

Session 8

The Kingdom of God

Throughout the Bible, believers were hoping for the Kingdom of God to come soon. This was a major theme for the prophets of the Old Testament and a major part of the gospel explained in the New Testament. In this chapter, we review what the Bible says about the Kingdom of God.

8.1 The return of Jesus

Mark 13: The Olivet prophecy

This prophecy of Jesus was given just before he was killed. It is called the “Olivet prophecy” because he was sitting on the Mt of Olives near Jerusalem while speaking to his disciples. Read Mark 13.

1. What signs did Jesus say would precede his return?
2. What events are we *not* to interpret as signs of his return?
3. What is the “abomination that causes desolation” (v14)?
4. Have you heard of any false Christs?
5. What do you think verses 24–25 mean?
6. Who are the “elect” (v27)? Where will the angels take them?
7. What did Jesus mean in v30?
8. What are we to watch (v37)?

The Bible contains over 200 references to the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. It is a major biblical theme that the Kingdom of God will be established upon the earth, ruled over by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here are some more Bible passages about his return which you may like to look at:

Matthew	16:27; 25:31	Colossians	3:4
Luke	21:27	1 Thessalonians	2:19; 3:13; 4:15
Acts	1:11; 3:20–21	2 Thessalonians	1:7–8
1 Corinthians	1:7; 15:50–51	1 Peter	3:3–10
Philippians	3:20–21	1 John	2:28
		Revelation	1:7

8.2 Resurrection

Jesus was the first person to be raised from the dead, never to die again. When he returns, his followers who have died will also be raised never to die again.

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.
(1 Corinthians 15: 21–23)

The Bible never teaches that the dead go to heaven. See, for example, John 3:13 and Acts 2:34. Instead, it consistently teaches a resurrection of the dead when Jesus returns.

Both Old and New Testaments contain many passages telling of the resurrection of the dead which will occur at Jesus' return. For example:

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.
(1 Thessalonians 4:16)

Here are some more passages for you to look up:

Old Testament	New Testament
Daniel 12:2–3	1 Corinthians 15:51–55
Isaiah 26:19	Luke 14:12–14
Job 19:25–27	John 5:28–29; 11:23–24
Psalms 17:15	Acts 24:14–15
	Revelation 20:4–6, 11–12

8.3 Judgement

The Bible tells us there is to be a judgement at the return of the Christ. For example, Paul wrote to the believers in Rome:

You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat... So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.
(Romans 14:10,12)

He also wrote to Timothy:

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead... (2 Timothy 4:1)

We can see from Paul's words to Timothy that Jesus himself will be the judge on behalf of his father. Here are two more quotations which confirm this:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. (John 5:22)

Matthew 25: Are you a sheep or a goat?

Read Matthew 25:31–46.

1. On what grounds are people judged?
2. Why didn't the righteous realize they had done what was required of them?
3. What is the reward for the righteous?
4. What is the punishment of the wicked?
5. How can we ensure we feed, clothe and visit Christ's brethren?

8.4 The battle of Armageddon

The return of Jesus to the earth will be associated with a mighty battle in Israel, centred on Jerusalem. There are many references to this great battle in the Scriptures. The prophet Zechariah wrote:

I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. ... (Zechariah 14:2–3)

The book of Revelation also refers to a great battle at the time of the end:

... they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. ... they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. (Revelation 16:14,16)

Armageddon means "Mount of Megiddo" and is probably one of the mountains near the city of Megiddo in northern Israel, not far from Nazareth.

8.5 Jesus will be king

The battle over the city of Jerusalem will be the event which will finally bring God's wrath on those Gentiles who seek to control Israel and Jerusalem. Jerusalem has long been described as God's special possession, his "holy hill", and he has made it clear that Jerusalem will, at Jesus' return, be established as the seat of government in the Kingdom of God.

Psalm 2:6

From Jerusalem, Jesus will reign as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords". We will then see all the promises and prophecies fulfilled which have been foretold in the Bible:

Revelation 19:16

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end. (Luke 1:32-33)

He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth... All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him. (Psalm 72:8,11)

8.6 A new world order

The Kingdom of God will introduce a completely new system of government upon the whole earth.

Zechariah 14: Conditions in the Kingdom of God

Zechariah was a prophet in Judah in about 520 BC. In this last chapter, he described the return of Jesus and the conditions in the Kingdom of God. Read Zechariah 14.

1. What geographical changes in Israel are prophesied?
2. What are the eastern and western seas (v8)?
3. Who will be king of the whole world?
4. What must all the survivors do annually?
5. What will happen if they refuse to do this?

Isaiah 2: Worship in Jerusalem

Isaiah was also a prophet in Judah. He lived about 700 BC. In chapter 2 he described the nations of the world worshipping at Jerusalem. Read Isaiah 2:1–4.

1. Which mountain is “the mountain of the Lord’s temple”?
2. Will it really be the highest mountain in the area, or is Isaiah speaking figuratively?
3. What will the people do in Jerusalem?
4. What are the conditions of the kingdom which are described here?

Here are some other descriptions of the conditions which will exist in the Kingdom of God:

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:

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|----------------|---|
| Luke 1:31–33 | Jesus to reign on David’s throne. His kingdom will never end. |
| Isaiah 9:6–7 | He will reign on David’s throne forever. |
| Zechariah 14:9 | The Lord will be king over all the earth. |

SEAT OF GOVERNMENT:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Micah 4:2 | Law to go out from Zion; the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. |
| Matthew 5:35 | Jerusalem, the city of the great king. |
| Zechariah 8:3 | The Lord will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. |
| Zechariah 8:22–23 | Many nations shall come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord. |

DIPLOMATIC APPOINTMENTS:

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|-----------------|--|
| Daniel 7:27 | All power and kingdoms to be handed over to the saints |
| Revelation 5:10 | The saints to be a kingdom and priests |
| Luke 19:17 | The faithful believers to rule over cities |

RELIGION:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Zephaniah 3:9 | All people to call on the Lord and serve him |
| Zechariah 14:16 | People will go annually to Jerusalem to worship |
| Isaiah 2:3 | People will go to learn in Jerusalem |

DEFENCE:

Psalm 46:9	The Lord will make wars to cease
Isaiah 2:4	Swords into ploughshares. No more war.
Zechariah 9:10	Jesus will proclaim peace to the nations
Isaiah 60:12	Nations will serve or perish

EDUCATION:

Isaiah 26:9	The people of the world will learn righteousness
Isaiah 2:3	Jesus will teach us his ways
Isaiah 30:20–21	Teachers shall show the right way

JUSTICE AND JUDGEMENT:

Isaiah 11:4	Jesus to judge with righteousness
Isaiah 60:18	No more violence in the land

HEALTH:

Isaiah 35:5–6	Blind, deaf, dumb and lame healed
Isaiah 33:24	People shall not be sick

TEMPLE TO BE BUILT:

Micah 4:1–2	The house of God will be on a mountain in Jerusalem
Isaiah 56:7	A house of prayer for all nations

DESERTS PRODUCTIVE:

Isaiah 35:1,7	Deserts will blossom as a rose
Isaiah 43:19	Pools in the desert
Isaiah 41:17–18	Springs of water in dry land

AGRICULTURE:

Amos 9:13–14	Ploughman overtakes reaper; planting vineyards
Psalm 72:16	Corn on mountains
Isaiah 55:13	No thorns and thistles
Isaiah 65:21–22	People shall live on the land

SOCIAL SERVICES:

Psalm 72:12	Jesus will deliver the poor and needy
Psalm 72:4	He will save the children of the needy

