

# Luke

*Thy Kingdom Come  
Luke 11:1-4c*

*With Study Questions*

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Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”* <sup>2</sup> So He said to them, “When you pray, say: **Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven.** <sup>3</sup> Give us day by day our daily bread. <sup>4</sup> And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one” (Luke 11:1-4).

## **Introduction**

Speaking with one of my children recently, we pursued the subject of what constitutes a great nation. What makes a nation great? Is a good political system the heart of a great nation. We often speak, and rightfully so, of problems within the system. The context of such a discussion leads our minds to observable, external things which a nation might manufacture. Included would be things like infrastructure, borders, laws, law enforcement, guiding documents, a symbolic flag. But all of these things are the eruptions of something happening at a deeper level.

Some have argued, with merit, that the system put into place the founders of our nation is one of, if not the, greatest of all government systems. But John Adams (the second president) famously said,

**Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people.<sup>1</sup>**

Adams recognized the necessity of religious and moral citizens for any assemblance of public prosperity (and just for context of what is meant here by religious, virtually all fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were members in good standing of Protestant churches). The simple point I am seeking to make here is that good founding documents

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<sup>1</sup> A letter to the Massachusetts militia in 1798.

were simply not enough. For example, the right of a person to have “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” means very little if we can’t agree on constitutes a person, a human.

It is worth noting that in the Old Testament/Covenant we have the most detailed system imaginable for the way God’s church should be governed. As someone once said, “We have no Leviticus in the New Testament.” This does not mean we should not make an effort to have a God-glorifying liturgy, or order of worship, and church government in New Covenant churches. We certainly should. But the hearts of God’s people in the Old Covenant had grown cold and the entire period ends with a curse and the promise of a New Covenant (Malachi 4).

It was to those who had been given that perfect and elaborate Old Testament system that Jesus said,

**Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it (Matthew 21:43).**

All to say, a system is not enough. Godliness is essential. We are now seeking God’s wisdom regarding this second petition in the Lord’s Prayer. Three words (four in Greek) that are very packed,

**Your kingdom come (Luke 11:2b).**

## **The Kingdom of God**

We mentioned before that the first petition given by Jesus is that the name of God be hallowed. And though what we have before us here is not the first petition, it is the most emphasized. Jesus mentions, and preaches, His kingdom more than any other topic in Scripture. He goes so far as to say,

**I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent (Luke 4:43).**

What is the kingdom of God and what do we mean when we pray and work<sup>2</sup> for its advancement? How would we know if our prayers are being answered? Before we can pray and work for its advancement, we must ascertain what it is. In what terms does the Bible speak of God's kingdom?

In the Old Testament the nation of Israel foreshadowed or was a type of God's kingdom with its prophets, priests, kings, sacrifices and battles. But the actual establishment of God's kingdom was concurrent with the birth of its King. This is pointed to in the very famous Christmas passage from Isaiah.

**For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of His government and peace *There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6, 7).***

This was a much-anticipated event. Joseph of Arimathea was **"himself waiting for the kingdom of God (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51).**

The entrance of Jesus into humanity and His works of power and redemption marked that period when the kingdom would move from the type or foreshadow to the substance. As stated, it was taken from Israel and given **"to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Matthew 21:43).**

Numerous times we read that the kingdom of God was **"at hand"**. Jesus made it quite clear that His presence meant the ushering in of this kingdom.

**But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you (Matthew 12:28).**

It strains the text to suggest that this kingdom is the future millennial kingdom we hear so much about in books like *Left Behind* and the *Late Great Planet Earth*. The King has come and with Him His kingdom.

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<sup>2</sup> Although there are times when all we can do is pray, say for the health of a sick friend, more often than not our prayers are to be accompanied by our actions. We pray for our daily bread, but we must work for it as well.

## Kingdom Growth

In a moment we will get into the various components of the kingdom, but first we can touch on its growth and permeation. In the kingdom parables we learn that God's kingdom would, like a mustard seed, start small, then grow large until the end of history (Matthew 13:31-33). We learn that, like leaven permeating a loaf, the kingdom would have a profound effect upon all areas of life (Matthew 13:33). The Bible seems to indicate that even though this kingdom is not like other kingdoms; all other kingdoms will eventually be won over by this kingdom

**Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15)!**

Jesus is currently the King of kings which means every kingdom belongs to Him. There may be mutinous rebellions and naysaying against the King. But He is King, nonetheless. The Father promised the Son,

**Ask of Me, and I will give *You* The nations *for* Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession (Psalm 2:8).**

As Dr. Bahnsen once quipped in seeking to refute those who hold Christ's kingdom to be yet future, "Are we to assume Jesus didn't ask?" Some would object that this means that it is the efforts of man that advance God's kingdom instead of Christ. But as we read in Isaiah,

**The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:7b).**

It is the word and Spirit of God working through His people, His church, that advances God's kingdom.

**Material or Immaterial?**

We've addressed the emphasis of the kingdom and the growth of the kingdom, but what is the kingdom? Is it material? Does this kingdom have an army and physical weaponry? Is it immaterial? Is it simply that which resides in our hearts?

Even though God's kingdom is not of this world, it certainly is in this world. In one sense the kingdom of God has a temporal and observable side to it; it could **"come near you" (Luke 10:9)**. But in another sense the kingdom is very spiritual being **"within"** people (Luke 17:21) and something **"flesh and blood cannot inherit" (1 Corinthians 15:50)**.

So, we are not to view the kingdom of God as merely spiritual or merely physical but both. Although the blessings of this kingdom have a spiritual and eternal aspect to them, Jesus taught that the blessings (and trials Acts 14:22) would be found in history as well.

**Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,<sup>30</sup> who shall not receive many times more *in this present time*, and in the age to come eternal life (Luke 18:29, 30 italics mind).**

So, what are we praying for in the advancement of God's kingdom? What is the outward manifestation of God's kingdom for which we are to pray? What is the heart of God's kingdom for which we are to pray?

## **God's Kingdom Revealed in the Church**

In the same way a nation can be identified by its laws and documents and citizens, the outward, visible, tangible manifestation of God's kingdom *the church*. In a temporal and physical sense, the kingdom of God is revealed through Christian churches – local churches – which together form the holy catholic (universal) church (those who profess Christ and their children). These are the institutions where the King's law and gospel are preached, His sacraments administered, His praises sung and His victory proclaimed.

The church might be compared to the nation's capital. As you walk through the nation's capital you see copies of its original documents, you see memorials of the great victories, testimonials of its great leaders and so

on. These are all designed to reveal the heart of that nation and inspire those who visit to engage in a similar great enterprise.

There has been recent downplay of the importance of church. The value of the church has not always been viewed as so expendable. The Westminster Confession (1640s) teaches something astonishing about the church.

**The visible Church...is the *kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ*, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation (italics mine).** (Acts 2:47) (1 Cor. 1:2, 1 Cor. 12:12-13, Ps. 2:8, Rev. 7:9, Rom. 15:9-12) (1 Cor. 7:14, Acts 2:39, Ezek. 16:20-21, Rom. 11:16, Gen. 3:15, Gen. 17:7) (Matt. 13:47, Isa. 9:7) (Eph. 2:19, Eph. 3:15) <sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that this is not the totality of the kingdom of God. Chad Van Dixhoorn rightly explains that “it would be a mistake to woodenly equate the kingdom of God with the church...[not] every reference to the kingdom of God [is] a reference to the church...His kingdom is bigger than the church, but it certainly includes the church.”<sup>4</sup>

We might view the church the way we would view an embassy. If the U. S. has an embassy in a foreign land, we would point to the land and say it is the U. S. But it is not the entire U. S. Nonetheless, the visible manifestation of God’s kingdom is the church.

Clearly Christ ordained that there would be local churches with pastors, deacons, elders, preaching, sacraments, church discipline, etc. (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1) who would be responsible for the handling of the sacred message which is the power of God unto salvation. Christians must be leery of those who downplay or despise the local church for they, in a certain sense, are downplaying the kingdom of God.

We must highly esteem Christ’s church. For that sacred message which God has entrusted by His Spirit to His church is where the heart of the kingdom of God is ordinarily accessed. The word and sacrament are the touchpoint between the mundane and the divine. What are we praying for when we pray for the advancement of God’s kingdom in this context?

We are praying for church buildings, or at least settings, where congregations can gather to hear and see. This is how we’ve been praying when we pray for Eli and the church where he ministers in Hawaii. We are

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<sup>3</sup>The Westminster confession of faith. 1996 (Chapter XXV, 2). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>4</sup> Confessing the Faith, 2014, Chad Van Dixhoorn, (pp 340, 341).

praying for favorable legislation when it comes to the setting up of those buildings or venues. We are praying for pastors/evangelists who can be subsidized and devoted to full-time ministry. We are praying that the planes, trains and busses carrying ministers arrive safely to their destinations and so on.

In a deeper, yet still visible/observable sense, we are praying that churches and pastors holdfast to, and contend earnestly for, the faith once for all delivered to the saints. We are to pray that the church maintain its purity and resist amalgamation and contamination from the world by which it is surrounded. We pray that pastors, elders, deacons and members will ever recognize that the preaching of the law and gospel of Christ and the proper administration of baptism and the loaf and cup are the means by which God will advance His kingdom.

But in its deepest consummation, when we pray for the advancement of God's kingdom, we are praying for the souls of men and women, that they would be among the number to whom Jesus says,

**'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'**  
**(Matthew 25:34)**

## **Entering the Kingdom**

The puzzling thing about this deepest aspect of God's kingdom is that, according to Jesus, it is impossible for people to enter it. When His disciples asked Him who can be saved, He answered, **"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible"** (Matthew 19:26). Jesus is speaking to a mystified Nicodemus

**Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).**

We've seemed to have gotten used to thinking that this re-birth – or birth from above – is something we are capable of achieving through the mere force of our own will; but clearly with man this is impossible. We do not regenerate ourselves. God regenerates (gives us new spiritual birth) us from above. We are called to believe that King Jesus died and rose again for

us. That is something we should do. But know this, if you find a heart of faith within yourselves, it is a gift from God, and the means by which He brings you into His eternal kingdom.

### Questions for Study

1. Is it important that a nation have a good, wise system to function well? Is that sufficient for public prosperity? Why or why not? (pages 2, 3)?
2. Where was the kingdom of God found in the Old Covenant/Testament? Was this the full expression of God's kingdom? Explain (pages 3, 4)?
3. Why would we conclude that the kingdom of God is a very important topic? When did this kingdom begin (pages 3, 4)?
4. What is to be expected when it comes to the growth or coming of Christ's kingdom? Is this a result of the efforts of men? Explain (pages 4, 5)?
5. Is the kingdom of God material or immaterial (pages 5, 6)?
6. Discuss how the kingdom of God is present in the church. What is the prime directive of the church as it relates to the kingdom of God (pages 7, 8)?
7. How does one go about entering the kingdom of God (page 8)?

