4—The Inaugurated Kingdom

Sunday, July 12, 2026

Introduction

a) Preparing For a Move of the Spirit

- Acts 1:1–3

> 1 The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,
>
> 2 until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.
>
> 3 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

- Before the Lord moved powerful by His Spirit in the book of Acts, Jesus laid a kingdom foundation for forty days.
- Teaching about the kingdom prepares the church for the move of the Holy Spirit.
- This is one reason I'm spending so much time teaching about the kingdom. It is preparing us for a move of the Holy Spirit.

b) The Kingdom of God from Genesis to Revelation

- The kingdom of God is one of the great themes running from Genesis to Revelation.
- There are five phases of the kingdom that we see.
  1. The kingdom was purposed in eternity
  2. The kingdom was promised through the prophets
  3. The kingdom was inaugurated through Jesus
  4. The kingdom is present through the Spirit-empowered church
  5. The kingdom is future when Jesus returns
- Today we will look at how Jesus inaugurated the kingdom at His first coming.

A Hotly Debated Scripture

a) Why Luke 17:21 Is Debated

- Jesus told the Pharisees, "The kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:21).
- The NKJV translates the phrase, "The kingdom of God is within you."
- The meaning of this verse has been debated throughout church history. Even serious Bible translators disagree.
- The Greek word *entos* can mean "within," "inside," or "among," so the word itself does not settle the question.
- The context must decide.

b) The Case for "Within You"

- Some believe Jesus used the Pharisees' question as a teaching moment for the disciples standing nearby.
- From this perspective, Jesus was teaching that God's reign comes to dwell within His people by the Holy Spirit.
- The NKJV and the YLT translate it "within you."
- This idea is biblically true: the kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

c) The Case for "In Your Midst"

- Jesus was speaking directly to proud, self-righteous Pharisees who opposed Him and rejected His authority.
- It is therefore unlikely that He was saying God's kingdom already ruled within their hearts.
- The NASB and ESV likely capture the meaning best: the kingdom was in their midst because the King stood among them.
- Jesus was essentially saying, "You are asking when the kingdom will come, but you do not recognize that the King is standing in front of you."

d) Holding Both Truths Together

- Jesus embodies the kingdom, and through the indwelling Spirit the kingdom also resides within His people.
- In Luke 17:21, however, the primary emphasis is that the kingdom had arrived in the person of the King.
- The King had come. The kingdom was present. Tragically, the Pharisees could not see it.
- The Pharisees were looking for signs but they overlooked the greatest sign of all—the King standing directly in front of them.
- Jesus was essentially saying, "I am the kingdom of God."

Undercover Boss

a) The Basic Premise of the Show

- *Undercover Boss* was a reality series in which a CEO or company owner disguised himself and entered the business as an ordinary employee.
- The employees usually believed they were training a new worker or participating in a workplace documentary.
- They had no idea the person beside them possessed authority over the entire organization.

b) The Purpose of Going Undercover

- From the corporate office, the executive could read reports and receive updates from managers.
- By going undercover, he could experience the company from the ground level.
- He could observe working conditions, hear employees' frustrations, recognize their dedication, and discover problems that might never reach the executive office.

c) The CEO Worked as an Ordinary Employee

- The CEO performed everyday jobs such as cleaning equipment, stocking shelves, making deliveries, answering calls, or working on an assembly line.
- Along the way, he heard employees' personal stories and saw both the strengths and weaknesses of the company's culture.

d) The CEO Embodied the Company

- The undercover executive was not merely another employee.
- He was the owner, leader, vision-carrier, and final authority.
- He represented the company's mission, values, standards, and identity.
- In a real sense, he was the brand.

e) The Executive's Identity Was Revealed

- At the end of the episode, the disguise was removed.
- The employees discovered that the ordinary worker beside them was actually the head of the company.
- Their reactions were often dramatic because they suddenly realized who had been standing among them.

f) Jesus Embodied the Kingdom

- In a far greater way, Jesus entered His own creation with His glory veiled.
- People saw a carpenter from Nazareth, but standing among them was the eternal Son of God, the promised Messiah, and the King of kings.
- Jesus did more than come as the King.
- He embodied the kingdom itself.
- He was the kingdom in person.

The Kingdom Came in a Person

a) The Pharisees Overlooked the King

- The Pharisees were looking for the kingdom but they overlooked the King standing directly in front of them.

- They wanted Rome overthrown and expected the promised kingdom of righteousness, peace, joy, justice, healing, freedom, and glory.
- They were not wrong to expect the kingdom; they were wrong to expect its final fullness all at once.
- They looked for *consummation*, but Jesus came first to bring *inauguration*.

b) The Kingdom Comes in Stages

- First, the kingdom came in the person, words, and works of Jesus.
- Then it expanded through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit-empowered witness of the church.
- Finally, it will be consummated when Jesus returns, crushes all opposition, and fills the earth with God's glory.

c) Jesus Is the Kingdom in Person

- Origen used the word *autobasileia*—"the kingdom in person" or "the kingdom itself"—to describe Jesus.
- Jesus did not merely announce the kingdom; He embodied it. Wherever Jesus went, God's reign broke into history.
    - The promised kingdom of righteousness came in Jesus, the righteous King.
    - The promised kingdom of holiness came in Jesus, the Holy One of Israel.
    - The promised kingdom of peace came in Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
    - The promised kingdom of joy came in Jesus, the One anointed with the oil of gladness.
    - The promised kingdom of justice came in Jesus, the righteous Judge.
    - The promised kingdom of healing came in Jesus, the Lord our Healer.
    - The promised kingdom of freedom came in Jesus, the Bondage Breaker.
    - The promised kingdom of glory came in Jesus, the glorious Son of God in human flesh.
- Through His ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement, Jesus inaugurated the kingdom.

Jesus's First Coming Is Like a Movie Trailer

a) A Real Preview of What Is Coming

- Most moviegoers know that if a movie is scheduled to start at 7:00, they can arrive around 7:20 without missing the beginning. Before the movie starts, theaters usually show advertisements, promotions, and about twenty minutes of trailers.
- A movie trailer is not the whole movie, but it gives a real preview of its storyline, characters, tone, and drama.

- In the same way, Jesus's first coming was not yet the full restoration of all things, but it truly revealed the coming kingdom.
- Every blind eye opened, deaf ear unstopped, lame person walking, demon cast out, and dead person raised declared, "This is what the world will look like when the King reigns openly."

b) The Pattern We Will Follow

- In the next part of the message, we will look briefly at what the prophets promised, how Jesus embodied that promise, and how the Spirit forms the same kingdom reality within the church.
- The pattern: Prophets → Jesus → Spirit-formed church

Jesus Embodied Kingdom Righteousness

a) The Prophets Promised a Righteous Kingdom

- Isaiah declared that the Messiah would establish His kingdom with righteousness (Isa. 9:7).
- Jeremiah said that the Messiah would execute righteousness in the earth (Jer. 23:5).
- Isaiah also prophesied that the Messiah would judge the poor with righteousness (Isa. 11:4–5).
- All these promises will be fulfilled after Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom.
- Under His thousand-year reign on the earth, sin, corruption, and injustice will no longer dominate; the world will be brought back into right order under Jesus Christ.

b) Righteousness Walked the Earth in Jesus

- Before righteousness fills the earth in the coming kingdom, righteousness walked the earth in Jesus Christ.
- Like an undercover boss, Jesus entered the world with His glory veiled, embodying the righteousness of the coming kingdom, giving us a living trailer of what earth will be like under His reign.
- Jesus did not merely teach or demand righteousness; He embodied it in every word, motive, judgment, act of mercy, and confrontation with evil.
- Psalm 45 connects His throne, kingdom, righteous scepter, love of righteousness, and hatred of wickedness (Ps. 45:6–7; Heb. 1:8–9).
- Jesus rules righteously because He Himself is righteous. His kingdom is the outward expression of His nature.

c) The Sermon on the Mount Reveals the King

- Matthew 5–7 is more than an impossible list of rules; it is a portrait of the righteous King and the mature kingdom life He forms in His disciples.
    - Jesus teaches humility because He is humble. He humbled Himself and became obedient to death (Phil. 2:6–8).

  - He teaches meekness because He is meek. He perfectly submitted His infinite power to the Father, allowing it to be governed by love, obedience, and the Holy Spirit.
  - He teaches mercy, purity, peacemaking, truthfulness, forgiveness, and enemy-love because He embodies each of these qualities.

- Jesus never taught an ethic He did not embody. Every command flows from the King's righteous character.
- Jesus embodied kingdom righteousness, and we are called to embody it as well.

Jesus Embodied Kingdom Justice

a) The Prophets Promised Justice in the Earth

- Isaiah declared that the Messiah would bring justice to the nations and establish justice in the earth (Isa. 42:1, 4).
- He also said that the Messiah would uphold His kingdom with justice (Isa. 9:7).
- All these promises will be fulfilled after Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom.
- Under His thousand-year reign on the earth, every institution, economy, culture, courtroom, and nation will ultimately come under the righteous rule of Jesus Christ.

b) Justice Walked the Earth in Jesus

- Before justice fills the earth in the coming kingdom, justice walked the earth in Jesus Christ.
- Like an undercover boss, Jesus entered the world with His glory veiled, embodying the justice of the coming kingdom, giving us a living trailer of what earth will be like under His reign.
- Jesus brought good news to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, dignity to the forgotten, mercy to the guilty, and healing to the broken.
- He valued women, welcomed children, touched lepers, ate with sinners, and brought the outcast near.
- His justice was also fierce: He rebuked oppressive leaders, exposed hypocrisy, challenged corruption, and overturned exploitation in His Father's house.

c) The Cross Was the Supreme Act of Justice

- Jesus did not become sinful in nature; He became the sin offering and bore the judgment our sin deserved.
- God did not ignore evil or set justice aside. At the cross, His justice was satisfied so sinners could be justified, forgiven, and reconciled.
- Before Jesus establishes justice over the earth, He established justice at the cross by dealing fully with sin.
- When He returns, every wrong will be made right, every corrupt system will fall, and every enemy will be judged.

- Jesus embodied kingdom justice, and we are called to embody it as well.

Jesus Embodied Kingdom Glory

a) The Prophets Promised a Kingdom of Glory

- Isaiah declared that the Messiah would be beautiful and glorious (Isa. 4:2).
- Habakkuk said that Messiah's glory would cover the earth like the waters cover the sea (Isa. 4:2; Hab. 2:14).
- Isaiah also prophesied that the veil over the nations will be removed, and the world will see the King in His beauty as He reigns from Zion (Isa. 24:23; 25:7; 33:17).
- All these promises will be fulfilled after Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom.
- Under His thousand-year reign on the earth, the beauty and glory of Jesus will transform the atmosphere of the nations, awaken worship throughout the earth, and bring creation into the radiance of His presence.

b) Glory Walked the Earth in Jesus

- Before glory fills the earth in the coming kingdom, glory walked the earth in Jesus Christ.
- Like an undercover boss, Jesus entered the world with His glory veiled, embodying the glory of the coming kingdom, giving us a living trailer of what earth will be like under His reign.
- The Word became flesh, and the disciples saw the glory of the only begotten Son, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).
- The glory Isaiah saw in the throne room was the glory of the preincarnate Son (Isa. 6; John 12:41).
- In the incarnation, the glory that will one day fill Zion and the nations came near in human flesh.

c) The Transfiguration: The Ultimate Trailer of the Coming Kingdom

- Jesus's face shone like the sun and His garments became white as light, briefly unveiling the glory normally hidden beneath His humble appearance.
- Peter, James, and John received a glimpse of the Son of Man coming in His kingdom—a preview of the King reigning openly in beauty and glory (Matt. 16:28–17:2).
- Jesus embodied kingdom glory, and we are called to embody it as well.

Jesus Embodied Kingdom Peace

a) The Prophets Promised the Reign of the Prince of Peace

- Isaiah declared that the government would rest on the Messiah's shoulders, and there would be no end to the increase of His peace (Isa. 9:6–7).
- He also prophesied that nations would turn swords into plowshares and war will cease (Isa. 2:4).
- Micah said that people will dwell securely with no one to make them afraid (Mic. 4:4).

- All these promises will be fulfilled after Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom.
- Under His thousand-year reign on the earth, violence, fear, war, and hostility will give way to security, harmony, and the unshakable peace of the Prince of Peace.

b) Peace Walked the Earth in Jesus

- Before peace fills the earth in the coming kingdom, peace walked the earth in Jesus Christ.
- Like an undercover boss, Jesus entered the world with His glory veiled, embodying the peace of the coming kingdom, giving us a living trailer of what earth will be like under His reign.
- Jesus calmed storms, delivered the tormented, reconciled sinners to God, and brought rest to weary souls and peace to anxious hearts.
- Before abolishing all war and conflict, He brought peace through His presence, words, works, and ultimately His cross.
- Peace is what happens when Jesus reigns.
- Jesus embodied kingdom peace, and we are called to embody it as well.

Jesus Embodied Kingdom Joy

a) The Prophets Promised Everlasting Joy

- When the Messiah reigns, Isaiah declared that the redeemed will return to Zion with everlasting joy, while sorrow and sighing flee away (Isa. 35:10; 51:11).
- He also prophesied that the Messiah will give beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for mourning, and praise for fainting (Isa. 61:2–3).
- Zephaniah added that the King Himself will rejoice over His people with love and shouts of joy (Zeph. 3:17).
- All these promises will be fulfilled after Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom.
- Under His thousand-year reign on the earth, sorrow, depression, and despair will give way to gladness, celebration, and the overflowing joy of life in the presence of the King.

b) Joy Walked the Earth in Jesus

- Before joy fills the earth in the coming kingdom, joy walked the earth in Jesus Christ.
- Like an undercover boss, Jesus entered the world with His glory veiled, embodying the joy of the coming kingdom, giving us a living trailer of what earth will be like under His reign.
- Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness beyond His companions (Heb. 1:9). Though He grieved and suffered, joy defined His fellowship with the Father.
- He brought kingdom joy by turning water into wine, welcoming children, eating with sinners, forgiving the guilty, healing the broken, and delivering the oppressed.
- He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, imparted His joy to His disciples, and came as the Bridegroom whose presence brought gladness.

- Joy is the emotional atmosphere of Christ's reign.
- Jesus embodied kingdom joy, and we are called to embody it as well.

Jesus Embodied Kingdom Healing

a) The Prophets Promised Wholeness and Healing

- When the Messiah reigns, Isaiah declared that He would open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears, cause the lame to leap, and the mute to shout for joy (Isa. 35:5–6).
- Isaiah even prophesied that under the Messiah's reign no resident would say, "I am sick" (Isa. 33:24).
- According to Isaiah, the Messiah's reign would bring healing to the brokenhearted, freedom to captives, comfort to those who mourn, and deep restoration from the inside out (Isa. 61:1–3).
- All these promises will be fulfilled after Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom.
- Under His thousand-year reign on the earth, sickness, disability, trauma, and brokenness will steadily give way to physical wholeness, inner healing, and comprehensive restoration under the ministry of the Healer-King.

b) Healing Walked the Earth in Jesus

- Before healing fills the earth in the coming kingdom, healing walked the earth in Jesus Christ.
- Like an undercover boss, Jesus entered the world with His glory veiled, embodying the healing of the coming kingdom, giving us a living trailer of what earth will be like under His reign.
- Jesus restored sight, hearing, speech, and mobility; cleansed lepers; healed paralysis and withered limbs; delivered the tormented; and raised the dead.
- Every healing was both compassion and a kingdom sign—a preview of the day when sickness, disability, oppression, pain, and death are banished.
- When John questioned whether Jesus was the Expected One, Jesus pointed to Isaiah's kingdom signs being fulfilled before his eyes (Matt. 11:4–5).
- Jesus told His disciples to heal the sick and announce, "The kingdom of God has come near" (Luke 10:9).
- The promised kingdom of healing came in Jesus, the Healer-King.
- Jesus embodied kingdom healing, and we are called to embody it as well.

Jesus Embodied Kingdom Freedom

a) The Prophets Promised Deliverance

- Isaiah declared that the Messiah would break the yoke of oppression, bring prisoners from darkness, and proclaim liberty to captives (Isa. 9:4; 42:7; 61:1).
- Micah pictured the Breaker going before His people, opening the gates, and leading them out with the LORD at their head (Mic. 2:13).

- All these promises will be fulfilled after Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom.
- Under His thousand-year reign on the earth, oppression, bondage, and demonic tyranny will give way to liberty, security, and the freedom of life under the Breaker-King.

b) Freedom Walked the Earth in Jesus

- Before freedom fills the earth in the coming kingdom, freedom walked the earth in Jesus Christ.
- Like an undercover boss, Jesus entered the world with His glory veiled, embodying the freedom of the coming kingdom, giving us a living trailer of what earth will be like under His reign
- Through His ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement, Jesus broke sin's power, disarmed darkness, removed condemnation, and opened the prison of death.
- When Jesus cast out demons by the Spirit of God, He declared that the kingdom had come upon them (Matt. 12:28).
- His deliverance ministry showed that the Stronger Man had come, Satan's house was being plundered, and captives were being set free.
- At His first coming, Jesus broke chains enslaving people. At His return, He will break the chains enslaving nations and overthrow every evil system.
- Jesus embodied kingdom freedom, and we are called to embody it as well.

Jesus Won the Decisive Victory

a) D-Day and V-Day Illustrate the Already and the Not Yet

- On D-Day, June 6, 1944, Allied forces invaded Nazi-occupied France. The war was not over, but Germany's defeat became inevitable.
- Fighting continued until V-Day, when Germany surrendered and the victory secured at D-Day was fully realized.

b) The Cross and Resurrection Were D-Day

- Through His ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement, Jesus decisively defeated sin, Satan, death, and the powers of darkness.
- At the cross, He canceled our debt, stripped the enemy of accusation, and publicly triumphed over rulers and authorities (Col. 2:15).
- What appeared to be Jesus's humiliation became Satan's humiliation. The crucified King was conquering.

c) The Fighting Continues

- Satan is defeated but not yet removed. We still face temptation, suffering, sickness, death, demonic opposition, and evil governments.
- Healing is available, but not every sickness is healed. Deliverance is real, but warfare continues. Sin's power is broken, but we still battle sin in fallen bodies.

- The kingdom is already present, but it is not yet complete.

d) The Second Coming Will Be V-Day

- When Jesus returns, Satan will be bound, evil powers judged, death destroyed, and every enemy placed beneath His feet.
- Everything secured at the cross will be openly displayed across the earth.
- The cross and resurrection were D-Day. The second coming will be V-Day.
- We do not fight for victory; we fight from victory. We live between the victory already secured and the victory soon to be fully revealed.

Jesus Embodies the Kingdom

a) The Prophets Foretold It; Jesus Embodied It

- Everything the prophets promised—righteousness, justice, glory, peace, joy, healing, and freedom—appeared first in Jesus.
- The kingdom came in seed form through His person, words, works, cross, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement.
- Through the indwelling Spirit, the church is called to embody the character of the King and demonstrate the powers of the age to come.
- When Jesus returns, what appeared in seed form at His first coming will cover the earth in fullness.
- The kingdom He embodied will be openly displayed through the reign of the King.