

The Gospel – The Message of Jesus Christ

Thy Kingdom Come – More than Personal Salvation

The Gospel proclaims a King and a Kingdom

Christianity expresses its hope in terms of the Kingdom of God. It looks to the King to bring His rule to the earth and restore all things to a never ending world of peace and righteousness. Toward this Kingdom, the Old Testament prophets looked forward and told of days that would be very much unlike the current days of warfare and hatred, disease and death, along with drought and famine and pestilence. It would be a day of peace and prosperity where all the world's problems would be resolved as God would bring His rule to bear upon the earth and drastically renew and recreate the world. Of this Kingdom, George Ladd writes.....

*“Then came Jesus of Nazareth with the announcement, **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matt 4:17). This theme of the coming kingdom of God was central in His mission. His teaching was designed to show mankind how they might enter the kingdom of God (Matt 5:20, 7:21). His mighty works were intended to prove that the kingdom of God had come upon them (Matt 12:28). His parables illustrated to His disciples the truth about the kingdom of God (Matt 13:11). And when He taught His followers to pray, at the heart of their petition were the words, **“thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”** (Matt 6:10). On the eve of His death He assured His disciples that He would yet share with them the happiness and the fellowship of the Kingdom (Luke 22:22-30). And He promised that He would appear again on earth in glory to bring the blessedness of the Kingdom to those for whom it was prepared (Matt 25:31,34).”*

This Kingdom then is a major theme of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is a proclamation that God's Kingdom has arrived in the person of the King, the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus first began His ministry he announced **“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**

Matthew 4:17 - 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** NASB

With this announcement of the Kingdom, comes a summons to *repentance* from sin. This is because the nature of God's Kingdom is primarily about His sovereign authority and rule as the King. The holy God will not always strive with sin in His presence, but has now proclaimed that His rule has come and He has issued warning that **“all men every should repent.”**

Acts 17:30-31 - 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, **God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.** 31 because **He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness** through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." NASB

Now that God has long **“overlooked the times of ignorance”** He is **“now declaring”** that men must repent of sins because He has **“fixed a day”** of judgment. This summons to repentance was also one essential element of the Gospel that was preached by the apostles as well.

Mark 6:7-12 - 7 And **He summoned the twelve and began to send them out** in pairs;.....12 And they went out and **preached that men should repent.** NASB

Acts 3:19-20 - 19 **“Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away,** in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; NASB

Acts 20:20-21 - 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks **of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.** NASB

Acts 26:20-21 - 20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that **they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.** NASB

In this sense then **the Gospel is a warning**. Because Christ is now bringing His authority as King to bear upon all mankind, He is commanding that all rebels who sin against His holy Law, should stop sinning and surrender to His Lordship or be judged and banished from His Kingdom forever. Moreover, they shall perish and die forever under the wrath of Almighty God.

Luke 13:3 - "I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish**. NASB

John 3:36 - 6 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but **he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him**." NASB

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 - 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 **dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction**, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, NASB

Therefore the great King has now warned of the arrival of His Kingdom and has mercifully invited men to repent from sins and be saved from this awful wrath which is to come. He has graciously given rebel sinners an opportunity to freely surrender or else suffer the consequences. However, along with the warning of the consequences of continued rebellion comes all the promises of God as expressed in the hope of the coming Kingdom of God. Accordingly, those who respond to the Gospel with repentance and faith receive and enter the Kingdom of God, the realm of His rule, and forever live in the fullness of its blessing. The experience of this blessing is glorious and fulfilling beyond what words can express.

Three Expressions of the Kingdom in the New Testament

The language of the New Testament speaks about the Kingdom of God in various ways. Primarily, there are three different ways in which the Kingdom of God is expressed.

1. **The Kingdom is God's reign, His Authority, His sovereign rule as King**. – In almost every case of the usage of the term Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven the Scripture is speaking of God's rule, His dominion and sovereign authority as King. So when this term is applied we speak of the realm of His authority and the blessing and power of it.

Psalm 145:11-13 - 11 They shall speak of **the glory of Thy kingdom, And talk of Thy power**;

12 To make known to the sons of men Thy mighty acts, And the glory of the majesty of Thy kingdom. 13 **Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Thy dominion endures throughout all generations**. NASB

Psalm 103:19 - 19 The Lord has established His throne in the heavens; And **His sovereignty rules over all**. NASB

We are told to "***seek first His Kingdom***" so the Kingdom is something we seek.

Matthew 6:33 - 33 "But **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**; and all these things shall be added to you. NASB

Or we are told that they were "***preaching the Kingdom***" so that they were telling people of the reign and rule of God and warning men to come and surrender and receive its blessing.

Acts 28:30-31 - 30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, and was welcoming all who came to him, 31 **preaching the kingdom of God**, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered. NASB

Or we are told of its nature as it exists now in the church.

Romans 14:17 - 17 for **the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**. NASB

Also it can be expressed in terms of the fact that we suffer for the Kingdom.

2 Thessalonians 1:5 - 5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered **worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering**. NASB

2. **The Kingdom the present realm into which we may now enter to experience the blessings of His reign**. – When Jesus came preaching the Kingdom he told us it was now at hand.

Matthew 4:17 - 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" NASB

Luke 17:20-21 - 20 Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as **to when the kingdom of God was coming**, He answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.**" NASB

As He taught, He described the Kingdom as something we could now enter or not enter based on certain conditions.

John 3:5 - 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, **he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**" NASB

Luke 18:17 - 17 "Truly I say to you, **whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter** it at all." NASB

He described it as something that had now come and that He was its chief representative. because the Kingdom had now arrived.

Matthew 12:28 - 28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, **then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**" NASB

It is also expressed in terms of our present state having been delivered from the "domain of darkness" and transferred to the Kingdom of God.

Colossians 1:13 - 13 For He delivered us **from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,** NASB

3. **The Kingdom is a future realm which will come only with the return of our Lord Jesus Christ into which we will then enter and experience the fullness of His reign.** – The Kingdom of God is also expressed in terms of its future fulfillment and the fact that it is yet to come. As Jesus taught of the Kingdom He would speak of it not only in terms of its present reality, but also in terms of it being yet future.

Matthew 25:34 - 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**" NASB

Luke 22:17-18 - 17 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, **I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.**" NASB

Or the Apostles would speak of it as something yet to be "*inherited*" in the future or something yet to be entered into to.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 - 9 Or do you not know that **the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall **inherit the kingdom of God.** NASB

2 Timothy 4:18 - 18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, **and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom;** to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. NASB

Furthermore, the Kingdom has different stages of its fulfillment as it reaches its climax in History. Of this fact the Bible has much to say. There are many prophecies in the Bible describing these different stages of fulfillment and events that yet shall be in the future as we see the Kingdom of God unfold in the course of world History.

1 Corinthians 15:23-24 - 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 **then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father,** when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. NASB

Matthew 24:14 - 14 "And **this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world** for a witness to all the nations, **and then the end shall come.**" NASB

And so the Kingdom is described in these three ways. It is the realm of God's authority which has **now** broken into time and space in a certain spiritual way, but has **not yet** reached its climax. Jesus reigns as KING from the right hand of God, and has established the Gospel of the Kingdom as a way for mankind to be reconciled to God and surrender freely and receive amnesty from His fierce wrath. However, this period of God's patient forbearance with evil in the world

will soon end and Christ will return in Glory with all of His angels to take His rightful place as King. This is typically referred to as the Second Coming of Christ.

The Second Coming of Christ

An essential element of the Gospel is that we preach Christ Jesus as Lord and King. We *warn* mankind to come voluntarily under His authority and rule before it is too late and they die in their rebellion against Him and face Him in judgment, or He returns to establish His Kingdom and they are found in their rebellion against Him and then face Him in judgment. We call mankind to repentance from sin and faith in our Lord Jesus in order to flee from the coming wrath. (Eph 5:6, Col 3:6, 1 Thes 1:10, Rev 6:16-17, 11:18) When Christ returns there will be several tasks at hand that He will accomplish. I have put them into (4) categories here for the sake of brevity. The **warning that we give in the Gospel** embodies these inevitable and unavoidable events to come upon the entire world.

- **Rescue and Resurrection**
- **Destruction of Evil Authorities**
- **Establishment of Earthly Kingdom**
- **Consummation of the Ages**

Below we will briefly describe these events for the readers education of general categories of “end time” events of which they are warning people will soon take place.

1. Rescue and Resurrection

In the course of this Gospel age, there will come a time of terrible tribulation on the earth unlike any other time before it. Christ will “*cut short*” the time of tribulation on the earth in order to rescue His people from the greatest persecution ever to come upon them by the hands of Antichrist (Dan 7:21-27, Rev 13:4-10).

Matthew 24:21-23 - 21 for **then there will be a great tribulation**, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. 22 "And **unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.** NASB

When this rescue takes place, the dead in Christ shall be raised first, and the Church will be caught up in the air to meet Christ and to stand with Him in glory as He puts all of His enemies under His feet and establish His reign as King. This is the **first resurrection** (Rev 20:4-6).

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 - 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that **we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.** 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and **the dead in Christ shall rise first.** 17 **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,** and thus we shall always be with the Lord. NASB

Matthew 24:29-31 - 29 "But **immediately after the tribulation of those days** the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.** 31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His **elect** from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. NASB

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 - 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; **we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,** 52 **in a moment,** in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.** 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. NASB

2. Destruction of Evil Authorities

When Christ returns to rescue and resurrect His people, He will then swiftly destroy the Antichrist and arrest every earthly authority (Rev 19:11-21).

Revelation 19:19-21 - 9 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him[Christ] who sat upon the horse, and against His army. 20 And the **beast[antichrist]** was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those

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who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; **these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.** 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. NASB **Daniel 7:25-27** - 25 'And he[antichrist] will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. 26 'But **the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.** 27 '**Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom,** and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' NASB

Evil will be brought under control on the face of the earth at the hand of Jesus the King, and be brought under the rule of the Kingdom of God.

Isaiah 2:2-4 - Now it will come about that **In the last days, The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains,** And will be raised above the hills; And **all the nations will stream to it.** 3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, And that we may walk in His paths." **For the law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.** 4 And **He will judge between the nations,** And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. **Nation will not lift up sword against nation,** And never again will they learn war. NASB

Even Satan himself will be bound and have no influence on the earth for 1000 years.

Revelation 20:1-3 - And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And **he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.** 3 and threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. NASB

3. Establishment of Earthly Kingdom

At this time Christ will establish His rule upon the earth. His long awaited government will be established, His rule will be Sovereign and will never be destroyed. It will be everlasting!

Daniel 2:44 - 44 "And in the days of those kings **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed,** and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; **it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.** NASB

Daniel 7:13-14 - 13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "**And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.** NASB

He and His saints (the church of all time), will rule over the nations, there will be no war, and the world will enjoy a time of great peace (Rev 20:4-6).

Psalms 22:27-28 - 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, **And all the families of the nations will worship before Thee.** 28 **For the kingdom is the LORD'S, And He rules over the nations.** NASB

Zechariah 14:16-20 - 16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 17 And it will be that **whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.** 18 And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19 **This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.** NASB

Daniel 7:27 - 27 '**Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom,** and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' NASB

Revelation 5:10 - 10 "And Thou hast made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and **they will reign upon the earth.**" NASB

This time period of 1000 years is commonly called the Millennium. There is much controversy concerning the nature and circumstances of this time.