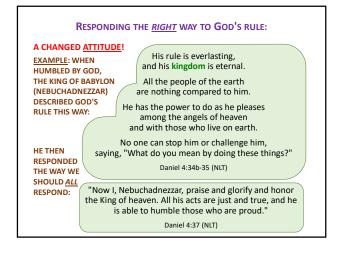


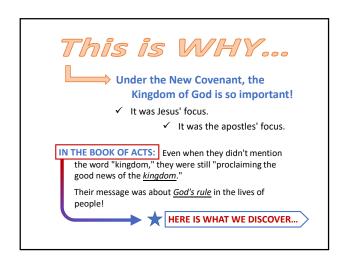
★ An aspect of God's sovereign rule over all creation.
 We can describe this rule in a variety of ways.
 From the perspective of God as creator...
 As Creator, he rules all the earth – everything past, present and future. Nothing surprises him; nothing is beyond his control.
 Sin makes it difficult for us to see this. But we can trust him; he will bring all things to a righteous and fair conclusion.
 We must not forget that God's sovereign rule does NOT do away with our responsibility. We choose our choices... and are held accountable for what we choose.

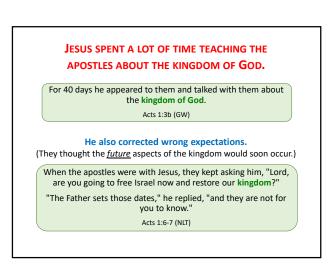
# From the perspective of time, our main focus is on: God's future rule over the earth... Here, we focus on Jesus' return – the time when sin will be totally removed from the earth. This is a day that all of God's people look forward to! When that day arrives: ... the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:9b (NIV) God's present rule in the lives of his people... God's people want to follow him now. Since God has put his laws in their hearts, their desire is for his will to be done in their lives now.











# THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS THE FOCUS OF THE APOSTLES' PREACHING AND TEACHING.

[Paul] entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

Acts 19:8 (ESV)

Later, he describes the new disciples as...

... you to whom I have preached the Kingdom...

Acts 20:25b (NLT)

The apostles' focus wasn't merely on the <u>fact</u> that the Kingdom exists!

There is a lot implied by this "summary statement"!

The apostles message was about <u>entering</u> the Kingdom... and there is only one way to do that: through Jesus Christ and what he has accomplished.

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS CONNECTED TO JESUS — WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE DID.

From morning until evening [Paul] explained things to them, testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus from both the law of Moses and the prophets.

Acts 28:31b (NET)

[Paul] preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 28:23b (NIV)

**★** The Good News can be summarized by these two concepts! ★

[Philip] proclaimed the <u>good news</u> about the kingdom of God and the name\* of Jesus Christ, ...

Acts 8:12b (CSB)

\* (In the Bible, a "name" represents the person and all he is.)

# IT IS NOT EASY TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

When people accepted the Good News, it was necessary

for the apostles to be...

... strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith.

"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Acts 14:22 (NIV)

This is one of the reasons there are so many fakes in the church. They want the <u>future</u> benefits of being in the kingdom, but have no interest in the <u>present</u> "entry requirements."

### TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD...

(Which means the same as: "to be saved.")

 $\Longrightarrow$ 

### There are requirements.

We must be willing to submit to the rule of God... and doing this goes <u>against</u> what our sinful nature wants to do.



### Certain things prevent it from happening. EXAMPLES:

- ✓ Thinking we're "entitled" to salvation under our own terms.
- ✓ Making excuses for our "favorite" sin, ignoring God's warnings that it is <u>not</u> an option.
- ✓ Changing what Scripture says, to what we <u>want</u> it
  to say

SCRIPTURE CONTAINS <u>MANY</u> WARNINGS
THAT WE <u>CANNOT</u> CLING TO LIVES OF SIN **AND** BE SAVED.

The two ways are opposites.

· Here is just one example of the many warnings:

[SUCH PEOPLE ARE NOT MEMBERS OF GOD'S KINGDOM.
THEY ARE STILL IN WHAT JESUS DESCRIBES AS "OUTER DARKNESS."]

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived:
Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Cor. 6:9-10 (NIV)

This is why Jesus and the apostles so frequently mention concepts such as: self-denial, repentance, obedience, "carrying one's cross," etc.

BUT ALL THIS <u>CAN'T</u>
BE TRUE...
<u>NOBODY'S</u> PERFECT!

NO, GOD'S PEOPLE HAVEN'T <u>REACHED</u> PERFECTION. BUT THEY <u>STRIVE</u> FOR IT!

<u>Don't close your eyes</u> to all those Scripture passages that focus on righteousness, obedience, and holiness in the lives of saved people. <u>Those passages DO exist!</u>

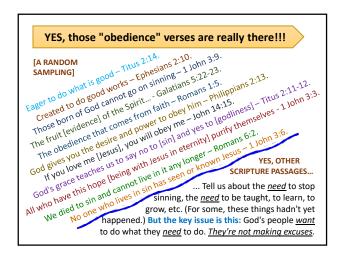
GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

GUARANTEES THAT

THEY WILL DO SO!

### There is practical value in admitting these things!

- People who admit that sin is "not an option," and that God empowers his people to <u>not</u> sin: They won't be "sinlessly perfect," but they'll be inclined to sin *less*.
- People who treat sin as "an inevitable part of life" will be inclined to make excuses for their sin. (And will try to explain-away all those Scripture passages that disagree with them.)



THAT'S EXACTLY THE POINT, YOU CAN'T... NO WAY A PERSON IF YOU RELY ON YOUR CAN DO THIS! IT'S OWN POWER. SO "UNNATURAL"! HERE IS WHERE GOD'S **GRACE COMES INTO FOCUS.** OUR ABILITY TO DO ALL THIS **GRACE!** COMES FROM HIM! Without it, you will remain a slave to sin. Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:34-36 (NIV) **\*** GRACE! THIS WILL BE OUR TOPIC NEXT TIME! **\*** 



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