

Believers and the Kingdom of God

Dated 20/09/2020

Bible Readings: Matthew 6:19-33 Daniel 4:19-22

Key Verse: But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (NKJV).

INTRODUCTION:

In the New Testament, we find that the theme of the Kingdom of God has been of major importance to the preaching of Jesus Christ. The term does not refer to a specific geographical area but to a more general idea of “the Kingly authority of God”. The Kingdom of God refers to the rule of God over individuals and people groups, rather than a specific region or location within which this authority is exercised. In the preaching of Jesus Christ, the theme of the coming of the Kingdom of God is specifically linked with the need for repentance or spiritual rebirth. There is an emphasis placed here upon the radically new character of God’s rule. The preaching of the kingdom demands a response of obedience from those who learn of it, which leads to their renewal.

The Kingdom of Heaven began when God himself entered human history as a man. Today Jesus Christ reigns in the hearts of believers, but the Kingdom of Heaven/God will not be fully realized until all evil in the world is judged and removed. Christ came to earth first as a suffering servant; he will come again as king and judge to rule victoriously over all the earth.

As believers, we are "temporary residents and foreigners" in this world because our real home is with God. Heaven is where God lives. Life in heaven operates according to God's principles and values, and it is eternal and unshakable. The Kingdom of Heaven/God came to earth in the symbolism of the Jewish sanctuary (the Tabernacle and Temple), where God's presence dwelt. It came in a fuller way in the person of Jesus Christ: "God with us." It spread through the entire world as the Holy Spirit came to live in every believer.

The Kingdom defined.

The word “Kingdom” is made up of two words: “king’s domain” = Kingdom. It is the territory or area over which a king rule and reigns; the king’s domain. God’s Kingdom is the rule and reign of God, whether in heaven or in earth. It is the purpose of God—the extension of God’s rule.

The Greek word “Basileia” meaning a realm or a region governed by a King. The royal reign of the Kingdom of God has to be seen. One cannot separate the King and the kingdom as far as God is concerned. The word kingdom is used some 160 times in the New Testament.

Naturally a question arises that for how long has the Kingdom of God been in existence? A good detailed reading of the Scripture informs us that:

- (a) The Kingdom of God is an everlasting Kingdom (Psalm 145:13 ; 103:19 and Daniel 4:3). There has never been a time when the Kingdom of God has not been in existence. It has neither beginning nor end.
- (b) The Kingdom of God is sovereign, ruling over all other kingdoms (Psalm 103:19; Revelation 11:15)
- (c) The Kingdom of God is all –inclusive, including within itself, its domain, the total universe, the elect angels, heaven, the fallen angels and all creatures and mankind on this earth. All are under His control and dominion. None could exist or act without His sustaining power (Psalm 103:19; Exodus 15:18; Psalm 145:10-13).

Is there is difference between the Kingdom of God and Kingdom of heaven?

There is no difference between these terms; they are synonymous. What is said of the Kingdom of God is also said of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 23:22).

The Church and the Kingdom.

2. The Church and the Kingdom

The word “Church” is used 115 times in the New Testament. The word “Kingdom” is used 160 times. A study of the book of Acts, along with other major Scriptures from the Gospels show that the early Church was indeed the channel, the instrument, the vehicle and vessel for the expression of the Kingdom of God. It was through the Church that the kingdom of God was extended in the earth in the hearts of people. We note some of the major truths concerning the kingdom of God in the following verses:

- Christ said He would build His Church and give her the keys of the Kingdom—Matthew 16:18-19
- Repentance and the faith are the doorway into the Kingdom—Matthew 3:2; 4:17 and 23
- One must be born again from above by spiritual and heavenly birth to enter the Kingdom (John 3:1-5). If the Kingdom was postponed, then it means that no one could and no one is born again until then.
- Regeneration is a translation out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of love and light—Colossians 1:13-14
- The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). It is very well described in Psalm 85:10
- The Kingdom of God is not of this world system—John 18:36; Matthew 6:9-10; Luke 17:20-21
- The Gospel of the Kingdom is to be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations before the end comes—Matthew 24:14; Mark 16:15-20
- The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the Kingdom of God is preached—Luke 16:16; Matthew 5:17-18; 11:13 and 12:28
- The Kingdom was taken from Jewry and given to the holy nation, which is the Church—Matthew 21:42-46; 1-Peter 2:5-9
- Believers are the good seed of the kingdom, in the mystery-form of the Kingdom in this age—Matthew 13:37-38; Mark 4:11; Matthew 8:11 and Luke 13:28-29
- We are to seek first the kingdom of God—Matthew 6:33; Luke 21:31

- The Church taught and preached and demonstrated the power of the Kingdom of God in the following manner:

- (a) Jesus spoke to the disciples of the kingdom of God—Acts 1:3
- (b) Philip, from the Church at Jerusalem, preached the Kingdom of God as an evangelist—Acts 8:12
- (c) Paul preached the kingdom of God, as an apostle from the Church at Antioch—Acts 19:8; 14:22
- (d) John and Paul, apostles of the New Testament Church, believed they were then in the Kingdom (Revelation 1:9; Colossians 4:11; Acts 28:23 &31.
- (e) Jesus Christ is the King-Priest after the order of Melchisedek (Hebrew 7:1-2; Revelation 15:3; 1-Timothy 1:17 & 6:15; Revelation 19:6). The Church is also a royal priesthood after the same order (Revelation 1:6; 5:9-10; 1-Peter 2:5-9; Romans 5:17 & 21).
- (f) Believers are born into the kingdom as subjects of the kingdom (John 3:1-5) and then they are added to the Church as members of the new community (Acts 11:24; 2:41-47).

The Church today is the agent for the proclamation and demonstration of the Kingdom of God in the earth.

The Kingdom of God Versus the Kingdom of Satan

A. THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOMS				
<u>Kingdom of God</u>			<u>Kingdom of Satan</u>	
Item	Description	Reference	Description	Reference
1. Rulership	Rule by God --Theocracy	2Ch 20:6; Ps 95:3 ; Da 4:17,32; 1Ti 1:17	Rule by Satan --The God of this age	Jn12:31; 14:30; 2Co 4:4; Eph 2:2; 1Jn 5:19
	God's rule Through His Son	Ps 110:1; Isa 9:6-7; Da 7:13-14; Mt 28:18 LK 1:32-33; Eph 1:20-11; Heb 1:3-8 Rev 1:5; 19:13-16	Satan assisted by principalities, powers and rulers of this dark world	Eph 1:21; 6:12 Col 1:16; 2:15; cf. Da 10:13
2. Character	Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy	Mt 6:33; Jn 18:36; Ro 14:17	Centered in the things of this world	1Jn 2:15-17; 5:19; Rev 2:9, 13
	Divine power	LK 11:20-22; 1Co 2:4; 4:20; 1Th 1:5	Disease, sickness, slavery	Mt 10:1; LK 9:1

Truth	Jn 8:31-32 14:6, 16-17; 15:26; 16:13 17:17	Deception	Ge 3:4-5, 13; Jn 8:44; Ro 1:25; 2 Co 4:4; 2Th 2:10-12
Holiness	1Co 1:2,30; 2Co 6:17-7:1; Eph 4:24 Heb 12:10,14; 1Pe 1:15-16	Sin and evil	Ro 1:28-32; 1Co 6:9-10; Eph 2:1-3; 1Jn 3:7-10,12
Light	Jn 1:4-9; 3:19 Col 1:12-13; 1Ti 6:16; 1Jn 1:5,7	Darkness	LK 22:53; Ac26:18; Eph 6:12; Col 1:13; 1Jn 1:6; cf, 2Co 11:14

The Role of Believers in the Kingdom

The New Testament has much to say about the role of believers in God's kingdom.

- (1) It is the responsibility of believers to persevere in diligently seeking God's kingdom in all its manifestations, hungering and thirsting for God's presence and power both in their own lives and within the Christian community. Those who follow Christ are urged to seek above all else God's Kingdom and His righteousness. We must seek earnestly to have the rule and power of God demonstrated in our lives and assemblies. We must pray that God's Kingdom will come in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit to save sinners, to deliver people from demonic bondages and strongholds, to heal the sick and to magnify the name of our Lord Jesus. The position of the believers in the Kingdom will be determined by their attitude towards God's commandments; i.e., by their obeying and teaching them. Our degree of faithfulness in this respect will determine our degree of glory in Heaven.
- (2) In Matthew 11:12 Jesus gives additional information on the nature of Kingdom people. There He indicates that the Kingdom of Heaven is taken hold of only by forceful people, who are committed to breaking away from the sinful practices of the human race and who turn to Christ, His Word and His righteous ways. No matter what the cost may be, such people vigorously seek the Kingdom in all its power. In other words, experiencing the Kingdom of God with all its blessings requires earnest endeavor and diligent faith. Spiritual warfare that includes the will to resist Satan, sin and an often-corrupt society.

It is my prayer that your understanding about the Kingdom of God and your responsibilities as believers is clearly established and increased. May You all reflect, glow and radiate the Kingdom values in your life, home and Church.....Amen.