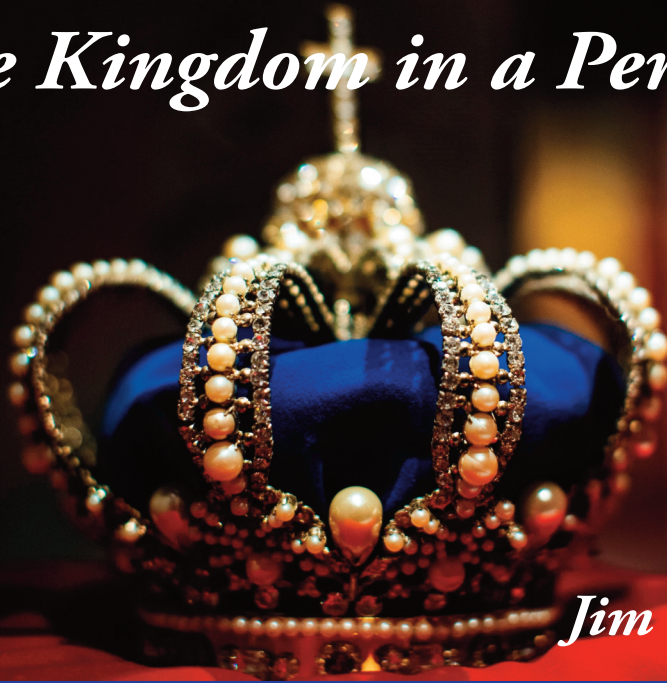


# *The Kingdom in a Person*



*Jim Fowler*

**T**he new covenant gospel is all about the advent (coming or arrival) of the “kingdom of God.” Jesus declared “the kingdom of God has come” (Luke 11:20) and “the kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:21), because he was conveying that the kingdom of God was in himself.

The Greek word for “kingdom” is *basilea*. The Greek word for “king” is *basileus*. The Greek word for “reign” is *basileuo*. The early Christian writers, Origen and Tertullian, introduced a variant of these words when they used the term *autobasileia*, meaning “the kingdom in himself.”

The kingdom of God is intrinsic to, and inherent in, the person of Jesus Christ, the divine King.

This distinction was brought to the fore when Pope Benedict XVI wrote a series of books on Jesus of Nazareth, and stated, “Jesus himself is the Kingdom; the Kingdom is not a thing, it is not a geographical dominion like a worldly kingdom. It is a Person. It is HE.”

The kingdom of God is not a static territory, authority sphere, or future theocratic system. The kingdom is the

ontological presence and dynamic function of the Lord and King JESUS as he reigns in the lives of his people, both individually and collectively.

As Dietrich Bonhoeffer expressed it, “Jesus is the Being and the Act of everything that God does” and is doing.

Jesus did not come to introduce, proclaim or bring anything other than himself. The living Lord Jesus is the reality of God’s grace, the gospel salvation, eternal life, righteousness, holiness—the kingdom and all that is Christian. The kingdom is inherent in the Person of JESUS, and is personally operative as he reigns in the interior spirit of receptive Christ-followers, who will necessarily be involved in the collective interaction of the Body of Christ, the Church.

## **The Kingdom of God**

The gospel records, especially the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, place much emphasis on the “kingdom.” Matthew refers to the “kingdom of heaven” rather than the “kingdom of God” in deference to the Jewish reluctance to speak the divine name.

The Jewish people of first-century Judea were chafing under oppression of the Romans, and they had an intense anticipation for a promised Messiah who would restore the kingdom of David that they conceived in nationalistic, political, geographical and racial parameters.

Jesus countered the Jewish expectations when he declared, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). He came to restore the kingdom of David, but not in the terms that the Jewish people expected. He came as King to bring the reign of the kingdom in Himself (*autobasileia*). Everything Jesus came to bring to mankind was in himself—salvation, wisdom, life, truth, kingdom.

He came to bring himself to a fallen humanity, the vital dynamic of God to dwell within receptive human beings and to reign spiritually in the kingdom of their hearts. **The kingdom of God has come in the Person of JESUS Christ**, and his desire is to dynamically reign as King in our lives and in his Church. □

Excerpted from Jim Fowler’s book, *The Issue Is Jesus*.