

14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." 16 As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him." Mark 1:13-18, NAS95.

Kings and judges in OT Israel were chosen by God and anointed. Times of testing would show that they were indeed God's choice for the task

We have already seen how Christ in his baptism and temptation did so to identify with his people whom he came to save. Another aspect of the wilderness temptation is not just as the second Adam on our behalf but also as a king.

This is a bridge for us to understand some of the language regarding Jesus' sermon, Repent and believe for the kingdom of God is at hand.

Kings always had an inner circle of loyal supporters who would even risk death for the sake of the king.

The presence of a king engenders love Amongst his subjects and his loyal friends, As it disanimates his enemies. William Shakespeare

But a king's reign on earth was temporal.

"What are kings, when regiment is gone, But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?" Christopher Marlowe, Edward the Second

Any mere human king was merely a shadow of divine authority in the sense that kings and rulers are placed on earth by the sovereignty of God for His purposes unto His own glory.

It is no different with Christ. The means of pledging loyalty and support however is quite different.

To be a loyalist to the King of the Kingdom of Christ first requires genuine repentance and faith in Christ. One must believe the good news that Jesus preached.

Yet many through history might more agree with Maxwell Anderson the American playwright:

"The gods of men are sillier than their kings and queens, and emptier and more

Kings have not always been well looked upon. Scripture confirms this about Christ as king.

"1 Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying, 6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." 7 "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. 9 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'" 10 Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. 11 Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. 12 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!" Psalms 2:1-12, NAS95.

We see Christ as king in both regards. He will have his loyalists and he will have those who are opposed to him even until the day of final judgement.

But the day will come :

"10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:10, 11, NAS95.

The Jewish people recognized that God ruled the universe in one sense now, but they prayed daily for the day when his kingdom, or rule, would be established over all peoples of the earth. Then, they believed, everyone would submit to God. Because the Gospels affirm that Jesus must come twice, they recognize that the kingdom comes in two stages: God's future rule is established in the lives of those who obey him in the present, and over all the world when Jesus returns. John the Baptist, however, was not yet in a position to make this distinction.

After John had been thrown into prison (where he would be facing death soon), Jesus returned to Galilee, far from the scene of his earlier spiritual experiences of baptism and temptation. His purpose was to proclaim the good news of God, i.e. the good news that

God had sent and also the good news about God—that he is willing to receive and forgive us. Because this was made possible by what Jesus did on the cross and because Jesus alone shows us perfectly what God is like, Jesus himself is the good news, and to preach the good news is to preach Jesus. To do this is the whole aim of Mark's gospel. The rule of God was about to begin on earth. Of course, in one sense, it had always been present, but this is at a deeper level. The kingdom of God was shown first in the life of Jesus and then in the lives of his followers.

One of the things that Mark is anxious to explain is that this coming of God's kingdom was a silent one, unnoticed by most people, for the world was not changed dramatically overnight. This fact, and also the way that God chose to introduce his kingdom by the suffering of his Messiah, are two things that Mark wants to show us through his gospel. This is the 'mystery of the kingdom' which we cannot see until God reveals it to us. This too is the reason why Jesus could not declare his Messiahship openly—until they realized that the Messiah had to suffer, the people would expect him to act like a king of this world.

John had called people to repent and be baptized; Jesus called them to 'Repent and believe the good news'. We know, however, from John's gospel that Jesus' disciples also practised baptism (Jn. 3:22). To believe the good news is to believe in Jesus. To believe in Jesus is to follow him, so he called his first disciples, as he still calls us today. Simon and Andrew, James and John were all ordinary people at their ordinary tasks when Jesus called them to make them fishers of men. As usual, Mark gives only the bare bones of the story. John's gospel shows us that these fishermen had had some contact with John the Baptist before they became Jesus' disciples. However much we are prepared in advance, there comes a time for each of us when the call of Jesus comes to us personally, and we must make a decision whether to follow him or not. Mark concentrates here on that one moment. These men had to decide to leave all that they had, whether little or much, and follow Jesus. In return, Jesus promised to make them fishers or 'catchers' for the kingdom of God, winning others in a time ahead for him, as he had won them at that moment.

We must also realize that the timeline of Jesus ministry is shortened here in Mark when we look at the other Gospels. And he was preparing these men for what lie ahead.

Were they genuinely saved at this point? Some say so, some think not. Whether they were or not at this point in time, the eleven who would be - Judas never was, were used as his apostles and were empowered to preach on the day of Pentecost.

This drawing of people into the kingdom of God was the whole purpose of Jesus' earthly ministry, and that is why preaching the good news, not healing or driving out demons, lay at the heart of his ministry. Miracles of healing and exorcism are only signs of the kingdom; they are proofs of God's power as well as of his love.

This earthly ministry of Jesus was necessary to establish a core of loyalists who would continue as his subjects even in his physical absence.

The king has come and the kingdom requirements are made clear.

These men made a decision to follow Christ and we all must do so but we must understand the process that brings us to the place of that decision.

What we are seeing in the narrative story line is not the process, it is the result of the process. Those who completely embrace the doctrines of grace, as we do here at New Covenant Baptist Fellowship, at times are afraid to use the word decision when speaking of the Gospel and how men respond. This should not be so. The greatest Calvinistic preachers in history encouraged men to make decisions, but how they did it differs from what is preached by many today who embrace a free will theology of easy believism.

Andrew Fuller:

"Man's response to the invitation to repent and to come to Christ is not simply a wise human decision, a balancing of the arguments for and against, and thinking that those for are more cogent. The decision is itself a work of grace."

John Reisinger: God's Part and Man's Part in Salvation.

“ONE: A man must repent and believe the gospel in order to be saved.

TWO: Every one who repents and believes the gospel will be saved.

THREE: Repentance and faith are the free acts of men.

FOUR: The same Bible that states man must repent and believe in order to be saved also emphatically states that man, because of his sinful nature, is totally unable to repent and believe

FIVE: The new birth, or regeneration, is God giving us the spiritual life that enables us to do what we must do (repent and believe), but CANNOT DO because of our bondage to sin

SIX: The Scriptures clearly show that faith and repentance are the evidences and not the cause of regeneration

God's grace not only provides salvation, but His power also gives us the ability to both desire and receive it. He works in us both to will and to do. His working in us to will is the new birth, and, I say again, this work of regeneration is totally the work of the Holy Spirit.

The moment we lose sight of this distinction between being saved by faith (the act of man) and being born again by the Holy Spirit (the act of God), we are heading for confusion and trouble. We will be convinced that man is able to do what the Bible emphatically states he is unable to do. The necessity of the Holy Spirit's work being thus theologically denied, it will not be long before it is ignored in actual practice. This is the plight of modern day evangelism. Since they are convinced that the new birth is within the power and ability of man's will, their man made methodology has become far more important than the theology of the Bible.”

Jesus came and preached repent and believe for the kingdom of God is at hand.

But now, let's look at the first part of his message:

“The time is fulfilled.”

What time is fulfilled. To understand this we go back to John the Baptist's earlier words:

"BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY;

3 THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.'"

"7 And he was preaching, and saying, "After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. 8 "I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'" Mark 1:7, 8, NAS95.

And we must hear the words of God Himself:

"11 and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.'" Mark 1:11, NAS95.

These words are declaring in summary multitudes of Old Testament Scriptures that speak of the Messiah, who is also a servant who would one day come.

Jesus has fulfilled every one of those Old Testament prophecies.

Christ is the fullest revelation of God in these last days Heb.1:1-3

Without Christ there is no God to be known (outside of General Revelation) salvifically
The New Covenant in fulfillment cannot be seen without Christ

The Old Covenant was written on tablets of stone - The New is written on the heart
The Old had no life and was an inscription - The New is living and a living inscription (Torah)

The person of Christ is this covenant by Christ's own words.

Mr 14:24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

Lu 22:20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

1Co 11:25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

The New Covenant Person gives life.

2Co 3:6* who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The Old Covenant had no power to do anything

The Living New Covenant Person has the power to do everything

The Old Covenant had a limited purpose for a limited time to a specific people

The Living New Covenant Person has an eternal purpose for all people

The OC gave conditional guarantees of blessing and curse

The Living New Covenant Person is the guarantee of blessing and curse

Under the OC God was known by the written Covenant and the witness of Gods acts.

Under the NC God is known in and through Christ and His life

All of our hope is in Him . We are born again to LIVING HOPE

The OC was a ministry of death by the written code of the letter

The NC person is life and liberty

The New covenant Person is these things spoken of in the Old Covenant

Christ is the Servant

Service of God involves justice and righteousness (Is 32:17)

15 Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high, And the wilderness becomes a fertile field, And the fertile field is considered as a forest.16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness And righteousness will abide in the fertile field.17 And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.

It also involves worship, and the Servant of the Lord (who is Christ) is the one who particularly portrays those characteristics.

The servant concept is turned on its head because of Jesus. Jesus is Lord (Jn 13:13; Acts 10:36; 1 Cor 12:3), and to be a servant of Christ is to confess him as Lord. Yet also “the Son of man came not to be served but to serve” (Mt 20:28). This service was not just symbolic; it involved low-status tasks like washing feet (Jn 13:1–17) and led eventually to his death. The Master voluntarily puts himself in subjection to his own disciples, and the concept of servant leadership is born.

Christ is the Manna - “This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever” (Jn 6:58 NASB).

Manna imagery spreads throughout Scripture, sensuous multiple references to God’s ability—and willingness—to provide for his children (even complaining ones) in their wilderness experiences. Jesus stresses that he himself is the ultimate manna, the true manna sent from heaven, capable of sustaining both life on this earth and life eternal.

Christ is the Temple - John 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

God’s Dwelling Place. The temple in its most basic sense symbolizes the dwelling place of God. This is underscored by numerous references to the temple as the “house

of God” or the “house of the LORD.” Its other titles include “the sanctuary” or at times simply Zion—as the psalmist emphasizes, “For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation” (Ps 132:13; cf. Ps 9:11; 74:2; 76:2; Joel 3:17)

Symbol of Divine Victory. Jesus is our ultimate victory over the enemies of sin and death and He is our peace.

David is securely settled in his house; 2 Sam 7:1 but wants to build God a temple; 2 Sam 7:5). God rejects David’s plan but tells him he will build for David a dynasty; 2 Sam 7:11. The one who follows David in his dynasty will be the one to build the “house of God.” This one of course is Solomon, whose name means “peace.” The point is that the temple symbolizes victory over the enemies of God and peaceful settlement in the land. David was the conquest completer, but he was also “a warrior” (1 Chron 28:3); so the time was not right for the temple. His son Solomon built it.

Place of Communication. We meet with God in Christ. Our heavenly communication is in by and through Christ and His Spirit (note—we are also the temple of God)

Its priests had access to the mind of God (Deut 33:8) and instructed the people in the law. In Luke’s infancy narrative the temple is the place where the pious receive revelation concerning God’s coming salvation and where Jesus, even as a child, expounds God’s Word. In Acts the early church does not abandon the temple but preaches in its precincts.

The Temple and Holiness. Christ is holiness - Re 4:8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

Because the temple represented the dwelling place of God on earth, it was a symbol of holiness. The deeper one penetrated the temple precincts, the greater the sanctity one encountered. Unlike a synagogue or church, the inside of the temple itself was not a place of public worship. The spread wings of the cherubim on the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies suggest a picture of divine sanctity and protection (1 Kings 8:6–7;

The Temple and Community. Since sacred concepts of boundaries, holiness and God's presence undergird the identity of the people of God, the temple often symbolizes God's people. For Isaiah the restoration of the temple mount and of the people are synonymous (Is 51:16); Ezekiel's vision of the restoration of the temple is a vision of hope for Israel (Ezek 40:1-43:12). Numerous biblical authors employ the temple as a symbol of the rise and fall of God's people according to their moral, ethical and spiritual condition (Ps 79:1; 114:2; Jer 24; Ezek 9:6; 43:10; Dan 8:13; 11:31; Rev 11:1). Similarly, the disciples' discussion of the temple in the Gospels sets the stage for Jesus' prophetic discourse concerning the nation of Israel (Mt 24:1; Mk 13:1; Lk 21:5). John in particular emphasizes the function of the community, Jesus' body, as the temple that bears God's presence (e.g., Jn 2:19-21; 4:21-24).

Paul as well understands the redeemed community, the church, as the dwelling place of God: "Do you not know that you are God's temple?" (1 Cor 3:16). Accordingly, it has implications for separation from the unholy and ungodly (cf. 1 Cor 3:17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21). 1 Peter speaks of Christ and believers as "living stones" that are "built into a spiritual house" (1 Pet 2:4-5). Revelation addresses the faithful as pillars of the temple (Rev 3:12) but also emphasizes that there is no longer any need for a temple because of the unmediated presence of Christ in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:22).

The Temple and Justice and Peace. The temple is pictured as the embodiment of God's people's longing for justice, peace and blessing. All justice is now to be meted out by Christ.

The temple also symbolizes peace and rest. And in Christ the temple we have our Sabbath rest for all of eternity.

Conclusion. Given such a richness of imagery surrounding the house of God, it is little wonder that God's people have always passionately yearned for life inside its courts: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long" (Ps 23:6) And we as His New covenant

Christ is true Israel - the true vine John. 15:1

I am the vine (1) is the last of the great 'I am' sayings in John's gospel. Its significance can be appreciated against the background of the OT idea of Israel as a vine or vineyard (Ps. 80:8-16; Is. 5:1-7; Ezk. 15:1-6; 19:10-14). Jesus was the true vine in the sense of being genuine as compared with Israel which had not acted in harmony with its calling.

Christ is our Sabbath - Hebrews 4:1-3

The Sabbath was the sign of the Old Covenant. It served two purposes. One to remind Israel that that they were delivered from Egypt Dt. 5:15 and another that was tied to the land and rest associated with the Creation and God's rest Ex. 31:14,15,16

In its final setting, then, the fourth commandment is no longer a commandment for God's people, but its intent remains. The 'law of Christ' anticipates rest through belief, but now rest has been realized.

Christ is our Passover Lamb - John 1:29; Rev.5:12

The Passover Lamb's blood was an atoning sacrifice that spared the first born of Israel. The emphasis on the firstborn is noteworthy (Exod. 13:2-15; 22:29b-30; 34:19; Num. 3:12-13, 40-45; 18:15). First, the plague against Egypt is in response to Pharaoh's attempt to destroy Yahweh's firstborn, Israel (Exod. 4:22). Secondly, it demonstrates that Yahweh alone is the great King who creates and sustains life. According to the requirements of tribute, not only do Israel's firstborn, both human and animal, belong to him, but Israel is the first fruits of Yahweh's harvest (Jer. 2:3)

Christ blood has delivered us from the bondage of our sins.

Jas 1:18 "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures."

There are more: Prophet, Priest, King, Lawgiver, Mediator.