

# BIBLICAL PRAXIS OF MISSION

Class 5: Sustaining Prayer Through A Watchful Lifestyle

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**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS “AT HAND” BEGIN ON PAGE 7 AND IS ADDRESSED FOLLOWING THE MAIN SESSION NOTES.**

## I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

- A. The Church is called to persevere in their calling to worship God and believe in his appointed Messiah, sanctify themselves in preparation for his Kingdom, and testify to all nations of the judgment and restoration of that Kingdom.

***In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. <sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (NKJV Matthew 6:9-13)***

***Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation (“to everyone, everywhere” NLT). <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. (ESV Mark 16:15-16)***

***Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written... (ESV Romans 11:25-26)***

- B. The Church is thus a *sojourning nation* witnessing to all the nations that the Day of the Lord is coming and Jesus is the Messiah. The Church is not a *dominionizing nation*, establishing the sovereignty of God, or an *escapist nation*, avoiding contact with this world, before the annihilation of creation.

***You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light... <sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. <sup>12</sup> Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge. <sup>13</sup> For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution... (NRSV 1 Peter 2:9-13)***

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES: [DOMINION \(TABLE OF CONTENTS\) BY C. PETER WAGNER](#) ARE ADDRESSED AT THIS POINT IN THE TEACHING AND ARE DOWNLOADABLE ON [THIS SESSION'S PAGE](#).**

- C. The grace of God through the Holy Spirit is given to the Church to strengthen us in our sojourning and our witness of him to whom we are sojourning. The Holy Spirit is given as a “gift” (Acts 1:4) and a “helper” (Jn. 14:16), that the Church might remain faithful and perseverant in her calling.

***Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit... <sup>8</sup> you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on***

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***you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* (NIV Acts 1:4-8)**

***I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge- <sup>6</sup> even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you- <sup>7</sup> so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (ESV 1 Corinthians 1:4-8)***

- D. This grace is released by means of prayer alone. The lack of the necessity of grace and the multiplication of the means of grace are the two primary reasons why the modern church refuses to organize itself around the place of prayer, individually and corporately.

***Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened... <sup>13</sup> If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (NIV Luke 11:9-13)***

***I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead... <sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus... <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (NIV Philippians 3:10-14)***

## II. SUSTAINING WATCHFUL PRAYER

- A. However, all prayer is not equal. Church history is littered with monastic movements that pray much, yet live in great sin and wickedness. God will not be mocked; He knows truth in the inward parts and demands righteousness.

***You do not have, because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. <sup>4</sup> You adulterous people! ... <sup>5</sup> do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? <sup>6</sup> But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (ESV James 4:2-6)***

1. Thus, to accomplish its mission and purpose the Church must order itself around *righteous prayer*, i.e. prayer in the context of true repentance and faith. This biblical prayer could also be described as "watchful prayer" or "prayer with faith".

***As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man... <sup>42</sup> Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come... <sup>45</sup> Who then is the faithful and wise servant... <sup>48</sup> suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, "My master is staying away a long time," <sup>49</sup> and he***

**then begins to beat his fellow servants (in pride) and to eat and drink with drunkards (in disbelief). <sup>50</sup> The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. <sup>51</sup> He will cut him to pieces... (NIV Matthew 24:37-51)**

**You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. <sup>37</sup> For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. <sup>38</sup> But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." (cf. Hab. 2:3-4) <sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved. <sup>11:1</sup> Now faith is being sure of what we hope for (resurrection and Kingdom) and certain of what we do not see (in this age, cf. 2:8). <sup>2</sup> This is what the ancients were commended for... <sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him (when Messiah comes, cf. 10:37). (NIV Hebrews 10:36-11:6)**

2. This language is borrowed from throughout the Old Testament, where God only answers the prayers of the righteous.

**I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. <sup>18</sup> If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. <sup>19</sup> But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. (ESV Psalm 66:17-19)**

**The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him. <sup>9</sup> The LORD detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness. (NIV Proverbs 15:8-9)**

**Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. <sup>15</sup> When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. <sup>16</sup> Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, <sup>17</sup> learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. (ESV Isaiah 1:14-17)**

**Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for the well-being of this people. <sup>12</sup> Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague." (NIV Jeremiah 14:11-12)**

**Then they will cry out to the LORD, but he will not answer them. At that time he will hide his face from them because of the evil they have done. (NIV Micah 3:4)**

**When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen, says the LORD Almighty. (NIV Zechariah 7:13)**

3. It is only the righteous that have liberty to ask for the grace of God with confidence that they will receive it.

**Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup> and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do**

**what pleases him.** <sup>23</sup> **And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.** <sup>24</sup> **Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.** (NIV 1 John 3:21-24)

**I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.** <sup>14</sup> **This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.** <sup>15</sup> **And if we know that he hears us-- whatever we ask-- we know that we have what we asked of him.** (NIV 1 John 5:13-15)

4. It is only to the righteous that God gives grace, and thus even those with a right theology and a right praxis will ultimately fall if a humble, repentant and believing heart is abandoned.

**And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory...** <sup>5</sup> **Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."** <sup>6</sup> **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time (cf. "when the chief Shepherd appears") he may exalt you (in the resurrection),** <sup>7</sup> **casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you...** <sup>10</sup> **And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you (in the resurrection).** <sup>11</sup> **To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.** (ESV 1 Peter 5:4-11)

- B. The primary way to maintain watchful prayer is a "watchful lifestyle," which is outlined in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Mt. 5-7; Lk. 6). Maintaining a repentant and believing heart is difficult and requires specific discipline, i.e. "acts of righteousness" (Mt. 6:1). These become the "means to the means of grace", so to say.

**Be careful not to do your "acts of righteousness" before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward (at the coming of Messiah) from your Father in heaven.** (NIV Matthew 6:1)

1. **Finances** – the primary aspect of the watchful lifestyle is remembering the poor. Because the accumulation of wealth and money is the primary means by which humanity rejects God's discipline in the cursing of the ground (cf. Gen. 3:17-19) and declares independence from His rulership, it is the primary means by which the human heart bolsters pride and thus becomes defiled. Generous giving is thus the means of acknowledging the sovereignty of God in this age and producing fruit in keeping with our fear of the Day of the Lord

**So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men (acknowledgment of authority). I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.** <sup>3</sup> **But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,** <sup>4</sup> **so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.** (NIV Matthew 6:2-4)

- ***Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also... <sup>24</sup> No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money (Gk. mammonas, Ar. for "treasure, riches...")... <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (NIV Matthew 6:19-33)***
  - ***Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, <sup>7</sup> for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world... <sup>9</sup> But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. <sup>11</sup> But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. <sup>12</sup> Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called (by self-sacrificial giving) and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (ESV 1 Timothy 6:6-12)***
2. *Forgiveness* – another aspect of the watchful lifestyle involves an ardent commitment to forgiveness and restraint from vengeance, which simply stems from an acknowledgement of present divine sovereignty and amnesticism. Without forgiveness the human heart is defiled by pride and diluted by a false sense of justice. We forgive in light of the Day of the Lord.

***This, then, is how you should pray... <sup>12</sup> "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." <sup>14</sup> For if you forgive men when they sin against you (in this age), your heavenly Father will also forgive you (in the age to come). <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive men their sins (in this age), your Father will not forgive your sins (in the age to come).* (NIV Matthew 6:9-15)**

- ***Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" <sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. <sup>23</sup> Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants... <sup>32</sup> Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' <sup>34</sup> In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. <sup>35</sup> This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you (at the coming of Messiah) unless you forgive your brother from your heart." (NIV Matthew 18:21-35)***

- **Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way (i.e. in meekness and forgiveness)... since they are heirs with you of the grace of life (i.e. resurrection), so that your prayers may not be hindered. <sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. <sup>9</sup> Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless (i.e. forgive), for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing (i.e. be forgiven). (ESV 1 Peter 3:7-9)**
3. **Fasting** – righteous prayer, individually and corporately, is also maintained by fasting. Fasting is the front door to entering “the house of the watchful and the wise.” It is the initial means of *self-humiliation*, by which we maintain a repentant and believing heart.

**And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others (in self-exaltation)... <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you (in the Kingdom). <sup>19</sup> Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth (in possession and recognition)... (ESV Matthew 6:16-19)**

- **He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves... <sup>11</sup> "The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men... <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week...' (ESV Luke 8:9-12)**
- **Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; <sup>6</sup> they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; <sup>7</sup> they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.' <sup>8</sup> But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup> And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. <sup>11</sup> The greatest among you will be your servant. <sup>12</sup> For whoever exalts himself (in this age) will be humbled (in the age to come), and whoever humbles himself (in this age) will be exalted (in the age to come). (NIV Matthew 23:5-12)**
- **Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell (Gk. Gehenna) as you are. <sup>16</sup> Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' <sup>17</sup> You blind fools! ... <sup>25</sup> Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. (NIV Matthew 23:15-25)**

**CLASS 5 (SN): THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS "AT HAND"**

**Related to these supplemental notes, and helpful in this subject, is a more recent audio teaching entitled [Exegesis of "Kingdom Now" Passages](#).**

**III. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Ultimately, the burden of proof rests on those who claim a change in the metaphysical nature of the Kingdom (i.e. spiritualization). There is no hint of a spiritualized kingdom in the Old Testament, and thus it is assumed to remain the same in the New Testament unless otherwise stated *specifically* and *clearly*.
- B. This must be the hermeneutical starting point concerning the study of the Kingdom; otherwise, a perpetual and boundless distortion and perversion is inevitable—and that concerning the central aspect of the gospel.

**IV. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND**

- A. The fundamental declaration concerning the Kingdom in the New Testament is its nearness. Jesus, John the Baptist, and the disciples all declare that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

***John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Gk. eggizo)." (ESV Matthew 3:1-2)***

***From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near (Gk. eggizo)." (NIV Matthew 4:17)***

***And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand (Gk. eggizo).'*' (ESV Matthew 10:7)**

- <1448> evggi,zw eggizo {eng-id'-zo}

*Meaning:* 1) to bring near 2) to draw or come near to, to approach

*Origin:* from 1451; TDNT - 2:330,194; v

*Usage:* AV - draw nigh 12, be at hand 9, come nigh 8, come near 5, draw near 4, misc 5; 43

- B. This nearness has generally been interpreted in two ways:
1. Metaphysically/Spatially:
    - a) The Messiah and/or God are personally near.
    - b) The angelic hosts and/or Holy Spirit are near in the second heavens/supernatural.
    - c) Heaven's citizens/ambassadors/representatives/messengers are personally near.
  2. Temporally/Chronologically:
    - a) John the Baptist and Jesus were wrong.
    - b) A spiritual kingdom was set up at Jesus' Baptism/Triumphal Entry/Last Supper/Cross/Ressurrection/Ascension/Pentecost.

- c) 2,000 years is considered by God to be “near,” i.e. time is relative to God.
- C. The Day of the Lord initiates the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and thus they are inherently interrelated. Because of this, the phraseology of both are somewhat interchangeable in the New Testament.

***Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'*** <sup>10</sup> ***But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say,*** <sup>11</sup> ***'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.'*** <sup>12</sup> ***I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.*** (NIV Luke 10:9-12)

***And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*** <sup>8</sup> ***Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons...*** <sup>14</sup> ***And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.*** <sup>15</sup> ***Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.*** (ESV Matthew 10:7-15)

***For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written (cf. the Day of the Lord)...*** <sup>25</sup> ***There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.*** <sup>26</sup> ***Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.*** <sup>27</sup> ***At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*** <sup>28</sup> ***When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near...*** <sup>29</sup> ***Look at the fig tree and all the trees.*** <sup>30</sup> ***When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near*** (“at hand” KJV). <sup>31</sup> ***Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near*** (“at hand” KJV). (NIV Luke 21:22-31)

1. The proclamation of the nearness of the Day of the Lord is simply a reiteration of the prophetic declaration already spoken throughout the Scriptures.

***Wail, for the day of the LORD is near*** (“at hand” KJV/NKJV); ***as destruction from the Almighty it will come!*** <sup>7</sup> ***Therefore all hands will be feeble, and every human heart will melt.*** <sup>8</sup> ***They will be dismayed: pangs and agony will seize them; they will be in anguish like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at one another; their faces will be aflame.*** <sup>9</sup> ***Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it.*** (ESV Isaiah 13:6-9)

***Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.*** <sup>15</sup> ***Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand*** (“near” NASB/ESV/NIV/NRSV); ***it shall come as destruction from the Almighty.*** (NKJV Joel 1:14-15)

***Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near*** (“at hand” KJV/NKJV/NIV), <sup>2</sup> ***a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!*** (ESV Joel 2:1-2)

**Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. <sup>15</sup> The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. <sup>16</sup> The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. (ESV Joel 3:14-16)**

**The great day of the LORD is near-- near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the LORD will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. <sup>15</sup> That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness... <sup>18</sup> In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth. (NIV Zephaniah 1:14-18)**

2. Jesus and the disciples were simply declaring the word of the Lord already spoken to the prophets. In other words, the apostolic declaration of the nearness of the Kingdom is simply a *prophetical reiteration*.

**In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar... the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. <sup>3</sup> He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>4</sup> As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him...'" <sup>7</sup> John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ... <sup>15</sup> The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come... <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." <sup>18</sup> And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them (cf. repent, the kingdom of God is at hand). (NIV Luke 3:1-18)**

**• In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand... <sup>11</sup> I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire (i.e. the Day of the Lord)." (ESV Matthew 3:1-11)**

- D. The Day of the Lord—and thus the Kingdom of God—are still considered to be “near” after all the events that are typically interpreted as the initiation of the spiritualized Kingdom.

**Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is almost gone, and the day is near (“at hand” KJV/NKJV/ESV). Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. (NASB Romans 13:11-12)**

**Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup>**

***not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (ESV Hebrews 10:23-25)***

***But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. <sup>4:1</sup> Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved... <sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand ("near" NASB/NIV/NRSV, "coming soon" NLT). (ESV Philippians 3:20-4:5)***

***Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer (cf. Lord) waits for the land to yield its valuable crop (cf. resurrection of the righteous) and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains (cf. Holy Spirit as means of resurrection). <sup>8</sup> You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near ("at hand" ESV/NKJV). (NIV James 5:7-8)***

***But they (pagans) will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead (cf. Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:2; 2 Tim. 4:1; etc.)... <sup>7</sup> The end of all things is near ("at hand" KJV/NKJV/ESV). Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. <sup>8</sup> Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. (NIV 1 Peter 4:5-8)***

- E. Thus, the timing of the Day of the Lord is considered to be "near" because it is in relation to God, and time itself is relative to Him.

***First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. <sup>4</sup> They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised (cf. the Day of the Lord)? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." <sup>5</sup> But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. <sup>6</sup> By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed (suddenly). <sup>7</sup> By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. <sup>8</sup> But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day (i.e. time is relative to God). <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. (NIV 2 Peter 3:3-10)***

- F. The nearness of the Day of the Lord and the establishment of the Kingdom is at the heart of all New Testament apostolic declaration. Thus, the witness commanded to the apostles (cf. Acts 1:8) essentially remains "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" (cf. 2:38; 3:19; 4:10ff; 5:30ff; 7:51ff; 8:12; etc.), thus assuming a temporal/chronological nearness.

***He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God... <sup>6</sup> So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> He said to them... <sup>8</sup> "you will receive power when***

***the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses (Gk. martus) in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (NIV Acts 1:3-8)**

***He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify (Gk. diamarturomai) that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead (i.e. repent). (NIV Acts 10:41-42)***

***Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again... <sup>32</sup> Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (NIV Acts 20:25-32)***

- ***Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd... <sup>17</sup> "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people... <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'... <sup>36</sup> Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." <sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" <sup>38</sup> Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (NIV Acts 2:14-38)***
- ***Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing (Gk. anapsuxis) may come from the presence of the Lord; <sup>20</sup> and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, <sup>21</sup> whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time (cf. the Day of the Lord). (NASB Acts 3:19-21)***
- ***Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again... <sup>32</sup> Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (NIV Acts 20:25-32)***
- ***For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person-- such a man is an idolater-- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God... <sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord. (NIV Ephesians 5:5-10)***
- ***And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, <sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. (NIV Colossians 1:9-12)***
- ***For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, <sup>12</sup> encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. (NIV 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12)***

- ***In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: <sup>2</sup> Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction... <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (NIV 2 Timothy 4:1-8)***
- ***Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup> for our "God is a consuming fire." (cf. Deut. 4:24) (NIV Hebrews 12:25-29)***
- ***Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. <sup>11</sup> For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (ESV 2 Peter 1:3-12)***