

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

PART 3: SONS, DAUGHTERS, & PRIESTS

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This week I am in my final week of a 3 week series on the Kingdom Of God.

- Kingdom of God = rule & reign of God

Within these 3 weeks, we're looking at these 4 things:

1. How the OT prophesies spoke of the coming of the Kingdom of God
2. How those OT promises of the Kingdom of God were inaugurated with coming of Christ
3. What the effect is of the Kingdom of God in the Earth
4. What that means for you as an individual Christ follower

So far we've looked at:

- OT prophets & psalmist spoke about the coming King & Kingdom of God
- How Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled those prophesies and is God's Anointed King
- Jesus inaugurated God's rule & reign in the earth & is seated as King NOW
- His Kingdom is not of the world -It's not carnal or worldly
- His Kingdom is for this world
- His rule & reign is spiritual but impacts the material
- God's Kingdom is not an immediate take over but gradual expansion
- This Means while His Kingdom is now...it's also not here in the fullness it will someday be

These last two weeks have we've looked at the macro picture, but tonight we are going to zoom in to the micro level and look what God's Rule & Reign means for you personally.

To get where we are going tonight we are going to use a theological term...**Eschatology**

WHAT IS ESCHATOLOGY?

Eschatology literally means...the study of last things

- The word comes from the greek words:
 - eschatos - last
 - ology - study of
 - More popularly thought of today as "End Times"

Growing up, my thoughts about eschatology, were informed by 2 things:

1. "Left Behind" books
2. The echo chamber of my denomination's teaching

I was taught something called dispensationalism.

- Dispensation = an arrangement or management of something

Dispensationalism is a theological interpretation of the Bible that divides time into 7 different dispensations (periods) - where God manages creation in a certain ways according to that specific period of time/dispensation.

The flagship idea of dispensationalism is a 2 part return of Jesus

- He returns to rapture the Church and take them away
- There are 7 years of tribulation in the earth
- Jesus returns, with the Church, to establish His Kingdom with a 1,000 year reign.

Dispensationalism is actually a rather *NEW WAY* of viewing eschatology.

- It is especially common in pentecostal, baptist, & evangelical churches.
- If your history in church has been isolated to those streams - you've probably, by no fault of your own, been in a theological echo chamber having only been taught dispensationalism, never being told their are other, historical, biblical interpretations of eschatology.

There Are 4 Views Of Eschatology

1. Historic Premillennial

- Belief in Christ's physical return before a literal 1,000 year reign, with the church enduring a tribulation

2. Amillennialism

- Interpretation that the millennium is symbolic, and is representing the time between the 1st & 2nd coming of Jesus. Jesus is reigning as King in heaven now.

3. Postmillennialism

- Jesus will return after a millennium - which is symbolic for a long period of time marked by the widespread success of the Gospel and Christian ethics

4. Dispensational Premillennialism

- Theory that divides time into 7 distinct periods & includes a 2 part return of Christ where He raptures the church before a 7 year tribulation, reinstates animal sacrifices in a 3rd temple, then returns for a literal 1,000 year reign as King.

You'll notice the common phrase here is millennial.

- Millennial just means 1,000 years
- Comes from Rev. 20 - where Christ reigns for 1,000 years
- These views are built around different interpretations of that millennium
 - Will Jesus return before that millennial reign or after?
 - Is that millennium a literal 1,000 years or (like much of revelation) is it a symbolic meaning for long time?

The Early Church had different views about the Jesus' return but their differences never led to division. They stayed united.

- **Irenaeus (130-202 AD)**
 - In "Against Heresies" he has a historic premillennial view
- **Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD)**
 - In "City of God" he gives an amillennial view, with tiny hints of postmillennialism
- **Eusebius of Caesarea (260-339 AD)**
 - In "Ecclesiastical History" he gives an early version of postmillennialism

The one view that is completely missing in early Church history is dispensationalism.

- This is because it didn't exist until about 1800 years into Church history

So how did dispensationalism come about?

- Early 1800's - Edward Irving
 - A Scottish minister advocating for the literal interpretation of prophecy.
 - Emphasized the idea of the rapture and the restoration of spiritual gifts.
- 1830 - Margaret MacDonald
 - A Scottish lady had a vision that showed a pre-tribulation rapture of the Church
- 1830s - John Nelson Darby
 - He was influenced by Edwards Irving, and likely also Margaret's vision
 - Developed the systematic theological framework known as dispensationalism
 - First systematic teaching of 2 fold return of Jesus (rapture followed by 7 years then return)
- 1909 - Cyrus Scofield
 - Published Darby's dispensational ideas in his Scofield Reference Bible
 - Scofield introduced Darby's idea to the world through his commentary & notes
 - This began the wide spread reception of dispensationalism

That means that the United States Of America is around 50 years older than dispensationalism and the idea of a 2 part return of Jesus Christ.

- That in & of itself does not invalidate dispensationalism
- It does give me good reason to investigate other more historic ideas about eschatology

With all of that being said...Whatever view you take, this is not a salvation issue.

- We are a nondenominational church...that means:
 - It is likely that all 4 views are represented by people within this congregation
 - I do not mandate that the leaders of this church share my view
 - They can have their own
 - This is a secondary issue, not a primary issue
 - This SHOULD NOT DIVIDE US

There is a lot of room for a diversity of thought when it comes to eschatology.

- **Essentials:** Jesus will return visibly & physically
- **Non - essentials:** what is the nature of the millennium & interpretation on when His return will be in relation to it
- **Charity:** understanding this is a complicated and debated topic, so even in passionate teaching we don't treat another view as heretical

So when it comes to End Times (Eschatology) I want to encourage everyone to take the position of "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

The reason I bring all of that up, is because when I am talking about how the Kingdom of God effects you personally today...I actually think that is an eschatological thought.

My hope tonight is to successfully show you what I believe the Bible teaches about the present reality of the Kingdom of God **in your life.**

What I hope to effectively demonstrate is that the future realities of what will be in the fullness of God's Kingdom can be appropriated by faith here now due to the Holy Spirit dwelling in you.

Let's start tonight in Acts

Acts 2:14-18 (ESV) Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. **15** These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! **16** No, **this** is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: **17** "**In the last days**, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. **18** Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Look at what Peter says...

- This is what was spoke by the prophet Joel
- "In the last days"

The Apostles viewed themselves, at least in some measure, as living in the last days.

- “In the last days”
- I think it is extremely important for us to acknowledge their views

Peter is saying here that he understands the outpouring of the Holy Spirit eschatologically.

- The outpouring of the Spirit, in Peter’s eyes is a last days phenomena

THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT IS CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE KINGDOM OF GOD

When the Messiah came...

- He came to introduce His Kingdom into the world then and there...
- When Jesus ascended...it’s not like God left the world...

The Ascent Of The Incarnation Brought The Decent Of The Holy Spirit

Jesus taught us the descent of the Spirit was an important reason for His ascension

John 16:7 (ESV) Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

That is really significant!

- Jesus ascended
- Holy Spirit descended

One of the ways the Bible talks about the Holy Spirit is as the Spirit of Jesus.

Philippians 1:19 (ESV) for I know that through your prayers and the help of the **Spirit of Jesus Christ** this will turn out for my deliverance

Acts 16:7 (ESV) And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the **Spirit of Jesus** did not allow them.

Romans 8:9 (ESV) You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the **Spirit of Christ** does not belong to him.

This means the King rules in heaven while His Spirit is at work in the earth.

The present presence of the Holy Spirit is so incredibly important...because the rule & reign of God is in not established in political legislative powers but in people’s hearts by the Spirit...God’s Kingdom is One that is spiritual & overcomes spiritual powers of wickedness & evil.

- Transformed spiritual realities create new natural realities
- Transformed hearts created new families

The Pharisee's had this idea that self-righteous living would prepare for the Messiah.

- Displaying righteousness by intense rule following would send a message to God that His people were ready to be governed by His Messiah.
- It would show they would be prepared to live in His Kingdom following His rules
- The effort of many of the pharisees missed the spirit of the law for the letter of the law...

Jesus called them out on this very thing:

Matthew 23:4 (ESV) *They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.*

Matthew 23:13 (ESV) *But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.*

The Pharisee were so legalistic that they couldn't even keep up with the rules & regulations they placed on people. It seems their intention was good - to show God they were obedient and ready to follow His rules so He could send the Messiah.

What they couldn't see is God's Kingdom is not world & carnal but is spiritual & heavenly.

The Rule & Reign of God:

- Is **not** discovered in **rules** and **restrictions**
- It is realized in the very **Spirit of God**.

Romans 14:17 (ESV) *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

The Kingdom of God as inseparable from the Holy Spirit as it is from Jesus.

- This is a spiritual Kingdom that impacts from the inside out

While talking to Nicodemus about the Kingdom of the God, Jesus taught that the only way to enter into this Kingdom was to be spiritually born again.

John 3:1-8 (ESV) *Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and*

you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Paul says the same thing as Jesus...but in different words:

Galatians 4:6 (ESV) And because you are sons, God has sent the ***Spirit of his Son*** into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

- There is that phrase of again - Spirit of His Son
- The Spirit of Jesus is carrying out the work of King Jesus
 - To have the Holy Spirit is to have Him, just as having Him is having the Father.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR AN INDIVIDUAL CHRIST FOLLOWER

The Bible teaches that every believer is in God's Kingdom not merely under His Rule & Reign as slaves or event civilians, but as sons, daughters, and even as priests.

I want quickly refer again at a scripture we saw earlier:

Romans 8:9 (ESV) You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God ***dwells in you***. Anyone who does not have the ***Spirit of Christ*** does not belong to him.

The Spirit of Jesus dwells where? YOU! IN YOU!

The Kingdom of God is where? YOU! IN YOU!

BY THE INDWELLING SPIRIT WE ARE SONS & DAUGHTERS IN GOD'S KINGDOM

Within God's Kingdom, humans occupy a unique relationship with God.

Unlike angels, who are servants, humans are family.

This special status is tied to our unique nature as beings who are both flesh and spirit.

Humans are the only beings in God's Kingdom who can become His children through adoption in Christ. This relationship transforms us from mere creatures in the earth, to members of God's family, His very household,

How does this adoption happen?

Romans 8:14-17 (ESV) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” **16** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

So we are Sons & Daughters In The Kingdom By The Holy Spirit

Humans Have Been Uniquely Created

- There is a spiritual realm with spiritual beings - different types of angels & demons
- There is a material realm with fleshly beings - mammals, reptiles, amphibians

Humanity is God's unique hybrid creation...both spirit and flesh.

- This is by divine design.
- It is an aspect of our priestly role in the earth.
- To be people of flesh that influence the material with the spiritual
- This is how a spiritual Kingdom impacts a material world
 - Through a people who are spirit and flesh

BY THE INDWELLING SPIRIT WE ARE PRIESTS IN GOD'S KINGDOM

1 Peter 2:9 (ESV) But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Revelation 1:5-6 (ESV) Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, **5** and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood **6** and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Being Children & Priests In God's Kingdom Means For You Personally:

1. Intimacy and Access

- As sons and daughters, you have direct access to God, your Father. You can approach Him with confidence, knowing that you are loved and accepted.

2. Inheritance

- Being a child of God means you are heir to His promises. You share in the inheritance of eternal life and all the blessings that come with being part of God's family.

3. Responsibility

- As a priest, you have the responsibility to serve God and represent Him to the world. You are called to declare His praises, intercede for others, and live holy lives.

4. Authority

- Priests in the Old Testament had the authority to minister before God. As New Testament believers, you have spiritual authority to pray and to serve in the power of the Holy Spirit.

5. Mission

- Your priestly role includes being an ambassador of God's Kingdom, spreading the gospel, and working for the transformation of society in accordance with the way Jesus molded prayer - His Kingdom on Earth as in Heaven.

This brings us back to eschatology.

- When Jesus first appeared, He inaugurated His Kingdom in the earth
- When Jesus appears again, His Kingdom be realized in it's fullness

Galatians 1:3-4 (ESV) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, **4** who gave himself for our sins to **deliver us** from the **present evil age**, according to the will of our God and Father, **5** to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

How are we delivered from the present evil age?

- By the One who gave Himself for our sins
 - The Resurrection of Jesus brings is His vindication & justification
 - Resurrection & judgment is meant to be in the age to come
 - When Jesus was resurrected, it was a something from the age to come breaking into the now
 - This is why when we place our faith in Jesus...we are justified now.
 - We can be justified now because Jesus is justified in His resurrection and by Faith we are united to Him

What does it mean to be delivered from the present evil age?

- It means as individuals we are new creations in Christ
 - Jesus' language - we are born again
 - Paul's language - have died with Christ and are raised with Christ

So we are a new person, living in a new era...but we still have an old body.

- Paul talks about this..saying he looks forward to the day he get a glorified body
 - **2 Corinthians 5:2 (ESV)** For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling

This Means YOU Are A Micro Expression Of The Now & Not Yet

The Spirit is the deposit of the age to come in us...

Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

The Holy Spirit Is A Guarantee Of Our Inheritance

- He is a downpayment of our inheritance
- We have a new spirit but a old body
- This means the overlap of the ages can be seen in your own self

Dr. Constantine Campbell says it this way, "He is the future living in us."

Hebrews 6:4-5 (ESV) ...those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, **5** and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the **age to come**,

The powers of the age to come is dwelling in you.

Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension, & pouring out of the Spirit inaugurated the coming age

- That is the age of Kingdom
- The age of rule and reign has been inaugurated

We Should See Jesus Like Peter, Paul, & Company - That Is Eschatologically

- The future coming of Jesus is eschatological
- But also the first coming of Jesus was eschatological
- Jesus' work brought into world's now, what will be

(Show slides)

Jesus has come & He will come again

- Currently live in between His first appearing & His second appearing
- According to Peter, Paul, James, John, & Jude - this puts us in a last days time
- We live in the overlap of the ages
 - One is closing
 - Another is growing

His Kingdom Is In You By The Present Presence Of The Holy Spirit, Who Is The Promise Of What Will Be...By Faith, We Can See What Will Be Invade The Now.