

Jesus and the Kingdom of God

Introduction

For VOC Fellowship, everything is about Jesus and His Kingdom.

If we put Jesus and His Kingdom first in our life and work, God can produce much through us on behalf of a needy world. If we do the opposite, not only will we lose Jesus and His Kingdom, we will lose everything else.

The Apostle Paul, called by many one of the greatest followers of Jesus in history, understood this.

“ And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified”.
(1 Corinthians 2:2)

“Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him. (Acts 28:30-31)

Shown below are important questions about Jesus and the Kingdom of God. The answers are simply highlights from many Biblical references for each question. There is much more, which you can discover by personal study of the Bible and asking God to speak into your heart. The **red letters** are what Jesus himself spoke.

Topics

Jesus, the King

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Who is Jesus Christ

- The Son of God

“When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came

from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." Luke 3:21-22

- A Son of Man (while on earth)

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us.'" Matthew 1:23

- The Savior of all

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:16-17

- The Lord of all

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:9-11

- The image of God.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And he is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may be the preeminence." Colossians 1:15-18

Why did Jesus come to earth

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Luke 4:18-19 (and Isaiah 61:1-2)

"I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."

Luke 4:43

"Jesus answered and said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'" Luke 5:31-32

What does Jesus say about himself

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

"I and My Father are one." John 10:30

"The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When He comes, He will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He'." John 4:25-26

"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture . . . I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep." John 10:9, 11

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats." Matthew 25:31

What is Jesus like

- Like the Father in Heaven

". . . He who has seen Me has seen the Father . . .". John 14:9

- Only does what pleases his Father

"Then Jesus answered and said to the, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner'." John 5:19

- Compassionate

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." Matthew 9:35

"When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman He said to her, 'Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more'." John 8:10-11

- Humble

"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:8

- Cares for all needs

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, ,and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people." Matthew 4:23

- A Servant heart

"And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matthew 20:26-28

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus

- To have a moment by moment relationship with God the Father and Jesus

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”
John 17:3

“To him the doorkeeper opens and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.” John 10:3,4

“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for who I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” Philippians 3:8

- To become like Jesus

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Romans 8:29

“For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” John 13:15

What does Jesus say to his followers

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”
Matthew 28:18-20

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also, and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” John 14:12

“Then they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent’.” John 6:28-29

“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

“If you love Me, keep my commandments.” John 14:15

What is the Kingdom of God

- It is where the will of God is done.

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:10

- God is the Creator and Jesus Christ is his appointed King.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1

"On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." Revelation 19:16

- The subjects are the people and heavenly beings who submit to God's will.

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." Matthew 7:21

- The laws of the kingdom are what we find in the Bible and understand with the Holy Spirit's help.

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes." Psalms 19:7-8

- God's territory is wherever there are subjects who do his will.

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10

Why is the Kingdom of God so important

- The Kingdom was the purpose of Jesus to come to earth.

"But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." Luke 4:43

- The Kingdom was the consistent message and priority of Jesus.

"After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him." Luke 8:1

- Declaring the Kingdom was the mission Jesus gave to his followers.

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." Luke 9:1-2

- The Kingdom is the solution to the world's problems. Without the word of Jesus holding us together, we would self-destruct.

"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven." Hebrews 1:3

Characteristics of God's Kingdom

- The kingdom covers everything

"The Lord has established his throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all." Psalms 103:19

"For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." Colossians 1:16-20

- God is the owner and it is for His glory.

"For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." Matthew 6:13

- The kingdom will be fully revealed in the future, but is advancing now.

"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." Luke 17:20-21

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband." Revelation 21:1-2

- The kingdom is mysterious, especially to those who do not know Jesus.

"He told them, 'The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables . . .'" Mark 4:11

- Paradoxically, the way to understand kingdom mysteries is to become like a child

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:1-4

- The kingdom requires repentance for entrance.

"From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." Matthew 4:17

- The kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness (Galatians 5:19-21, Matthew 6:33).

"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19-21

- The kingdom will include every nation, tribe, people group, and language.

"After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white

robes and were holding palm branches in their hands." Revelation 7:9

Upside-down principles of God's Kingdom

- To gain our life, we must lose it.

"Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it." Luke 9:23-24

- The greatest leaders in kingdom work are not those who are powerful and impressive by the world's standards, but those who serve others.

"Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many'." Mark 10:42-45

- It is more blessed to give than to receive.

" . . . And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'. " Acts 20:35

- The poor are actually rich

"Blessed are the poor. For yours is the kingdom of God". Luke 6:20

- We should love our enemies (Luke 6:27-29).

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic." Luke 6:27-29

- Less can be more.

As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins."I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." Luke 21:1-4

- God chooses foolish and weak things to shame the wise and strong.

"Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things?€"and the things that are not?€"to nullify the things that are, so that no

one may boast before him." 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Good news of the Kingdom:

- The King, Jesus, knows what it is to suffer and has a special heart for the poor.

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not." Isaiah 53:3

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18-19

- There can be healing.

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness." Matthew 9:35

- When we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, God will take care of our worries and needs.

"Therefore do not worry, saying 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'. For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you".
Matthew 6:31-33

- The Kingdom is unshakeable.

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe . . ." Hebrews 12:28

- The hungry will be filled, and those who weep will laugh.

"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." Luke 6:21

- Leaving the world's pleasures for the sake of God's kingdom will be rewarded, both now and in the future. Including a huge new family!

"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life." Luke 18:29-30

- Nothing is impossible for God.

"Jesus replied, 'What is impossible with men is possible with God'." Luke 18:27

How the Kingdom of God grows

- The Kingdom begins inside of us.

"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." Luke 17:21

- The Kingdom starts small, but grows big.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." Matthew 13:31-32

- The kingdom grows and touches everything like leaven.

"He told them still another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough'." Matthew 13:33

- The kingdom grows from town to town and city to city in an organic way.

"After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him." Luke 8:1

- God is the one who gives growth, but he uses people to plant and water.

"What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe?€"as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 3:5-11

- Like a plant, the kingdom grows one stage at a time in ways we do not understand.

"He also said, 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain?€"first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come'." Mark 4:26-29

- The kingdom grows as people pray and humble themselves to follow God's will.

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10

"if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

Kingdom principles for leaders

- Leads in following God

"[Uzziah] sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the Lord, God gave him success . . . But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God." 2 Chronicles 26:4,5,16

- Leads in service and example

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." 1 Peter 5:2-3

- Leads in following God's truth

"Be careful to obey all the law of my servant Moses gave you; do not turn for it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Joshua 1:7-8

- Leads with justice and integrity.

By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for **bribes** tears it down. Proverbs 29:4

- Leads in establishing peace.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." Matthew 4:9

- Leads in care for the weak and poor.

"and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings." Isaiah 58:10-12

- Leads in strong families.

"And God said to him, 'I am God Almighty ; be **fruitful** and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body.'" Genesis 35:11

- Leads by developing more leaders.

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will

also be qualified to teach others." 2 Timothy 2:2

Blessings of God's Kingdom

- The main evidence of God's kingdom is God - doing what only He can do.

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power." 1 Corinthians 4:20

- Lives changed by God.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17

- Restoration of health in body, emotions, spirit, and social//family

Physical

" . . . there shall be no more death . . . There shall be no more pain". Revelation 21:4

" . . . I will give of the fountain of the water of life to him who thirsts". Revelation 21:6

" No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days." Isaiah 65:20

" They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit." Isaiah 65:21

Emotional

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. Revelations 21:4

"But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create . . . The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying." Isaiah 65:18,19

Spiritual

". . . Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God". Revelations 21:4

"But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God almighty and the Lamb are its temple. Revelations 21:22

"It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer, And while they are still speaking, I hear. (Isaiah 65:24)

Social and family

"In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life . . . The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Revelations 22:2

"They shall build houses and inhabit them". Isaiah 65:21

"My elect shall enjoy the work of their hands". Isaiah 65:22

"They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, And their offspring with them. Isaiah 65:23

"The world and the lamb shall feed together . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain." Isaiah 65:25

- God-given reconciliation with God and between people

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation . .

. " 2 Corinthians 5:18

- Righteousness, joy, and peace.

"... for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14:17

Warnings of God's Kingdom

- The devil tries to give us a counterfeit kingdom.

"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.'" Matthew 4:8-9

- Whatever is not of the kingdom will be shaken.

"The words 'once more' indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain." Hebrews 12:27

- Not everyone who talks about the kingdom will enter it.

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" Matthew 7:21-23

- There is struggle for and against the kingdom.

"From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it." Matthew 11:12

- The devil tries to snatch the word of God's kingdom out of people, making follow-up very important.

"When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path . . ." Matthew 13:19

- The kingdom will be taken away from those who do not produce its fruit .

"Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit." Matthew 21:43

- It is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom.

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'" Matthew 19:23-24

- Don't look backwards to hold onto your old life.

"Jesus replied, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.'" Luke 9:62