nature.

3. Personal Reflection

Has Jesus' teaching about the necessity of the new birth corrected your confidence in family background, religious knowledge or outward association? Explain what has changed.

4. Response to Truth

Where has worry, pressure or personal preference been given more influence than the present reign of Jesus Christ? Explain what you now recognise needs to change.

5. Action Step

Identify one present worry or responsibility that needs to come under the rule of Christ. What will you change in your priorities, words or conduct because Jesus is King now? Explain when you will begin.

6. Early Response

Have you begun responding differently to the worry or responsibility identified in Question 5? If yes, describe the change and what it revealed about your trust in Christ. If not, explain the obstacle and the response you intend to make.

7. Ongoing Practice

What could help you keep seeking first Christ's Kingdom when worries return? Explain how His life produces righteousness, peace, joy and fruit without making your conduct a way to earn salvation.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

How does the Kingdom given to a fruitful nation bring believing Jews and Gentiles together under one King? Explain why Christ's reign remains everlasting as His enemies are brought under His feet.

9. Living the Truth

Someone says that Christ's authority will begin with a future earthly government. How would the apostles' teaching about being brought into His Kingdom and Christ reigning now help you answer? Use a verse in your response.

10. Final Response

How do Christ's fulfilled coming, the generation He addressed and gathering believers into one body help explain His present Kingdom? Describe what has become clearer to you and any personal response you want to make.