

CUMC Christ College

Jesus People: The Character and Content of Christian Mission

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PART ONE: The Kingdom is the Mission

Key Questions: Who is God? What is “Christian Mission”? What is the big story of Scripture all about?

Lesson Goals:

- Recap and fill in gaps what we’ve learned in biblical overview and Gospel Transformation
- See how the establishment and expansion of God’s Kingdom is one central plot line in the Grand Story of Scripture

Introduction: What’s our purpose?

1. What’s your purpose and your destiny? Do you have one? (Nietzsche)
2. Have we misjudged our destiny thanks to our “density”? (Francis Schaeffer: “to live life with the possibility of being minimally disturbed”; the pursuit of comfort and personal happiness

Walker Percy (pardon the bohemianism): It is a pleasure to carry out the duties of a citizen and to receive in return a receipt or a neat styrene card with one’s name on it, certifying, so to speak, one’s right to exist. What satisfaction I take in appearing the first day to get my auto tag and brake sticker! I subscribe to *Consumer Reports* and as a consequence I own a first-class television set, an all but silent air conditioner and a very long lasting deodorant. My armpits never stink.

We all know perfectly well that the man who lives out his life as a consumer, a sexual partner, an 'other-directed' executive; who avoids boredom and anxiety by consuming tons of newsprint, miles of movie film, years of TV time; that such a man has somehow betrayed his destiny has a human being.

What are we called to seek instead? What purpose and destiny has God provided? Matthew 6:33

The Story of God revolves around the establishment and extension of God's Kingdom: the _____ is the Mission.

A. What is God? What metaphor begins to adequately describe him?

Isaiah 6:5 _____

B. How do we best describe God's relationship to his world and his role in the story?

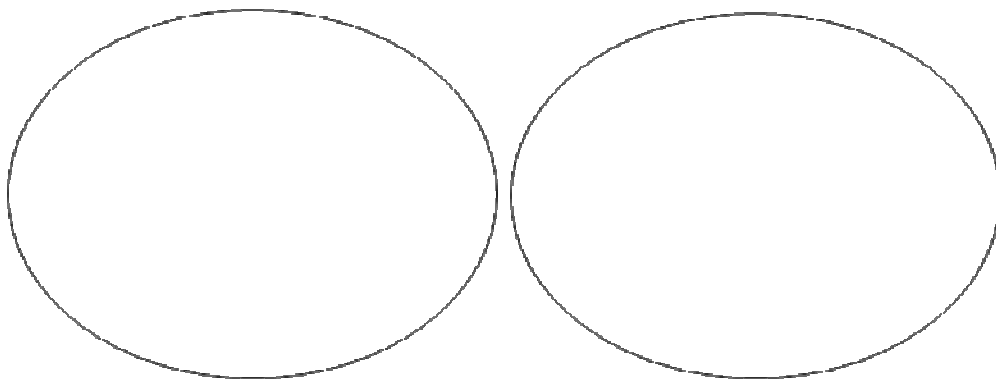
[[See handout A]]

Discussion Question: what about this aspect of God is particularly difficult for contemporary people, including many Christians?

C. Every great story has dramatic tension; in God's Story, the dramatic tension arises because of _____.

D. The Resolution of this story will occur when _____.

E. Two circles: old age/new age



F. The new age is brought about by _____.

This produces the _____.

G. What were the signs for the earliest Christians (all Jews!) that the new era had dawned?

What are some passages that show this belief? Hebrews 6:5, 9:26-28;
1 Corinthians 10:11

H. Jesus (and John the Baptist and the Apostles) summed this all up with one phrase: THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Cannot stress enough that this is not in the first instance *our work*, or what we did or earned. It's God's work and God's gift. It's called GRACE.

"Went on reading St. Augustine. Interested to note that he left Carthage, where he had been teaching, to go to Rome because in Carthage his students were so undisciplined ("the license of the students is gross, and beyond all measure"). Convinced more than ever that St. Augustine, and those like him, alone have found the answer to life, which is to *'slaughter our self-conceits like birds, the curiosities by which we voyage through the secret ways of the abyss like the fish of the sea, our carnal lusts like the beasts of the field'* in order that 'you, O God, you the consuming fire, should burn up those dead cares and renew the men themselves to immortal life.' Walking around St. James' Park I thought intensely of the difference between Tolstoy and St. Augustine. Tolstoy tried to achieve virtue, and particularly continence, through the exercise of his will; St. Augustine saw that, for man, there is no virtue without a miracle. Thus St. Augustine's asceticism brought him serenity, and Tolstoy's anguish, conflict, and the final collapse of his life into tragic buffoonery."

Malcolm Muggeridge, writing in his diary, 26-27 March 1951, as recorded in Like It Was: The Diaries of Malcolm Muggeridge, page 434.

1. WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE AND YOUR DESTINY?
2. HOW HAVE WE MISJUDGED OUR DESTINY THANKS TO OUR "DENSITY"?
3. GOD HAS GIVEN US A HUGE PURPOSE AND A HUGE DESTINY:

MATTHEW 6:33 AND "THE SEARCH"

Part One: The Kingdom is the Mission

**WHAT IS GOD? WHAT METAPHOR BEGINS
TO ADEQUATELY DESCRIBE HIM?**

Perhaps the best metaphor for who God
is = **KING, EMPEROR GOD.**

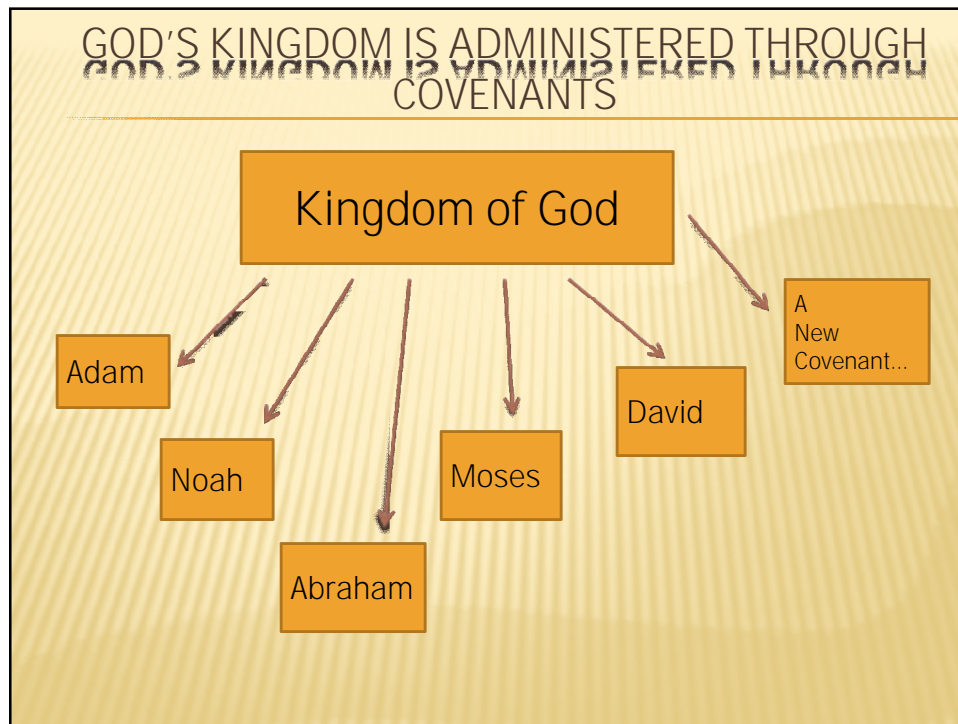
Isaiah 6:5

**God's mission is his REIGN: the
extension of his Kingdom.**

**The Emperor God creates
covenants to administer his
kingdom and to define his
relationships with his
subjects, his servants, or
“vassal kings”**

- ò How do we best describe God's relationship to his world and his role in the story?
- ò Can be summarized in one useful term, providing a central theme for the Bible's story.

The Kingdom of God



THE PROBLEM...

- Dramatic tension created because of rebellion...
- Psalm 97:1-6
- Psalm 98:4-9
- Psalm 99:1-5

So God's MISSION is to rule over all in the future

ZECHARIAH 14:9

MICAH 4:1-5:8

ISAIAH 52:7

DANIEL 2:34-35, 44-45; 7:13-14, 18, 27

KINGDOM FOCUSES ON ONE PEOPLE—AND EVENTUALLY ONE PERSON...

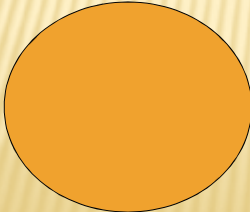
- As one Rabbi put it, "I will make Adam first, if he goes wrong Abraham will come to restore everything again." *Gen Rab* 14:6
- Jesus the representative Israelite, representative human

THE MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION FOR FIRST CENTURY JEWS:

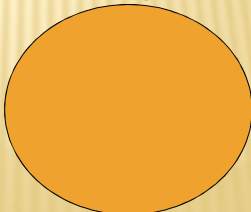
צמיון וצמיון?

○ How can we get from “old age” to “new age” (or “latter days”)? How will the KINGDOM Come? When and how will God reign over all?

Old Age



New Age



The Jewish Expectation of the Restoration of Israel and the World

PRESENT AGE
AGE TO COME

*Sin;
Nations rule over Israel;
Death,
Evil,
Satan*

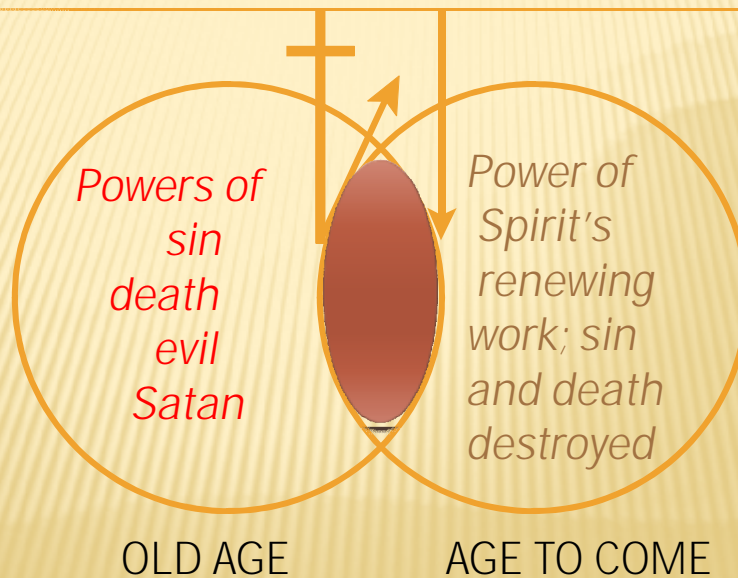
*Holy Spirit;
Knowledge of God; rez; Israel rules nations; David; Love; Prosperity; Righteousness; Judgment Peace
Justice Joy*

Israel waits for the Spirit and Messiah to move the world from the old age to the new

HOW DID THE NEW AGE HAPPEN?

- o "who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age" Galatians 1:3-4
- o . . . thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:12-14

New Testament Fulfillment



WHAT HAD ARRIVED IN THE NEW AGE?

The Kingdom of God:

**The power of God in Christ by
the Spirit to restore humanity
and creation to life under the
rule of God.**

Acts 2 quoting Joel 2, Amos 9

Hebrews 9:26-28 But now he has appeared once for all *at the end of the ages* to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself...Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him."

Hebrews 6:5: we have "tasted...the powers of the *age to come*."

1 Corinthians 10:11 Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, *on whom the end of the ages has come*.

STILL WAITING ON FULLNESS OF KINGDOM

God put his [new creation] power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.

. . . he has put all things under his feet . . .

Ephesians 1:20-22

JESUS'S MINISTRY: KINGDOM SIGNS

◦ Blind see; lame walk; deaf hear; sick healed; dead raised; poor/lost/dirty are received and cared for; sins forgiven; cursed creation restored; demons cast out; lives changed, relationships healed (cf. Lk. 7:21-23); people were told that God was reigning after all; de-humanized people are "re-humanized" (Mark 5:15); receive true law versus false law (Matt 5-7)

The Gospel of the Kingdom

- ò Restoration of humanity
- ò Change of kingdom, from darkness to light (Col. 1:12-13).
- ò Restored to true life, whereas demons/Satan lead to death (cf. Genesis 3)