

# 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.