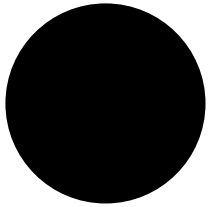


The Kingdom of Heaven: Here or Near?



“Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is *near*. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons.” (Matthew 10:7-8, NLT)

Jesus directed the disciples with these words after giving them power (grace) to minister (Matthew 10:1, NLT). They were to declare the kingdom. God’s will was to be done on earth as it is in heaven. If there was a condition in a person’s life that was not congruent with heaven’s standard, it was to change. People in heaven are not tormented by demons. People in heaven do not have any diseases. People in heaven are not sick. People in heaven are not hungry. The power the apostles had received was to change what was contrary to heaven on earth!

However, we must note (see Matthew 10:7, NLT) that the disciples were to proclaim the kingdom only as *near*. Yet once the Day of Pentecost had come, it was no longer *near* but *here*! The kingdom is now in the hearts of men and women who are born again and filled with His Spirit, just as the kingdom was in and manifested through Jesus as He walked this earth.

In the gospels, when the apostles went forth to bear fruit,

the Holy Spirit was only *with* them and the kingdom was only *near*. However, Jesus shows that after the kingdom comes, the Holy Spirit will be in us—*within*. This is why He instructed all of us just before His ascension to heaven, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21, NKJV). We have the power *within* to advance the kingdom in the hearts and lives of people exactly as Jesus did; it’s all because of His amazing grace!

Once the kingdom is within, we can advance it, no matter if we are a businessperson, stay-at-home mom, doctor, schoolteacher, mechanic, student, or politician—our occupation does not matter. He commissions all of us.

I hope it’s becoming clear. Grace is God’s empowering presence, which gives us the ability to live godly lives in the present and to do what is required to advance the kingdom. *Grace gives us the ability to go beyond our own ability in every area of life* to please God—to live extraordinarily. The reason God set it up this way is simple: He gets all the glory, not us.

*Marked by boldness and passion, **John Bevere** delivers uncompromising truth through his award-winning curriculum and best-selling books now available in over sixty languages. His newest book is Extraordinary: The Life You’re Meant to Live. More information is available at .*