

THE CRUCIBLE'S FIRE

Your Kingdom Come: The Kingdom Has Come Near

Main Scripture Texts: Matthew 4:17, 23 | Matthew 5:3, 10 | Matthew 6:9–10 | Matthew 12:28 | Matthew 28:18–20

Key Focus: Understanding God's Royal Reign Arriving in Jesus, Present Lordship, and the 'Already/Not Yet' Tension

◆ SERIES MAIN IDEA

The Kingdom of Heaven is God's saving and sovereign reign arriving on earth through Jesus. That reign is genuinely present now under the risen King and through the Holy Spirit, forming a people whose lives increasingly reflect the Father's will, even as we await resurrection and the renewal of creation.

I. THE KINGDOM STORY: FROM CREATION TO PROMISED KING

- 1. Creation & Delegated Authority:** Genesis 1 begins with God speaking and assigning purpose. Human beings are given real but delegated authority. We are image-bearers beneath the Creator, not independent kings. The primary Kingdom question is not 'Where do I go when I die?' but 'Who is King?'. Kingdom means God's rule before it means territory.
- 2. Sin as Rival Kingdom Life:** Genesis 3 is a crisis of allegiance. The temptation beneath sin is deciding for ourselves what is good. Rival kingdom life begins when the creature says, 'I will determine what is good.' This fractures trust and spreads disorder across personal and public life.
- 3. Israel & The Promised King:** At Sinai, God formed a 'kingdom of priests' (Exod 19). Grace came before vocation—God saved them first, then called them to live under His rule. When human leaders failed, prophets pointed to God's anointed King (Isa 9, Dan 7) whose righteous government will have no end.
- 4. Expiration Date:** Human kingdoms rise and disappear. Every human kingdom has an expiration date, but God's Kingdom will outlast every rival kingdom (Dan 2:44).

II. JESUS ANNOUNCES THE ARRIVAL OF THE KINGDOM (MATTHEW 4:17, 23)

- 1. Inseparable from the King:** When Jesus preaches 'The kingdom of heaven has come near' (Matt 4:17), He is not announcing an abstract philosophy. God's royal rule is arriving in human history through Jesus Himself.
- 2. Royal Repentance:** Repentance is not religious moralism; it is a fundamental shift of loyalty and mind. It means stepping down from the throne of self-governance and submitting to King Jesus.
- 3. Present Overturning of Evil:** Jesus' healing and exorcisms were not random miracles; they were demonstrations of royal authority. In Matthew 12:28, casting out demons by God's Spirit proves the Kingdom has come upon them.

"But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." — Matthew 12:28

III. THE PRESENT REIGN OF THE RISEN KING

- 1. Refusing the Extremes:** We must avoid two errors: thinking the Kingdom is purely postponed in the future, or assuming the Kingdom is fully consummated in full glory today.

2. Resurrection & All Authority: After the resurrection, Jesus declares, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me' (Matt 28:18). His Lordship is not waiting for the future—He reigns right now as King of kings.

3. Rescued and Transferred: Believers have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son (Col 1:13).

IV. THE CONTROLLING TENSION: ALREADY AND NOT YET

Dimension	Present Reality (Already)	Future Hope (Not Yet)
King's Authority	Jesus <u>reigns now</u> at God's right hand (Matt 28:18)	Total public subjection of all enemies and powers (1 Cor 15:24–26)
Citizenship	We <u>belong</u> to the Kingdom today through Christ (Col 1:13)	Final bodily resurrection, eternal inheritance & reward
Creation & World	Kingdom power <u>embodied now</u> through the Spirit and Church	Full renewal of creation and complete abolition of death & sorrow

V. EMBODYING THE KINGDOM & PERSONAL DIAGNOSTIC

1. Receiving the Kingdom Like a Child: Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:3, 10 that the Kingdom belongs to the poor in spirit and those persecuted for righteousness. Kingdom citizenship is received as grace, not earned by prestige.

2. On Earth as it is in Heaven: Praying 'Your kingdom come, your will be done' (Matt 6:9–10) means inviting God's royal rule to shape our hearts, cities, and nations.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

"If Jesus is already reigning as King of kings, what specific area of my life (finances, relationships, ambition, habits) am I still attempting to govern as my own independent kingdom?"