

Kingdom and Covenant in the New Testament

Lesson 2

The Kingdom of God

Lesson Guide



thirdmill

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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or manuscript versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**

- **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
- **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.

- **While you are watching the lesson**

- **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
- **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
- **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.

- **After you watch the lesson**

- **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
- **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:20)

II. Good News (2:17)

A. Meaning (3:43)

The phrase “good news” comes from the Greek noun *euangelion*, meaning a “good announcement,” or a “good message.”

The gospel is the good news of victory for the kingdom of God (1Samuel 31:9; 2 Samuel 18:19; Luke 4:43).

B. Kingdom of God (8:26)

The kingdom of God is specifically associated with the gospel in the New Testament (Matthew 4:23, 9:35, 24:14; Luke 4:43, 8:1, 16:16; Acts 8:12).

Scripture refers to the kingdom of God in two primary ways:

1. Unwavering Sovereignty (11:25)

The entire creation is God's kingdom because God always has ruled and always will rule over all he has made (1 Chronicles 29:11; 1 Timothy 6:15).

God is sovereign in heaven and on earth (1 Kings 8:27; Isaiah 6:1; 2 Chronicles 18:18; Job 1:6; Psalm 82:1; Daniel 7:9-10; Luke 22:30; Revelation 4:6).

2. Unfolding Kingdom (14:00)

The unfolding kingdom refers to a particular way that God reveals, displays, or demonstrates his sovereignty throughout history.

God displayed his kingship in the Garden of Eden, but Satan led Adam and Eve into a major setback for the kingdom.

As a result of the Fall, God divided humanity into two rival factions.

In the end, God will have victory over all who have opposed him (Philippians 2:10-11).

C. Developing Significance (16:41)

1. Israel's Failures (17:25)

God chose Abraham and his descendants to fulfill the kingdom commission he had first given to Adam and Eve.

Every generation of Abraham's descendants failed God in one way or another.

Israel's failures became so flagrant that God turned in judgment against them.

2. Israel's Hope (20:45)

Israel hoped for the time when God would defeat his enemies and deliver his people into the blessings of his kingdom (Isaiah 52:7).

Four features related to Israel's hopes (Isaiah 52:7):

- Messengers would bring “good news” and “good tidings” to Zion.
- Christian preaching fulfilled Isaiah's prediction of messengers announcing “good news” (Romans 10:15).
- Isaiah predicted that the “good news” would be a proclamation of peace and salvation (Ephesians 1:13, 6:15).
- “Your God reigns!” is the basis of the gospel referred to in the New Testament as “the good news of the kingdom.”

Isaiah predicted the two sides of victory that Israel longed to see (Isaiah 52:10):

- Defeat: Isaiah predicted that after Israel's exile, God would completely defeat all of his enemies everywhere.

- Deliverance: Isaiah predicted that the deliverance of God's people would be universal and final.

The belief that God's kingdom would rise to unprecedented victory in Jesus was very important to his followers.

III. Coming (28:17)

A. Expectations (29:14)

- **This age and the age to come**

The present age of sin, suffering, and death, and the future age of righteousness, love, joy, and peace.

Jewish sects had different expectations for the transition from "this age" to "the age to come," but most agreed there would be a catastrophic war.

The Messiah would lead the angels of heaven and God's people to victory over God's human and spiritual enemies (Exodus 12:12; 1 Samuel 5:1-12; Isaiah 21:9; Haggai 2:6-9; Zechariah 9-12; Ezekiel 38-39).

- **Christian expectations**

Jesus' followers began to anticipate the arrival of victory for God's kingdom differently.

New Testament authors believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

Jesus' messianic titles in the New Testament:

- **"Christ":**

The New Testament refers to Jesus as "Christ" (the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Messiah") some 529 times.

- **"Son of God":**

The New Testament refers to Jesus as "Son of God" some 118 times, indicating Jesus was the rightful king of Israel.

- **"Son of David":**

The New Testament refers to Jesus as "son of David" some 20 times, indicating Jesus was the heir of David's throne.

Jesus' followers believed he would bring the transition from this age to the age to come in unexpected ways. (Matthew 13:31-32)

"Inaugurated eschatology": the work of the Messiah has already been manifested on earth, but the *final* victory is still to come.

The New Testament outlook on the coming of God's kingdom is threefold:

- Inauguration

- Continuation

- Consummation

B. Threefold Victory (41:56)**1. Defeat (43:00)**

- **Inauguration**

Jesus' twofold strategy in the inauguration of the kingdom:

- Jesus inflicted God's judgment on God's spiritual enemies (Matthew 12:28-29).
- Jesus extended God's mercy to God's human enemies (John 12:31-32).

Twofold strategy of Christ's atoning death on the cross:

- Jesus broke the power of Satan over human beings (Colossians 2:15).
- Jesus' atonement set people free from sin and death (Ephesians 4:8).

- **Continuation**

Jesus' church is not at war with people, but with Satan and other evil spirits (Ephesians 6:11-12).

Followers of Christ must extend God's mercy to God's human enemies (2 Corinthians 5:20).

- **Consummation**

When Christ returns he will defeat God's spiritual *and* human enemies (Revelation 19:13-15, 20:20).

2. **Deliverance (55:17)**

- **Inauguration**

Miracles represented the blessings of the kingdom that Jesus brought to earth.

Jesus' attention to social justice represented important blessings of the kingdom.

The greatest blessing in the inauguration of God's kingdom was the gift of eternal salvation (Colossians 1:13-14).

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the one blessing of the world to come given to all believers (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

- **Continuation**

God continues to grant the gift of the Holy Spirit to his church (1 Corinthians 4:20).

Followers of Christ must keep their hopes fixed on even greater blessings in the kingdom to come (Hebrews 12:28).

- **Consummation**

God's people will fully experience all the promised blessings of the kingdom (Revelation 5:9-10; 11:15).

The defeat of God's enemies and deliverance of God's people represent the arrival of victory for the kingdom of God in Christ.

IV. Conclusion (1:03:12)

Review Questions

1. What is the meaning of the “good news” of God’s kingdom?
2. Explain in detail the two primary ways Scripture refers to the kingdom of God.

3. What is the developing significance of the kingdom of God in the New Testament? Explain.
4. What were the expectations for the arrival of God's kingdom?

5. What is the New Testament outlook on the threefold victory of the kingdom of God?

Application Questions

1. How are the implications of the good news of God's kingdom affecting the way you live in your present circumstances?
2. God has unwavering sovereignty over all of creation. How do we respond to this truth in the midst of hard circumstances, such as natural disasters, sickness, poverty, persecution, war, and injustice?
3. As we await God's final victory and the defeat of his enemies, how do you remain hopeful and faithful to God?
4. How can you encourage others to remain hopeful for the final victory over God's enemies that will come when Jesus returns?
5. List some obstacles, struggles, and/or strongholds that God has delivered you from. Has this deliverance changed the way you minister to others? Explain your answer.
6. How can the biblical outlook of "the already but not yet," help you live a faithful Christian life in this fallen world?
7. In the Gospels, there are many royal titles used to identify Jesus as the one who was inaugurating God's kingdom. How can you use the royal titles of Jesus as an evangelistic tool?
8. As we look forward to the final deliverance from the enemies of God, how does your anticipation of this day motivate you to persevere?
9. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

Glossary

basar – Hebrew term (transliteration) meaning to bring or announce good news, especially news of victory in battle

Christ – From the Greek word "*christos*" meaning "the anointed" or "anointed one"; closely tied to the Old Testament Hebrew term "messiah"

christos – Greek word (transliteration) for Christ; used in the Septuagint to translate "*mashiach*" or "messiah," meaning "anointed one"

consummation – Third and final stage of inaugurated eschatology when Christ will return and fulfill God's ultimate purpose for all of history

continuation – Second or middle stage of inaugurated eschatology; the period of the kingdom of God after Christ's first advent but before the final victory

euangelion – Greek word (transliteration) for "gospel"; literally "good news"

gospel – Literally, "good news"; announcement that God's kingdom came to earth through the person and work of Jesus and that it expands toward its great consummation as God grants salvation to those who receive and trust in Jesus as the Messiah

inaugurated eschatology – View of the end times that says the age to come has begun (been "inaugurated"), but hasn't yet come in all its fullness; the "already, not yet"

inauguration – First stage in inaugurated eschatology; refers to Christ's first coming and the ministries of his apostles and prophets

kingdom of God – God's sovereign and unchanging rule over all of creation

mashiach/meshiach – Hebrew word (transliteration) for "messiah"; anointed one

Messiah – Hebrew word meaning "anointed one"; the great King from David's royal line who would bring about the transition from this age to the age to come; translated "*Christos*" in Greek

olam haba' – Hebrew term (transliteration) for "the age to come"; rabbinical phrase referring to the future age when God will fulfill all of his promises to Israel

olam hazeh – Hebrew term (transliteration) for "this age"; rabbinical phrase referring to the present age of sin, suffering and death that has existed since the Fall

Septuagint – Greek translation of the Old Testament

sovereign/sovereignty – Theological term that refers to God's continuing rule and complete authority over all creation

the age to come – Phrase used by rabbis and leaders in Israel to describe the future age of righteousness, love, joy and peace that would follow the exile; time when all of God's purposes for history would be fulfilled

this age – Phrase used by rabbis and leaders in Israel to describe the present age of sin, suffering and death

Zion – Another name for Jerusalem; sometimes referred to as the City of David or the City of God; also used in reference to all of Israel and as a name for the eternal or heavenly Jerusalem