

Second Temple Judaism

1. Genesis theology, the land promise, the king promise, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Torah, the Temple, judgment and restoration, history, etc.

The Kingdom of God

1. Physical, Political Reign of God
 - a. Spoken of by the prophets (esp. Daniel)
 - b. Everything changes at the coming of the Son of Man when there will be a cataclysmic, irreversible act of divine judgment and vindication.
2. The Message about the Kingdom as near
 - a. Jesus as Apocalypticist (apocalypse¹ = unveiling, generally about future events)
 - i. In particular John's Gospel is permeated with the notion that Jesus enjoys an extraordinarily privileged relationship with God to the degree that he has insider information that a Father would only share with his Son.
 - b. Time has run out, one needs to prepare for the kingdom through repentance
 - i. Start loving God and one's neighbor
 - ii. Get on board with God's program for the future (i.e. the kingdom agenda)
 - c. Message needs to be heard by as many as possible
 - i. This is limited to Israel even though a handful of instances occur in which either a Samaritan or a Gentile does find out
 - ii. Twelve sent out to preach the message
 - iii. Seventy sent out to preach the message
3. Two Groups
 - a. there are two distinct groups of people in the world
 - i. Parable of Sower & Seed, Parable of Tares & Wheat, Parable of Dragnet
 1. sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one
 - ii. there isn't any middle ground
 - iii. one group belongs to the present age (the world) whereas the other group of people belongs to the age to come (the kingdom)
 - b. Disciples were insiders, especially informed by Jesus while the crowds mostly did not understand what Jesus was saying and his enemies understood (sometimes) but chose not to believe
 - c. Separation from the world
 - i. "the world" was the political, religious, economic, social sphere controlled by Satan and his demons
 - ii. followers of Jesus had left the world behind when they became disciples
 1. what is prized by humans (reputation, money, etc.) is an abomination in the sight of God (Luke 16.14-15)

¹ According to definition #2 from Dictionary.com an apocalypse is, "a prophetic revelation, esp. concerning a cataclysm in which the forces of good permanently triumph over the forces of evil."

- iii. “the world” and following Jesus are diametrically opposed to one another
- iv. since Satan is (for now) in charge of “the world” (i.e. this age), those in power are siding (inadvertently?) with him
- v. the mission is not to “make the world a better place” but to call people to leave the world behind and join ranks in following Jesus

4. Reversals

- a. Last will be First (Matthew 18.4–5; Mark 10.13–16; Luke 18.15–17; Matthew 19.13–15; Luke 9.46) also see (Matthew 23.12; Mark 10.29–31; Luke 14.11; 17.33; 18.14)
 - b. Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus
 - c. Beatitudes in Luke 6.20–26
 - i. the poor will inherit kingdom, the rich have received their comfort in full
 - ii. the hungry will become satisfied and the well-fed will become hungry
 - iii. the weeping will laugh, the laughing shall mourn and weep
 - iv. the persecuted have reward stored up in heaven, those who are well-spoken of are like false prophets
 - d. Those in power will be humbled whereas those at the bottom of the heap (the marginalized, the afflicted, the lame, the outcast, the blind, the widow, the orphan, the poor) would be exalted to positions of power.
 - i. well summarized by the statement “those who endure injury & injustice with patience and without resentment will take possession of the land” (Mat 5.5)
 - e. The disciples are to be servants/slaves of all (to come under others rather than exert their power over others). (Mark 9.35; 10.42–44; Luke 9.48)
 - f. They are to be like children who are the lowest when it comes to power in society. (Matthew 18.4–5; Mark 10.13–16; Luke 18.15–17; Matthew 19.13–15; Luke 9.46)
- #### 5. Grim Outlook for the Disciples in this age
- a. Because Satan is ultimately “the god of this age” the people of God are destined to suffer in this age. This is not just suffering in the sense that everyone suffers because of the affects of the Fall (the corruption of the material order). But, the followers of Jesus will suffer because of their message, their lifestyle (i.e. separate from the world), and their association with Jesus.
 - b. Just before the end a time of intense persecution will break out against the people of God. These are like the labor pains of the new age which intensive just before birth. It is called the messianic woes, the great tribulation, or a time of distress.
 - c. Followers of Jesus are instructed to endure, persevere, discern false messiahs, and preach the gospel in anticipation of the cataclysmic coming of the son of man.
 - d. The followers of Jesus are poor, hungry, mourning, pure in heart, meek, persecuted, merciful, hungry for righteousness, peacemakers, insulted, and maligned because of their association with Jesus (Matthew 5.3–11).
- #### 6. Bright Future for the Disciples
- a. Resurrection of Ancestors
 - b. Ruling with the Messiah
 - i. Freedom from Rome/Sadducees
 - ii. Gain Possession of the Land
 - iii. Administrate/Judge the twelve tribes

- c. eternal life
 - d. They will gain comfort, satisfaction of justice, satisfaction from hunger, laughter, mercy, the privilege of seeing God, the title, “sons of God,” the kingdom of God
 - i. taken from the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.3–12; Luke 6.20–23
7. Wait for God to act
- a. this is called “passive apocalypticism”
 - b. it does not mean that one does nothing to become ready, it just means that one does not attempt to bring about God’s future
 - c. getting ready included living the new lifestyle Jesus taught them in his great teachings on ethics