**Luke 17:20-37 (NIV)**
20  Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation,
21  nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."
22  Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it.
23  Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them.
24  For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other.
25  But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.
26  "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.
27  People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.
28  "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.
29  But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.
30  "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.
31  On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything.
32  Remember Lot's wife!
33  Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.
34  I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left.
35  Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.
36  "
37  "Where, Lord?" they asked. He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

This world started with just one Kingdom in place – the Kingdom of God

When mankind rejected the kingdom of God they subjected themselves to the kingdom of Satan

Satan then became the ruler of this world

The result is obvious

Hatred, war, murder, sickness, disease, death, destruction, pain, sorrow

These are the signs of the kingdom of Satan, the kingdom of darkness

We know it is not good and not what we want

We know, perhaps from memories of our great grandparents Adam and Eve, that the earth was created good, and we were created very good

Many People have tried to fight against the evil that came into the world – by instead doing good – helping others, instead of hurting them

The world has seen people like Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David try to do what was right, try to be just, try to help others, right injustices, if perhaps not always through the perfect means, still trying to make a positive difference in a world filled with the pain brought by evil, hatred, and murder.

So, in a real sense, not all the people in the world have been evil all the time.

God’s grace, I believe, that came to the earth as the symbol of the rainbow after the flood of Noah’s day, is the reason for the world not decaying faster than it has.

Even when I say that the world has morally decayed, there are some that would challenge that.

No doubt the world has changed, they say, but for the better – to which I would agree – in certain areas – medicine being one. (Neo natal units that can save babies born prematurely)

And though medicine in not perfect by a long, shot, I thank God most people don’t have to die anymore from an infection

I also am thankful that we have seen the light so as to abolish things like slavery

We have certainly seen betterment in some of these areas.

But it is also painfully clear, that we have lost ground in others.

while our past has seen great violence – it has usually come through wars as a result of a immoral dictator trying to take over the world and in his selfish pursuit, left the carnage of many human lives in his wake, before his demise.

But the war has become much different these days for us in America.

It is internal.

It is everywhere.

When we first moved to Bedford County, in the Chestnut Ridge area, I thought I would also be moving into an area where drugs, for example, would not be so prevalent.

I was rudely awakened.

Everywhere.

And everywhere there are signs of a tremendous problem with evil – in our schools, for goodness sake, where metal detectors have become necessary to try to stem the violence that desires to penetrate the halls through which our beautiful little children walk each weekday.

No

No one can make the argument that we have eradicated evil

The kingdom of darkness is still here - Even today, over two thousand years after Christ came to usher in the kingdom of God

**If Satan is defeated, then why is his kingdom still obviously present?**

**Will we ever eradicate evil on the earth?**

**Will we still make progress against its evil tide?**

**Where is the kingdom of God?**

**What difference has the message of the kingdom of God made upon the earth?**

The answer to this last question is – much – in many, many ways.

Though Christianity has had its dark days, much has been done in the name of Jesus that is very, very good.

Many people have been helped and continue to be helped.

Many social programs have been birthed by those who sought to put legs on the Gospel

Many, many lives have been changed – as a result of believing the truth of the Gospel, and receiving its power – to free them and transform them – from lives of devastation and hopelessness, to lives of freedom and new life. (\*\*Examples here) – drug addicts, etc.

**There is much joy that is spread when the kingdom of God is actually manifested.**

**That’s because there is real power in the kingdom of God, for those who willingly enter it.**

**But those that choose to enter the kingdom of God do so because they have seen a witness**

Jesus was the first witness of the Kingdom of God coming to the earth

His first act, after his baptism, was to confront the kingdom of Satan – as he was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, and after not falling for Satan’s first two lies, but combating them with the truth of God’s word, Satan took him to that high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and offered them to Jesus, if he would fall down and worship him – becoming like Satan’s prince, with Satan still the king of this world.

Jesus told him to take a hike

He said that he would worship God, and God alone

Interestingly, others also wanted to give Jesus an earthly kingdom

After feeding the multitudes, they wanted to force him to become king – literally capture him, and declare him to be their king – setting their crown upon his head, declaring their independence from Rome.

Even some of His own disciples who had this mentality that the Messiah would come as an earthly king – their king, wanted Jesus to declare it so

I’m convinced that this is what was used to influence Judas to betray Jesus

I think Judas thought it would force Jesus to use his power and rally the people to free him and make himself king – Messiah – of the Jewish nation

It was the same spirit behind all of it, as we will see

As He stood before Pilate, when the accusation against Him was that He said that He was a king, Pilate said, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" and Jesus said, "My kingdom is not out from this world system - if my kingdom were out from this world system, then would my servants fight but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

He refused to inherit the world system as it was – to lay claim that he was its king

No

His kingdom was different

 He was fighting all the way along against a false kingdom for a true one, against an earthly for a spiritual; but the powers that existed were seeking to get Him involved in a kingdom which was not His real one.

Suppose He had given in, accepted a kingdom out from this system, put Himself on this level; rode into Jerusalem, instead of on a donkey, in a warriors chariot, and instead of palm branches, his disciples carried swords.

No, He was not accepting the framework which embodied the kingdom of Satan - that is what it amounted to.

Satan, the prince of this world, was established in that kind of a kingdom, and the Lord was not accepting that at all.

Through all these temptations, even though they might come through the lips and by the mistaken zeal of a beloved and devoted disciple of the inner circle - no other than Simon Peter himself - He was adamant.

On that very matter of His going up to Jerusalem and being delivered into the hands of men to be crucified, when the human counsel is "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee," Jesus told Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16:21-23).

He sees Satan entrenched in the very suggestion, and that is not the kingdom the Lord will accept.

There would be a kingdom which He would have, but not of that kind.

So to the Cross

Through the Cross, He went to the heart of the current world system – to hades, and to its leader – to the prince of this world

**Colossians 2:15 (NIV)**
15  And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

**Hebrews 2:14-15 (NIV)**
14  Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- 15  and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

**1 John 3:8 (NIV)**
8  He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Disarmed, destroyed the devil’s work

How?

He captured - let us rather say, recaptured - the Kingdom which had been betrayed by Adam into that usurper's hands;

recaptured it as the last Adam, the second man, the Lord from heaven;

and, having recaptured it in and by His Cross, He rose,

and His message was

All authority has been given to me

Authority – in the kingdom of God

That’s what Jesus spent the forty days after his resurrection telling the disciples about

How the kingdom of God would now work

Telling them or its power

Telling them, however, to wait for it

They saw it on the day of Pentecost

They witnessed the recaptured Kingdom in the hands of this victorious Christ

Who knew how to refuse the quick returns offered by Satan

 - a thing which we must also come to know how to do

And because Jesus passed on the lesser, he obtained the greater

**And that’s what he offers you and me now – offers all who will choose to enter**

**But to enter, we must be willing to let go of the holdings that Satan offers us in this world system**

Now in the hands of Jesus, the Kingdom recaptured is brought in on the day of Pentecost in the power of the Holy Spirit.

But we have to be aware, to come to understand the difference of the Kingdom of God that Jesus offers, and the kingdom of this world – which was offered to Jesus by Satan, and which the people tried to encourage Jesus to take

Though Jesus turned it down, and as a result, took up a greater kingdom,

It is another kind of kingdom, essentially spiritual.

It exists alongside of the world system that Jesus rejected

Now, both are present

The Kingdom of God has come

But, not fully – in the sense that everyone on the earth is now in it

It is entered only by choice

And it comes in by the Holy Spirit – entering the choosers (within)

Choose this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord

Jesus as Lord – means that you are totally surrendering to him

Choosing Him and His ways over the ways of the world

Choosing love over selfishness

Choosing delayed gratification over instant

Because you have come to see the better choice

You have seen the power of the kingdom of God and want to make Jesus your king, enter into his kingdom

Jesus is Lord

You can be saved by Him because He is Lord.

You can be forgiven because He is Lord.

It must be that - that Jesus is Lord - not as an item of a creed or of doctrine, but as something which has become an inward power.

Power to do what, exactly?

Power to be freed from the power of the enemy

Power to be freed from the slavery of sin

For sin shall no longer be your master

Power to change

Power of a new life

Power of new hope

Power of eternal life

Which means, among other things, no more fear of death

Power to live in love

Power to help others

This was evidenced immediately, in the early church

**Acts 2:43-47 (NIV)**
43  Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.
44  All the believers were together and had everything in common.
45  Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.
46  Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,
47  praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The power to say no – to things that will end up harming you in the end

The power to say yes – to the things of God that will bring you eternal joy

But both choices are still present

Choose this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord

Jesus as Lord – means that you are totally surrendering to him