

## Is the Kingdom Here?

### Scripture Reading — Matthew 11:1-19

*“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it.” — Matthew 11:12*

John the Baptist was alone in prison, and he was wondering, “Is Jesus really the Messiah?” So even John wasn’t always certain about the purpose of Jesus’ mission.

King Herod had put John in prison, and that would have been a despairing place to be (see Mark 6:17-20). Despair can do strange things to people. It can lead us to question everything we have ever known as we wonder why we might be in the mess we are in.

Jesus’ response to John’s question takes us back to the prophet Isaiah, who foretold what would happen when the Messiah would come (Isaiah 29:18; 61:1). Jesus’ answer also recalls that John’s mission was to call people to repentance and prepare the way for the Messiah of God’s kingdom, whom Jesus truly was. And through the ministry of both John and Jesus, the kingdom of heaven was making advances, even though it was assaulted with violence.

The work of the kingdom continues despite opposition. Jesus does not promise that participating in the kingdom of God means having a comfortable life. John the Baptist died in prison. But we can expect that the kingdom will keep advancing. We may not be able to point and say “Here it is” or “There it is,” but we do know it is within each of us, despite our circumstances.

### Prayer

*Lord, even in our trouble and despair we are thankful that you have overcome the world. Continue to bless us in hard times and good, we pray. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

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