



THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND



In this chapter you will ...

- (1) Observe the partial return to the land and a second temple built.
- (2) Understand the inter-testamental period.
- (3) Recognize the genealogical “seed” of the Genesis 3:15 promise in the person of Jesus.
- (4) Marvel at the inaugurated kingdom through the Messiah.

Mark 1:1-15 - Out Of Exile And Into The Kingdom



The Gospel of Mark opens with a backwards looking reference to the prophet Isaiah and the prediction of a forerunner, the one we would come to know as John the Baptist. The appearance of Jesus on the scene was not “out of the blue” nor merely a “New Testament” thing. It was the fulfillment of promises made to the people of God for centuries. The days were dark in a foreign land and some of the exiles had returned, but there was no kingdom of Israel, no king, and no land they could call their own. And into that political and religious landscape, Jesus was born! The time had been fulfilled ... and the clear message Jesus brought was - “The kingdom of God is at hand.” He came proclaiming the Gospel of God and would demonstrate it through signs and wonders. The whole story was about Jesus. He was the answer to the prophet’s hope, and the centerpiece of the Father’s plan for redemption.



The Gospel Of God

The Gospel did not begin with Jesus, nor does it only point to the work of Jesus on the cross. Jesus came proclaiming the Gospel! If that was the case, then what was He proclaiming? What was He calling people to believe? He spent his time teaching and showing that He was the Father’s answer to the curse mankind was under. He did what the promises of old said the Messiah would do. His perfect life fulfilled the law, and His substitutionary death satisfied God’s holy wrath. Jesus’ message was consistent with the whole story - Repent, Believe, and Obey God.

What Gospel Am I To Believe?



Today it’s not uncommon to hear phrases like - “Ask Jesus into your heart,” or “Accept Jesus as your Savior.” But is this the Gospel that Jesus came preaching? There is just no way it can be, either from listening to Jesus or reading the whole story of God. The Gospel isn’t about Jesus as fire-insurance or Jesus as your ticket out of suffering. Rather, the Gospel is the call to find your righteousness in God through faith, like Abraham did (Genesis 15:6), and like Paul proclaimed (Romans 1:16). That means you don’t “accept Christ” and then trust self. You can’t “say yes to Jesus” and then live like the world. The Gospel of God is always about leaving the lies of the Eden serpent to find your home in the God of heaven. And when heaven is sent to earth in the God-man Jesus, you find that He is the way, the truth, and the life ... and His plan for you is indeed a new Eden with joy forevermore!

Story-Tellers Takeaways ...

- (1) The return of the exiles to Jerusalem was not the kingdom God promised, it was still to yet come.
- (2) The 400 years silence was broken by the songs of angels and the cry of a baby.
- (3) The Good News that Genesis 3:15 promised was the Gospel of God now preached by the One who fulfilled that promise.
- (4) When Jesus came the King had been revealed. The kingdom was inaugurated, though it’s complete fulfillment was yet to come.

My Notes:

How to Read the Story ... the Big into the Small, and the Small into the Big ... all to Penetrate Our Hearts!

Feathers - You must have an understanding of the epic narrative of God's story ... this is Biblical Theology that guides our reading of the story.

Shaft - You must approach each text of Scripture honestly and openly ... this is Exposition of Scripture that shapes our understanding of the story.

Point - You must have a soft heart to worship the author of the story ... this is Gospel Centeredness that changes life.

For Discussion:

- (1) What was significant about the political and religious landscape that Jesus was born into?
- (2) Jesus preached the whole story of the Gospel. How should that effect our preaching of the Gospel today?
- (3) Look at the beginning of each of the four Gospel accounts in the New Testament. What does each teach us about the whole story of God?
- (4) Do you preach the whole Gospel to lost people? Where do you need to be more strategic in your evangelism to the lost? Who will you share the Gospel of God with today?