

The What and When of the Kingdom of God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 January 2024

Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

[0 : 00] The book of, what's that? Oh, the memory. Thank you. I forgot about the memory verse. So we started this, we started this last week.

And so the idea here is to have a memory verse that we as a church can do together. We'll do one verse a month. So it'll give us approximately four weeks to work on this verse together. If you'd like to also work on it throughout the week, that's great. If you just want to do it during the church service altogether, we'll do that. So we're just going to repeat this together, try to get it in our minds.

And then also, where do we want God's word? Down into our hearts, right? And so memorizing scripture can be a helpful aid and tool in doing that.

So let's read this together. And we'll start with the verse reference. Colossians 3, 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

[1 : 11] We'll do that one more time. Colossians 3, 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

We talked about this verse last week. But just to reiterate, we have a position, an identity as Christian believers who, when we trust in Christ, we are identified with him.

And one of the ways in which we're identified with his resurrection from death. The Bible says that we, previously, before we became believers, were spiritually dead.

Just means separated from him. But when we trust in Christ, we are identified with him, and we are raised to new life. We are raised with him.

If you then be risen with Christ, if we're identified with him in his resurrection, then our life, the focus of our life, should not just be only on earthly things, but should be on heavenly things.

[2 : 19] Because that's where Jesus, Jesus rose from the dead, and then he rose from the ground, the Bible tells us, at the end of the Gospels, into the heavens. And it says that Jesus today, right now, is at the right hand of the Father in the heavenlies.

And so we should be seeking heavenly things as Christians. And so that's what this verse is all about. And it's good to always keep that in mind. There's lots of earthly things to keep our minds busy, aren't there?

No end. But we should try to remember, from God's word, not just to focus on earthly things, but on the heavenly things as well. Amen?

All right. We are going to jump back into the book of Mark here. So open up your Bibles, if you would, to Mark. And we finished up chapter 8 in Mark last week.

And we are going to look at, start in Mark chapter 9. Now today, if you noticed in the message title and the reference, we are going to look at one verse.

[3 : 28] Now that might seem discouraging. We're not making very much progress here. But I thought it was important because there's actually a lot in this verse. And there's some controversy around it.

So I thought it would be important to spend our whole time this morning just looking at this one verse. If you remember from last week, Jesus has taken his disciples, and there are others who have followed him.

And they've gone to this certain area, which is away from a lot of the bigger cities. And Jesus spent some time specifically with just his 12 disciples.

And one of the things he asked him is, Who do men say that I am, and then who do you say that I am? He wanted to make sure that they were clear on who he was. And Peter answered, really for all of them, and he said, You are the Christ.

You're the Son of the living God. That's who you are. And Jesus said, Basically, you're right, but don't tell anybody. I don't want everybody to know this, at least not quite yet.

[4 : 36] And then he goes on to talk about, to his disciples, and also he gathers some other crowds.

So if we go back here, look at, well, verse 31. Chapter 8, verse 31. He tells his disciples that he is going to be persecuted.

He's going to be reviled. The Jewish leaders are going to come against him. And that he's going to be killed, and then he's going to rise from the dead three days later.

Peter rebukes him, and then there's this interaction in which Jesus makes it clear. Hey, listen, this is an important thing that's going to happen. And I don't need you opposing this whole plan.

Then Jesus calls the rest of the people who were there. These were followers of his, not the twelve, but other disciples, people who are following him.

[5 : 37] It says, When he had called the people to himself, this is in verse 34, with his disciples also, then he starts to explain, Hey, if anybody wants to follow me from now on, I need you to realize that you're joining a dangerous mission.

You need to be willing to take up your cross. The cross is an implement of execution. And you need to deny yourself and follow me.

And we talked about what all that means. The idea here is basically this. Where I'm going, they're going to come after me and kill me. I want you to follow me, and they're probably going to kill you too.

Very encouraging. And that's the context of going into verse 1 of the next chapter.

It's a little strange because usually chapter demarcations in the Bible move along to like a different setting. There's, or something like that.

[6 : 47] In this case, it seems, well, maybe that's the case. But most people who read the context here realize this is just a continuation from the same message, the same conversation.

And so we should keep that in mind. Chapters and verses were added to the Bible later. They weren't there originally. And for the most part, they're very, very helpful, right? If you want to find a certain portion of Scripture, like today we memorized Colossians 3.1.

It's right smack dab in the middle of Colossians. If we didn't have that reference, it would be hard probably to find it easily. So the references really help. But sometimes they actually kind of get in the way.

And I think that's the case here. Today we're going to look at two big questions. What is the kingdom of God? And when is the kingdom of God?

What is the kingdom of God? And when is it supposed to happen? Now, there's some controversy in here, which is why we're going to spend kind of the whole morning on this one question, this one verse.

[7 : 54] When it comes to timing, especially of future events in the Bible, people have all kinds of different ideas about when the timing. When it comes to end times, there are all kinds of different views, right?

And so that's part of it. And then the other part is, well, what is the kingdom of God? And among Christian believers today, and these are faithful Christians, and I'm not talking about the cults. I'm just talking about real Christians that trust that Jesus died for their sins.

Because even among those of us who are Christians of various denominations and sorts, the idea of what the kingdom of God is is hotly debated, and there are different views.

So, and then along the way, as we talk through this, we're going to talk a little bit about what's the best approach to interpreting the Scripture. So let's just read this verse.

Mark 9, verse 1. And he said to them, So let's just talk a couple of things regarding the context.

[9 : 15] So remember Miles Coverdale's quote. We've used that many times here at the church and had it posted at different times in different places.

But Miles Coverdale, his quote is all about context. And it's, Who's speaking? Who's being spoken to? What's the setting? Where's the place? What came before? And then what came after?

These are all important things. So right now it's important to look, Well, what came before this saying of Jesus? Jesus is concluding. These are kind of his final thoughts when he's telling his disciples and potential disciples, Hey, if you want to follow me, I'm about to go to Jerusalem.

He doesn't say that specifically here, but later on we'll see. Jesus is headed to Jerusalem into the lion's den, if you will. He's saying, I'm going to die and so will you most likely if you follow me. And you need to count the cost. You need to be willing to count that cost. You need to be willing to die to follow me. And so this, this last parting word I think should be seen as a glimmer of hope, right?

[10:34] In a somewhat depressing message. The message of, we're all going to die. And he's saying, hey, but listen, there's a kingdom coming. And some of you, you're going to make it through.

That seems to be what he's saying. Some of you will make it to that time when the kingdom finally arrives. And then the other part of context is the audience.

Who is being spoken to? Jesus is speaking to his 12 disciples. And then some of the others who, it sounds like he's asking these others, you know, well, do you want to be my disciples as well and come follow me?

And here's what the cost is. So it seems, as we just read this, at least to me, as the natural reading of this passage, is that, hey, most of you are going to die, but some of you, some of you standing here, some of you right in front of me, you're not going to die until you see the kingdom come.

This, just a little bit of aside, he uses this phrase, will not taste death. And you might think, well, what does that mean?

[11:53] Well, I think to most of us, it's probably fairly clear this is a phrase actually used in other places in the scripture, but it just means, you know, to die. Now, it's difficult for many to take this passage just at face value from what it seemingly says.

That Jesus will come to reign in his kingdom within a very short period, a generation, if you will, a matter of years, right?

Not thousands of years, not hundreds of years, but a short period of time. But that's not our experience, right?

We read this, and we see Jesus said, some of you standing here will not taste death until you see the kingdom coming with power, and this kingdom, well, we don't really see the kingdom described in the Bible, and as far as we know, I think all these disciples passed away, right?

It's been 2,000 years, and even though in the early parts of the Bible some people lived to almost 1,000 years, that's not happening anymore. So what's going on?

[13:16] Now, on top of this, there are other passages about the coming of the kingdom that seem to relate a similar idea. So Jesus' message about the kingdom that we, when we first started this study on Mark, we talked about his message of the kingdom, and his message was this.

This is from Mark 1, verse 15. Jesus preached to the people, he said, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is at hand.

That means it's right here. It's almost here. Not quite yet, but just about here. And then he says, repent and believe the gospel.

That's the message of Jesus to the Jewish people. Another passage to consider, this is in Matthew 10, verse 23, and this is when Jesus is sending out his 12 disciples to go preach about the kingdom to all the cities in Israel.

And he sends them out, two by two, remember? But he sends them out to preach this message and also to have miracle ministry just like he did. But in Matthew 10, verse 23, as part of his message on sending them out, he says this, when they persecute you in this city, flee to another.

[14:41] For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. Saying, I'm going to send you and you're going to preach in a lot of these cities, throughout all of Israel, preaching that the kingdom is coming.

And I don't want you to dilly-dally in just one place. If they don't receive you, just move on to the next. But even though you're going pretty quickly, the Son of Man is going to return, seemingly, with his kingdom, before you finish going through all these cities.

The other place that we can look at that has a similar idea is what we call the Olivet Discourse. This is where Jesus actually explains to his disciples a lot of the details about what is coming in the upcoming future.

He describes the tribulation, the end times, as we call it. What's going to happen in the end? And then ultimately, how he's going to return with his angels in glory and in power and how the elect will be gathered in from the four corners of the earth?

He explains all those things. But in Matthew 24, verse 34, he kind of, towards the end of this discourse, says this. Matthew 24, verse 34, Assuredly I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

[16:19] He's describing the end times and then he says, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. So what, what in the world is going on?

So we're going to look at these two questions. Well, what is the kingdom of God? Are we getting it right? Maybe it's something different than, than we think. And two, when will, or, when did it happen?

Did it already happen? Did we miss it? Typically what I've found is if you feel strongly about the answer to one of these questions, it impacts how you view the answer to the other question.

So I want to look at three views, three views on really these, these two questions that we're going to pair together. and these views consider really a, a more literal or a less literal, kind of more metaphorical interpretation of these two questions.

And when it comes to how we interpret the Bible, it's important that we consider the best way to interpret the Bible.

[17:31] You know, there are those who look at the Bible as a, a bunch of stories that are mostly metaphors for how we should live a good life. And there are certainly a few of those in the Bible.

But, if you, if you approach the Bible as just simply a bunch of metaphors for how to live life, you're not going to really get the main message of the Bible. The Bible is a book of real and true history, things that really did happen.

And while there are some metaphors, especially when it comes to end time things, it's not mostly metaphors. You know, when, when it comes to interpreting the Bible, typically someone who would be more on the liberal end of the spectrum would have a tendency to view much of the Bible as metaphorical.

Whereas somebody more on the conservative, we would call it conservative side of the spectrum, would read the Bible more literally. Now, the Bible has both. It has figures of speech, it has metaphors, and it also has very straightforward didactic teaching and history.

But we need to be able to recognize both. It makes me think about in our political world, right? We have liberals and conservatives, right?

[18:51] And we have a document that our country is founded on based on, called the Constitution, right? And has anybody ever heard of this concept of constitutional interpretation where you view the Constitution as a, quote, living document, right?

Well, what does that mean? Well, we don't like dead documents, right? Sounds great. Well, it's a living document, but what does that mean? Well, that means that, well, it kind of ebbs and flows. The meaning can kind of ebb and flow with the current generation and what our values are today. And is that how you should interpret a document, a historical document?

Well, it can change meaning over time based on what our values are. Well, that's a bunch of baloney, right? But that's a, that's a more liberal view, taking, being a lot more loose with the, with the meaning of things.

And so we should be, we should be careful. So, with that kind of as a, our, our setting, we're going to look at these three views. The first one, I'm going to call more of the view of the skeptics when it comes to this passage.

[20:06] And so, Jesus is claiming something here about the kingdom and about when it's going to come. And they look at it and they take it at face value and they say, well, it sounds like he's saying that the kingdom is going to come in less than a generation.

And that this is an earthly kingdom. Jesus sitting on the throne of, of David. And so, their conclusion is that the kingdom is literal, the timing is very literal, and the conclusion that they come up with is, Jesus was a fraud.

He was a nut. He was, he was just a man that made some things up or maybe he was led astray by other people or something like that.

But, what he said was not true. Not trustworthy. He didn't return when he said that he would. So, that's the first one, the skeptics view.

They take both of these very literally and say, it didn't happen. So, Jesus is a fraud. So, we'll take that first view. We're just going to set it aside because, well, is Jesus a fraud?

[21 : 18] He certainly is not. And this view undermines Jesus himself. Now, that doesn't mean that we just dismiss it out of hand and, you know, when we talk to skeptics we say, oh, well, that can't be true because, well, Jesus isn't a fraud.

Well, maybe he was and we should take those arguments seriously and provide answers but we can provide answers, right? We can actually look at the Bible and the other things that all about Jesus and what was prophesied about him and the things that he did and the things that he said and we can actually show Jesus was not a fraud.

He really was who he said he was. But in this particular case, we're going to set that argument aside because, well, Jesus is not a fraud. The second view we'll look at is where the timing of when the kingdom will arrive is taken more literally.

but we're going to look at what the nature of this kingdom is a little bit more figuratively or metaphorically. And Sarah, those who would focus in especially on the timing of this kingdom because we read those, well, really there's those four passages, this one and then three others that really seem to indicate strongly that this kingdom is coming very soon during this, you know, after the death of Jesus.

And so, here are just a few of the kind of viewpoints that really point to more of a spiritual kingdom. So, there are some that will say, you know, God's kingdom came to earth with power as it says here in this verse, Mark 9, 1, when Jesus rose from the dead.

[23 : 04] Now, is rising from the dead a sign of power? Well, sure. power. And so, there's even a scripture verse in Philippians chapter 3, verse 10.

Paul's talking about the resurrection of Jesus and he says that I may know him and the power of his resurrection. So, Jesus' resurrection was certainly a sign of power.

It was a demonstration of power. We even talk of resurrection power in our lives. but the question is, is that the kingdom?

Is Jesus rising from the dead? Is that the kingdom? Another very popular view is that Jesus' kingdom is a spiritual kingdom in which he reigns in the hearts of believers.

believers. And is it, is there a truth to that, that as Christian believers who submit our lives to the Lord, that he rules in our hearts?

[24 : 07] Well, sure. There's even a passage in the book of Luke, chapter 17, verse 20, in which Jesus is actually talking to the Pharisees.

He's talking to the Pharisees. I'll just go ahead and read it. Now, when he was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, so the Pharisees, they're asking, when's the kingdom coming?

Because they had a lot of prophecy from the prophets about this kingdom, in which a king would come and he would save Israel from the nations who had conquered them and bring righteousness and justice to the earth.

They asked Jesus, when's it going to come? And he said, the kingdom of God does not come with observation, nor will they say see here or see there, for indeed the kingdom of God is within you. The kingdom of God is within you. So many have taken this passage and said, well, the kingdom, even though it seems to talk about an actual throne, an actual physical kingdom, well, Jesus here is teaching that this is something that's inside of us, in our hearts.

[25 : 18] Now, this is really one of the only places that you'll find any kind of indication that the kingdom is a spiritual matter on the inside of us. There's a couple of difficulties with this.

One, the translation, the kingdom of God is within you, is actually a very poor translation. Really, it should be translated in many Bibles as the kingdom of God is in your midst.

It's more among you, not in you. The other difficulty is if he's saying that the kingdom of God is in you, who's he talking to? Is he talking to those who trust in him?

No, he's actually talking to the Pharisees. They're the ones that asked him, when is the kingdom coming? So is Jesus ruling and reigning in the hearts of the Pharisees? No, that's not happening. Others have said, well, the kingdom was present with power as part of Jesus' miracle-working ministry. I mean, this is the king, and he's performing acts of signs and wonders, and that's demonstrations of power.

[26 : 26] In fact, the Bible even uses that term, that his ministry of healing and miracles were demonstrations of power. But then, well, that's been happening already, right, for Jesus' three-year ministry.

This isn't something that's coming in the future, his miracle ministry. So when it says the kingdom will come in power before some of you die, well, wait a second, if that's what he's talking about, then that's already arrived.

It's already, the arrival is in the past. And then another view, which is popularly called preterism, and we'll talk about the counter to that, is that Jesus actually came later, the kingdom came later within a generation, just like the Bible seems to indicate in this verse and in the others, but he came when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans.

If you're familiar with history, it was in 70 AD, which is after the time of most of the apostles, after they had all, most of them had died, that the emperor sent in Titus to go invade, because of the rebellious Jews, he was tired of them, and he sent Titus in, General Titus, to go in and just raise Jerusalem to the ground.

And the temple was destroyed as part of that. There's actually a passage, we'll reference here the one in Mark chapter 13, where Jesus actually talks about one of the things that's going to happen in the future is what?

[28 : 17] He said he was actually standing in front of the temple and he says there's coming a time coming soon when not one stone will be left in this temple. And well, people connect the dots and they say, well, Jesus said that the temple's going to be destroyed and then it actually happened in 70 AD.

So they connect those dots and say, well, that must be when the kingdom arrived, is when the temple was destroyed. Now the difficulty there is there's a lot of details that Jesus even tells about what's going to happen and how he's going to return in clouds of glory with his angels and collect the elect from the four corners of the earth and the sun will be darkened and the moon will be darkened and all these cataclysmic things will happen.

And so there are lots of things that kind of more of a loose interpretation of those things to say that that 70 AD leveling of Jerusalem and the temple was a fulfillment of all these things and that was the actual coming of the king, not physically, they would say.

Jesus didn't come physically but he came in judgment over Israel is how they would put it. And his kingdom came but it was a matter of judgment over the people of Israel.

So that's a view where the timing is kind of taken more concretely but the nature of the kingdom is a little bit kind of a looser interpretation. then the third view does the opposite, it flips.

[30 : 01] It says, well, there's a lot of detail about the kingdom that's coming and the nature of it and we can't just be fast and loose with that and so we probably need to be a little bit more loose with what the timing is and what was meant by when these things would happen.

And they make lots of great arguments for a very literal physical kingdom. Look back to the prophets like Isaiah who said in chapter 9, for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, and of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.

Upon the throne of David and over his kingdom. Now, not on the throne of our hearts, but on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward even forever.

That's what the prophet Isaiah said of the coming Messiah, that he would establish this sea of justice everywhere. Then, when the angel came to Mary and told her that she was going to give birth to a son, one of the things that he said as part of his message, this is in Luke 1, verse 32, he will be great and he will be called the son of the highest and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end.

This Jesus that you're going to give birth to, this son, he's going to sit on the throne of his father David. This is a physical kingdom.

[32 : 00] David was not on the throne of a spiritual kingdom. He was on the throne of a physical kingdom with a people, a real people, a real land, a real king. And he's going to reign over a specific people, the house of Jacob.

Jesus that and then some of the other things that Jesus said. This is interesting and this is one of the passages that makes it really hard to spiritualize.

Jesus was talking, his 12 disciples, some of his disciples came to him and says, hey Jesus, we've left everything for you. What's kind of, are we going to get anything special because we left

everything for you?

That was kind of their question. And part of his response was, this is Matthew chapter 19 verse 28, so Jesus said to them, assuredly I say to you that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

when I come, I'm going to be the king of all the kings. But you 12 who have given up everything, even your lives for me, you have a special position.

[33 : 29] I'll put you on 12 kind of sub thrones, but you're going to help me to rule in this kingdom over the 12 tribes of Israel. That certainly doesn't sound like a very spiritual type of kingdom.

It sounds like a very physical, concrete, type of kingdom. Later on, in Acts, after Jesus is ascended, gone to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, Peter is declaring a message to the Jewish people.

This is in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost. Acts chapter 2 verse 29. Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David that he is both dead and buried and his tomb is with us to this day.

Therefore, being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body according to the flesh, according to the flesh, not according to the spirit, but of the fruit of his body according to the flesh, he would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne.

David spoke of a time throne, when there would be a physical person called the Messiah, the Christ, who would sit on David's throne.

[34 : 49] He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that his soul was not left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. salvation. And then, when we go to the very end of the Bible and look at this book of Revelation, it talks about Jesus and what is going to happen in the end.

Revelation chapter 11, verse 15, says this, Then the seventh angel sounded, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.

All the kingdoms of the world will be in submission to Jesus. Now, that's not Jesus living in our hearts, even though he does, not Jesus reigning in our hearts.

This is Jesus reigning on the earth, subduing all the kingdoms, all the despots and different rulers. They're going to need to bow down to him, and he will establish justice that we have not seen on the earth since the very beginning. So, if the king and the kingdom coming are literal and physical, well then, how do these people answer the question, well, Jesus said it was happening very soon before some of you die.

[36 : 21] So, here's some of the arguments. The most common one for this particular passage, where Jesus says, some of you standing here will not taste death till you see, what does it say, the kingdom coming in power?

Well, they look actually to the very next passage, which is about the transfiguration, in which Jesus goes up on a mountain, a few of his disciples go with him, and he is actually transformed, transfigured, and they see glory coming from him, and from the, who was it, Elijah and Moses, was it?

And, so, and that was, you know, quite an ordeal in which the glory of God was very evident. And so, many people say, well, in order to try to make this fit, probably, likely, maybe, this transfiguration was what Jesus was talking about.

You're going to get a preview of the kingdom coming in power through this transfiguration. You'll get a preview of it.

Now, a big problem with that is this happened one week later. It just doesn't seem to make sense that Jesus would say, hey, follow me, we're all going to die except some of you will make it before this event.

[37 : 54] And then it happens a week later when nobody's died yet. It just doesn't seem to fit, right? Some of you are going to survive to see this event and then it happens in a week and nobody dies, nobody's persecuted.

it just doesn't seem to fit. Now, others have said, in looking at some of these other verses, because the other verses mention a generation, this generation, for example, from Matthew 24, assuredly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

And so, some people say, well, when he's talking about this generation, he's talking about a future generation. Or maybe he's talking about a generation as in a race of people or a group of people. But then, you have the passage that we're looking at today where he doesn't use the term generation, he says, those standing here. It's a very, very literal thing.

And then there's one more kind of out there theory. And it's based on something that Jesus said at the very end of the Gospel of John.

[39 : 14] And he, Jesus tells Peter, hey, I need you to lay down your life for me. I need you to plan on dying, he tells Peter.

He tells him about the kind of death that he's going to die, laying his life down for the Gospel. And Peter says, well, okay, but what about this guy? What about this other disciple?

And he's talking about John, who is the author of this Gospel. And this is in John chapter 21. Jesus said to him, if I will that he remains, talk about John, till I come, what is that to you?

You follow me. He says, don't worry about him. I want you to do what I'm asking. I'm asking you to follow me even to the point of death. Then this saying, went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die.

Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but if I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? And so there are some out there who would say, John the Baptist is out there somewhere.

[40 : 28] Not John the Baptist. John the disciple of Jesus, he's out there somewhere. Maybe he's hiding in a cave somewhere in the Middle East somewhere and God is supernaturally preserving his life until Jesus returns again.

So, that's the theory. You can see how when you take one at face value, the other side, you seem to have to finagle and kind of play a little fast and loose with it, as you might say.

Well, I'd like us to consider kind of going back to the first view, and this is the view of the skeptics, and take a second look at it, where we look at what Jesus, what the kingdom is, and we read through all those scriptures about what the kingdom is, and then we look at the timing of it, and we just take it at face value, and I think this is what we should default to as we're reading the Bible.

And sometimes it's difficult, sometimes things don't always seem to fit in the Bible. Now, a lot of things do, the Bible is a pretty incredible book, and the way that everything fits together is absolutely incredible.

But there are certain things where sometimes it seems things just don't mesh, and so we have to try to figure out, well, how do we get this to fit into the larger picture? Also, I think it's important that as we look at things like the end times, that we take a humble view.

[41 : 59] And so I've kind of shared some of the other views, and I'm going to share kind of what I think is going on here. But from a standpoint of humility, there are a lot of views, especially on the end times, and I don't know that God really, in the things that he wrote, a lot of times, things about the end are shrouded in a fair bit of mystery.

Some things are a lot more concrete, and I think we should take them that way, but there are a lot of things that I think God didn't really, a lot of details that God didn't intend for us to know in a clear way.

A lot of times, when we see prophecy from the Old Testament that has come to pass, we see that it's actually a lot easier for us to look back and see it clearly, but when you try to put yourself in the place of those who these things were future for, you can see how there's maybe a lack of clarity there.

there. So, I'd like to revisit this literal interpretation of when the kingdom is coming in that generation and what the kingdom is.

It's a physical kingdom in which Jesus will come physically and establish a physical throne in a physical city on the world. But I'd like us to reconsider, there's an assumption in all three of these views that I'd like us to reconsider.

[43 : 25] But first, I'm going to give an illustration. There's a father. He had 12 kids. And he loved his kids and they were very important to him.

And so, this father wanted to do something very special for his children. He wanted to take them on a trip to the magic kingdom.

And what's the magic kingdom? Disney World. What kid would not want to go to Disney World?

Where there's roller coasters and animated characters and parades and all kinds of candy lollipops and funnel cakes and all kinds of wonderful magical things.

And so, the father tells his children, listen, I'm preparing. All of us to go on this trip to visit the magic kingdom. And we're going to do it in a year.

Here's the date. We're going to go. Get ready. Make sure you're ready to go. It's going to happen. But in the meantime, the father finds a mutiny in his own household.

[44 : 45] His children become rebellious, disobedient, disobedient, bickering at each other, and even doing criminal kinds of acts.

Hating each other, despising their own father, their own parents, talking back to their mother. They turn into horrific sinners.

sinner. And they have no more respect for their father and the things that he says. So finally, as the time for this special trip to the magic kingdom gets closer, gets close to that time, the father says, we're not going.

We're not going to the magic kingdom. We're not going to Disney World. You kids are a mess. Now, it wasn't even all the kids.

There were a couple of them that actually behaved well. They did the right thing. But because the majority of these kids became rebellious against their father, the trip was canceled.

[45 : 57] would we look at such a father and say, you know what, you're not trustworthy. You promised those kids.

You'd take them. And now look at this. You lied to them. You didn't do what you said you would do. Would we call that father a fraud or untrustworthy or unfaithful?

Or would we think, actually, that's probably the best thing to do, isn't it? Yeah? I mean, when your kids are being horrific, you shouldn't follow through on a promise to do something wonderful for them like that.

And so, I think we should apply this same kind of idea, the same kind of illustration to what's going on with God, with Jesus, and with the people of Israel.

But in our case, even though the father, did the father ever make it conditional about whether they were going to the kingdom, to the magic kingdom? He didn't. He just said, we're going to go. And then he took it away because of their rebellion.

[47 : 12] And we wouldn't fault him for that. But when we take this illustration, we apply it to what's going on with Israel, we actually have something even more to go on.

Turn, if you will, to the book of Jeremiah. We're going to look at something that Jeremiah said through the Spirit, a message from God.

And it's a message about a potter. It's an illustration. It's a metaphor. Jeremiah chapter 18, verse 1. The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter. So he made it again into another vessel, a different kind of vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

[48 : 18] So this is what Jeremiah saw. He went to the potter's house, he saw this happening. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?

Says the Lord, look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in my sight so that it does not obey my voice, then I will relent.

Really, the King James says, repent, turn. I will repent concerning the good with which I said I would befit it. This is something that God specifically told Israel.

Listen, if I say that I'm going to judge you, I'm going to bring judgment, and then you turn, I'm going to turn as well. I'm not going to do what I said. If you turn from your evil ways, I'm going to do good for you.

[49 : 48] But if I promise you something to specifically build a kingdom, and you do evil, I'm not going to do what I said.

It's not going to happen. So here's the underlying assumption that I think a lot of times we bring in, and it's actually very understandable, and the assumption is this.

If God foretells that something is going to happen, he will, without fail, bring it to pass. And that seems like an assumption that we should have.

When God says something, hey, he's going to do it. Except, God tells us here, right here in Jeremiah, especially to Israel, if I tell you I'm going to build your kingdom, and then you're evil, I'm not going to do it.

I'm not going to do what I said, or what I even thought to do. And so, we look at the big picture of what happened here with the nation of Israel in the New Testament.

[50 : 57] Romans chapter 9, 10, and 11 is a passage that really provides clarity about what happened to the Jews. You see, the whole Bible is a Bible about the Jews.

They're the people of God. Jesus came to die for the Jews. Now, he also came to die for the whole world. But his primary mission was to the Jews.

I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he said. The Bible is primarily a Jewish book. But in Romans 9, we see Paul grieving for the people of Israel.

He said, I grieve for my people. They've turned from God. And then he describes what happened. He says this in Romans chapter 11, verse 17.

And again, this is in the context of three chapters. We're just going to pull out a few verses. But in Romans chapter 11, verse 17, he says this, And if some of the branches were broken off, he's talking about Israel, and you, the Gentiles, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree.

[52 : 12] Do not boast against the branches. He's talking about what happened. The people, the Jewish people, were cut off from the tree of God's promises, and a new people were grafted in.

In Romans 11, verse 11, he gives us a little bit of a hint why that happened. Romans 11, 11 says this, I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?

So is this a permanent situation? No. He says certainly not. But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

He's cut them off for a season, not permanently, and he brought salvation to the Gentiles. Why? To provoke his children, the ones that he loves, to jealousy.

If I do something amazing for these Gentiles, then they'll turn back to me at some point. You see, God's promise of this kingdom is just delayed.

[53 : 27] It's still coming in the future. He's still going to establish a physical throne and a physical kingdom for his people, the Jews. In verse 25 of chapter 11, he says this, For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, and it is a mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

God's using the Gentiles and bringing blessing to the Gentiles, salvation to the Gentiles, even without the law. Just faith alone, just trust in Jesus, what Jesus did, and you can be part of God's family as a Gentile, and God's using that as a means to make the people of Israel jealous, to provoke them to jealousy.

We don't really understand exactly how all that will come to pass, but that's what Paul says here in Romans chapter 11. One day he promises, this is in verse 26 of chapter 11, that Israel will finally get their kingdom.

He says this, Romans 11 chapter 26, And so all of Israel will be saved, as it is written. The deliverer will come out of Zion, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. That's Israel.

For this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins. Concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. He's talking to the Gentiles. But concerning the election, the choosing, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

[54 : 56] Really, what God is doing for Israel is for the sake of their fathers. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he made a promise to them. He's going to stick it through. But, some things had to change.

And he says this, he ends that verse, For the gifts and the calling of God are revocable. The calling of Israel to a kingdom, it cannot be revoked. It will not be revoked. But, it has been delayed.

And so, to just summarize, kind of this, kind of perspective on what's going on here in Mark chapter 9, verse 1. And we'll read it again. And he said to them, God had a plan for Israel.

And there was two stages of that plan. The first one was kind of shrouded in mystery. The first one was that the Messiah would come and die. Most of the Jews totally missed that. Even though there's a reference to it directly there from the prophet Daniel.

Jesus, right here in this passage, is describing how stage one of the plan is about to happen. He calls his disciples to come follow him towards persecution and death.

[56 : 13] But he provides a word of comfort in telling them that some of them would make it through and survive to stage two. Now, when stage two comes, the rest, some will have died, but they'll be resurrected.

They'll still sit on the twelve thrones, but some, they'll have kind of made through it unscathed, if you will. They'll see stage two before they ever see death.

But the plan changed. And so the plan changing didn't just impact the unfaithful ones.

It also impacted the faithful ones, the ones who were going through the tribulation, who are holding on to this kingdom. It's coming very soon. It's not because Jesus is a fraud or a charlatan or unfaithful or untrustworthy, but it happened because he's a good and a wise God.

At the very end of Romans chapter 11, it says this, For as you Gentiles, this is verse 30, were once disobedient to God. You Gentiles, you weren't the people of God.

[57 : 33] You were rebellious, wicked people, worshipping false idols. Yet now you have obtained mercy through their disobedience. Because they disobeyed me, I'm going to shed my love and attention on you.

Even so, these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you, they also may obtain mercy. He's saying, I'm doing this for their good.

I'm going to pour out my blessing on you for their benefit. It's a benefit to them that I do this. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that he might have mercy on all.

He's saying, listen, God wants to have mercy on as many people as are willing. And this is the plan. And this is the way that God decided is the best way to get the most people to love and to trust him. That he can have mercy on the most people possible. That he might have mercy on all. And it ends with this. Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

[58 : 37] How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. We don't always clearly understand God's wisdom. His ways are sometimes difficult for us to understand.

How is all this going to work out? How is Israel going to look at the Gentiles and their salvation and then be provoked to jealousy and then come to the Lord? I mean, we don't really see that happening today. We're not totally sure exactly how this will play out.

But, we know that God is a God of wisdom. And his judgments are unsearchable in his ways past finding out. So what I'm going to end with today is we ought to be so grateful, right?

That God is using us Gentiles to teach a lesson to the Jewish people. Aren't you glad? What an amazing thing that God has shed his, poured out his love on us, given us a salvation that requires nothing.

No religious rituals, no keeping of the law of Moses in order to be God's people. Just trust in him.

[59 : 45] And all of that is to make his Jewish people ultimately jealous and provoked that they might return back to him. And that's the story that we see played out in the Bible.

And I think that's how all these things kind of connect back together. Father, are you grateful for what God did for the Gentiles? Amen. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, sometimes the words in this scripture are difficult to follow and understand. I ask that you would always work in us to understand clearly, not make up what we want it to mean, but to try to understand clearly what you mean for us to know.

And work in us that we would see clearly where some things are dark. And also, thank you for what you've done in us, for the salvation that you've provided to us Gentiles.

And that we are part of your plan for even the Jewish people. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.