

**Theology of the Kingdom:  
A Reversal of the Curse**

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Theology of Power Encounter

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## ***Introduction***

What is the kingdom of God? This phrasing isn't occasionally used in our everyday vocabulary. This question may lead us to study ancient context and vocabulary on what a kingdom is, especially that which belongs to God. Many simplify the significance of this statement or leave it under explained. The Kingdom of God is rich in theology and practicality. It wasn't just a random subject Jesus spoke about but it was what Jesus first spoke about in and lastly spoke about in Acts.<sup>1</sup> Jesus not only proclaimed the Kingdom of God in Word but embodied it in deed and power. According to Robert Riemer, "The kingdom of God is the reversal of everything that went wrong with the world when sin entered the world. It is the restoration of the way things were supposed to be."<sup>2</sup>

With the many opportunities Jesus had to teach, whether it be on sex, money, religious deception, etc. He quite often spoke about the Kingdom of God. Oftentimes, when Jesus would teach on it, people would be amazed as He would demonstrate it's restorative power for the most marginalized, broken, demon-stricken person. The kingdom of God was a different way of life, teaching, priorities, and value system. It's the good news of the Kingdom of God that reverses the curse of sin, death, and Satan.

## ***Old Testament***

Adam and Eve were the first of humanity to exemplify the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in Heaven. God gave them rulership in the Garden over creation and each other. This Kingdom demonstrated a perfect union and flourishing of relationships between God, humans, and creation. The conflict between the Kingdom of Light and Darkness emerged when Adam and Eve gave access to the serpent by disobeying God's guidelines of rulership in the Garden.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>. Robert Riemer, *Spiritual Authority: Partnering with God To Release the Kingdom*, Kindle edition (2020), 863

<sup>2</sup>. Riemer, 890

<sup>3</sup>. Genesis 3:1-14

Adam and Eve were deceived by the Serpent and became their own gods by redefining what is good for them. Their disobedience resulted in the separation of relationships and the disorientation of priorities. The curse began through giving access to the kingdom of darkness and it brought death, sin, and hell on earth. It was there where the kingdom of light and darkness declared war and within that very curse, God responded with the protoevangelium--the promise of His coming kingdom and victory of the enemy.<sup>4</sup>

In Exodus 7, the kingdom of God at odds with the kingdom of Pharaoh, who is deceived by his own sinfulness and power. God sends Moses to advocate on the behalf of the Israelites and requests their freedom from Egyptian captivity but Pharaoh denies. Not only did Moses make a declaration about the God of Israel, being “I am who I am”<sup>5</sup> but God demonstrates the power of His kingdom through the ten plagues. This is where the kingdom of light begins to demonstrate power over the false gods of Pharaoh's day. The story ends with the liberation of God's people and a reordering of priorities through the Ten Commandments.<sup>6</sup> The kingdom of God is marked by liberating power, a reordering of priorities that are contrary to the world's value system, and a submission to the great “I am who I am.”

Even after the freedom Israel gained from Egyptian captivity, they rejected God's rule and became their own gods and leaders. They defined what was good for themselves by complaining to Moses that they had better treatment in Egyptian captivity. The Israelites eventually created for themselves a golden calf and disrupted their allegiance towards the Kingdom of God.<sup>7</sup> The people of Israel are to be a holy nation in the Old Testament. They are to show themselves to be a community marked by a life-giving power. A community chosen to be

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<sup>4</sup>. Genesis 3:15

<sup>5</sup>. Exodus 7:3-12:30

<sup>6</sup>. Exodus 20:1-20

<sup>7</sup>. Exodus 32:1-4

different from the rest of the world in order to demonstrate the character and nature of God's Kingdom. In Isaiah 52:7-10, the coming of the Kingdom of Light is prophesied to be reinserted over His people. The Israelites hear this to be good news because it means that a new reign and rulership under a Messiah King will bring a reversal of the curse. They wait expectantly for a Messiah to bring a new kingdom to their world of oppression, sickness, sin, and death.

### ***New Testament***

In the Gospels, the Jewish audience would have been familiar with a coming kingdom because of their devotion to the Torah and Prophets. They would have been waiting for God to send a Savior that would usher in a Kingdom marked by power and liberty for their people and ultimately the world. This prophecy is fulfilled through the person of Jesus. God becomes flesh<sup>8</sup> through the person of Jesus and declares through word, deed, and power that He is the Messianic King that is ushering in the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in Heaven. Jesus redefines what is good for the world through demonstrating a power that is marked by service, love, and compassion contrary to the world's power. This reordering of values is not what His followers or the religious elite expected because they are familiar with Rome's oppressive power which is defined by dominance, violence, and intimidation.

Jesus redefines what is good for the world by calling a renewed community that will live by a new way of life that is contrary to the world's value system. In the book of Mark, Jesus is the good news because He is bringing the kingdom of God on earth.<sup>9</sup> It is about God's activity on earth and not just about His people going to Heaven after death. Jesus establishes and forms this new community by calling fishermen to follow Him. These Fishermen leave their family business and reorder their priorities in order to follow Jesus. In Matthew 4:23, Jesus begins to

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<sup>8</sup>. John 1:14

<sup>9</sup>. Mark 1:1

teach in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news, and healing every disease and sickness.<sup>10</sup> This is the reversal of the curse. In the book of Mathew, the Kingdom of God is presented in a way where the first shall be last and the last shall be first.<sup>11</sup> Jesus' followers are to serve others and look at the best interests of others even if it's at the expense of their own. The kingdom of God comes through Jesus and is defined by a difference in power, status, and position. Jesus redefines what is good. The Lord's prayer reveals the intention behind the Kingdom of God to become manifested on earth as it is in heaven and not simply a place where Christians would go after death. It was through this manifestation where Jesus exposed their deepest values and motives because the lame would walk, the blind would see, the sick would be healed, the powerless would find value in Christ. This forced everyone to confront the darkest parts of their character. The human condition and the lies in order to be renewed. Mathew 9, In deed, Healing, publicly shamed by what they have done with their bodies and what has been done to them. Jesus confronts the effects of evil. Jesus invites his followers to a new way of life and value system. He offers a way of life marked by a power that is loving, self-giving, and sacrificial.

Right before Jesus ascends to Heaven, He speaks to His disciples for Forty days about the kingdom of God.<sup>12</sup> Jesus commissions His followers to make disciples of all nations.<sup>13</sup> This means that the good news of the kingdom of God is not only to be established for the Jewish people but for the entire world. God's vision for a flourishing life and creation is for all nations. Although the Apostles are confronted with jail-time, execution by government, stoning from religious powers, the Kingdom of God continued to advance. Believers were added to the church

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<sup>10</sup>. Robert Riemer, *Spiritual Authority: Partnering with God To Release the Kingdom*, Kindle edition (2020), 873

<sup>11</sup>. Mathew 20:16

<sup>12</sup>. Acts 1:3

<sup>13</sup>. Acts 1:8

daily<sup>14</sup> because the power of God was not contingent on the powers of death, persecution, or government and religious opposition.

Throughout the Epistles, there are multiple church communities learning what it means to live out the kingdom of God in the midst of a world that holds a value system that is contrary to God's way of life. But Paul clearly states that our relationship with each other and with God begins to flourish as we learn what it means to be faithful to the way of the Kingdom.<sup>15</sup> That although these church communities are facing resistance through the power of sin, persecution, Satan, and the world, they must stay faithful to the way of the kingdom and endure because the kingdom of God is coming in its fullness.

### ***Kingdom of God vs. Kingdom of Darkness***

The Kingdom of Darkness is under God's authority and needs permission to act. It is not a struggle between good and evil but a battle already won by God through Christ. All demons must obey Jesus and Satan himself must ask God for permission (job). This means that the kingdom of God is sovereign of all other kingdoms. God's new way of life and community is being established and although it is here, it is also not yet fully here. It's the experience of the goodness of God on earth being manifested but also the experience of the consequences of fall like death and sin being made manifested. There is a conflict between the prince of the air and the people of the prince of peace on earth. Jesus gave authority to His followers to drive out demons, heal the sick, and preach sozos (salvation) to all the nations. There is a new partnership established between Jesus and His creation in order to see the world turned upside down.

### ***Theology of the King***

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<sup>14</sup>. Acts 2:47

<sup>15</sup>. Colossians 2:16-23

In the second chapter of Philippians, Jesus has been given the name above all names.<sup>16</sup> As King, Jesus is seated on the throne being transcendent but yet a personal God that is reachable. In Phillipians, Jesus empties Himself in humility so that He might die on the cross and reach humanity through defeating the power of death and sin. Jesus is King over the nations, nature, demons, and the devil. His power is over all and presents a new type of King that is marked by humility. One that is humble yet full of authority, filled with sacrificial love and yet dominates evil forces. Jesus was killed for claiming to be king over the nations<sup>17</sup> and for Jesus to be claim that was a statement that was loaded politically and socially.

### ***Ministry in Today's World***

The Kingdom of God was always a phrase that was very peculiar to me. It sounded too ancient and irrelevant to our world today. But the good news of the kingdom of God is a life-giving vision many desire and dream of. Our desire for justice, servitude, life-giving power, and love is what Jesus demonstrated the Kingdom of God to be in Scripture. As we long for justice for those who have been oppressed in America. As we long for new remedies and medicines that would delay death of our loved ones. As we long for this new way of life that is marked by human flourishing, we must proclaim and demonstrate the Kingdom of God. The church would have more influence in society if we actually reached the marginalized as Jesus did. The church would have a change of reputation from being judgemental towards the world to having a power that is restorative and liberating for the world, especially to those who are sick and demon-possessed.

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<sup>16</sup>. Phillipians 2:1

<sup>17</sup>. John 19:12

## **Bibliography**

Reimer, Robert *Spiritual Authority: Partnering with God to release the Kingdom*. Kindle Edition. June 23, 2020.