

What Is The Kingdom Of God?

As we seek to do what Paul said in Acts 20:27, to teach the whole counsel of God, we will thus learn from God's word just what the kingdom is, and is all about.

Depending upon the context of the question, and the context of the application from the Scripture, the answer to the question of our title can be rather varied. Generally speaking, the kingdom is the entire creation, the whole universe. Paul told some folks in the city of Athens, "The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24). It can be easily seen that Paul was declaring to those Greeks who believed that the universe centered itself about men, that God was the true center of all things, including, according to verse 28 of this text, the very daily existence of mankind. Thus, the kingdom of God is all that he has created.

To be more specific, the Old Testament declares that the kingdom of God was national Israel. This is no longer the case. National Israel, like the other events, places and people of the Old Testament was a type or foreshadow or picture of what God was going to accomplish for all mankind through Christ and his church. As Paul would write to the Ephesians, this is what God intended "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).

There are many references in the Old Testament to God's plan to establish a kingdom that would never be destroyed. An example of such is found in the book of Daniel. "And in the days of those kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44). This prophecy is looking specifically at the time of the Roman empire and the time of Christ.

In the New Testament, every time we see the kingdom of God referred to in the Gospel books, it always has reference to something in the future. The book of Acts from chapter three onward will refer to the kingdom of that which now exists. For example, consider what Paul wrote to the Colossian church, "who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Colossians 1:13). Paul said that God has done this, not "will" do it. Again, we read "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe" (Hebrews 12:28). The writer says we have this kingdom, not that we shall receive one in the future. Did God lose his kingdom? Was it in existence in the first century, but not now? Remember what Daniel said? "It will never be destroyed!"

What does Jesus say about this kingdom? Let us read Matthew 16: "He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in Heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be

bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matthew 16:15-19). What do we learn? 1-Peter was led by God to declare Jesus as the Christ; 2-this declaration is the rock upon which the church is built; 3-in the exact same context, Jesus then makes reference to the kingdom; 4-Jesus said Peter would have the keys to that kingdom; 5-Heaven and earth are both mentioned, thus the kingdom is not something IN Heaven, but from and having to do with Heaven and shall be on the earth. Therefore, the church is that kingdom, the kingdom is the church. Both refer to the same institution of God. When we find the beginning of the church, we find the beginning of the kingdom. Whatever the church is, or does by the authority of inspired men, it is what has already been decreed in Heaven.

Do we ever see the beginning of the church or kingdom taught in the Bible? Of course! Let us consider four passages and then learn what they teach us concerning this kingdom. First, "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Next, "And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Then, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). And finally, "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from Heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). What do these passages teach us? 1-the kingdom would come in the lifetime of some of Jesus' listeners; 2-the kingdom would come with power; 3-the power would be the Holy Spirit; 4-the Holy Spirit came on the Pentecost after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, thus the kingdom came on that same day. Is this kingdom the church? Listen to Acts 2:47-- "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

Those who would teach the false doctrine that Christ failed in his mission to build the kingdom which he promised, and His so called "failure" was due to His being rejected by the Jews, have made quite a number of blunders. First, they simply do not understand the nature of God's kingdom. They seem to think it is something physical rather than spiritual. Second, they did not understand the message of the prophets of the Old Testament. Third, they do not understand the mission of Christ. It was not to be a political mission, but spiritual. Listen to Luke's recorded words of Jesus: "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). And again, what John wrote, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit" (John 19:30). If Jesus' first attempt had failed, what makes these people believe that his 2nd attempt will not fail? If Jesus was not accepted the first time by Israel, why will he be accepted the next time? If Jesus did not build the kingdom 2,000 years ago, where is the book, chapter, and verse that teaches he shall build one on this earth yet in the future?

Sermon Notes:
“The Sermon on the Mount” Part I

This is one of the greatest sermons on record. It is the Master’s master work in describing the nature of the citizens of the kingdom which He was about to build: the church of Christ.

- Preparation begins with repentance: prove you have changed.
- His preaching was with authority.
- The two main points of this sermon deal with control:
 - Control your _____;
 - Control your _____.
- Jesus lists _____ proper attitudes one must cultivate (we refer to them as the beatitudes).
- Armed with proper attitudes, we can be of proper influence:
 - As salt:
 - As light:
- To exceed the mere “going through motions” type of “righteousness” Jesus what we have always heard with what He says:
 - _____ VS _____
 - _____ VS _____
 - _____ VS _____
 - _____ VS _____
 - _____ VS _____
 - _____ VS _____
- The goal: _____!

Meeting Times:

Sunday:
Bible Study: 9:30 a.m.
Worship: 10:30 a.m.
Evening: 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday:
Bible Study: 7:30 p.m.

Preachers:
James Grayson
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Robin W. Haley
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Weekly Budget: \$1360.00

Wednesday’s Wisdom:

*“The Old Testament teaches us to live rightly. We can endure if we **will** live rightly!” Jacob Haley*

Please pick up a copy of the business meeting notes and December financial report on the front table.

Question/Answer night is two Sunday nights from now. Please get your questions in to Robin or into the box.

Sermon Preview:

- Jesus preached for people of the first century to prepare for the coming kingdom, the church.
- Likely the greatest treatise on that subject of preparation is the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapters 5-7.
- Today, we shall examine the first 1/3 of that sermon, Matthew chapter 5.