

October 5 Answers

- 1) From the beginning of His preaching ministry, Jesus challenged the Jew's assumptions about God's kingdom. He said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent** and **believe** in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). This was troubling because the call to repent seemed out of place. The Jews were the descendants of Abraham; surely their inclusion in the kingdom was **certain**. Why did they need to repent? Jesus explained to them, as he did to Nicodemus, that the kingdom is first and foremost a **spiritual** kingdom in which the Messiah rules in the hearts of those who believe Him and accept Him as Lord. Only those who were born of the **Spirit**, as Ezekiel prophesied, would **enter** the kingdom and be a part of its establishment on earth in the last days (Ezek 11:17–20). The earthly kingdom was coming, and it would indeed be a worldwide kingdom of peace, but it was "at hand" in the sense that the Messiah had come to **suffer** and **bear** the sins of many (Isa 53:3–6). This must be done first, for Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would pour "out his soul to **death**" before Jerusalem would sing for joy over her children (Isa 53:12; 54:1).