

The Reign of God

John the Baptist preached, *"Reform your lives! The reign of God is at hand."*¹ Jesus proclaimed, *"Reform your lives! The kingdom of heaven is at hand,"*² and he preached the good news of God's reign.³ Jesus sent out the disciples and told them to make the announcement, *"The reign of God is at hand!"*⁴ The Pharisees were told, *"The reign of God is already in your midst."*⁵

What is the reign of God like? It has small beginnings for the believer but it's *like the yeast which rises,*⁶ *the mustard seed,*⁷ imperceptibly small but growing into a large bush where birds can nest, or *its like finding a buried treasure or pearl of great value*⁸ and then letting go of everything else in order to gain it.

What can we do to seek the reign of God? We can *love God with all our hearts, with all our thoughts, with all our strength, and love our neighbor as ourselves;*⁹ *be poor in spirit;*¹⁰ *accept persecution should it come;*¹¹ *be prepared to undergo many trials;*¹² *reform our lives and believe in the Gospel;*¹³ *do the will of our Father in heaven;*¹⁴ *be as trusting as children coming to*

*their father;*¹⁵ *look forward to the unfolding of the reign of God in our lives.*¹⁶

We can seek, through Jesus, that *the mystery of it be confided to us as it was to the disciples,*¹⁷ and when we hear the message take it in, and be like *the seed that multiplies a hundred-fold,*¹⁸ constantly bearing *witness to the reign of God among men.*¹⁹

The opponents of Jesus, demonic forces and their human followers, are trying to dislodge the Kingdom from its rightful place and undermine its importance in the life of the faithful. *From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent are taking it by force.*²⁰

But Jesus makes it clear that the devils have no say when he casts them out and the Kingdom's permanence is empowered: *But if it is by the finger of God that (I) drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*²¹

*The kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.*²² Paul's words to the Corinthians is a reminder of this aspect to us, *"But I shall come to you soon, the Lord willing, and find out, not what they say, but what they can do."*²³

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¹ Matthew 3:3

² Matthew 4:17

³ Matthew 9:35

⁴ Matthew 10:7-8

⁵ Luke 17:21

⁶ Matthew 13:33

⁷ Matthew 13:31-32

⁸ Matthew 13:44-46

⁹ Mark 12:28-34

¹⁰ Matthew 5:3

¹¹ Matthew 5:10

¹² Acts 14:22

¹³ Mark 1:14-15

¹⁴ Matthew 6:10

¹⁵ Luke 18:16

¹⁶ Mark 15:43

¹⁷ Mark 4:11

¹⁸ Matthew 13:18-23

¹⁹ Acts 28:23

²⁰ Matt 11:12

²¹ Luke 11:20

²² 1 Corinthians 4:20

²³ 1 Corinthians 4:19