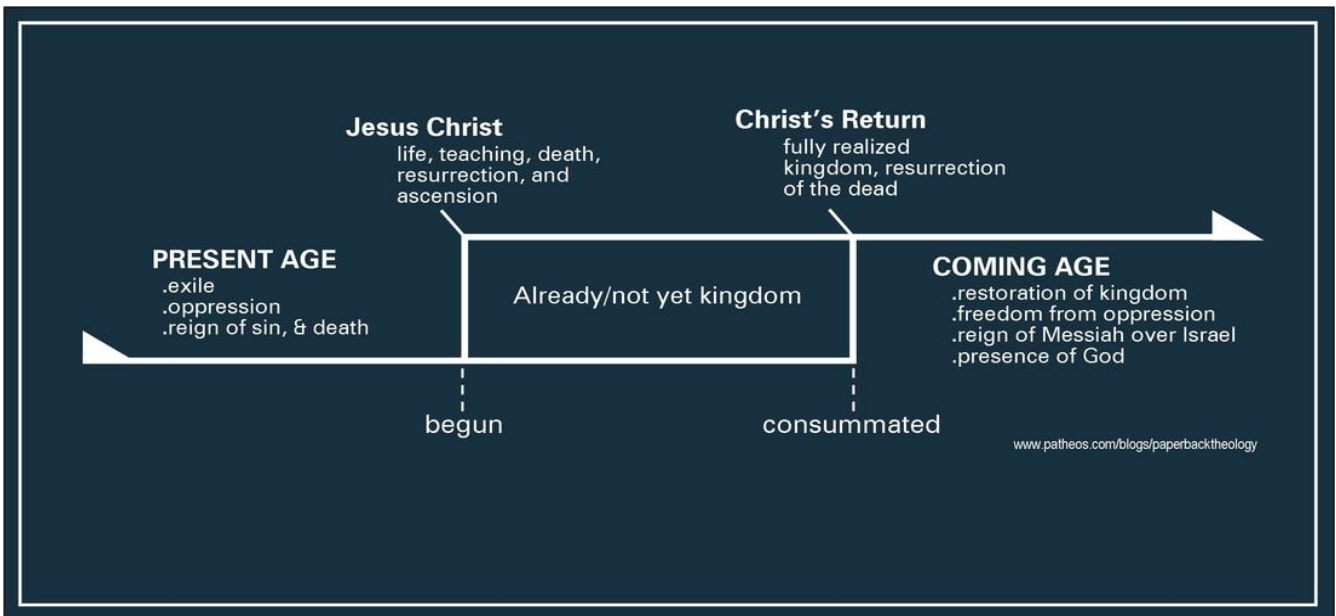


Parables of the present kingdom – Matthew 13

1. When you think about the Kingdom of God – are you more inclined to think of it as a present reality or a future reality?
2. The resurrection of Jesus was the public event where the God the Father vindicated his Son, publicly declaring him ‘Lord and Christ’ (Acts 2:36, Romans 1:4). It’s after Jesus’ resurrection that he announces ‘all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me’ (Matthew 28:18). His Kingdom has arrived. Yet our experience seems a far cry from the Kingdom pictured in Isaiah 11:1-10. How does the diagram below help to explain this?



3. Jesus taught about the Kingdom in seven parables in Matthew 13. Read the parable of the weeds and the wheat (Matthew 13:24-30 and v36-43). What does this parable teach us about the world? How might this parable help us guard against: naiveté about evil; distorted understandings of God’s sovereignty; a triumphalist spirituality that overemphasises the presence of the kingdom now? (Pick one option to discuss).
4. Read the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven (Matthew 13:31-33). These parables are often described as ‘fraternal’ rather than identical twins. The parable of the mustard seed tells us that there is an organic connection between the tiny seed and the glorious plant that emerges. The parable of the leaven teaches that something small can have a large effect. How do these parables help us understand:
 - a. The ministry and kingdom of Jesus?
 - b. Why we can have confidence and hope in living for his kingdom?
5. Memorise the basic outline of the diagram above. What helps you live in the now of the Kingdom, yet with your hope set on the glory that is to come? If someone were to examine your life, in what ways would they see that you are living as a citizen of Christ’s kingdom?