

Riverside Vineyard Bible School

One year
One Kingdom
One life

Part 2: Understanding the Kingdom January – March 2019

The following are summaries of the vid clips used throughout the programme. Most of the vid clips will be watched as part of our sessions on Mondays but can also be watched through the web site www.vineyardtraining.org where you can log on and view at your leisure. These summaries are simply for those who wish to review the clips further and maybe spend longer thinking about the issues developed. You can, of course watch any clip on-line as many times as you wish.

Vid 1.1 The Kingdom of God (7.39)

The Kingdom of God is all about Jesus and it unlocks the whole message of Scripture. It is the most important biblical theme imaginable.

The kingdom of God as the primary message and mission of Jesus

In the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), Jesus mentions the Kingdom of God more than anything else. Mark 1.14-15 – the kingdom of God is near – this is how Jesus ministry begins in Mark's gospel.

Matthew 4.23 – very early in his ministry, Matthew records Jesus as preaching the good news of the kingdom. Wherever Jesus went, he preached the same kingdom message.

Commissioning the 12 – their message was to be that the kingdom is near.

His parables were specifically about the kingdom – many start with “the kingdom of God is like this ...”

However, Jesus does not give a clear definition of what the kingdom is. Perhaps the closest is in the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:9-10).

Jesus message was ‘the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand’ – this is the fulfilment of centuries of Old Testament prophets. NOW the time of fulfilment has arrived.

The Old Testament is the background of the ministry of Jesus. It is a growing vision of expectation in 3 stages:

1. The exodus event
2. The Davidic monarchy
3. The prophetic promise

Vid 1.2 The Exodus, from Kingdom to covenant (20.28)

Jesus announced the kingdom as fulfilment

It is a growing vision of expectation in 3 stages:

1. The exodus event
2. The Davidic monarchy
3. The prophetic promise

Step 1 – the Exodus event:

It becomes a model of all subsequent understandings of the Kingdom.

God's kingdom breaks into history in the Exodus, which produces a new relationship with God's people, a covenant relationship. This then results in a journey into a new land. Event. Relationship. Journey.

A good film/movie has a climax at the end which brings to fulfilment the story which was started at the beginning of the film. The Exodus story does just that. God appears to Moses in the burning bush, commissions Moses to deliver his people and announces his name 'I am'. The plagues are evidence of the spiritual warfare – God v the gods of Egypt. Then there is a military battle. Victory is followed by celebration which concludes with 'Yahweh will reign for ever and ever'.

Exodus 3 ... God reveals his name to Moses. The name of a person is important in Hebrew thinking – the name describes the person. 'I am who I am'. Yahweh. I WAS who I was, I AM who I am, I WILL BE who I will be – it's an eternal name. It is not merely 'I exist', it is 'I am present', I become dynamically present to my people. God becomes present in history to intervene for the sake of his people.

Wherever the kingdom of God theme is revealed in the Old Testament, it's about God being present and intervening.

Each of the plagues are linked to one of the god's of Egypt (Steve's note: the Egyptian gods were 'nature based' and in a hierarchy of power. The plagues start at the lesser gods and move up to mock the impotence of ever increasingly powerful 'gods' finishing with Pharaoh – the son of Re, the sungod). See Exodus 12.12.

Yahweh's intervention was devastating Egypt's entire religious system. The Kingdom is a spiritual warfare conflict – it always is and still is. Note when Moses' snake ate the Egyptian magicians snake (Exodus 7.12). Often when the Spiritual battle is won, the physical victory follows.

Song of the sea (Ex 15) – the victory song after the Egyptians were defeated. The climax of the song 'Yahweh will reign for ever and ever'. This sets up a new relationship between Yahweh, the conquering king and his people. God uses the standard treaty nature of the time to set up this relationship – you will be my vassal state by obeying these commandments. If you are faithful, Yahweh will stay with you, if you break the covenant, that will threaten the relationship.

The key to understanding the relationship of the kingdom is to understand that the kingdom produces a covenant.

Vid 2.1 The Exodus event – the collision of powers (12.27)

We will look at the relationship between the Exodus and the covenant relationship which comes from it. We will look at the structure and design of the tabernacle to explore the covenant.

The exodus event – 3 steps – the coming of the kingdom, the covenant relationship, the journey of destiny. If Israel is faithful, Yahweh will remain with them. If they are not, there is the threat of him removing himself from Israel.

The central piece of furniture in the tabernacle is the arc of the covenant. The presence of God would sit on the 'arc' (an elaborate box) – it is his throne (and the top/lid is referred to as 'the mercy seat'). The king is sitting on the throne and in that arc throne are the symbols of the covenant. The arc was placed in the holy of holies within the tabernacle (a tent). The rest of the Israelite community arranged their camp around the tabernacle in a specific way.

The tabernacle was an image of the creation narrative (as we studied in September/October RVC Bible School sessions). There is a mirror imaging of the tabernacle and the creation accounts. In Genesis, we find Monotheism – ONE God (who also refers to himself in genesis 1 as 'WE'). The creation account is so important to the Jews as it demonstrates Yahweh as unique from other gods.

The Jewish camp is a battle formation – Yahweh is a warrior God who leads a warrior group of tribes in a military manoeuvre. Israel was also called to be a priestly nation. They were to take the rulership and reign of Yahweh, through the priesthood, into the 12 tribes of Israel and by them through to the rest of the world – Israel were called to be a warrior, priestly, missionary nation.

Vid 2.2 Exodus event – from kingdom to covenant (26.18)

The relationship of the conquering king to the vassal state fits into the convention of treaties from the ancient Near East (ANE) eg the Hittite suzerainty treaties. There were other treaties, e.g parity treaties, but the ones we are concerned with were those of conquering nations where a representative of the conquering nation would be appointed in the conquered state to rule on behalf of the conquering nation and an idol of the conquering nation's god would be placed in the temple of the conquered state temple.

In the Exodus story, a conquering king extracts a slave people through miraculous signs and wonders and relocates them to his own land.

The structure of the treaties were:

1. A preamble / title and a summary of the history of how the conquering had occurred
2. The stipulations and requirements for both sides of the treaty (conqueror and conquered)
3. Details of the official copy location (usually in the temple) and the requirements for it to be read to the conquered state peoples at specified intervals
4. Witnesses would attest to it
5. Curses and blessings – promises regarding what would happen if the treaty was obeyed and what would happen if it wasn't

Deuteronomy has this structure – preamble in the first few verses of Deuteronomy, then the historical summary in the rest of the first 3 chapters – they re-tell the story of the Exodus. The 10 commandments are the basic stipulations which are then expanded and expounded throughout Deuteronomy and Leviticus. The official copy location was in the arc of the covenant and in Deuteronomy ch 31 the Israelites are instructed to read the details publicly every 7 years. The witnesses ... Exodus 24 - a memorial – a physical witness and Deut 31 shows Moses song and the book of the law 'as a witness'. Blessings and curses follow. So the covenant is an example of an ANE treaty, but transformed into a covenant between God and his people.

The relationship is primarily expressed in the presence of God amongst his people – that is a critical difference between Israel and all the other nations – God lives amongst them. This is a covenant of grace – God has chosen to generously pour benefits on his people – the Torah / Law / Teachings is a revelation of GRACE. The covenant stipulations are the commands and law. LAW and GRACE are not juxtaposed opposites – they are part of the same story.

The relationship starts with the Divine presence – God physically comes down to his people. The greatest threat is that God will withdraw his presence. This presence brings the kingdom – God intervenes and delivers them from Egypt. From this kingship comes a new relationship of king / vassal state and a new community is formed – the people of God who are a holy and priestly nation. The system of laws, the tabernacle, the priesthood are a system of maintaining that relationship. They are heading for the land of 'milk and honey' and are called to be a missional people bringing the good news of the relationship with God and God's rule to all nations.

If the laws are broken, there is a method of reconciliation – sacrifices. The priests are there to administer those sacrifices. The promised land is a symbolic replacement of the garden of Eden and the people are to reveal God to the rest of the world, in this new relationship and in this new land. In Exodus, the people are in a 'now and not yet' (inaugurated eschatology) situation.

In the New Testament we have the same – the presence of God – God became human as Jesus in the same way that God entered the tabernacle in the OT. Jesus therefore creates a new covenant, a new relationship and a new community of God – the church. It is built on the same architecture of the OT Exodus but with new content.

The huge difference is the maintenance of the covenant. In the NT, obedience comes as a result of the power of the Spirit. The day of Pentecost was where the Jews remembered the giving of the law at Sinai. The Holy Spirit arriving on Pentecost is a huge replacement of the law – we keep the law by the Spirit IN us rather than the external tablets and written laws. The physical temple is now redundant – Jesus, the church and each of us are variously the new temple.

Now, the whole world is our land (see Matt 28). We now move from Pentecost with a message for all nations. We are therefore a people of destiny, a people with a mission, a people living in the 'now and not yet' – just like the Exodus Jews. We have the tension that we have the victory but we are also still moving towards the victory.

Vid 2.3 Exodus event – presence of the king (15.12)

Moving into more detail of the tabernacle and the tabernacle/temple as the place of God presence. The kingdom of God has the presence of God in the tabernacle which is in the middle of the encampment of the people of Israel.

Presence – Kingdom – covenant – community – mechanism for maintenance – resultant benefits – mission

How and where does Yahweh become and remain present amongst his people? The tabernacle. The tabernacle deliberately recreates the garden of Eden.

There are 3 parts of the tabernacle:

1. Outer court – the physical earth, where humans dwell
2. Holy place – the visible heavens – the cosmos we can see (stars etc)
3. Holy of Holies – the invisible dimensions of the cosmos where God is present

GK Beale 'The temple and the church's mission: a biblical theology of the dwelling place of God' "... *the Old Testament temple was a microcosm of the entire heaven and earth...*" (p31)

The Edenic garden is a separate space, tended by God's 'priest', Adam, where God dwells.

The tabernacle has symbolism of creation throughout – see examples in Psalm 78, Genesis 1, Exodus 26,27,28,36, 1 Chronicles 28, Psalm 99 & 132, Isaiah 66. God creates the cosmos, is established as King and his throne is on the arc of the covenant – the mercy seat.

God's dwelling in Israel's tabernacle and (later) temple is about God resting having conquered all opposition – just like day 7 of the Genesis creation narrative.

Israel is a covenant monotheism based on kingship – that is the essence of OT theology.

We are/were destined to be God's 'little kings' ruling under God's overall rulership/leadership. Israel had no idol in the temple – a blank space existed where the idol would have been. If we explore the concept of the idol (the representation of the god) – we see that Adam is the idol ... and later that WE are the 'idol' representations. Hence why making an idol is so utterly forbidden in Judaism – any idol we make is inferior to the God-made walking, talking breathing 'idols' who rule on his behalf.

As humanity covers the earth, God's kingship is supposed to cover the earth. Adam's sin lost that, so Israel's calling was to restore that. Now the church is the people of God – we are called to restore God's creative purpose and rule.

The temple theme runs through scripture – the garden of Eden is the first temple with Adam as vice-regent / priest. Abraham was the beginning of a priestly nation with a tabernacle where Yahweh rules. The temple of Solomon brings that reign to rest in Jerusalem. Jesus, as Immanuel, God with us, is God 'tabernacling' on us creating US as the new temple. At Pentecost heaven's temple came down to inhabit the church. The future New Jerusalem is the ultimate temple where God's reign covers the whole earth.

God's story is a temple story of Yahweh becoming present to all of creation.

Vid 3.1 The Davidic monarchy (25.54)

This is the 'Golden age' of the Jewish civilisation and is the 2nd model of God's kingdom in the Old Testament. David was ordained as the 'messiah' (anointed one) as king of Israel. David engages in military conquest, expanding the empire and his son Solomon develops the resultant prosperity in a time of unparalleled peace. The Davidic monarch builds on the 1st model, the Exodus event.

Jesus came announcing that the time has been fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is here – what was being fulfilled? It was a progression of models of God's kingdom – the Exodus, the Davidic monarchy and then the prophets. All 3 build to the arrival of Jesus.

Psalm 2 (written by David) covers messianic declarations – so it is referred to as the 'messianic psalm'. All the nations of the world are against God's anointed one (messiah) – David. The psalm progresses to align the king with the messiah and then asserts that as David was anointed by the Spirit, David becomes the adopted son of God. This enables him to rule, under God, as a representative of God himself (note ... does this remind you of what we covered in 'image and likeness', TSLM & DMWT from Genesis 1 during the Autumn module? David is taking this role and responsibility which we humans were given in Genesis 1).

The key features are the clash of powers – Yahweh versus the kingdoms of this world. David, as an adopted, anointed king is the person through whom the kingdom comes – he is the representative of God and God's rule. **2 Samuel 7** tells us the story of David's rule. V5-16, Nathan's prophecies. V18-29 David takes on this responsibility in a kingdom prayer. God sets up a dynasty of kings (v11) and will create a royal lineage, all adopted as sons of God and God will remain with them – his love and presence. It, in 2Sam is an eternal kingship. David responds with a huge 'WOW'. He refers to God as 'Sovereign Lord' saying v18, 'why me?' David declares the monotheism of Israel and repeats the story of the Exodus – acknowledging that his kingship is 'chapter 2' of the story following chapter 1, the Exodus. David accepts the call of God, and battles against the neighbouring nations follows, starting in 2 Samuel ch8. The Samuel narrative makes it clear that David was successful because he was anointed as the adopted messianic son of God. He installed the justice and righteousness of God – this is critical in the implementation of God's rule. David fought the battles, then his son Solomon built the temple and expanded the peace of Israel.

1 Kings 4 – the Israelites were numerous – just as God had promised to Abraham. There was a huge feast (refer back to the Autumn programme – 'Sabbath' was rest, worship and feast). The nation expanded and was dominant because Solomon was anointed. V25 Judah and Israel, all of it, lived in safety 'each man under his own vine and fig tree' – it was a time of safety, peace, abundance – the 'good life'. Solomon's wisdom was well known throughout the land – he wrote the book of **Proverbs** which is about God's rule in our lives coming down into the practical details of everyday life – family, community, work etc. Solomon also wrote the 'Song of Songs'. 1 Kings 4 describes a worldview of Solomon – he was aware of and in touch with the natural creation – he was doing what Adam should have been doing!

The Kingdom of God covers everything in life. Solomon's kingdom was a taste of heaven – both individually and nationally (corporate). It was spiritual and material – all of creation came under the rule of God. In 1 Samuel ch10 we see the visit of the Queen of Sheba – the pagan nation representative comes to the representative of Yahweh and discovers God. Yahweh was present in the kingdom and the kingdom declared Yahweh. This is the picture we are always so desperate to see today – that people who do not know God, see the people in whom God lives and through that experience, experience God himself.

When the Kingdom of God comes there is shalom (peace) and a messianic banquet! No wonder Jesus announced the beginning of his ministry by turning water into wine!

Vid 3.2 The Davidic ministry - shalom (10.07)

How does the Davidic covenant/monarchy and the Exodus relate to each other?

The key to Solomon's success is the return of the ark to Jerusalem. Once David had finished the military conquests, he knew the ark was to follow as the ark represented the presence of God. Solomon built the temple, brought the ark to it and the glory of Yahweh filled the temple – physically.

God's rulership is now visibly present in the temple.

1Kings 10 – the visit of the Queen of Sheba. Here we see God as the God who becomes present. The Queen meets Solomon and, v4, and was overwhelmed – zapped by God. The pagan Queen comes into the presence of God, is overwhelmed and has a conversion experience.

David/Solomon ruled over all Israel bringing justice and peace. This is still the job of the church.

The people of God had the presence of Yahweh; which led to deliverance; this led to the covenant with a chosen, holy priestly nation which was maintained through the system of law, tabernacle, priesthood and sacrifice. This resulted in the benefit of the promised land and they are now God's mission people. There is now a new enlarged nation of elect people. The covenant is now maintained through the temple as a tabernacle mark II. The benefits are the golden age, the shalom, every man living under his own vine and fig tree. The nearby nations see and are attracted to this scenario.

By the time we get to Jesus, he is referencing the Exodus and the Davidic monarch, and the shalom, the feast.

Vid 4.1 The prophetic promise – God will come (9.36)

Jesus talked about 'the time is fulfilled' – we are looking at how that Jewish expectation comes to that.

We divide the Jewish OT expectation of the kingdom in 2 parts – Yahweh REIGNS and Yahweh WILL REIGN. Eschatology is about an expectation of what will happen at the end of time – especially in Isaiah and Daniel.

3 windows – the Exodus event / the Davidic monarch / the prophetic promise

The first 2 have a present reality of 'the Lord IS king'. In the prophets, we see 'the Lord WILL BECOME king'.

After David came Solomon, after Solomon the Jewish nation declined '* - there are good kings and bad kings, but more bad and generally the trajectory became worse and worse (with sporadic exceptions).

The prophets warn and predict that unless the Israelites follow God, he will bring other nations to do his work – and he does. The Assyrian empire (the one Jonah prophesied to at Ninevah) invaded and obliterated the Northern kingdom of Israel and Babylon later destroyed the southern Jewish kingdom of Judah.

Psalm 137 epitomises the state of despair of Israel, in exile, in Babylon with Jerusalem only as memories.

The Jews are living in memory – the present is a disastrous exile. Habakkuk shows the past repeated – the Exodus and Sinai and asks 'Oh God, in our time have mercy' and steadfastly determines that due to the memory of what God has done in the past he will still praise. BUT he prays for God to come and rescue again. By the time of Isaiah and Daniel – the past is being entirely eclipsed by the future – when God comes again it will be much greater than the past. There is HOPE of the coming king.

There will be judgement of foreign nations, there will be 'the latter days' at the end of history when God will intervene in a greater way than ever before. Some biblical writers call it 'the last days', others 'that day'. God will intervene and make all new – eschatology (end of the world ology!). This world will be terminated and a new world will arrive.

* (Steve) I would say that the decline started part way through Solomon's reign – he was a great king for the 1st half and a poor king for the 2nd half. He permitted his copious wives to bring their 'gods' and practices with them. There is also a subtle criticism of Solomon at the end of 1 Kings ch 6 and the beginning of ch 7 (the chapter divide separates these, so we often miss the critical emphasis) ... *"The foundation of the temple of the LORD was laid in the fourth year, in the month of Ziv. ... the temple was finished in all its details according to its specifications. He had spent **seven years** building it. It took Solomon **thirteen years**, however, to complete the construction of his palace."* So – what's the implication of Solomon's focus and priorities in the 2nd half of his reign? He started well ... but finished his life with other priorities. A great challenge to us to finish our short and temporary time here well.

Vid 4.2 The prophetic promise – Isaiah & Daniel (29.13)

Isaiah – one of the prophets who articulated this future eschatological kingdom – but probably more and bigger than any other prophet. Jesus refers to Isaiah more than any other prophet.

Summary:

1. Yahweh will come – he has been waiting for this time and will come with huge glory. Yahweh will intervene in human history.
2. Yahweh's intervention will come through a Davidic descendent who is like David (anointed) but more so – an anointing vastly superior to that of David. All nations will be drawn to this future anointed one (messiah).
3. There will be an unprecedented outpouring of the Spirit ('I will pour out my Spirit' – Joel 2.28, Isaiah 44.3). This will be a 'new thing' – not like anything ever seen before. God's central activity will be salvation – God will act to save his people. Isaiah talks about salvation*1 God will wipe out their/our sins. God has been longing to forgive Israel and in this eschatological day, Yahweh will forgive. Sickness and imprisonment will be no more. Every form of human bondage will be liberated and peace will break out – unending peace. Death itself will die.
4. There will be a new people of God - God will hold an immense feast and people from EVERY nation will be there – Isaiah prophesies a comprehensive salvation reaching throughout the world.
5. There will be a new 'capital city' – a global God-led city – the NEW Jerusalem.
6. The earth will be renewed and there will be a new heaven and a new earth with creation restored to its original splendour.
7. There will be a final judgement. Only Yahweh will be exalted and evil will be destroyed. Everything that is unjust will be removed and God's justice reigns over all of humanity. The world as we know it will be terminated and a new order will be brought in by God.

Jesus summarises all of this in the phrase 'the Kingdom of God is here/coming/at hand. (12 mins)

Daniel – ch7 Daniel uses the phrase ‘Son of Man’ which Jesus takes as a description of himself.

Daniel ch 2 – the Babylonian king has a vision, Daniel describes the vision and interprets it – the vision of a statue. The Kingdom of God, from a heavenly quarry crashes into history and smashes all the kingdoms of men and forms its own greater kingdom.

Daniel ch 7 – the same story but in different imagery – 4 beasts from the sea (same empires as in Daniel 2). Then, in heaven, ch7 v9, God takes his seat – ‘white’ is the clue that it is God (remember the teaching from the autumn). God judges and we find ‘one like a son of man’ – a human being ^{‘*2} – a transcendent human being brought before God. He was given authority and power and WAS WORSHIPPED (therefore God) and had eternal rule (also therefore God). His eschatological kingdom replaces all the kingdoms of the world.

Then his kingdom will be given v27 to the people of God – ‘they are him and he is them’ ^{‘*3}.

Son of man is ‘second adam’ – he will dramatically come into history and a new humanity will be established ^{‘*4}. We see an eschatological dualism – history split into 2 – the ‘before’ and the ‘after’. This ‘after’ kingdom will last forever. In Ezekiel ‘son of man’ is a phrase which just means ‘human being’. In Daniel, ‘son of man’ is Jesus claim to be the final judge of all humanity, God himself and the eternal ruler of this incoming age.

Daniel tells us of a new humanity. Isaiah tells us of the coming king who will wrap up history and start a wholly different start of history – a new humanity.

Later (after Isaiah and Daniel), the intertestamental period, Israel was ruled by multiple foreign nations, so Isaiah and Daniel’s promise was ‘fantasised’, politicised and militarised to the extent that by the time Jesus arrived, the expectations of the messiah which the Jews had was wholly different. BUT, suddenly, John the Baptist arrives, then Jesus arrives and quotes Isaiah!

^{‘*1} Isaiah uses the word ‘yesha’ (salvation) 22 or 29 times (depending on how you measure the word’s derivatives) – more than any book other than Psalms (57 times). Look up the Jewish name for Jesus (ie what his mum would have called him! – and what Jewish Christians still call him today) ... Yeshua the same word in a name format!

^{‘*2} also look at ch10 v5-6. The man is God – especially the ‘flaming fire’ – always about purification and judgement – things only God could do – so this ‘son of man’ is both man and God

^{‘*3} remember image and likeness, TSLM & DMWT from the autumn – the ‘image/idol’ in the temple which has the essence of the god ... and we are called the TSLM & DMWT of Yahweh (or as the author ‘P’ would say Elohim, and later El Shaddai)

^{‘*4} the second adam - a ‘start again moment’ – Eden revisited – what was NOT in Eden? – evil, sickness, separation from God, death ... and so it will be in this new eschatological earth.

Vid 5.1 Jesus – announcing and demonstrating the kingdom I (35.22)

After many stages in the OT, the kingdom comes in Jesus – with immediacy, authority and also with a sense of mystery. There are many implications of understanding this.

We have been going through Jesus saying ‘the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of heaven has come’ – he was referencing the long build up from the OT – Exodus, David, Prophets. God then seemingly did nothing for hundreds of years during which the Israelites politicised and trivialised the prophetic elements of the arrival of the kingdom – this is the context into which Jesus arrives.

As soon as Jesus arrives, the pace accelerates. He announces the end of this world and the beginning of the new world. ‘At once’ (or ‘immediately’ – in his gospel Mark uses this word 41 times!) – it is fast paced, especially in Mark.

‘Authority’ of the kingdom (the event of God’s will becoming the rule on earth) is one of Mark’s strongest themes. The people were amazed that Jesus taught with authority, drove out demons with authority, summonsed people with authority, declared that he had authority over sin. Forgiveness was meant to be at the temple, with sacrifices – the idea that a person could pronounce forgiveness was scandalous, undermining the temple system and Jesus said that he forgives sin as ‘the son of man’ – Daniel’s messiah figure. This is eschatological forgiveness (end of the world). Jesus also had authority over death – Lazarus, Jairus’ daughter etc. Jesus also had authority over nature – the fig tree, the storm. Jesus is doing ‘let your kingdom come’ in front of their eyes!

Mystery – the demons knew who he was, but the religious leaders didn’t. Jesus often did things in secret – turning water into wine / healing people – ‘don’t tell anyone!’. Eventually, even John the Baptist was having doubts as Jesus was not meeting the expectations of 1st century Judaism. John sent people to ask Jesus whether he was ‘the one’ – Jesus replied with the prophesy of Isaiah – ‘tell John what you see – me doing what Isaiah prophesied’.

The mystery of the kingdom of God ... it is still a future event, but it is also now present. It is present, delayed, near and future all at the same time. The kingdom comes at the end of history (see Revelation) ... but also comes in the arrival of Jesus which was the pivotal turning of history – the kingdom is now a present reality. It is NOW and NOT YET. The kingdom is ‘near’, or ‘at hand’ (touching distance) – you can ‘smell it’, it’s here.

Jesus taught that the kingdom of God was ‘pregnant in history’ and was about to be born. Then he talks about it being delayed (eg the parable of the 10 virgins, or the parable of the talents).

The mystery of the kingdom is revealed in the fact that it is always simultaneously present, near, delayed and future. The timing of the nature of the kingdom baffles human understanding ... remember – ‘time’ is a dimension created by God – he is outside of time.

God deals with humanity in 2 ages – this age and the coming age. This age will end dramatically when God finally comes and will be followed by a new world when God has put everything right with a new humanity in a new heavenly city. In Jesus the mysterious and unexpected happened – that future world broke from the future into the present, such that the 2 ages co-exist. This age hasn’t finished, yet; but in Jesus, the coming age has already started. The life of the coming ages is now in front of us.

The theological term for this 2 ages running at the same time is inaugurated eschatology. The ultimate future has become present in Jesus, but not yet in consummation.

Is the kingdom of God here? – yes!

Are we still waiting for it? – yes!

We are living between the times – we are caught in the overlap of ages.

Vid 5.2 Jesus – announcing and demonstrating the kingdom II (45.13)

The high points of the life of Jesus – cross / resurrection / ascension are all eschatological kingdom realities. The cross: John ch 12 – NOW is the time! ‘I will draw all men to myself’. All of the new humanity is represented in Jesus as a 2nd Adam. Jesus says in John 12 that the judgement was ‘Now’ – ie when he was on the cross. In John ch 19, ‘completed, fulfilled, finished’. Jesus was saying that everything the OT was building towards crystallises in his crucifixion – the future judgement occurs, now, during the crucifixion. The whole cosmos bears witness to that fact – darkness, earthquake, dead being raised etc. In Jewish expectations, the general, final times resurrection of the dead is the climax of history and this now happens at the crucifixion!

As human beings we have a choice ‘which day of judgement do we want to show up to?’ – we Christians look to the crucifixion and say that our day of judgement has happened. We have been tried, found guilty, crucified and raised from the dead ... all in the death of Jesus!

The resurrection: Jesus says ‘what you think is only possible at the end of history is now possible when/because I am around’. Jesus changes everything into a new reality – appears within a locked room, disappears from the 2 disciples at Emmaus – his body seems to be able to materialise and dematerialise; yet he eats, he gets disciples to touch him, he cooks them breakfast – he is no ghost. This is what the future, our future, looks like. Our bodies will be transformed into immortality. The resurrection promises us that in one moment, every cell in our body will be reconstructed and we will be very different, but still us.

Paul theologises about the risen body – he breaks grammar rules to say that the new body is both physical and spiritual – N.T.Wright’s phrase ‘trans-physical reality’. Resurrection is different from resuscitation – people do come back from the dead today – but they still age and die later. With Jesus we have a new, risen, non-ageing, non-dying body.

Pentecost: Peter deliberately draws people’s minds to what Joel said. One of the key phrases the OT prophets used was ‘the day of Yahweh’ – when God will bring things to a close. Peter says that Pentecost is that end of the world outpouring which Joel prophesied – signs of the end of history working into the present time. Paul talks about being ‘sealed’ by the Holy Spirit awaiting the end. The Holy Spirit is described as a ‘foretaste’ or a ‘deposit guaranteeing our inheritance’ – a sign now of what will be fully evident in the future.

The phenomenon of revivals, illustrated by Holy Spirit power is often accompanied by some bodily effects – such energy that something happens – a level of anointing which physically touches our bodies, BUT at the end of history, the dial will be hugely turned up and in a moment our bodies will be transformed. The resurrection phenomenon and the Pentecostal phenomenon are intrinsically tied. Now, it’s a small foretaste of the future. In the NT, the ‘last days’ began in Jesus and we have been living in the ‘last days’ ever since. We are currently just moving through the last days, moving towards the end of history.

Every time there is a fresh Pentecost where we get a ‘foretaste’ experience, it’s a fresh inbreaking of the power of God into history. Revivals are characterised by these fresh Pentecost outpourings. The barrier between this world and the coming world has been ripped open. In the tabernacle and temple, the inner and outer chambers were separated by a veil. In Hebrews ch9, the outer court is seen as symbolic of the ‘present age’ implying that the holy of holies is symbolic of the coming age. When Jesus dies, the veil separating the chambers is torn – the barrier between this age and the coming age has been ripped open – by God. Understanding the kingdom is a way of understanding that the powers of the kingdom are so near that at any moment, the powers of the age to come are here ... we live on the edge! The kingdom brings the wholeness of the future world into the present world on a regular basis. Jesus has commissioned us to expect the kingdom to break through – in many areas, including healing. Sometimes, whole societies are changed by the

transforming power of God – various examples in history – Switzerland, America, Scotland, Wales, South Korea – all have examples and we see clusters of examples worldwide.

We are 'already - not yet people' ... we ARE saved, we ARE BEING saved and we WILL BE saved.

Vid 6.0 'Already' 'not yet' people (32.19)

This block takes this theology of the kingdom and takes it into living the Christian life. The NT expert at this is Paul – he positions the Christian in the map of the kingdom – both 'already' texts and 'not yet' texts. John does the same thing.

The kingdom is simultaneously present, near, delayed and future. The Christian community is caught in the middle of the 'already and not yet'.

Paul uses the terminology of the 'old man' (not in the kingdom) and the 'new man' (in the kingdom). Our identification, through baptism, draws us from the 'old' to the 'new' – as he dies / is buried / raised – so are we. We are now people who are being 'transformed from one degree of glory to another' (Paul, 2 Cor 3.18). When we meet Christ we ARE saved, but we find in our lives that we ARE BEING saved, and when we meet Christ after our death we WILL BE saved. We, each, are new creatures, living in the new kingdom.

Some times we experience huge victories – and Paul shows this with 'already' texts.

Other times, we have the 'deposit' of the Spirit but we experience battles and groan with the burden of not yet being there. - and Paul shows this with 'not yet texts'.

Christians are people who are so full of this new life AND so irritated by what is not yet transformed.

The experience of successful ministry is an experience of continually dying to yourself.

2Cor 6:4-10. Already and not yet together – we have endurance, troubles, hardships (not yet) ... in purity, understanding, patience and kindness (already) ...dishonour, regarded as imposters, dying, sorrowful (not yet). Christians are the happiest depressed people in the world – we are contradictions – the power of 2 ages has collided within us and they are competing within our very bodies. We embody and live out these overlapping worlds.

1 John 1:8 – if we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves (not yet)

1 John 3:6 – no-one who lives in Him keeps on sinning (already)

What does this mean for the Christian life?

All of us are caught in the reality of struggling with sin. We will get out of that when we see Jesus face to face but until then, do not descend into either triumphalism or defeatism – the truth is that we have both good and bad days. It's not a passing phase – get used to it! It is not a passing phase. We all have struggles and so we can be more open knowing that every other Christian we talk to has struggles too. When struggles happen, do not panic, fall into despair or descend into self hatred.

In a strange way, our Christian lives get harder and harder, and better and better. The closer we get to God, the more disturbed we are with what has not been transformed. It gets harder as the light of God's presence shines more deeply into our shadows; at the same time, the more we experience God, the more we see Him

moving, the more we think how great the Christian life is. Remember ... victory is guaranteed; we will be presented to God flawless, like Jesus .

Do not postpone your availability to be used by God until you are 'ready' – be available now! God uses us NOW, not when we have reached a certain stage of 'spirituality' – often God uses very young mixed up Christians in preference to the older, more experienced Christians. You will never be more right to be used by God than today. You will see great things, and you will struggle – because you are an already and not yet person.

Fight the fight – we are spiritual warriors looking for a war to fight. The nature of the Christian life is that of being in a warzone.

Vid 7.0 Bringing in the Kingdom (38.49)

The calling on the Christian to represent the Kingdom of God – 4 key steps – expectation, prayer, announcement, demonstration.

How do we bring in the kingdom of God?

What unleashes this event? Do we just pray and leave it to the sovereignty of God or are we partnering with God in this? Can we 'borrow from tomorrow'? – bringing the future into the present; precipitating the clash of the ages.

We need to get a full kingdom expectation into ourselves. This leads us to pray the kingdom prayer – 'let your kingdom come'. This leads us to have a different announcement of the kingdom and a linked, stronger, demonstration of the kingdom. There will still be a mystery of sometimes we see things happening and sometimes less so.

How do we grow our expectation?

If our conception of God is too small, we won't see much. How can we stretch our small vision?

1. Read the scriptures – Old and New Testament – Derek M particularly recommends Isaiah.
2. Read the history of revivals – where the theology and practice of the end of the age appear most strongly. We have settled for a set of expectations where nothing much will happen – but these stories challenge that perception – read what God has done.
3. Hang around with people who move in the matters of the kingdom of God – especially prophetic and healing gifts. It's more caught than taught. The more you see, the more you expect and the more you expect, the more you see. Note – God often ministers specially amongst the poor. From this, we pray the kingdom prayer – your kingdom come, your will be done – we are praying for the final future of humanity to break into the present.
4. Announcing the kingdom – the words and actions of Jesus: we are the keryx (the announcer)! The Roman keryx carried the authority of the Emperor and the law became effective from the point he announced it. The words of Jesus unleash the demonstration. Jesus did this and commissioned his disciples to do exactly the same. Every time you announce the kingdom, you live the risk of looking stupid – so the safe thing is never to do it but God hasn't called us to be safe. Sometimes we will announce the kingdom and God will move in great power, sometimes he won't – but he'd God, he'll do what he wants. We cannot and must not manipulate the scenario. We are not making it happen – we are following what God is doing. Go with what God is doing – follow, don't try to lead God!

We cannot switch God on and off. We need to learn to wait on God.
The gifts of the Spirit are often the spark, the trigger, which leaps from proclamation to activity.
So, train people to operate in prophetic and healing gifts.

In ministry time – make the times significant, with waiting time – not rushed nor short.

Paul does not refer to the 'kingdom' much, but he preaches the liberty of the grace of God which comes from the kingdom. Similarly with John, he seldom uses the phrase 'kingdom of God' but uses the phrase 'eternal life' – the life of the coming ages, life of the kingdom.

Engaging the church in the message of justice is part of bringing in the kingdom. God's justice reaches out to the poor and oppressed, bringing in the kingdom.

The quality of our life as a church must be a demonstration of the kingdom – life the quality of the life of the kingdom and be a window to people where they can view the kingdom. We are then an eschatological community – a community living the life of the next world NOW.

Vid 8.1 The kingdom displaces other theologies I (18.22)

Once we view the world through the theology of the kingdom, it opens up an insight into the whole biblical story line. We have had 2000 years of Christian theology, but Kingdom theology has only been prevalent in the past 50 or 60 years – post WW2 we had a rediscovery of who Jesus is and his central emphasis on the Kingdom. Jesus lived in '2nd temple era' – between the post-exilic rebuilding of the temple (c500BC) and its destruction in AD70. We have only recently discovered and translated the literature from the 2nd temple era – hundreds of texts which allow us to read Jesus in his context rather than in the context of often 1,000 years before Jesus (imagine reading about us in the context, culture, beliefs and presuppositions of William the Conqueror!). Especially since the 1980s and accelerating during the internet age when communication is so much more public, available and widely distributed.

A history of contextualisation of the message of Jesus:

- Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, takes the Hebrew/Jewish message and makes it communicable to a Roman/Greek society.
- The next contextualisation is in the 3rd/4th century in the workings of the 'Church Fathers'. They used mostly Greek philosophical ideas and language.
- Reformation – focussing more on Paul's writings than necessarily on the gospels – still a revival.
- Enlightenment – when we have a purely human Jesus and miracles don't happen and dead men don't rise.
- Pentecostalism – a reform of Protestantism which revolts against cessationism ('miracles' don't happen').
- 1980s onwards – we want to go back to the original Jesus, in his context, with his original message. This is sometimes known as 'the quest for the historical Jesus' or 'the 3rd quest'.

The discipline of 'Biblical theology' is comparatively new. It gets into the themes throughout scripture and finds the most frequent theme and the key to Scripture is 'the kingdom of God'.

What is the Bible about? *"the establishment of God's kingdom, through God's saviour, for God's glory, via all peoples according to the obedience of faith, through the power of the Holy Spirit"* (Bill Jackson. The Biblical metanarrative: one God, one Plan, one Story)

Vid 8.2 The kingdom displaces other theologies II (48.36)

Competing theologies – or theologies which get displaced by Kingdom theology

- Cessationalism
- Dispensationalism
- Restorationism

Cessationalism:

This believes that the miraculous events and gifts have ceased. There are now no charismatic events. John Calvin was a strong proponent of cessationalism. Miraculous events and gifts were for a period of time to testify to the uniqueness of who Jesus was and to kick-start the early church, but have now died out. They were temporary (and various cessationalist theologians debate exactly when it stopped).

Cessationalists still exist (the speaker says that this theology has been 'pushed back', but there are still huge swathes of the church which believe this).

This began as a theology by Calvin to remove the claims to authority for the Catholic church (miracles and apostleship) and for decades (maybe even centuries) was the dominant theology of the Protestant church. Later, the Pentecostal churches arrived and demonstrated that miracles, speaking in tongues, healing actually happens.

Once we understand the kingdom framework of 'now and not yet', we are living simultaneously in both ages, we understand that trying to split the history of the church into ages (eg times of miracles, then they stopped) does not make logical nor biblical sense.

Dispensationalism:

Starting in the 1800s. Here they believe that at some point before the 2nd coming, the spirit filled church will be taken away from this world and the Jews will again be God's main witness on earth – a sort of secret coming of Jesus before his 2nd coming and a 'rapture' of the Christians leaving others behind. They say that from Revelation chapter 6 onwards, the church has left the story!

In the bible, there are only 2 ages – this age and the age to come. There is no hint of a secret pre-2nd coming. Some of the Christian Zionism movement see the Jews as equally the people of God, even though they continue to reject Jesus.

Messianic Judaism – where Jews believe in Jesus. This is a huge and growing movement, but with many, especially in Israel, remaining incognito. However, there must not be any teaching of Messianic congregations having to remain separate from the gentile church, we have apartheid, not biblical kingdom theology – there is ONE church. Many differences, great variety – Coptic, Catholic, Eastern, Messianic, Pentecostal but ONE church. Dispensationalism sometimes teaches a division of the church – those who will be raptured, and those who won't.

Restorationism:

This teaches that God will restore the church. God HAS frequently restored lost truth to the world (eg Reformation – a restoration of the message of Grace; Pentecostalism – a restoration of the message of the presence of the Spirit). However, where Restorationism teaches that there is a 'last generation' of Christians, a 'special elite' which is different from the rest of the historical family of Christians.

From the apostolic age, there is an undulating story where most goes downhill – the miraculous and the presence of the Spirit is lost ... THEN ... there's a restoration of the apostolic ministry and there are apostles operating like 'Elijah' – an elitist understanding of restoration.

As we approach the end of the age, the more frequent the Pentecostal revivals seem to be – there is a restoration happening, but not as an elitist interpretation.

We ARE into a form of restoration, but not elitist. Kingdom theological understanding shows that the church has always been in the 'now and not yet' and that God will restore, but we do not claim to be a special 'last generation' or any different from any prior generation.

We are 'continuationists' – we see God continuing to work miraculously through his Holy Spirit.

We are part of ONE church – not a separate church, set apart from the rest.

(the speaker then has a long section on apostleship and 'the new apostolic movement' – I assume that is important to him, but feel free to listen!)

All of church history is the end of the age breaking into the present. There are no other subdivisions such as in cessationalism, dispensationalism or classic restorationism.

Our call:

1. Rediscover who Jesus is – read people like NT Wright etc who rediscover Jesus in his historical context (read Tverberg – v accessible , or Fletcher-Louis - very academic)
2. Get to grips with 'kingdom theology'
3. Articulate this kingdom theology and the eschatological Christ into the 21st century
4. Have a prophetic worldview – what we are discovering is actually the most ancient view of Jesus, we are simply bringing it into the present
5. Expectation, prayer, announcement, demonstration – do all 4 stages
6. Be a kingdom community – we are called to be the community of the kingdom