

## Kingdom of God

What if Jesus' death and resurrection were for the salvation of the planet, all matter, everything living, to take back, or correct what was made wrong? That at the end of days, the planet will be restored to its original perfection?

What if Jesus' teaching wasn't in order to gain eternal life for those who believe, but to reveal the mysteries of God's Kingdom on earth?

"There is, therefore, NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ Jesus" Romans 7:21-8:2  
Death and life. As a living being, my body may be alive, but I can still be dead. As a living being, my body may be alive, and I can have abundant life and peace, OR a life of destruction and pain.

## The Choice of Life or Death

### Deuteronomy 30:11

**11** "This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you, and it is not beyond your reach. **12** It is not kept in heaven, so distant that you must ask, 'Who will go up to heaven and bring it down so we can hear it and obey?' **13** It is not kept beyond the sea, so far away that you must ask, 'Who will cross the sea to bring it to us so we can hear it and obey?' **14** No, the message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart so that you can obey it.

**15** "Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster. **16** For I command you this day to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy.

**17** "But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, **18** then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.

**19** "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! **20** You can make this choice by loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life. And if you love and obey the LORD, you will live long in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Malachi 3:1-5 **1** See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

**2** But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap;

**3** he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness.

**4** Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

**5** Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

### 1 Corinthians 3:11–15

**11** For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. **12** Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— **13** the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. **14** If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. **15** If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

Kingdom of God: We mistakenly hear Jesus' message about the "kingdom of God" as if he's trying to sell an exciting new plan for establishing world peace. But to Jesus' Jewish audience, to proclaim the kingdom of God was to make a shocking announcement that God's promised Messiah had arrived, because the task of the Messiah was to establish God's kingdom on earth. Jesus was making an earth-shattering claim that he was the Christ, and that God's redemption of the world would come through him.<sup>22</sup>

Tverberg, Lois. *Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus* (p. 27). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Mystery of the Kingdom: For by ascending, by making a departure from this world the capstone of all his earthly acts, he underscores once and for all what he said with ever-increasing clarity through his whole ministry. The kingdom of God, the Ascension insists, does not come about because of what the world does to itself - nor even, in any obvious sense, because of what God does to the world. Rather, the kingdom already exists in the King himself, and when he ascends, the whole world goes with him (John 12:32). It is not that someday Jesus will do this, that, and the other thing, and then the Kingdom will come. It is not, for example, that at some future date the dead will rise or that in some distant consummation we will reign with him. Rather, it is that we have already been buried with him in baptism, and that we are already risen with him through faith in the operation of God who raised him from the dead, and that we are now - in this and every moment - enthroned together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.\*

Robert Farrar Capon. *The Parables of the Kingdom* (Kindle Locations 463-469). Kindle Edition.

Jesus says he is, not will be, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He insists to Martha - who quite plausibly figured that her brother Lazarus would rise again at the last day - that he, the Christ

himself, is the Resurrection and the Life right now. And he raises Lazarus then and there to drive the point home. Throughout his ministry, Jesus points relentlessly to himself ("believe in me") as the mysterious center from which and in which the Father reconciles the world to himself. Therefore, when he ascends - when he goes away, promising an imminent return - what can that mean but that he has the city fully in hand and ready to be delivered? He always had the whole world in his arms; what the Ascension uniquely proclaims is that he's got the kingdom in his pocket. To be sure, at the point of his departure, he has it in a highly mysterious pocket: as far as we're concerned we will not see it openly until the delivery is actually made. But that is not because sometime between his Ascension and his Second Coming he will have gotten down to brass tacks and made real what was only virtual. It is only because we can't see mysteries. On the last day, Jesus will not do anything thing new; he will simply make manifest what he has been doing all along - what, in fact, he has long since done by preparing for us a kingdom from the foundation of the world. It will be in seeing him, as he is, that it will finally dawn on us what, in him, we have always been.

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 475-484). Kindle Edition.

When we think of the subject of response, especially with regard to sacred subjects, our inveterate Pelagianism - our tendency to think that our own moral efforts are necessary to the plan of salvation - leads us to set up scenarios in which the work of the kingdom simply will not go forward without our cooperation. And that in turn - since we are much better at antagonistic responses than at positive ones - leads us to imagine that the best way for us to give the kingdom a helping hand is to take up arms as promptly as possible against the enemies of the Lord.

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1146-1149). Kindle Edition.

Judgement takes place AFTER the resurrection of ALL the dead, just and unjust. All are raised by the virtue of Jesus' resurrection. We simply do not know the reconciling power of Jesus' death and resurrection. And our human tendency is to ignore the paradox of mercy as expressed in Jesus, and go for the jugular or gun-barrel justice.

We don't know beans about who, or why, at the final judgement.

The mystery of the kingdom is exactly that, a mystery. We do not know or understand the depths of God's forgiveness, or permission of evil.

The whole field is sown, (universality of the kingdom), and it is sown in a way that is hidden.

Marvelous discrepancy between the hiddenness of the kingdom at its sowing and the manifest exuberance of it in its final, successful fruition.

The hiding of yeast in a batch of dough is both more mysterious and more pervasive than any of the hidings Jesus has so far used. Can one separate yeast from the dough?

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1224-1225). Kindle Edition.

Similarity and differences of seeds hidden in the ground and yeast hidden in flour.

\*\*\*The yeast, dissolved in liquid, makes the dough actual dough from start to finished. So this parable insists that the kingdom enters the world at its creation and that there is not, and never has been, any unkingdomed humanity anywhere in the world.\*\*\*

The yeast is indistinguishable from the whole lump, and undiscoverable in it, and irretrievable out of it. So is the kingdom in this world.

The mystery of the kingdom hidden within the world from creation. It did not materialize at Jesus' birth.

The kingdom IS the yeast-in-the-dough, and the seed-in-the-ground

Therefore, for every second of the time the world has been a world, it has also been the kingdom. Its progress through history is not a transition from nonkingdom to kingdom; rather, it is a progress from kingdom-in-a-mystery to kingdom-made-manifest.

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1246-1248). Kindle Edition.

The seed and the yeast work without our help, once planted it grows all by itself.

the imagery of the Leaven reflects and refracts Scripture's other references to warm carbon dioxide: that is, to breath, both human and divine. The whole kingdom of God - the catholic, actual mystery that, come fair response or foul, is irremovably mixed into creation - operates by warm breath. It takes its origin from a Father's breathed-forth Word who, spoken once for all eternity, brings the world out of nothing into being. It marches through its history under the guidance of a Spirit - a *ri ach*, a *pneuma*, a wind, a breath - who, proceeding from the Father's speaking of the Word, confirms that Word with signs following. And the imagery grows more and more complex. Jesus breathes out the Spirit upon his disciples after his resurrection. After he has ascended, he sends that same Spirit upon the church as a rushing mighty wind. And finally, when the church goes forth to announce the leavening of the world by all this trinitarian heavy breathing, it is by yet more warm breath - even by hot air - that the proclamation is made: "For after ... the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (KJV, emphasis mine). And do not try to cast a chill on the warmth of that Good News by telling me my last quotation means that the kingdom is at work only in "them that believe." To make belief the touchstone of the kingdom's operation is simply to turn faith into just one more cold work. Of course we must believe; but only because there is nothing left for us to do but believe. All we need to do, and all we can do, is simply trust that the leaven is, was, and always will be entirely mixed into the lump of our existence - and that it will infallibly lighten every last one of us. The job is already, if

mysteriously, done: by the power of the Word who breathed out his life for us on the cross – by the might of him who, in the glory of his resurrection, forever whispers our reconciled names into his Father's ear - we are as good as baked to perfection right now. We have been accepted in the Beloved; the only real development left for us to experience is the final accolade to be spoken over us by the divine Woman Baker: "Now that's what I call a real loaf of bread!"

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1276-1278). Kindle Edition.

Three measures (skta) is a bushel of flour, for crying out loud! That's 128 cups! That's 16 five-pound bags! And when you get done putting in the 42 or so cups of water you need to make it come together, you've got a little over 101 pounds of dough on your hands.

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1215-1216). Kindle Edition.

But every last one of us dies. Willy-nilly, every single person in the world, Christian or non-Christian, will someday come into full and secure possession of the field of death in which Jesus has hidden the treasure of his redeeming work. And therefore, since no one, anywhere, at any time, will ever finally be without death, no one - on earth, in heaven, or in hell - will ever be without Jesus' reconciliation.

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1446-1448). Kindle Edition.

the very hell of hell lies precisely in the fact that its inhabitants will be insisting on a perpetual rejection of an equally perpetual gift. It will be an eternal struggle to escape from the grip of a love that will never let them go.

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1450-1451). Kindle Edition.

Parable of the Net – sum up parable of judgment:

Sagēnē used only here in scripture: a drag net

The kingdom gathers up everything in its path, all things animal, vegetable and mineral  
The entire physical order of the world is drawn into it by the mystery of the Word.

The Kingdom fetches home to God everything in the world

The new heavens and the new earth are not replacements of the old ones; they are transfigurations of them.

The redeemed order is not the created order forsaken; it is the created order – all of it – raised and glorified.

Matthew 13:47 NO word for “fish” only “every kind” Greek; genous (representative of every genous/species)

The kingdom is the net-with-its-contents

Therefore, neither the purse seine while still in the sea, nor the kingdom while still in this world has any business setting itself up in the judging business. And neither does the church.

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1577-1578). Kindle Edition.

The church is only the sacrament of the kingdom - a visible sign of a presently invisible mystery. But in the Last Day, the church as such will not be necessary at all; the mystery of the kingdom will stand revealed in and of itself and will need no sacraments or signs whatsoever.

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1582-1584). Kindle Edition.

It is the fishermen (the Net) who set the standards for separating what's in the net, for what is acceptable for them.

We are not judged by our previous performances (on that basis, nobody would go anywhere but to hell); rather, we are judged by what Jesus did for us on the cross. He pronounces an authoritative *kald* over the whole world that he has caught in the net of his reconciliation. It is only those who want to argue with that gracious word who are then pronounced *sapra'*. Both heaven and hell are populated entirely and only by forgiven sinners. Hell is just a courtesy for those who insist they want no part of forgiveness.

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1647-1650). Kindle Edition.

Jesus has been at pains to expound a very different kingdom from the one his hearers, outsiders or insiders, were expecting. It is catholic, not limited just to the chosen people; it is paradoxically and vexingly hidden, not plausibly and gratifyingly manifest; it is at work now, not simply waiting for some future date; it operates in the midst of hostility, not welcome; and the responses it calls for are, hands down, the most mystifying propositions yet: not warfare, not haste, not a helping hand, not a quick, easy purchase, but rather nonviolence, patience, noninterference, and an investment the size of the national debt.

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1734-1738). Kindle Edition.

Conclusion:

Jesus' fundamental meaning seems fairly clear: "O-kay," he says, "you say you understand; so now I'll tell you something: "Once you've been taught about the kingdom of heaven by me, you're going to be like someone who's been given full authority over an incredibly rich castle. There will be nothing you lack and nothing you'll ever exhaust the wonder of - and, of course, nothing over which you won't have utterly satisfactory control. And like the lord of the castle who brings out [ekbdllei] all kinds of things from his treasure [thesaurou] - not only things that were stored up a long time ago but things that were acquired only this morning - you, too, will bring forth things new and old [kainc kai palaic] ."

Robert Farrar Capon. The Parables of the Kingdom (Kindle Locations 1775-1781). Kindle Edition. we were meant first of all to spend huge amounts of time in the attic just poring over it and trying all of it on for size. And we were meant, above all, to invite the world up into the attic to

play dress-up with us. We are supposed to be kids, you see: "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes." You can't get more encouragement than that for holy horsing around.

"Behold, kaina poio panta, I make all things new," says he who sits, from beginning to end, on the throne of the kingdom. As scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven - and as children turned loose in the treasure room of the castle - we've got more than enough to keep us fascinated forever.

Robert Farrar Capon. *The Parables of the Kingdom* (Kindle Locations 1829-1830). Kindle Edition.

Robert Farrar Capon. *The Parables of the Kingdom* (Kindle Locations 1820-1823). Kindle Edition.