



Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries
dikaosune.com

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The kingdom of God is also the kingdom of Christ. Jesus speaks of the kingdom of the Son of man (Matthew 13:41; 16:28), "my kingdom" (Luke 22:30; John 18:36). See "his kingdom" (Luke 1:33; 2 Timothy 4:1); "thy kingdom" (Matthew 20:31; Luke 23:42; Hebrews 1:8); "the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13); "His heavenly kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:18); "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:11).

God has given the kingdom to Christ (Luke 22:29), and when the Son has accomplished His rule, He will restore the kingdom to the Father (I Corinthians 15:24).

The kingdom of the world is to become "the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (Revelation 11:15). There is no tension between "the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ" (Revelation 12:10).

In Luke 19:12, 15 a nobleman went into a far country to receive a "kingdom," i.e., authority to rule. Revelation 17:12 speaks of ten kings who have not yet received a "kingdom"; they are to "receive authority as kings" for one hour. These kings give over their "kingdom," their authority, to the Beast (Revelation 17:17). The harlot is the Great City, which has "kingdom," dominion over the kings of the earth (Revelation 17:18).

The kingdom (βασιλεια βασιλεια) is also a realm over which a reign is exercised. The idea of a realm is found in Matthew 4:8, Luke 4:5; Matthew 24:7; Mark 6:23; Revelation 16:10. The Kingdom Is God's Reign. The "kingdom of God" means primarily the rule of God, the divine kingly authority.

The Hebrew word *מלכות*, like *βασιλεια*, carries primarily the abstract rather than the concrete meaning. A king's reign is frequently dated by the phrase "in the...year of this *מלכות*," i.e., of his reign (I Chronicles 26:31; Daniel 1:1). The establishment of Solomon's *מלכות* (I Kings 2:12) meant the securing of his reign. The reception of Saul's *מלכות* by David (I Chronicles 12:23) is the authority to reign as king.

The abstract idea is evident when the word is placed in parallelism with such abstract concepts as power, might, glory, dominion, (Daniel 2:37; 4:34; 7:14).

When *מלכות* is used of God, it almost always refers to His authority or His rule as the heavenly King. See Psalms. 22:28; 103:19; 145:11, 13; Obadiah 21; Daniel 6:26

In the NT, The kingdom of God is the divine authority and rule given by the Father to the Son (Luke 22:29). Christ will exercise this rule until He has subdued all that is hostile to God. When He has put all

enemies under His feet, He will return the kingdom, His messianic authority, to the Father (I Corinthians 15:24-28).

The kingdom (not kingdoms) now exercised by men in opposition to God is to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15) and "He shall reign for ever and ever." In Revelation 12:10 the kingdom of God is parallel to the salvation and power of God and the authority of His Christ.

This abstract meaning is apparent in the Gospels. In Luke 1:33 the everlasting kingdom of Christ is synonymous with His rule. When Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36), He did not refer to His realm; He meant that His rule was not derived from earthly authority but from God and that His kingship would not manifest itself like a human kingdom but in accordance with the divine purpose.

The kingdom which men must receive with childlike simplicity (Mark 10:15; Matthew 19:14; Luke 18:17), which men must seek (Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:31), which Christ will give to the disciples (Luke 22:29), is the divine rule.

The object of the divine rule is the redemption of men and their deliverance from the powers of evil. I Corinthians 15:23-28 is definitive. Christ's reign means the destruction of all hostile powers, the last of which is death. The kingdom of God is the reign of God in Christ destroying all that is hostile to the divine rule.

The NT sees a hostile kingdom standing over against God's kingdom. The "kingdom of the world" is opposed to God's kingdom (Revelation 11:15) and must be conquered. The kingdoms of the world are under satanic control (Matthew 4:8; Luke 4:5). Matthew 12:26 and Luke 11:18 speak of the kingdom of Satan, whose power over men is shown in demon possession.

This world or age opposes the working of God's kingdom; the cares of the age will choke the word of the kingdom (Matthew 13:22). This opposition between the two kingdoms, of God and of Satan, is summarized in 2 Corinthians 4:4. Satan is called the god of this age and is seen to exercise his rule by holding men in darkness. This statement must be understood in light of the fact that God remains the King of the ages (I Timothy 1:17; Revelation 15:3).

The kingdom of God is the redemptive rule of God in Christ defeating Satan and the powers of evil and delivering men from the sway of evil. It brings to men "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). Entrance into the kingdom of Christ means deliverance from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13) and is accomplished by the new birth (John 3:3, 5).

The Kingdom Is Dynamic. The kingdom is not an abstract principle; the kingdom comes. It is God's rule actively invading the kingdom of Satan. The coming of the kingdom, as John the Baptist preached, would mean a mighty divine act: a baptism of judgment and fire (Matthew 3:11-12). God was about to manifest His sovereign rule in the Coming One in salvation and judgment.

The Kingdom Comes at the End of the Age. John looked for a single, though complex, event of salvation-judgment. Jesus separated the present and the future visitations of the kingdom. There is a future eschatological coming of the kingdom at the end of the age. Jesus taught the prayer, "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10).

When the Son of man comes in His glory, He will sit on the throne of judgment. The wicked will suffer the condemnation of fire; the righteous will "inherit the kingdom" (Matthew 25:31-46). The same separation at the end of the age is pictured in Matthew 13:36-43.

This eschatological coming of the kingdom will mean the *παλιγγενεσία* (Matthew 19:28), the rebirth of transformation of the material order.

The Kingdom Has Come into History. Jesus taught that the kingdom, which will come in glory at the end of the age, has come into human history in His own person and mission. The redemptive rule of God has now invaded the realm of Satan to deliver men from the power of evil. In the casting out of demons Jesus asserted the presence and power of the kingdom (Matthew 12:28).

While the destruction of Satan awaits the coming of the Son of man in glory (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10), Jesus has already defeated Satan. The strong man (Satan) is bound by the stronger man (Christ)-and men may now experience a new release from evil (Matthew 12:29).

The mission of the disciples in the name and power of Christ casting out demons meant the overthrow of Satan's power (Luke 10:18). Thus Jesus Christ could say that the kingdom of God was present in the midst of men (Luke 17:21). In the messianic works of Christ fulfilling Isaiah 35:5-6, the kingdom manifested its power (Matthew 11:12).

The Kingdom Is Supernatural. As the dynamic activity of God's rule the kingdom is supernatural. It is God's deed. Only the supernatural act of God can destroy Satan, defeat death (I Corinthians 15:26), raise the dead in incorruptible bodies to inherit the blessings of the kingdom (I Corinthians 15:50), and transform the world order (Matthew 19:28).

The same supernatural rule of God has invaded the kingdom of Satan to deliver men from bondage to satanic darkness. The parable of the seed growing by it self sets forth this truth (Mark 4:26-29). The ground brings forth fruit of itself. Men may sow the seed by preaching the kingdom (Matthew 10:7; Luke 10:9; Acts 8:12; 28:23, 31); they can persuade men concerning the kingdom (Acts 19:8).

However, they cannot build the kingdom of God. It is God's deed. Men can receive the kingdom (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17), but they are never said to establish it. Men can reject the kingdom and refuse to receive it or enter it (Matthew 23:13), but they cannot destroy it. They can look for it (Luke 23:51), pray for it's coming (Matthew 6:10), and seek it (Matthew 6:33), but they cannot bring it.

The kingdom is altogether God's deed although it works in and through men. Men may do things for the sake of the kingdom (Matthew 19:12; Luke 18:29), work for it (Colossians 4:11), suffer for it (2 Thessalonians 1:5), but they are not said to act upon the kingdom itself. They can inherit it (Matthew 25:34; I Corinthians 6:9-10, 15:50), but they cannot bestow it upon others.

The presence of the kingdom in history is a mystery (Mark 4:11). A mystery is a divine purpose hidden for long ages but finally revealed (Romans 16:25-26). The OT revelation looks forward to a single manifestation of God's kingdom when the glory of God would fill the earth. Daniel 2 sees four human kingdoms, then the kingdom of God.

The mystery of the kingdom is this: Before this eschatological consummation, before the destruction of Satan, before the age to come, the kingdom of God has entered this age and invaded the kingdom of Satan in spiritual power to bring to men in advance the blessings of forgiveness (Mark 2:5), life (John 3:3), and righteousness (Matthew 5:20; Romans 14:16) which belong to the age to come. The righteousness of the

kingdom is an inner, absolute righteousness (Matthew 5:22, 48), which can be realized only as God gives it to men.

The parables of Matthew 13 embody this new revelation. A parable is a story drawn from daily experience illustrating a single, fundamental truth; the details are not to be pressed as in allegory. The kingdom has come among men but not with power which compels every knee to bow before its glory; it is rather like seed cast on the ground which may be fruitful or unfruitful depending on its reception (Matt. 13:3-8).

The kingdom has come, but the present order is not disrupted; the sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one grow together in the world until the harvest (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). The kingdom of God has indeed come to men, not as a new glorious order, but like the proverbial mustard seed.

However, its insignificance must not be despised. This same kingdom will one day be a great tree (Matthew 13:31-32).