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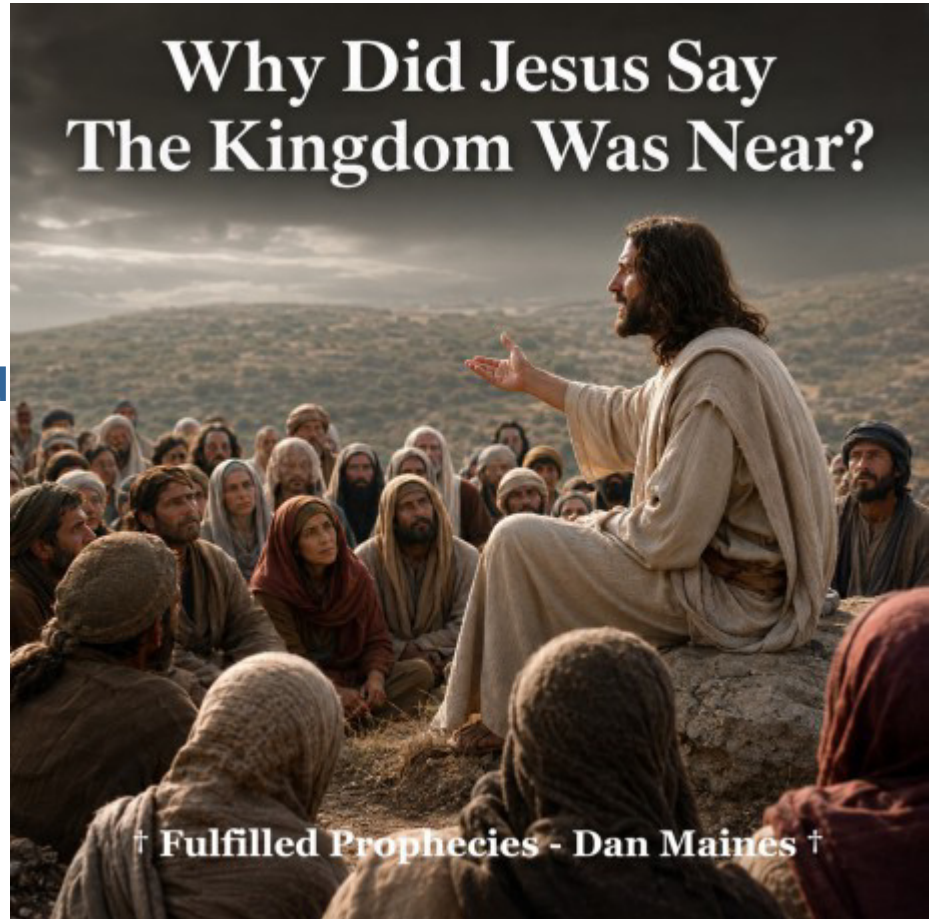
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[Kingdom - Why Did Jesus Say The Kingdom Was Near?](#)



By Dan Maines

Why Did Jesus Say The Kingdom Was Near?

Introduction

† One of the biggest problems for futurism is the simple fact that Jesus repeatedly said the kingdom was near. He did not say it would arrive thousands of years later. He spoke to real people standing before Him, and He expected them to understand that the promises of God were about to be fulfilled in their generation.

† If the kingdom was still future 2000 years later, then the words near, at hand, and coming quickly lose all meaning. Scripture must be allowed to define its own time statements plainly and consistently.

† The fulfilled perspective recognizes that Christ brought in His kingdom in the first century exactly as He promised, culminating in the judgment of Jerusalem and the full transition from the old covenant world into the new covenant kingdom. (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:34)

Matthew 3:1-2

Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

† John the Baptist announced that the kingdom was at hand, not thousands of years away. The phrase at hand means it was drawing near to them in their lifetime. (Matthew 3:1-2)

† John was preparing Israel for an imminent covenant transition. The old covenant age was about to reach its fulfillment through Christ. (Malachi 3:1; Luke 1:16-17)

† If at hand can mean thousands of years later, language itself loses all meaning. God communicated clearly to the people living in that generation. (Isaiah 46:10)

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

† Jesus preached the exact same message as John the Baptist. The kingdom was near because the King Himself had arrived among them. (Matthew 4:17)

† Christ never corrected the expectation of nearness. Instead, He intensified it throughout His ministry. (Matthew 10:7)

† Futurism pushes the kingdom thousands of years into the future, but Jesus kept placing it directly before His audience. (Luke 21:31-32)

Matthew 10:7

And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'

† Jesus commanded His disciples to preach that the kingdom was at hand to the cities of Israel in the first century. (Matthew 10:23)

† The disciples were not warning people about events 2000 years away. They were announcing the approaching fulfillment of covenant promises. (Daniel 2:44)

† Christ tied the coming of His kingdom to the mission going throughout Israel before the destruction that was coming upon that generation. (Matthew 23:36)

Mark 1:14-15

Now after John was taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the gospel."

† Jesus said the time is fulfilled. He did not teach that the prophetic clock would pause for thousands of years. (Galatians 4:4)

† The kingdom was connected to fulfilled prophecy, not postponed prophecy. Christ was bringing to completion what the prophets had spoken. (Luke 24:44)

† The audience hearing Jesus would've naturally understood these statements as referring to events approaching in their own generation. (Matthew 16:27-28)

Luke 11:20

But if I cast out the demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

† Jesus did not merely say the kingdom was coming someday. He said it had already come upon them through His ministry. (Luke 11:20)

† The presence of the King meant the kingdom itself was already breaking into their world. (Matthew 12:28)

† This destroys the idea that the kingdom could only be a distant future earthly system. Christ said it was already present among them. (Luke 17:20-21)

Luke 17:20-21

Now He was questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, and He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs that can be

observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

† Jesus explained that the kingdom was not an earthly political empire that could be physically observed with signs of military conquest. (John 18:36)

† The kingdom was a spiritual covenant reality established through Christ and His reign. (Romans 14:17)

† This completely destroys the futurist expectation of a future earthly kingdom centered in physical Jerusalem. Christ's kingdom was already arriving among them. (Luke 11:20)

Romans 14:17

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

† Paul spoke of the kingdom as a present reality already experienced by believers in the first century. (Romans 14:17)

† The kingdom was not dependent on earthly borders, physical temples, or national politics. It existed in the reign of Christ over His people. (Colossians 1:13)

† This directly contradicts the futurist expectation of a postponed earthly kingdom. (Hebrews 12:28)

Matthew 16:27-28

For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY PERSON

ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.

"Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

† Jesus directly tied His coming in the kingdom to the lifetime of some standing there listening to Him. (Matthew 16:27-28)

† This is one of the clearest time statements in the entire Bible. Some of His audience would still be alive when these things happened. (Matthew 24:34)

† Futurism cannot honestly stretch some standing here into thousands of years later without completely changing the meaning of Christ's words. (Revelation 1:1)

Luke 21:31-32

So you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.

† Jesus again declared the kingdom was near and connected it directly to the generation He was speaking to. (Luke 21:31-32)

† The destruction of Jerusalem was the visible sign that the old covenant age had ended and Christ's kingdom had been fully established. (Hebrews 12:26-28)

† Jesus did not warn a future distant generation. He warned His own generation repeatedly. (Matthew 23:36)

Acts 2:16-17

but this is what has been spoken through the prophet Joel:

'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says,
'THAT I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND;
AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHECY,
AND YOUR YOUNG MEN WILL SEE VISIONS,
AND YOUR OLD MEN WILL HAVE DREAMS;

† Peter did not say the last days would begin thousands of years later. He said this is that spoken by Joel. The kingdom age and last days were already arriving in the first century. (Acts 2:16-17)

† The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was proof that the promised new covenant kingdom was beginning. (Joel 2:28-32)

† Scripture consistently places the fulfillment of these promises in the first century generation. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Revelation 1:1-3

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

† John used the exact same time language Jesus used in the Gospels, shortly and at hand. The book itself declares its prophecies were near to the original audience. (Revelation 1:1-3)

† Futurism often redefines near, shortly, quickly, and at hand to mean thousands of years later, but scripture never uses language that way in normal communication. God was speaking to real people about events approaching in their lifetime. (Revelation 22:6-10)

† Revelation was written to prepare first century believers for events that were about to happen, not events thousands of years beyond their lifetime. (Revelation 22:10)

Historical References

† Eusebius recorded that the Christians remembered the warnings of Jesus and fled Jerusalem before its destruction, showing they understood His prophecies as near to their own time.

† Josephus described the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 with famine, tribulation, false prophets, and unparalleled suffering exactly matching the warnings Jesus gave in the Olivet Discourse.

† Clement of Alexandria spoke of the transition from the old covenant system into the new covenant order established through Christ.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We can trust the words of Jesus completely because everything happened exactly when He said it would.

† The kingdom is not something believers are still waiting to arrive. We're living in the reign of Christ now. (Ephesians 1:20-23)

† We don't need to fear failed newspaper predictions or endless future speculation because Christ already fulfilled His covenant

promises. (Hebrews 8:13)

† Understanding the fulfilled kingdom brings clarity, confidence, and consistency to the entire Bible. (Luke 24:27)

Q & A Appendix

Q If the kingdom already came, why is there still evil in the world?

A Christ's kingdom was never described as the immediate removal of all physical evil from the earth. His kingdom is a spiritual reign over His people. Even in the first century there was still evil while Christ reigned from heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Ephesians 1:20-23)

Q Didn't Jesus teach a future kingdom?

A Jesus consistently taught that the kingdom was near, at hand, and coming in the lifetime of His audience. The future aspect they awaited was fulfilled in the first century judgment and covenant transition. (Matthew 4:17; Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:34)

Q What was the sign the kingdom had fully arrived?

A Jesus connected the coming of the kingdom with the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the old covenant age. When the temple fell in AD 70, the old covenant system ended permanently. (Luke 21:20-32; Hebrews 12:26-28)

Q If the kingdom already came, why do many Christians still expect a future earthly kingdom?

A Many traditions interpret prophetic language literally when scripture often uses covenantal and symbolic language. Jesus and the apostles repeatedly placed the coming kingdom within

their own generation, not thousands of years later. (Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 24:34; Revelation 1:1-3)

Q Did the apostles believe they were living in the last days?

A Yes. The apostles consistently taught that they were already living in the last days and the end of the age. Peter said this is that spoken by Joel, and the writer of Hebrews said God had spoken in these last days. (Acts 2:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2)

Q Was the kingdom fully established before AD 70?

A The kingdom was already present during Christ's ministry, but the full transition from the old covenant world was completed with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70. That judgment marked the end of the old covenant age. (Luke 11:20; Hebrews 8:13; Luke 21:20-32)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Matthew 3:1-2; Matthew 4:17; Matthew 10:7; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 11:20; Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; Matthew 16:27-28; Luke 21:31-32; Acts 2:16-17; Revelation 1:1-3

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3; Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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