

**ENGAGE**

This week we are looking at several passages in Luke and other Gospels related to the Kingdom of God.

- Below is a list of 10 understandings about the kingdom of God. Please have your class read the verses that are related to the various points as you work through them.
- The questions below will direct the class to assess what is kingdom living now and what are kingdom prophecies for the future.

**EXAMINE**

The kingdom of God is, in essence, God's redemptive reign. Yet it can be easy to overlook this prominent theme in the life of Jesus, and tempting to assume rather than investigate the importance of the kingdom for Jesus. When we miss the significance of the kingdom to Jesus, however, we can miss the significance of the kingdom for biblical theology and ethics.

So how important was the kingdom of God to Jesus? What was his relationship to the in-breaking of the eschatological kingdom? Let's examine ten ways Jesus related to the kingdom.

**1. Jesus inaugurates the kingdom.**

With the coming of Christ, the kingdom begins not in the coronation of a mighty king but in the birth of a crying baby. Yet as Jesus' ministry begins in Mark, he announces, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). What Israel had long awaited, Christ had now inaugurated.

(Mark 1:15)

15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

**2. Jesus is the kingdom.**

Where the king is, there is the kingdom. This is precisely why Jesus says to the Pharisees, "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:21). As Graeme Goldsworthy teaches, Jesus embodies the kingdom motif of God's people in God's place under God's rule. Jesus is both the faithful ruler and the righteous citizen of the kingdom.

(Luke 17:20-21)

20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

**Sources**

[thegospelcoalition.org](http://thegospelcoalition.org)

### 3. Jesus purposes the kingdom.

Jesus reveals that his purpose is to proclaim the kingdom. Jesus described his mission saying that he “must preach the good news of the kingdom of God” (Luke 4:43).

(Luke 4:43)

43 But he said, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.”

### 4. Jesus declares the kingdom.

Through his words, Jesus explains the kingdom and invites people to enter into it. Luke summarizes Jesus’ ministry as “proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God” (Luke 8:1). The declaration of the kingdom often came through the parables of Jesus that illustrated what it was and how it worked.

(Luke 8:1)

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.

### 5. Jesus demonstrates the kingdom.

Through his works, Jesus shows the power of the kingdom and his authority over the prince of darkness. As Jesus explains, “If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Luke 11:20). Jesus not only declares the kingdom in his words but also demonstrates the kingdom in his works.

(Luke 11:19-20)

19 Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

### 6. Jesus deploys the kingdom.

Jesus sends his followers out as ambassadors of the kingdom to herald its arrival. This deployment happens in Luke 10 as Jesus sends out the 72, instructing them to say, “The kingdom of God has come near to you” (Luke 10:9). In the great commission, King Jesus issues his discipleship battle plan to the church because he possesses “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matt 28:18). Jesus sends his soldiers to the front lines to engage the kingdom of darkness.

(Luke 10:8-9)

### Sources

[thegospelcoalition.org](http://thegospelcoalition.org)

8 “When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. 9 Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

### **7. Jesus transforms the kingdom.**

Israel’s messianic hopes focused on the coming of a military conqueror who would rescue them from their geo-political enemies. That is why they sought to make Jesus king (John 6:15). But Jesus reorients their vision by declaring, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). Jesus transforms the kingdom, showing it is holistic in its nature, redemptive in its mission, and cosmic in its scope.

(John 6:15)

15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

(John 18:36)

36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

### **8. Jesus purchases the kingdom.**

Through his victorious death and resurrection, Jesus redeems the kingdom. As he satisfies the wrath of God poured out for those who rebel against his rule, Jesus defeats Satan, sin, and death (Col 2:14-15). He overcomes the world, the flesh, and the Devil by destroying the power of the kingdom of darkness. By purchasing a kingdom people at the cross, Jesus proves himself to be the rightful ruler of the restored kingdom.

(Col 2:14-15)

14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross

### **9. Jesus concludes with the kingdom.**

In his final words to his people, Jesus concludes his earthly ministry by clarifying the kingdom. Just before his ascension, Jesus’ disciples asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). Even at the conclusion of his earthly ministry, Jesus resolved confusion about the kingdom. So the kingdom was key to the start of Jesus’ earthly ministry and its culmination.

(Acts 1:6)

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

### **Sources**

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### 10. Jesus returns the kingdom.

In the second coming of Christ, Jesus returns as a triumphant warrior king. As he returns to achieve final victory, the name scribed on his body is “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev 19:16). At last, he places all his enemies under his feet as he launches a new creation kingdom that fully reflects his righteous reign. He consummates the conquest that began with his birth.

(Rev 19:16)

16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.

If the kingdom of God was central to Jesus’ life and ministry, then it remains crucial to our theology and ethics today.

### QUESTIONS

1. What is the kingdom of God?
2. How would you define it?
3. Who rules over—and who lives within—the kingdom of God?
4. When does the kingdom come? Is it already here, yet to come, or somehow both?
5. Where is the kingdom found?
6. Is it only a dynamic rule, or does it also have boundaries and inhabit space?
7. How—and why—are Christians to live in the kingdom today?
8. How would you describe Kingdom in the future? (prophetic – end times)
9. How would you describe kingdom now? (how you and I are to live?)

### Sources

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