

Thy Kingdom Come — Introduction

Read Matthew 3:2; 4:17,23; 5:3,10; 6:10,33; 13:19,24,31,33,44,45,47; Luke 11:20; John 17:3; Isaiah 11:6-9.

1. What do you understand by the words “Thy Kingdom Come”? Have your views changed over the years? Were you surprised to hear that Jesus’ teaching on the kingdom of God/heaven is central to everything that he taught?
2. Have your views of Jesus changed over the years? How do you think of Jesus today?
3. Steve said that he was both satisfied and unsatisfied with Jesus. What did he mean? Do you feel the same way?
4. Can you relate to the words of pastor/author/theologian, Brian McLaren, who states: “... through these years, an uncomfortable feeling has showed me that the portrait of Jesus I found in the New Testament didn’t fit with the image of Christianity projected by religious institutions, charismatic televangelists, religious spokespeople in the media—and sometimes, my own preaching. Sometimes the discomfort has come when I realise that Jesus’ teachings and example don’t fit neatly in the categories of my theology.”
5. Steve said that the Jesus of the gospels is far more expansive than a ticket to heaven, far more interesting than just a religious leader who is essentially concerned with personal piety, and far more wonderful than most Christians proclaim. What do you think about this? Do you feel that Christians have “reduced” Jesus to a “personal Saviour” and a “Friend who is there in times of trouble”?
6. In which way is Matthew’s ‘kingdom of heaven’ and John’s ‘eternal life’ often misunderstood?
7. Why is it so important to hold the tension of God’s kingdom being both a present reality and a future hope?