

A landscape photograph of a calm sea under a blue sky with wispy clouds. The horizon is visible in the distance, and the overall atmosphere is serene and expansive.

Hastening the Kingdom

What We Believe

NICENE CREED	APOSTLES' CREED
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.	He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.	from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.	I believe in [...] the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

RESURRECTION

JUDGMENT

KINGDOM/
WORLD TO COME

What does it mean to “look forward?”

LUKE 3:15

The people were **looking forward** and all were debating in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he himself might be the anointed one.



LUKE 7:19

“Are you the coming one or should we be **looking forward** to another?”



LUKE 12:46

“The master of that servant will arrive on a day which he does not **look forward to** and at an hour which he does not know.”

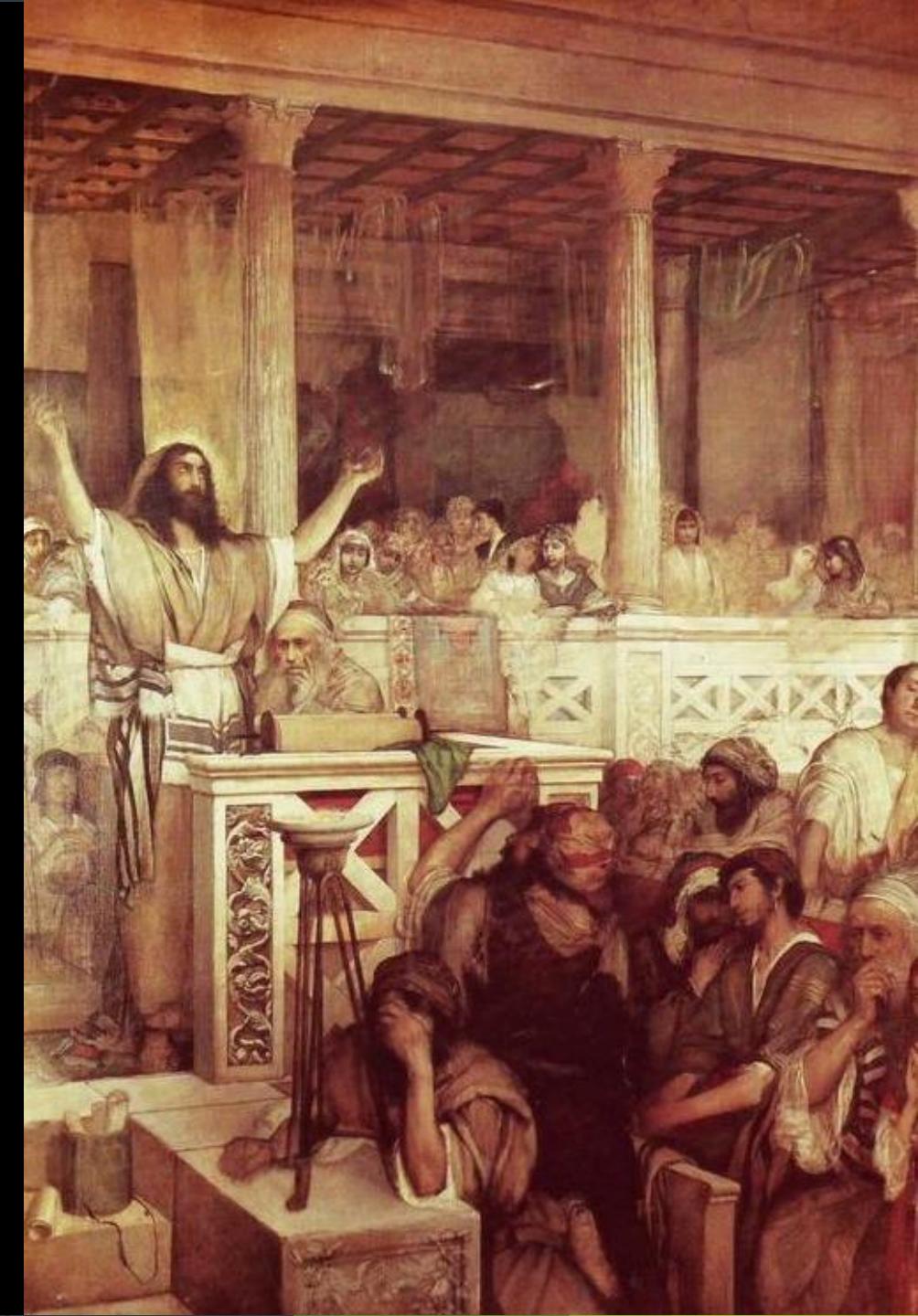
“According to his promise we **look forward**
to new heavens and a new earth in which
righteousness dwells.”

(2 Peter 3:13)



“The time has been fulfilled,
and the kingdom of God has drawn near.
Repent, and believe in the good news.”

(Mark 1:15)



“For Jesus the reign is not “coming” in the sense that it lies somewhere in the unattainable future; that future is already dawning, is already visible in Jesus and his deeds. Everyone can already share in the reign of God now... So in terms of the temporal dimension also the reign of God is not a utopia, but a future already in realization.”

(Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth: What He Wanted, Who He was*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015, p. 350)



But how near is near?

“Amen, I say to you, **there are some standing here** who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come in power.”

(Mark 9:1)



“Amen, I say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until all these things have taken place.”

(Mark 13:30)

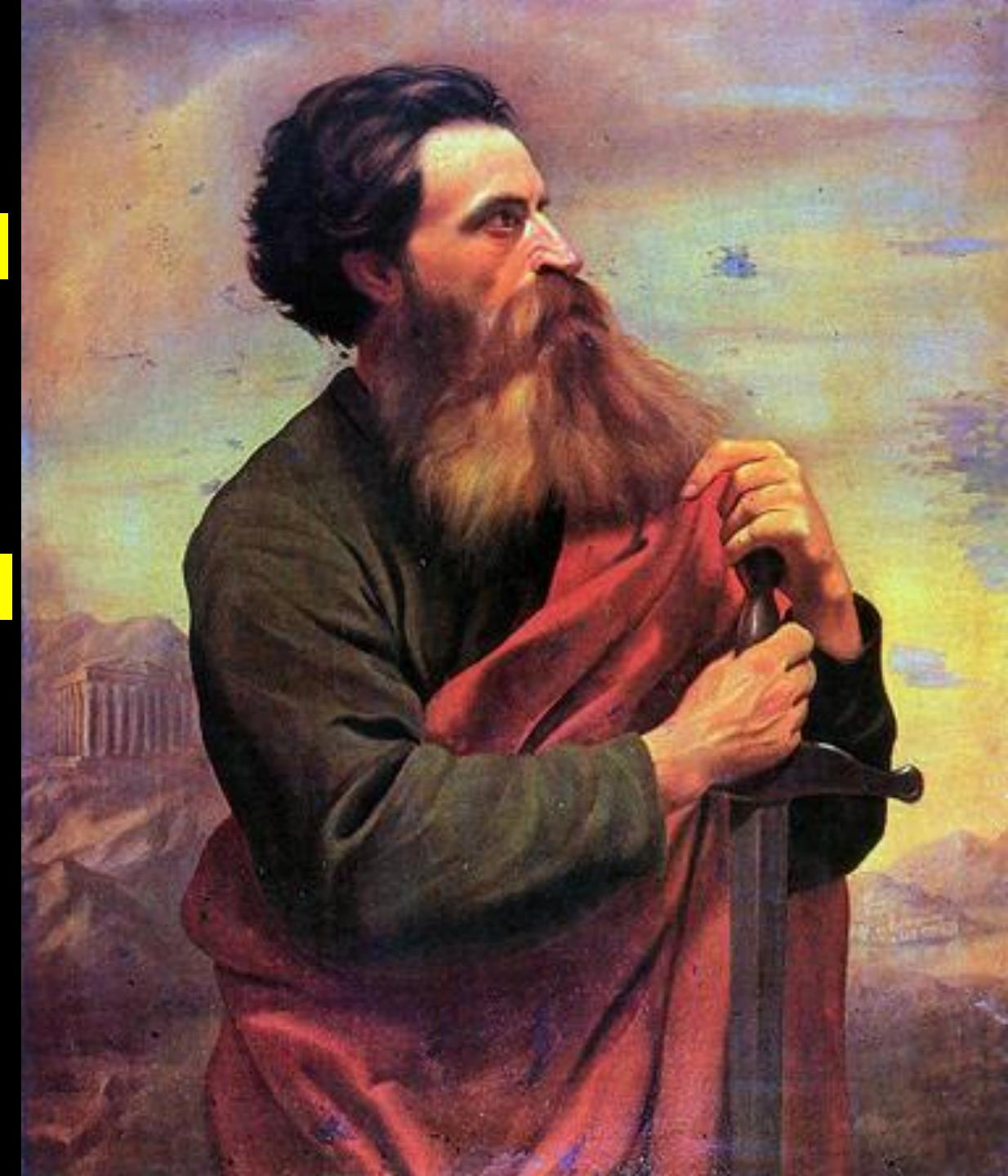
“But of that day or hour, **no one knows**, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

(Mark 13:32)

Behold, I tell you a mystery. **We shall not all fall asleep**, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet.

For the trumpet will sound, **the dead will be raised incorruptible**, and we shall be changed.

(1 Corinthians 15:51-52)



“In the primitive church the influence of truth was very powerfully strengthened by an opinion which, however it may deserve respect for its usefulness and antiquity, has not been found agreeable to experience.”

“The revolution of seventeen centuries has instructed us not to press too closely the mysterious language of prophecy and revelation; but as long as, for wise purposes, this error was permitted to subsist in the church, it was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians, who lived in the awful expectation of that moment when the globe itself, and all the various race of mankind, should tremble at the appearance of their divine Judge.”

Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*,
London, 1776



How we avoid the problem

We *exchange*
Jesus' promise for
a disembodied
afterlife in heaven

“According to his promise
we **look forward** to new
heavens and a new earth in
which righteousness
dwells.”

(2 Peter 3:13)

We *equate*
Jesus' promise
with social or
moral progress

Who we ignore

“Symeon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of equal value to ours through the righteousness of our God and savior Jesus Christ...”

“I will always remind you of these things, even though you already know them and are established in the truth you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this “tent,” to stir you up by a reminder, since I know that I will soon have to put it aside, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me. I shall also make every effort to enable you always to remember these things after my departure.”

(2 Peter 1:1, 12-15)



We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you **the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory, **“This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”**

We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain.

Moreover, we possess the prophetic message that is altogether reliable.

You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

(2 Peter 1:16-19)



I am trying to stir up your sincere disposition, to recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and savior through your apostles.

Know this first of all, that in the last days scoffers will come [to] scoff, living according to their own desires and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? From the time when our ancestors fell asleep, everything has remained as it was from the beginning of creation.”

They deliberately ignore the fact that the heavens existed of old and earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God; through these the world that then existed was destroyed, deluged with water.

The present heavens and earth have been reserved by the same word for fire, kept for the day of judgment and of destruction of the godless.

(2 Peter 3:1-7)

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day.

The Lord does not delay his promise, as some regard “delay,” but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be found out.

(2 Peter 3:8-10)

Since everything is to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought [you] to be, *conducting yourselves in acts of holiness and devotion*, looking forward to and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved in flames and the elements melted by fire.

But according to his promise we look forward to new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

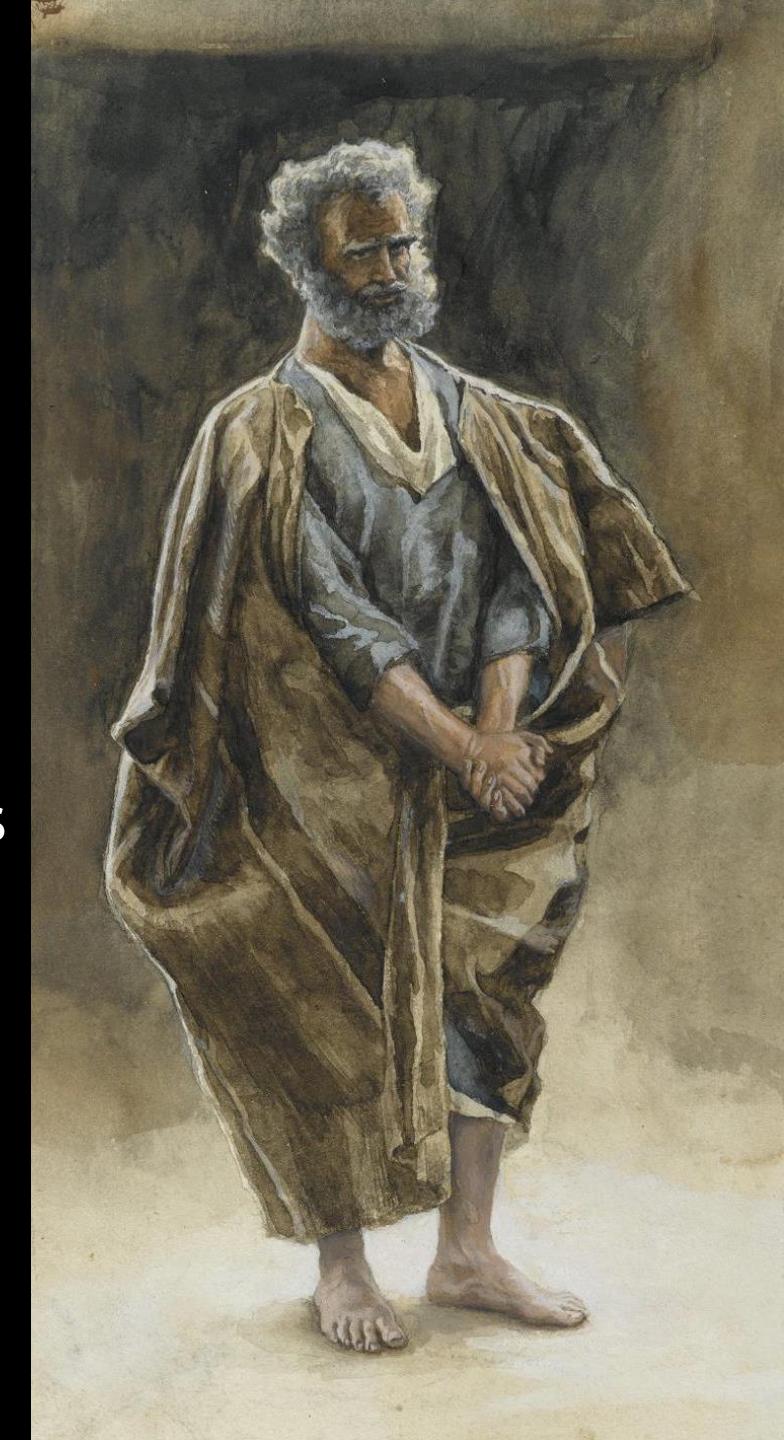
(2 Peter 3:11-13)

What are “acts of holiness and devotion?”

“Gird up the loins of your mind, live soberly, and set your hopes completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

“Like obedient children, do not act in compliance with the desires of your former ignorance but, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves **in every aspect of your conduct**, for it is written, “Be holy because I [am] holy.””

(1 Peter 1:13-16)



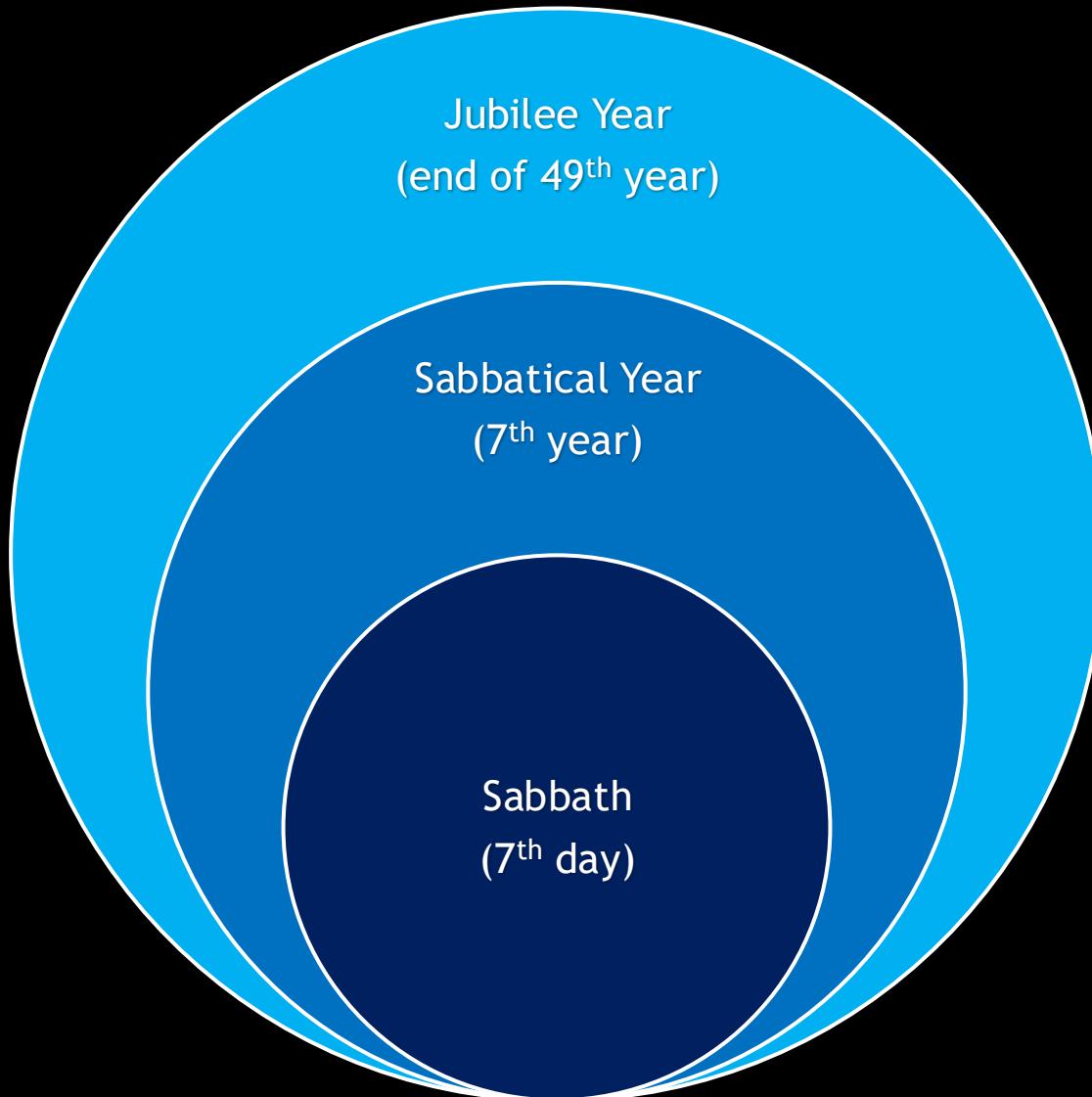
The Eighteen Commandments (Leviticus 19)

Be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy.

revere parents/keep sabbaths	make restitution for sacrilege
avoid idols/have no other gods	dedicate first fruits
make acceptable communion sacrifices	avoid divination/maintain bodily integrity
leave gleanings for poor/aliens	do not make daughters prostitutes
act with integrity	keep sabbaths/reverence sanctuary
do not exploit the vulnerable	avoid necromancy
judge justly	respect the elderly
love family/neighbors as yourself	love aliens as yourself
avoid mixtures	avoid economic dishonesty

Be careful, then, to observe all my statutes and decrees. I am the LORD.

Ecological and Economic Holiness (Leviticus 25)



The Mystery of Devotion

(1 Timothy 3)

You should know how to behave in the household of God - which is the church of the living God - as a pillar and support for the truth.

Undeniably great is the mystery of devotion,

*Who was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed to the Gentiles,
believed in throughout the world,
taken up in glory.*

Why do holiness and devotion hasten the kingdom?

Who belongs to the kingdom?

Beatitudes (5:3-12)

Salt and Light (5:13-16)



How does one enter the kingdom when it comes?

Commandments (5:17-20)

“But I say to you” (5:21-48)



How should one seek the kingdom on a daily basis?

Prayer (6:1-18)

Almsgiving (6:19-34)



Warnings
(7:1-27)

How do beatitudes hasten the kingdom?

PRONOUNCEMENT	EXPLANATION
Blessed are the poor in spirit	for theirs <u>is</u> the kingdom of heaven
Blessed are they who mourn	for they <u>will</u> be comforted
Blessed are the meek	for they <u>will</u> inherit the land
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness	for they <u>will</u> be satisfied
Blessed are the merciful	for they <u>will</u> be shown mercy
Blessed are the clean of heart	for they <u>will</u> see God
Blessed are the peacemakers	for they <u>will</u> be called children of God
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness	for theirs <u>is</u> the kingdom of heaven

How do salt and light hasten the kingdom?

You are the salt of the earth.

But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world.

A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.

How does prayer hasten the kingdom?

Our Father in heaven,
let your name be made holy,
let your kingdom come,
let your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our *epiousios* bread;
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and do not subject us to the final test,
but deliver us from the evil one.

How do works of mercy hasten the kingdom?

Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'

Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'

'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'

'For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?'

And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'

And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Why should hastening the kingdom matter to us?

We *exchange* Jesus' promise for a disembodied afterlife in heaven

“According to his promise we **look forward** to new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”

(2 Peter 3:13)

We *equate* Jesus' promise with social or moral progress

International Theological Commission *Eschatological Questions (1992)*

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1990_problematiche-attuali-escatologia_en.html