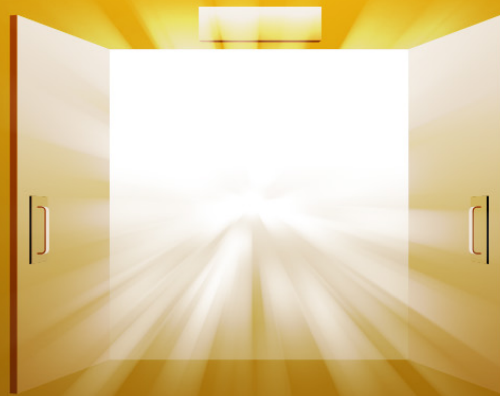


ACTS 1:1-11

REVEALING^{THE}
KINGDOM^{OF}
GOD

On no account, from the evidence of Daniel, could it be an invisible reign established only in the hearts of believers. Its political dimension as well as its location on earth is unmistakably clear. It is equally obvious that the Kingdom of God described by Daniel has not yet appeared.



Daniel 2:44

44 In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

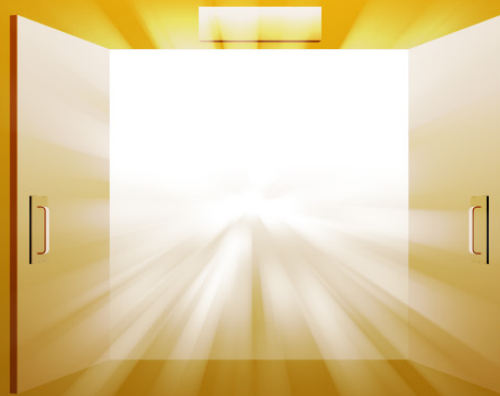


Daniel 2:45

45 Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”



In the next verse the impact of the Kingdom is likened to a stone crushing the “iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold” of former world empires. The certainty of this shattering event is based on what “the great God has made known to the king” and what “will take place in the future. The dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy” (Dan. 2:45).



Daniel 7: 14,27

14 “And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom, That all the
peoples, nations and men of every
language Might serve Him.

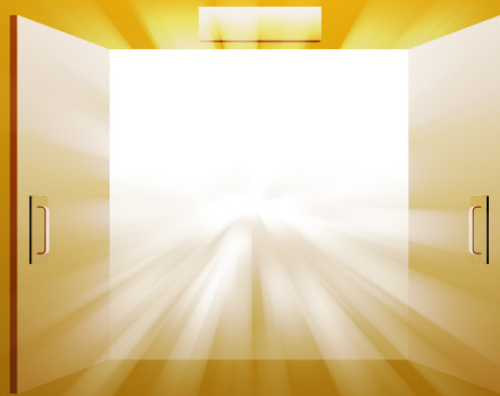
His dominion is an everlasting
dominion Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.



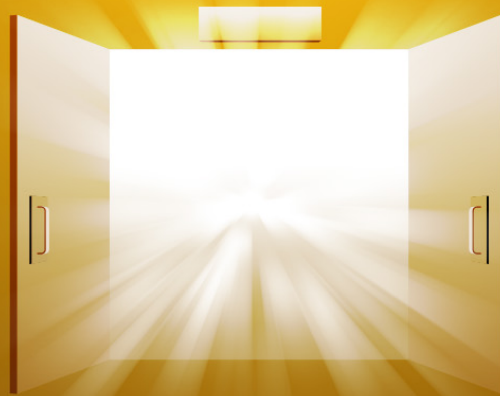
27 Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.’



The Kingdom of God is evidently an empire, exercising sway over all nations. It will come to power on the earth (“under the whole heaven”) and its establishment will be by a catastrophe, an international upheaval resulting in a complete political reorganization. The administration of the Kingdom will be in the hands of “the Son of Man” and “the saints.”



A recurring theme of the New Testament is that Jesus and his followers will be the executives of the new World Government – the Kingdom of God (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:28-30; 1 Cor. 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4). To be a saint in the New Testament is to be one appointed to rule with the Messiah in the coming Kingdom.



Matthew 19:28

28 And Jesus said to them,
“Truly I say to you, that you
who have followed Me, in
the regeneration when the
Son of Man will sit on His
glorious throne, you also
shall sit upon twelve
thrones, judging the twelve
tribes of Israel.



Luke 22:28-30

28 “You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; 29 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.



1 Corinthians 6:2

2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?



2 Timothy 2:12

12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;



Revelation 2:26

26 He who overcomes, and he who keeps *My* deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;



Revelation 3:21

21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.



Revelation 5:10

10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”



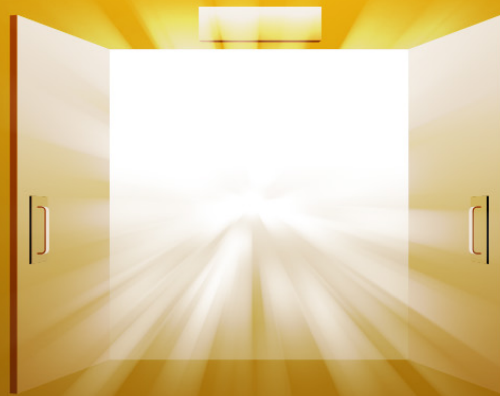
Revelation 20:4

4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

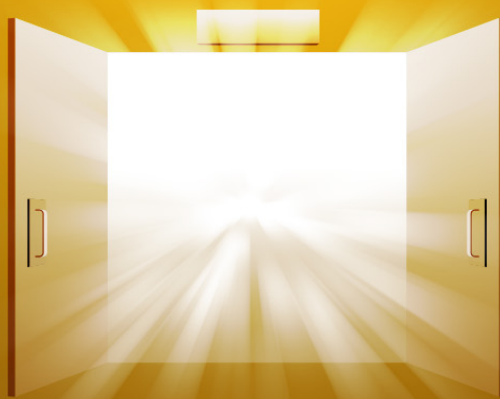


Jesus' Announcement of a Coming Crisis

In the light of this background information, Jesus' public proclamation of the nearness of the Kingdom of God must be understood as a warning about a great future crisis in history. The stupendous event foreseen not only by Daniel, but by the other Hebrew prophets, demanded an immediate repentance and reformation of lifestyle.

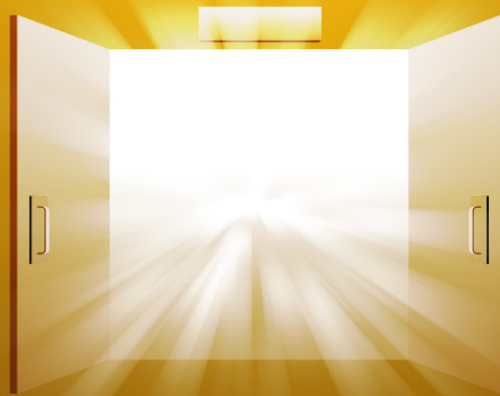


The point of the call for repentance, “for the Kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:14, 15), was simply that a place in the Kingdom would be granted only to those found living in faithful obedience to God.



Mark 1:14-15

14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”



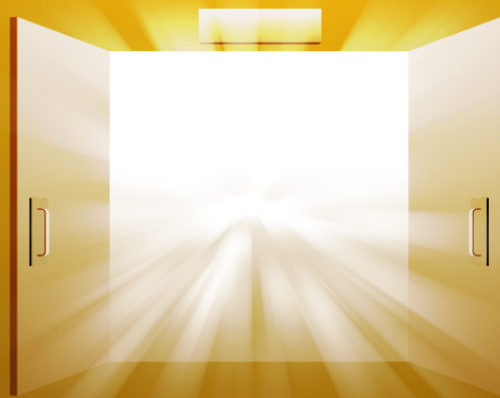
Repent- met-an-o-eh'-o

to change one's mind, i.e. to repent

to change one's mind for better,
heartily to amend with abhorrence
of one's past sins



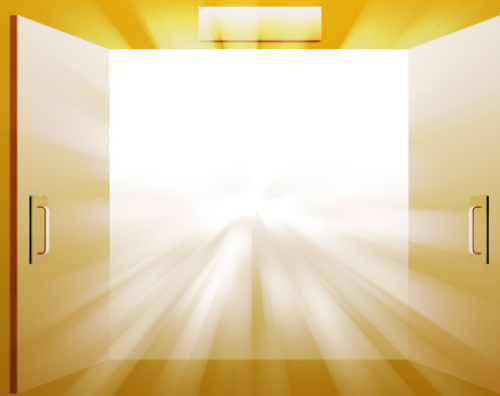
The threatening element in the proclamation of the Gospel can be seen from John the Baptist's appeal for a "U-turn" in conduct, private and national, because the Kingdom of God was "at hand" (Matt. 3:2).





Matthew 3:2

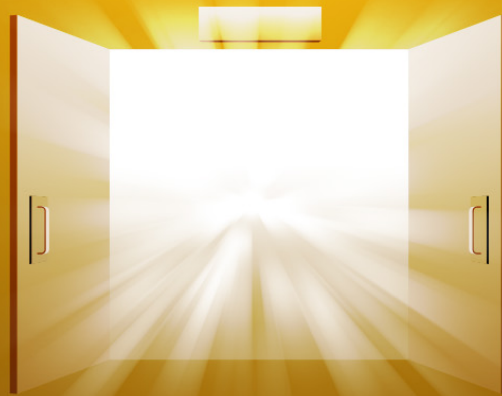
2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”



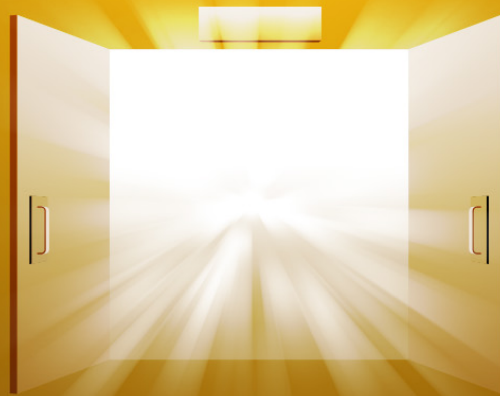
"Repentance (metanoia, 'change of mind') involves a turning with contrition from sin to God; the repentant sinner is in the proper condition to accept the divine forgiveness."



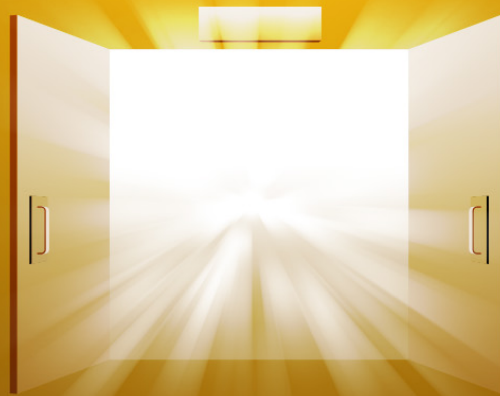
Referring to Jesus, John says: “His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:12).



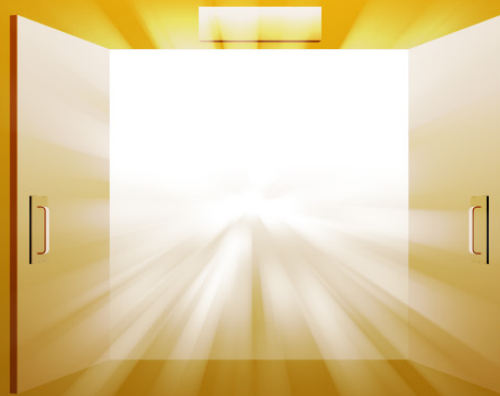
Matthew describes this Message in exactly the same words as he summarizes the teaching of Jesus. Both agents of God's word, John and Jesus, called for repentance, "for the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17).



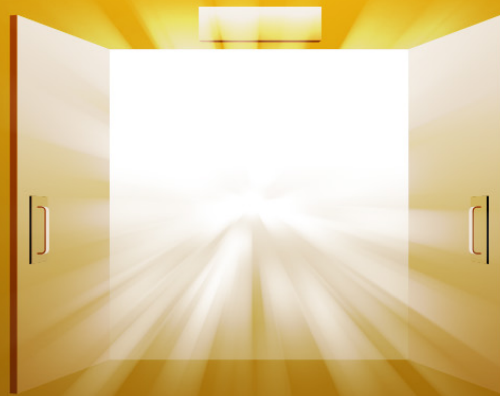
The Message contained both a threat and a promise – sudden death as the appalling consequence of persistently being unrepentant, and the glory of the Kingdom for those who had heeded the Message and prepared themselves accordingly.



This simple theme governs the entire New Testament. There are two possible destinies for human beings – “the barn or the bonfire.” Either one enters the Kingdom or one is destroyed. Hence the critical warning element in the Christian Gospel.



Underlying the call for repentance was the well-known concept of the “Day of the Lord” predicted by the Old Testament prophets. This day of terrible divine wrath is equated in the New Testament with the Second Coming of Jesus to establish the promised Kingdom. Thus in the well-known parable of the tares, the good seed are:



Matthew 13:36-43

36 Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” 37 And He said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,



38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.



40 So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,



42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

