



THE GENERAL LETTERS (cont.)

2 Peter

Primary Information for Starters...

We are going to have to go through this stuff good because we have this second half where it really all comes together, and I don't want us to miss out on that.

So, Peter is mostly likely awaiting execution as he writes the Letter of 2 Peter. Somewhat like 2 Timothy, Peter is kind of facing the brink of it all. The primary theme in this book is growth in grace and in knowledge. Knowledge is really emphasized over and over again is the insurance that we have in Christ through our knowledge of Christ. So, we see that numerous times.

It is interesting to compare the themes of 1 and 2 Peter. In 2 Peter, Peter is writing from a persecuted standpoint, but it is not as much about the suffering in persecution as 1 Peter is. 1 Peter talks about how Satan can come as a lion to devour the church with persecution. What is interesting though is, when you get to 2 Peter, you see him talking about how Satan can come as a serpent to deceive the church with false doctrine. That he will take different vantage points to come after the church is what we are seeing.

Practical Advice for Study...

You see the overall structure in your notes. I think it is interesting to compare this book with 2 Timothy to see two men who are facing martyrdom. Note the explanation, especially, the Bible's inspiration at the end of 2 Peter 1. The Bible's inspiration is really described in how all the Old Testament prophets were pointing to Christ. That is the book of 2 Peter.

1 John

Primary Information for Starters...

Then you get into three letters here from John. 1, 2, and 3 John. 1 John is a great book. Just a little tip here. If you are ever in a Greek class that is devoted to 1 John, it is extremely helpful to memorize the New American Standard portions of John because that will help you out a lot on your Greek test when you are supposed to be translating this particular verse. It is really helpful to have a little bit of the English hidden in your mind and heart. So, anyway, not that I know that from experience, but...

John states five purposes: That we might have fellowship. It is talking about communion with Christ. That we might have joy. That we might not sin. That we might overcome error. He is addressing Gnosticism much like we saw in Colossians. That we might have assurance. In 1 John 5 you see a test of obedience, a test of love, a test of truth. How do we know? Because John is addressing people who had claimed to come to faith, but had completely turned their back on it, completely. So, John is talking about how they never really were of us and, you could see it by those kinds of different tests so to speak.

The primary themes in 1 John are that God is Light. Light is compared with darkness throughout this book. That God is love. Love is compared with hatred all throughout this

book, and then God is truth. Which is contrasted with error. Key verses you see them listed there in your notes.

Practical Advice for Study...

I want you to see, when you read this book, I encourage you to see how John uses simple words throughout that are packed with meaning. Simple foundational words over and over again. "Love," "know" or "knowledge," "sin," "abide," "remain," the "world" just like we saw in the Gospel of John, and "life." It is also helpful many times when we think of developing an argument, so to speak, or building a case for something, we kind of build sequential steps, and this builds on this and this builds on this. John, I put there in your notes, you see it more in terms of a musical arrangement than a well-ordered argument. It is really a circular pattern. He comes back to these themes that you see that we have just talked about over and over and over again. So, we will be talking about one thing, and we will go back to the other, and then to another, and then he will come back to the thing he had been talking about before. Really kind of a verse, chorus, verse, chorus, kind of a picture we have got there. That is 1 John.

2 John

Primary Information for Starters...

Then 2 John. 2 and 3 John, obviously, much smaller. Written to either one local church or an esteemed woman in a local church because it mentioned that it is written to her. However, this is one of those general kind of vague moments in some of these letters. We are not sure exactly who he is writing to. Basically, what is being addressed in this book is what happens when somebody causes problems in one church, and they end up leaving, where do they go? They go to another church to cause problems, and they go to another church, and they go to another church, and, mostly, what John is doing is there have been some false teachers who have risen up and have been addressed in one church. Then, they left to go to another church, another church, another church, and false teachers are, basically, trying to deceive different churches. So, that is why he writes this book.

To guard the doctrine of the Incarnation because much of what they were teaching was about the divinity and humanity of Christ, and then to avoid false teachers. Avoid false teachers. He is encouraging them to avoid false teachers.

Practical Advice for Study...

He tells them to practice the truth, and then protect the truth. In this short book, the word "commandment" is mentioned 14 different times. "Commandment" mentioned 14 different times. You have "truth" and some of these other important words, but he is obviously commanding them to hold fast to the truth of Christ and to guard it.

3 John

Primary Information for Starters...

Then you have got 3 John. This is the shortest book in the Bible. 3 John is the shortest book in the Bible, and, basically, there are four different characters involved in this short book. One is John. He is the one who wrote it. Gaius, he is the one who received it. Diotrephes, he is the one who caused it. He is the one who made the letter necessary, and Demetrius who carried it. Basically, what had happened was, in that day, itinerate missionaries would travel around from church to church, and it was expected for the churches in different places to offer them hospitality. Just as Johnny is visiting here, and the folks from up north, we want to offer hospitality. Well that was kind of the picture there. Well, it was a part of that whole picture that a missionary who traveled around would have a letter so to speak that would verify who they were and that they represent this Church. It was their way of making sure that they were going to guard against false teachers. Well, you had this guy, Diotrephes,

who, basically, was causing a mess. He wanted to be boss in the church, and he was usurping John's authority and the authority of other church leaders, and he was not showing the kind of hospitality that is call for there.

So, the primary theme is hospitality in the church. That is really what 3 John is mainly about.

Practical Advice for Study...

The overall structure we see in those three people. Gaius is a prosperous Christian, Diotrephes a proud Christian, then Demetrius a pleasant Christian. That is kind of an overview of the structure.

Jude

Primary Information for Starters...

Last two books. You have Jude, another small book, written by Jude or Judas, brother of Jesus. The primary theme, and this is a word that you will see highlighted, "contend for the faith." Contend for the faith. Fight for, guard the faith. The picture in Jude is the soldiers who are holding the fort at any cost, doing whatever is necessary to guard and contend for the faith.

Practical Advice for Study...

You see the condemnation of false teachers based on seven Old Testament examples. So, in this short book, you have a lot of allusions to the Old Testament. The picture is, he is challenging them to guard the faith, but he is doing it by emphasizing the power of Christ to keep His church to the end. Jude emphasizes the power of Christ to keep His church to the end. So, he is saying, "Guard the church. Guard your faith. Guard the gospel that has been entrusted to you because you have a Savior who is guarding your salvation. He guards you, so let's guard the gospel that he has entrusted to us." That is the picture that we have in the book of Jude.

Revelation

Primary Information for Starters...

Finally, Revelation. What is this book all about? What genre is this book? How do you even begin to describe or classify Revelation? Well, basically, in the very beginning of this book, we see it referred to as three different types of literature. First, it is referred to as Apocalyptic literature. Looking toward the future, and then you see using all kind of images in that. Second is Prophecy. It is a word about things to come, and then it is a letter. It is an Epistle. So, basically, the conclusion we come to is this book has no parallel, and it doesn't fit into any other groups. This is unique in and of itself. Revelation is a very unique book.

Now, this is not in your notes, and it is just going to be side information. We are not going to camp out here long, but throughout church history, there have been different approaches people have taken to how to interpret Revelation. How you understand this book, and, basically, there are four main approaches, and I am just going to run through them real quick. They are not in your notes.

The first approach to Revelation is called a Pretorius approach to it, which basically means we are looking at Revelation as something that was only intended for those first Christians in the first century, and the only application is to what was going on is to what was going on in their lives at that time. It is not about future things. It is about what was going on right there, and that is where it stops. Its meaning stops. Second is a historical approach to the book of Revelation, which basically says that all of church history is fulfilling the things we see in the book of Revelation. So, there have been attempts in church history to tie details

that have come along the way in the last 2,000 years back to this verse or that verse in Revelation. A historical approach. Third is symbolic. There are some people who believe that Revelation is just symbolic of the battle between Christ and Satan, good and evil, and we should just interpret it as simply that. Symbolism. Then, fourth is the Futurist interpretation, which basically says this is prophecy. This is something that is looking toward actual events that are going to happen one day.

Basically, the way that I would encourage you to look at the Book of Revelation is through two lenses. The first lens I would encourage you to look at the Book of Revelation through is the lens of what it meant to these first century Christians. Was there application to them? Yes. We are going to see that in just a second. There was huge application of where they were, and the gospel's effect on where they were at that time. Then, it makes it pretty clear at the beginning of this book that it is about prophecy. So, not only look at what it meant for them then, but second, look at what this Book is telling us about all time as a whole. There are all kinds of incidents in Scripture where, even in the Old Testament, we see a prophecy of something that is going to happen, and it is fulfilled at one point in part, but it is fully fulfilled in Christ. That is kind of the picture that we are seeing here, so look at it through two lenses. Through what this meant for those people at that time, but also what it means for all people of all time. So, with those two lenses, let's dive into this.

The book was written by John when he was exiled on Patmos. After Nero, an emperor named Domitian came along. Domitian was a coldblooded murderer and was wreaking havoc on the Church. Nero had been horrible. Domitian was horrible as far as persecuting the Church. As a result, John is on the Isle of Patmos at this point, and he is in his nineties. He was probably very old at this point and was writing this as he is in exile. Not much hope for anything else is going to happen in John's life, and that is why he is writing this book to Christians who are facing persecution back on the mainland in the first century. The whole book is about the gospel and about the future of God's Kingdom. It is about the gospel and the future of God's Kingdom.

The primary theme is the revelation of Jesus Christ. From Revelation 1, it is clear this book is about the supremacy of Jesus Christ, and how he is revealed in all of history, the totality of history.

Practical Advice for Study...

So, as you study it, as you studied it, here are some things, this part is a little longer the practical advice for study than some others, but I want to encourage you in a few ways. First of all to look for the Old Testament throughout Revelation. Something we get so caught up thinking is that Revelation is about the future, and we start getting into this "Left Behind" mode that we leave the real meaning of Revelation behind because there is Old Testament that is looking back as well throughout this thing. Out of 404 Verses there are 278 references to the Old Testament. 278 verses out of 404 that contain references to the Old Testament. These are the books that it is predominate from: Psalms, Daniel, Zechariah, Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Joel.

It is really neat to see how Genesis and Revelation serve as "bookends" of the Bible. They are "bookends" of the Bible. I have listed some things there. We won't look at those tonight, but it is an incredible picture to see how this is no accident that Genesis said what it said and Revelation says what it says. It all comes together. We really see the unity of the Bible in the book of Revelation.

Some help in understanding this Apocalyptic imagery. This beast, these horns, what is going on in this book? Well, a few things. First of all, remember that the imagery is fantasy. Now,

by that I don't mean that it is not truth, but I do mean that it is images that do represent things. If we get so embroiled in what is this part of this beast or this part of this dragon mean, and we start getting so focused on these little minute things, then maybe we are missing the point of why it is depicted this way. So, don't get too caught up in that. John interprets the most important images. The most important images we need to know exactly what they are, we are not left in jeopardy on what they are. He makes it clear. Pay attention to the fixed images throughout the book. There are certain images that represent judgment or certain images that represent blessing that we really can focus on and pay attention to, and the things that repeat and reoccur are the things that we need to camp out on. Then, see the visions as a whole, not always pressing every detail. See the overall picture of what is going on here because, if you get caught up in trying to interpret this, this, this and all this little picture right here, you will miss the forest for the trees.

Finally, see the majesty of God in Christ all over Revelation. Domitian had claimed that he was "Lord" and "God," and he needed to be addressed as "Lord" and "God." So, over and over again in this book, John says, "You are not Lord, and you are not God," and he makes it clear through the picture of Christ. The throne is mentioned 44 times. King, kingdom, or rule about 37 times, and power and authority about 40 times. The sovereignty of God is all over that book.

WHY DID GOD GIVE US THE NEW TESTAMENT? The New Testament as Theology

Okay. That leads us to Part 2. We have an overview of the books of the Bible. The books of the New Testament. Now, I want us to see how they come together. How they come together. Now, this is where we are going to briefly tie together the Old and New Testaments. If you were here for Old Testament Secret Church, we are going to pick up where we left off there and see how it catapults us into the New Testament.

Why did God give us the Old Testament?

You have in your notes there, "Why did God give us the New Testament?" Now, we are thinking about that theological dimension. We thought through some of the historical, literary picture. Now, the theological dimension. Why did God give us the Old Testament? Main reason, over-arching reason, this is based on notes from Secret Church that we saw in the Old Testament last November. To reveal how God redeems His people for His kingdom. That is the whole point of the Old Testament. It is showing how God is taking the initiative to bring His people back to Himself. He is redeeming His people for His Kingdom.

Now, God's Kingdom we described as three-faceted. First of all, God's kingdom involves people who are ruled by the King. People that he rules and reigns over. People that are ruled by the King. Second, a place where the King has dominion. So, you have people and a place where the King has dominion. Then, the kingdom involves, third, a purpose for the King and His kingdom.

So, what we saw in the Old Testament was God bringing His people to His place for His purpose. We saw that in different times. We saw it at the beginning of creation. We saw after the fall of creation and what God did with the Patriarchs, what God did with the Judges and the Prophets, what God did through his Kings, what He did to the United Monarchy and the Divided Monarchy in the Old Testament. What God did through, basically, anarchy after

that. It is was over and over again we saw this theme of God bringing His people to His place for His purpose.

Now, that is the Old Testament picture, and everything, when you get to the end, points to the day when God will redeem His people for His Kingdom and establish His reign over all creation. That is what the Old Testament is pointing toward, but the Old Testament is an incomplete story. The Old Testament is incomplete. We are left hanging at the end of Malachi. We want something else, but it is not there. So, you have this period of about 400 or 500 years where you don't hear anything, and then you get the New Testament.

Why did God give us the New Testament?

To finish what the Old Testament started. The New Testament finishes what the Old Testament started. Here is the beauty of the New Testament. God redeems His people for His kingdom in Christ. The whole plan of the kingdom revolves around Christ. What we see in the New Testament, you think about people, place and purpose, God's Kingdom, Jesus perfectly represents the people of God. He perfectly represents the people of God. We are going to see this unfold. Jesus is the perfect place where the glory of God dwells, and Jesus perfectly fulfills the ultimate purpose of God. Everything comes to a head in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is the King at the center of scripture! Everything points to Him. The Old Testament points forward to Him. The New Testament gives us a picture of Him, and the Church points back to Him. Everything centers on Christ! Everything in Scripture must be interpreted through Christ and the Gospel of Christ. Everything centers on the King revealed in the New Testament. King at the center of Scripture. The beauty of this book, of all these books is the fading shadow of the Kingdom of God in the Old Testament has now been illuminated by the glorious reality of Christ in the New Testament, and it is a glorious reality. That is what I want us to dive into. It is an incredible picture.

What I want us to do is that, you have an insert in your notes that says "The Kingdom of God" at the top. This is going to be kind of our map for this second part of looking at the New Testament. What you have on this map right here is you have three different sections. This chart/map is divided at the top by a timeline, and what you see on the left is "Christ." You have a picture of Christ in Matthew to John, and then it comes to the cross where he dies, rises from the grave and ascends into heaven. Then, you have the "Period of the Church" and that is the picture that we get from Acts all the way to Jude. A picture of the Church, the Church growing, the Church advancing, the Church encouraging one another, all that picture. Then, it is all looking forward to when Jesus comes back. When he comes back that inaugurates the picture of the restoration of all creation which we see in Revelation. So, we have Christ, the Church, and Creation. That is kind of a timeline. So, with that I would like for us to take each one of those time periods, and I want us to think about the Kingdom in those time periods. What we see revealed about the King, and then, at the bottom, the very bottom, we are going to ask some questions because the last thing I want us to do is come in here tonight and study the New Testament as mere theory or knowledge. We need to see how the Word comes to life in us, and how it affects our lives. So, I want us to guard tonight against just getting a bunch of knowledge about the New Testament and not seeing how it relates to our lives.

How does God reveal His Kingdom in the New Testament?

So, I want to challenge you with three questions tonight based on the over arching message of the New Testament. How does God reveal His kingdom in The New Testament? We are going to go kind of piece by piece through these, but I am going to go ahead and give you the top three blanks. You actually have blanks in two different places on your notes and in here. The first thing we are going to look at is how He reveals His Kingdom through the

gospel of His Kingdom. Through the gospel of the Kingdom. That is the time of Christ. Through the gospel of the Kingdom.

Second, we are going to see how God reveals the Kingdom through the mission of the Kingdom. That is what we are going to see in the Church. From the gospel of the Kingdom to the mission of the Kingdom, and then, we are going to close out with the hope of the Kingdom. We are going to close out with the hope of the Kingdom. So, the challenge before us is to stay awake until we get to the hope. It is okay to get tired. It is okay to stand up and walk around. It is okay to kind of do that maneuver how ever many times that you need to. You just did that. Okay that is great. You just do whatever you need to. We have got hope coming. There is hope of an end here. Okay. Hold on to the hope. All right?

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

So, we have the Gospel of the Kingdom, the mission of the Kingdom, and the hope of the Kingdom. I want us to see those unfold in three different ways. What we will do is kind of keep this handy as we go along, and we are going to fill in these blanks as we come to them. The Gospel of the Kingdom is where we are going to start. Let me encourage you to pull out your Bibles. We are going to do some more looking at different things in Scripture. We did that some in the first part. We are going to do some more in the second part because I want you to see these things unfold and give you an opportunity, maybe, to underline some verses and put a little note out beside that deals with what we are talking about. So, the more activity that involves, the more it will keep us awake. Okay. Here we go.

The Gospel of the Kingdom. What is the gospel? If I were to ask every single person in here tonight, "What is the gospel," I would probably get different answers. Exactly what is the gospel? So, what we need to do is dive in to see the gospel as the declaration of who Christ is and what Christ has done. That is what the gospel centers around. It centers around the coming of the Kingdom of God. So, the first truth that we see, I want you to see in the Gospel of the Kingdom, is that the King has come! That is how the New Testament starts. With the declaration that the King, we are not waiting for him any more, the King has come. He is on the scene. The King is in the house. Okay? That is what we are going to see at the very beginning of the New Testament. I want you to see it in a few different ways.

First of all, the Old Testament people's anticipation. The Old Testament people's anticipation. Old Testament Micah 5. I am going to read a passage from there. If you trust yourself to find Micah fast enough then go for it. Micah 5:1. It says, *Marshal your troops, O city of troops...* Now remember this is the Prophet speaking about things to come.

...for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod. "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace.

That is a prophecy in the Old Testament that is pointing toward the New Testament, and that was their anticipation. What you had in the first century Jewish world, is you had this anticipation since the end of the Old Testament of when is the King going to come, especially under this Roman rule. How are we going to be delivered from the Romans? They are waiting for a king to come to rise up and establish God's reign over all Rome, all the world. They are ready for them to be restored. That is what they are looking forward to, and that is what had been said. (*Micah 5:2-4*) "... Even Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel...and his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. So that is the Old Testament people's anticipation.

Then, we get to the New Testament and the King's introduction. I want you to turn with me to Matthew 1. Matthew 1 and I want you to see the King's introduction, the tie-in here. I listed a couple of others. They are all over the Old Testament and, just by way of note, I have tried to list a good number of Scriptures here for you to be able to go back and look on your own, but this does not represent all that demonstrate these truths. There are so many Scriptures there in the Old Testament, but you get to Matthew 1, and it had been said way back here whose origins are from old from ancient times.

So, in the King's introduction here in Matthew 1, it says, "A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham." That is a loaded sentence. He is the son of Abraham of old, and he starts with Abraham and goes down to give us a list of the genealogy of Jesus. He starts intentionally with Abraham. Remember who Matthew is writing to. He is writing to the Jewish people. He is King of who? The Jews. So, he starts with Abraham, but he doesn't just emphasize Abraham, he emphasizes that he is the son of who? David, the anointed king who was the mediator of the covenant. He says He is the Son of David, and so we see Matthew 1:2-6... Remember these are the genealogies we skip over and it makes it easier to read through a chapter of the Bible because you don't have to read every single word? Verses 2 to 6 you see it stop "Jesse the father of King David," and it starts again, "David was the father of Solomon," and it goes down all the way to verse 16, "Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." The picture is that the King has come.

He is the Anointed King that we have been looking for. That is how Matthew 1 sets it up. Then, you get down to verse 20, and it says, and you might underline son of David or son of Abraham in these verses. Look at verse 20. "...after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream," talking about Joseph here, "and said, "Joseph son of David..." He is emphasizing that he is in the Davidic line. Then, you get over to Matthew 2:1-2. Remember Micah 5? "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem..." Coincidence? God has got this thing rigged.

In Bethlehem Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.

Then, you get down to verse 6 and guess where he is quoting from. Micah 2:5. "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel." He is the anointed King that had been looked at ever since the beginning. Now, throughout the rest of Matthew, we won't look at all these verses, 9:17, 15:22, and so on over and over again, his Abrahamic and Davidic lineage are emphasized. He is the son of David. He is the King who was promised who would come. From the very beginning, Matthew is making clear: this is the King that we have been waiting for. What you are going to see throughout all these

things that I am calling the “King’s introduction” here, all of them are rooted in just the first few chapters of each of the Gospels. We are not even diving into the middle of these books or the ends of these books. They are all in the introduction. How is Jesus Introduced to the people? First of all, the anointed King.

Second, He is introduced as God. He is God. You get to Matthew 20:23, really 22 and 23, Matthew 1:22-23. *“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said to the Prophet. ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel...’—which means, what? “God with us.”* Who is with us in Jesus? God is with us. So, not only is He the King, but He is God.

Third, He is the new Adam. The new Adam. What do you mean by that? Well, turn with me over to Luke, his introduction. Look at Luke 3. This is one of those places you know when you get there. Maybe put a little note out to the side. Jesus is the new Adam. Just kind of mark your Bible up to help you understand as you are reading through it. In Luke 3:23, he gives the lineage of Jesus. He does it kind of backwards from what Matthew did. It says in verse 23, *“Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph...”* Then, he starts working backwards, but he doesn’t stop at Abraham. He goes all the way back, when you get to verse 38, *“the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.”* Why would Luke do that? Who is he writing to? Not primarily Jewish people, he is writing primarily to Gentiles. So, he is tying the person of Christ all the way back to the first man, Adam. Now, what is interesting is right after, why did Luke not do this in Luke 1 or Luke 2? Why didn’t he take Matthew’s advice and do it that way? Well, he does it here, and then in Luke 4:1, he launches into a picture of Jesus going into the wilderness to be what? To be tempted. We have this picture of Jesus being linked to Adam. So, the reader is brought back to Adam who in his temptation failed, and the result is all of us across this room, all us throughout history have a sinful nature in us. It is inherited from Adam. Romans 5. So, there is a new Adam on the scene, and He goes into the wilderness and is tempted and guess what? He doesn’t give in. This is the new Adam who is able to pay the price for our sin because He alone, in the landscape of human history, did not fall in the lines of Adam of old. All of us have, every single one of us has, and it disqualified us from ever to be able to save ourselves. But Jesus is the new Adam. He is the new Adam that represents us, and God credits the righteousness that was His on to us. Romans 5:12-21, incredible exposition of that picture. So, we when see Jesus as the new Adam. It is linking him all the way back to Genesis.

Next, He is true Israel, the Seed of Abraham. I almost said Birmingham. He is not. He is not. He is not the seed of Birmingham. Okay. Wow. Okay. Go back to Matthew 2, and I want you to see Matthew 2 again. Sorry, we are going to be back and forth all over the place, but I want you to see this. How he is linked with Israel, and how this even relates to the temptation narrative that we see in Luke 4 as well as in Matthew 4. In Matthew 2:14, this is when they escaped to Egypt, and it says, *“So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’”* Now, does anyone know what book he is quoting from there? Quoting from the book of Hosea 11:1. Okay. Now, some of you are thinking they really paid attention in Old Testament Secret Church. How did they know? Well, they have probably got a little note at the bottom of their Bible, a little letter that kind of sends you down. You can be an instant Bible scholar. This is really neat. So, Hosea 11:1. Not that you may not have been paying attention at Secret Church, but when you go back to Hosea, which we won’t look at tonight, I want you to see is that is a passage that is talking about the people of God he is going to bring back. So, what Matthew is doing here is he is equating Jesus with the people of God. He is the epitome of the people of God. You have a corporate picture of the people in Hosea

11, now becoming a singular, personal picture of Jesus. *"Out of Egypt I called my son."* (Hosea 11:1) Jesus and the people of Israel brought together.

Now, when you get to Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus goes through the temptations. Now, when He goes through the temptations, three different times He is tempted, and every single time He says the same thing. What? What does He say? He says, *"It is written..."* and He quotes from the Old Testament. Now, let's see if we have learned how to be instant Bible scholars. He said in verse 4, *"Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* Where is He quoting from there? Deuteronomy 8:3. Okay. All right. It is easy. Then, you get down to verse 7. *"It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* Where is He quoting from there? Deuteronomy 6:16. Now, you have one more. Verse 10, *"Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"* Where is that quotation from? Deuteronomy 6:13. All those quotations from the book of Deuteronomy from when Israel was tempted in the wilderness, and Israel failed. Over and over again Israel failed in the wilderness. Old Testament history is the picture of Israel failing over and over and over again. So, Jesus comes on the scene, and it just so happens, by coincidence, that when He is tempted, He quotes from there and says, "I am not going to fail." Jesus is the true Israel. He is the epitome of the people of God, and when He comes on the scene and goes into battle with the devil, He does not come out the loser. He comes out the winner in Matthew 4:11 where God's people throughout her history have not been able to do that. Jesus is able to do that. He is the true Israel. Isn't this good? All right. He is King, the anointed King. He is God, and He is the new Adam, and you know that picture even gets better.

This whole Israel picture because, when Jesus gets to the point where He calls His disciples, how many does He happen to call? Twelve. Well, that is quite a coincidence because the people of Israel had how many tribes? Twelve tribes. So, you see that Jewish imagery. Then remember Abraham? Remember the Abrahamic blessing in Genesis 12? *"I will bless those that bless you. I will curse those that curse you and through you all the nations of the earth will be blessed."* In Matthew 28:19-20, at the end of this picture of Jesus Christ, He rises up from His resurrection, and He says, "Now we are going to go and we are going to be a blessing and we are going to make disciples..." In where? All nations. All the peoples of the earth are going to come to know the love and the glory of my Father. That is where it is all headed. The Jewish picture of Jesus is incredible in the book of Matthew. Okay.

He is next. Let's go to John a little bit here. He is the Passover Lamb. John 1:29, when he is spotted, *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"* When we get, now who wrote the book of Revelation? Anybody remember? John. Revelation 5, the glorious picture that we are going to dive into is the lion who when He came to the earth was the lamb. It is incredible imagery here. The lamb, Passover Lamb. In Exodus, they sprinkled his blood over a doorpost. The Lamb has come! He is the one! When you are under the umbrella of his blood, you stand right before God. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of who? Remember the emphasis of John. He is writing for the world. He takes away the sins of the world, to all people within the sound of my voice and all people throughout all creation. His blood will cover the sins in your life when you trust in Him. That is the picture in John. He is the Passover Lamb.

Next, He is the Word of God. He is the Word of God. John 1:1, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Why the emphasis on the Word? Well, in the beginning. Does that sound like another book in the Bible? Genesis 1, *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* Over and over again throughout

Genesis 1 and 2 this creation narrative. How is creation coming to be? By the Word of God. God said this, "*Let there be light and there was...*" God said this, and it happened. God said this, and it happened. Over and over again, the power of the Word in Genesis 1 and 2.

When we get to John 1, he draws it all the way back. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" The revelation of God now in Jesus. The Word now has become flesh and dwelled among us. He is the Word of God. This is even a picture of the Old Testament prophet picture that we see. All throughout the Old Testament, the prophet was the spokesman of the Word of God. Who was more fit to be the spokesman of the Word of God? It is not just His teachings; it is His very person. He is God's spokesman. When you look at Mark 1:14-15, we won't go there. You might just make a little note there. That is when Jesus begins his ministry, and He goes down to Galilee to begin His ministry after something happens. After John is put in prison is when Mark shows the transition. John the Baptist was the Prophet, the link between the Old Testament and the New Testament put in prison, and Jesus began His ministry there in Mark 1. In that picture, we see there the inauguration of the beginning of Jesus' ministry. So, He is the Word of God.

Next, He is the Tabernacle. John 1:14. We talked about some in the Old Testament. "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us,*" literally says "tabernacled among us." In the Old Testament, you have a picture before the Temple was there of the Tabernacle, and that is where the presence and the glory of God dwelled among His people. That was the Old Testament picture now illuminated by the glorious reality of "Christ with us" in the Old Testament. He has made His dwelling among us. He has come to us. He has shown Himself to us, up close and personal. He is the Tabernacle.

Then, lastly, He is the Temple. He is the Temple. Look at John 2:13 and following. We won't start at verse 13. You remember the story. Jesus is cleansing the Temple so to speak. He is going in and turns everything over, and he is telling them, "*Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!*" Then in verse 17, "*his disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me,'"* and he quotes there from the Old Testament, but then listen to this:

Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

In other words, they got it. They finally got it, but Jesus, when He came, all throughout the Old Testament, and even up to this day, they would journey to the Temple to encounter the glory of God. You would make long journeys to come to this place where God dwelled among his people and where you would worship. You had this elaborate system of worship that was set up to revolve around the place where the glory of God dwelled. Jesus comes and says, "If you want to see the glory of God, if you want to encounter the glory of God, here I am. He is the Temple, I am the new Temple," and it just gets better that when this "new Temple" would die and the curtain of the old Temple would be torn in two, and He would rise from grave and would send His Holy Spirit. So, the Temple, where the glory of God dwells, all glory be to His name, would be us, that our bodies would be the Temple of the Holy Spirit! Therefore, we honor God with our bodies with great zeal, and we guard our bodies against any temptation that would come against us because we have the indwelling

of the Holy Spirit of the glory of God Himself dwelling in us. He is the Temple. Jesus is, remember, bringing God's people to His place? This is His place. That is where they would come, the Tabernacle, the Temple. Now Jesus is, that is what I mean by Jesus is, Jesus is the place of God. He is where the glory of God dwells. His Kingdom is coming full circle. We are seeing the picture here. Now, that is the King's introduction.

Next, we are seeing the King's Anticipation, the King's Introduction, the King's Proclamation. The King's proclamation. What did Jesus come and teach? We have seen who he is. What did he say? What we see in those verses he mentioned is pretty much a similar theme. I want us to look at the Mark one. Mark 1. While you are turning to Mark, the King's proclamation. Matthew 4:17 says something very similar to what we are about to look at. Matthew 4:23-25 talks about how He came preaching the good news of the Kingdom. In other words, the Gospel of the Kingdom. I want you to look at what Mark 1:14-15. This is the transition I mentioned earlier from the ministry of John the Baptist to the ministry of Christ. It said, "*After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!'*" So, that is the message that Jesus started proclaiming. It is exactly what he started proclaiming in Matthew 4 as well. The kingdom of God is near. Repent for the Kingdom of God is near. I want us to think about these phrases. There are over 100 references to the kingdom of God in the Gospels alone. It is mainly in the Gospels. We see it. We definitely see it thematically in the letters in the New Testament. It is mentioned, specifically, that word different times, but the picture is there. It is mentioned over 100 times in the Gospels.

I want us to think about the three phrases we saw in verse 15. First of all, "The time has come." "The time has come." We have already looked once at the Old Testament. We are going to kind of pause and not go back, but if you look at Zephaniah 3 or Isaiah 52, again just a couple of examples. In Isaiah, talking about the good news, "*those who bring good news,*" and the whole picture of God coming among his people and raising up and showing His power among his people. So, Jesus comes on the scene and says, "The time has come. It is here. It is game time."

Not only had the time come, but "the kingdom of God is near." Now, I want you to go with me to Luke 4. Luke 4. I want you to see this. In the beginning of Jesus' ministry in the Gospel of Luke, we have already talked about how He was tied to Adam at the end of Luke 3. He was tempted at the beginning of Luke 4. Look at verse 14,

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

He is quoting there from Isaiah 61. When you get to verse 20, it says, "*Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'*" "Those are some good verses in Isaiah, now you want to see them in action. Today it is fulfilled. The kingdom of God that has been prophesied is here." In verse 22 it says, "*All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came*

from his lips." They begin to try to put this whole picture together, but what is happening is Jesus saying, "The time has come. The Kingdom is here."

Now, when he is talking about "kingdom" here, well, we will see it in just a second. The kingdom of God is near. Well, no I think it would be good to go ahead and get this out there. When he is talking about "kingdom," when you survey, we won't have an opportunity to look at all the instances of "kingdom" in the Gospels, he is not primarily talking about a locality like the United Kingdom, the nation of England. That is a locality. When he is talking about "kingdom," that word is primarily, and it has different uses, but it is primarily, the overarching theme in the New Testament, in the Gospels especially, is authority. The King has authority. The Kingdom is a sovereignty, a right to rule. That is what is being emphasized at different points. So, when we see the authority, when we see Jesus talking about the Kingdom, what he is talking about is, basically, saying that God has come to earth in the person of Christ, God in the flesh, and He reigns, and He is ready to establish His reign in a whole new way based on everything that has happened in the Old Testament. So, the message, when we see Jesus saying, "The kingdom of God is near," he is basically saying, "The reign of God is upon you. The rule of God is upon you, so get ready." The kingdom of God is near.

Now, we are going to see that unfold in just a second. Then, He says, "*Repent and believe the good news.*" The King's proclamation: "The time has come, the kingdom of God is near, and repent, repent and believe the good news." We won't look at these verses, but Matthew 12:41 talks about how they repented at Nineveh, and they had better repent today. Luke 5:32 and Luke 13:3 and 5 are basically saying, unless you repent, you will perish. This is an inward change that Jesus is saying, "There is a change that needs to happen. The reign of God is here, and you need to come under the reign of God." That means turning aside from all the kingdoms of this world and submitting yourself to his kingdom. The message of the Gospel, the message of Jesus, was repent. That is not a word we even use very much today, but it was the central message of Jesus, and so, maybe it would be wise to recover the meaning of repentance. What does it mean to repent because the kingdom of God is near? We are going to see that in just a second, but the King has come! We have seen His introduction. We have seen His proclamation and all the anticipation that led to that, but that is not where the Gospels end. That is just the very beginning of the Gospels.

The King has conquered.

That is just a few of the first Chapters of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. The second part of this Gospel of the Kingdom is, not just the Kingdom has come, but the King has conquered. The King has conquered, and that is the second blank that is on your map in your notes, that yellow map you have for understanding the story line. The King has conquered.

The power of the Kingdom displayed. I want you to turn with me to Matthew 11:1-6. I want you to look with me at Matthew 11. This is interesting. What I am going to do is, I want us to read Matthew 11, and I am going to have Isaiah 35 handy over here to see the correlation between the two. Look at verse 2. Look at Matthew 11:2.

When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

Instead of saying, "Yes, I am the one to come,"

Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf

*hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.
Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."*

Now, I want you to keep your eyes on those verses right there, verses 5 and 6, and let me read you from Isaiah 35 which is a prophecy looking forward to when Israel would be redeemed. It says, in Isaiah 35:5. You have got to keep your eyes on those verses. *"Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy."* Does that sound familiar? The whole picture of the kingdom of Christ coming is that He would show the authority, the reign of God, not only with what He said, but with the way He lived. It is on that basis that Jesus says to John the Baptist, "If you want to know if I am real, look at what I am doing because what I am doing is illustrating, it is demonstrating, the power of the Kingdom." That is the purpose.

When we get to the New Testament, to this part of the Gospels, what we need to see is all these miracles that Jesus is doing. He is certainly doing out of love for people, no question, but the primary reason that He is doing this miracle here and that miracle there is to show, in different places, that the Kingdom has come. The authority of God, the reign of God, has come. He is demonstrating God's reign over a variety of different things. God's authority over a variety of different things.

First of all, just think about it. Jesus has authority over nature. He has authority over nature. Jesus is the kind of guy that if his friends are out on a boat in the middle of the water, and He has missed the boat and can't get out there to them, He just decides that He is going to take a stroll. So, that is what He does. He walks on the water in John 6. In Mark 4, when He is on the boat with His friends, and He hasn't taken a walk out there this time, but He is asleep, and they are having a big storm around them. They are all getting kind of scared, and He is snoozing over here. So, they go and wake Him up, and they say, "Jesus, wake up. We might go down tonight." So, Jesus wipes the sleep from His eyes, and He yawns and takes a stretch. Then, He just raises up His hand. He is a good guy to have on the boat with you at that point. Jesus has authority over nature.

When you are hungry, and you only have a little bit of food, it is Jesus who blesses that food and gives it to His disciples who hand it out to over 5,000 people at the beginning of John 6. He has authority over nature. Over and over again, we see this, that He has authority over nature. In Mark 4, at the end of that story of Him calming the waves, the disciples are stunned, and they said, *"Even the wind and the waves obey him."* They are scared in Mark 4. Why? Because there is only one who has power over the wind and the waves in the Old Testament. It is God Himself. These guys have just gone from being scared in a boat to realizing that God was in the boat with them, and just a side note, that is a good word, because that text can be, if we miss the point of the miracle, that text can be so skewed that we walk away, and we say, "Well, whenever I am going through a storm in life, God is going to get me through." You know, we can't promise our persecuted brothers and sisters in prison that there is going to be a day when they get out. Not on this earth, we can't make that promise. I tell you what promise we can make. We can make the promise that the God that has authority over all nature is right there with them in that prison walking them through it. They are not alone. God is with them. That is a better truth to hold on to than storms of life stuff. Jesus has authority over nature.

Second, Jesus has authority over disease. Disease or sickness. Mark 1. I mentioned earlier all of these different verses that are talking about all these different people coming to His house, and he is basically saying He is healing everybody in the town. It was a good thing to have Jesus in your town at that point. Look at John 9. I want you to see something very

interesting. Look at John 9. This is Jesus and a man born blind. One of my favorite stories in all the Gospels. Here is a guy, Jesus is talking about how He is "the Light of the World," and these people are debating why this guy is blind. Is it because his parents passed it on to him, or is it something that he did because somebody had to have messed up in order for him to be blind. So, Jesus comes on the scene and starts talking about how he is "the Light of the World." In verse 6, *"Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes."* That is kind of gross, you know. I mean we kind of glamorize the New Testament. It is kind of weird to see Jesus spitting, and then putting the saliva and this mud on this man's eyes, but all of a sudden he can see.

So, the religious leaders go crazy, and what I want you to see, and you might circle or underline these different words. You see one word at the beginning of all their questions. Look at verse 10. John 9:10. They asked him, *"How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded. He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes."* Then, you get down to verse 16, and about midway through, this guy starts getting badgered. Others asked, *"How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?"* The word "how" is mentioned again in the middle of verse 16. Then, you get to the end of verse 19. *"Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind?"* There it is. Circle it again.

'How is it that now he can see?' Then they asked him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered, 'I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?'

Isn't that a great response? If you want to believe it, then just do it, but I don't know "how?" They keep asking "How?" over and over and over again. Then, you get to the end of the story, and Jesus comes face to face with this guy who had been healed in verse 36. He doesn't ask "How?" What does he ask?

'Who is he, sir?' the man asked. 'Tell me so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.' Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshiped him.

The question changes in verse 36. The point of Jesus' miracles was not to show "How?" this or that could happen, but the point is to show who He is, and this man came to that realization. That is why we have the miracles over and over in the Gospels, to give us a picture of the King on the scene. He reigns. Okay.

Jesus has authority over nature, over disease. Jesus has authority over demons. Ah, this is a good one. Go to Matthew 12. We, obviously, see at different points Jesus healing people of demon possession, we see demons going into pigs, and it is always just an interesting scene. However, I want you to look with me at verse 24 when he is having a conversation with the Pharisees about these demons that are being driven out, and I want you to see what he says. Verse 24,

But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons..."

Now listen to these two verses.

*If I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out?
So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of
God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

It is showing you a picture of the kingdom of God. Then you get to verse 29, "*Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.*" What we are seeing here is a picture of Jesus saying, "When I cast out demons I am showing my authority over Satan. I am showing my authority over these demons." That is what He is showing over and over again in these demon possessions, demons being cast out. Every time He casts out a demon, don't miss the picture, is the picture of the reign of God over spiritual power in this world. The reign of Christ over every spiritual power in this world.

The whole picture in verse 29 is if you are going to go and rob a strong man's house, what do you have to do first? You have to bind the strong man, and Jesus said, "I am come to do one thing. I am binding the strong man because Satan has no power with me on the scene. I am the King, and I am going to bind him." He goes to a cross, and He defeats sin. He binds the strong man. Now, does sin still have presence in our lives? Do we still have struggles with sin? Are there struggles with sin in the rest of the New Testament? Yes, but he is bound and there is coming a day when it will be complete. That sin will be ultimately destroyed. All of these demon possession things, demons being cast out, are looking forward to the day when the Kingdom will be complete.

So, I remind you with the sins that we struggle with in this room, and the things that you just can't seem to get a hold of, an adversary says over and over again that you can't conquer this thing, remind him that he is bound! The Strongman is bound, and Jesus Christ reigns over all the spiritual powers of this world! That is the King! He has come!

Okay. Jesus has authority over suffering next. He has authority over suffering. Mark 5:25-34. We won't read there, you get to the very end in verse 34, "*Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.*" Be freed from your suffering. An incredible picture. The pain that this world brings and the freedom that Christ brings. Jesus has authority over suffering.

Jesus has authority over sin. Mark 2:1-11 when Jesus heals someone, but then also claims to be able to forgive his sins. Mark 2, 6 or 7, somewhere in there, the religious leaders are thinking, "Who does this guy think He is saying He has power to forgive sins. Only God can do that." It is the passage that C. S. Lewis said was most pivotal to bringing him to faith in Christ. For a king to make this kind of claim, to be able to forgive sins, it was showing his divinity. Jesus has authority over sin.

Finally, Jesus has authority over death. He has authority over death. Matthew 5:37-43 is the daughter who had died. He heard she was sick, and He didn't make it there in time. She was dead. You don't need to come anyway. He says, "You want me to come?" So, He comes into that room with a couple of people, and He raises her from the dead.

Then, you get to John 11:28-35, and you see his friend Lazarus. Jesus didn't make it in time for that one, they thought, and so He goes, and He says, "*Lazarus arise and come out.*" Then, you have this picture of His authority over death. Now, He has authority over all these different things. You see how Kingdom is a picture of authority and reign, sovereignty, and rule and Jesus is showing the reign of God here.

Now, the problem is when you get to this next thing. The power of the Kingdom has been displayed, but now the power of the Kingdom is in doubt. By that, I mean the unexpected, the absolutely unexpected tragedy of the cross. For Jesus to say, "I am going to suffer, be given up, and I am going to die." To say that over and over again, and have Peter, and we are hard on Peter sometimes, but it makes sense in some ways to pull Jesus aside and say, "That is not the way you set up a kingdom. You don't set up a kingdom by going to a Roman cross." The picture is still "the Kingdom conquers," and the picture is of the King going to where the battle is thickest, to the ultimate source of the battle and taking it head on and the King, our King, conquers by the cross. That is why, that is why the church thrives in persecution because the King has conquered by the cross. He knows how to take what the world intends for evil and turn it into the ultimate good. It is unexpected. Mark 8:31 and 9:1 gives you that picture in Peter's dialogue with Jesus and Jesus talking about the suffering of the Kingdom. It is an unexpected tragedy, but it all makes sense though. You put it together with all that you have seen at this point with all that Jesus was identified as in that introduction. He is the Passover Lamb. He is the Sacrifice in the Temple. He is the one that makes it possible for us to come to God. He is, especially in Mark, the Suffering Servant in Isaiah. It all comes together. The power of the Kingdom is in doubt in the unexpected tragedy of the cross, but the power of the Kingdom is declared in the ultimate triumph of the resurrection. The ultimate triumph of the resurrection. The King has come and the King has conquered!

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