



## **The Kingdom of God**

(Mark 1:14-15)

**Bottom Line:** The Kingdom of God is already here, but not yet fully accomplished, therefore we should live with confidence now and expectation of something greater to come.

**What is something that you look forward to every year? How do you get ready and prepare for that occasion?**

**Read Mark 1:14-15. What do you think the “Kingdom of God” is?**

Several commentators all agree together and state that these two verses are by far the most important summary statement in the book of Mark. They introduce and sum up virtually the entire message of Mark’s Gospel and Jesus’ ministry: that the Kingdom of God is at hand and we should repent and believe in the gospel. We’ve discussed at some length already in past studies the nature of repentance and the gospel, but we’ve yet to seriously dive into the concept of the Kingdom of God.

**What does Jesus mean when He says, “The time is fulfilled?” What could He be referring to?**

The word translated “time” in this verse carries the connotation of “a favorable, opportune, or significant” time, rather than just a mere moment in time. Jesus is saying that the moment that Israel had been waiting for, the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of God’s people, had come. Paul explains in Galatians 4:4 that “when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son...”

**What do we learn about God’s plan through Jesus’ statement in Mark 1:15 and Paul’s statement in Galatians 4:4? How does this help us when we are struggling to understand God’s timing regarding certain things in our lives?**

God’s plan for the world unravels exactly how He plans it to. The coming of John the Baptist was foretold by God (Mark 1:2-3), the coming of Jesus was foretold by God, and now Jesus is saying that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Everything is happening precisely as God has intended it to. When Jesus proclaims that “the Kingdom of God is at hand”, He is making a radical, profound statement. It is a political statement (“the kingdom of Caesar is subject to the greater Kingdom of God”), and a religious statement (“the reign and rule of God over the earth is about to be decisively displayed”), but it is also a statement about our real, tangible reality (“the Kingdom of God will be the new normal from this point forward”). And Jesus explains to us the means by which we can become citizens of this Kingdom: we must “repent and believe in the Gospel.”

**Read Luke 17:20-21. What does Jesus say about the Kingdom—as to when, how, or where it is? Do you think this answer surprised the Pharisees? Why?**

# mark

C O M E F O L L O W M E

Jesus' answer to their question was unexpected. He told them God's kingdom would not come with observable signs. God's kingdom was already present among them. While Jesus certainly emphasized the personal and spiritual nature of God's kingdom, here He emphasized the kingdom's presence among people, *as something within their grasp*. The Pharisees did not have to go out searching for the kingdom; it was present wherever Jesus was present. Since the kingdom is already present in Jesus Christ, people need not wait to enter it but can do so now.

**Have you considered the idea that the Kingdom of God is a present reality that we live in? If that's the case, what are the implications for us? How does understanding that we are currently living in the Kingdom of God affect the way we view evangelism? Missions? Discipleship? Sanctification? Politics? Wealth?**

Here an important distinction needs to be made: although the Kingdom of God is present now, it is not *fully* present. Sin and Satan still have a foothold in this world (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2). Until Satan is vanquished, death is defeated, and sin is eradicated, we will find ourselves caught between two kingdoms, the Kingdom of God and the "domain of darkness" (Colossians 1:13). Our role as citizens of the Kingdom of God is to advance this Kingdom, and the promise to us is that our victory is certain (Matthew 16:18). So we live now with great confidence, knowing that as citizens of God's Kingdom we have access to the tools necessary to overcome sin and Satan, and eventually death. And along with that confidence comes a great and eager expectation of the day when the Kingdom of God will be fully established, our fight will be over, and we will reign under the rule of a good, sovereign Lord.

**How can you live faithfully as a kingdom citizen while you go about your business in this world? What are some of the challenges in doing so? What are some of the promises you have in doing so?**

**How does waiting for the "not yet" aspect of the kingdom affect our praying, our witness, and our obedience to Christ?**

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**Reflection:** Read these aloud, using your discretion about which questions should be pondered and which questions should be discussed.

**Jesus's statement, "the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand", signified the culmination of human history had come. This was Jesus' way of saying that things would never be the same, that there was a new King that had come to usher in a new Kingdom. The glorious future promised by God was no longer a flickering hope light years away; it has become available to us in the present. The requirements to enter this Kingdom are to "repent and believe the Gospel." Everything about you: your life, death, dreams, hopes, future—these are all affected by how you respond to Jesus' message. Will you repent and believe the Gospel so you can live in the reality of God's Kingdom right now?**

**What aspects of the Kingdom of the World prevent you from fully enjoying the Kingdom of God? Money? Relationships? Worldly entertainment? Selfish ambitions? How can you rid yourself of these distractions and focus on living in God's Kingdom now?**