

# The Kingdom of God

## Lesson 1

### I. Series Description

- a. Introduction to the topic of the Kingdom of God
- b. The Mediatorial Kingdom in the Old Testament
- c. The Mediatorial Kingdom in Old Testament Prophecy
- d. The Kingdom in the Four Gospels
- e. The Kingdom in Acts, the Epistles and the Book of the Revelation
- f. Synthesis and conclusion

### II. Series Objectives

- a. Provide a comprehensive Biblical framework for understanding the “whole counsel of God” with regard to this important topic.
- b. Identify the significant interpretive variations that have emerged among Bible scholars regarding the kingdom.
- c. Discuss the questions that divide the various kingdom theories.
- d. Provide a rational basis for reaching your own understanding and conclusions about the nature of the kingdom.
- e. Discover some important implications for the believer which flow out of a comprehensive view of the Kingdom of God.
- f. Encourage a deeper desire for the personal apprehension of the fullness of daily kingdom living.

### III. Why Study the Kingdom of God?

- a. The Kingdom of God was the central teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and was at the heart of his earthly ministry. Matt 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. KJV
- b. It was also central to His worldview and that of his first followers, the New Testament writers, and the early Church. It represents the very essence of New Testament Christianity. Acts 19:6-8 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve. 8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. KJV
- c. Many believe that next to the Person of Christ, the Kingdom of God is the most important and all-encompassing concept of Scripture. Luke 16:16 "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. NIV
- d. Christ is the divine center of the Kingdom of God, the King eternal, which means that without understanding His Kingdom we do not really understand Him. 1 Tim 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. KJV
- e. The eschatology of the Bible is drawn extensively from the ideas of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth. Ps 110:1-2 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. 2 The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. KJV
- f. Christians are commanded to pray for it and to live it. Thus it may be said that kingdom living is the constant recognition of a spiritual and eternal world and is one of the unailing marks of genuine Christianity. Matt 6:9-10 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. KJV
- g. Yet the kingdom remains one of the most misunderstood, misconstrued and confused, abstracted, and contested realities in Christianity.
- h. Most churches today rarely mention the kingdom, let alone teach and obey its established and present-day elements.

### IV. Definition of the Kingdom of God

- a. There are three elements present in the Biblical concept of God's Kingdom: The ruler; the realm, and the reigning function.
- b. The plain understanding of the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words for kingdom when applied to God infers both a realm and a reigning function. Ps 22:28-29 For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations. 29 All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. KJV
- c. Therefore, the Kingdom of God may be defined broadly as the rule of God over His creation.

### V. Two Key Biblical Distinctions

- a. Certain passages present the kingdom as something which has always existed; yet in other places it seems to have a definite historical beginning among men. Compare Ps 110:16 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. KJV with Dan 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. KJV
- b. The kingdom is set forth as universal in its scope, outside of which there is no created thing; yet again is revealed as local rule established on earth. Compare Ps 103:19 The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. KJV with Is 24:23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. KJV

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- c. The kingdom sometimes appears as the rule of God directly, with no intermediary standing between God and man; yet it is also pictured as the rule of God through a **mediator** who serves as channel between God and man. Compare PS 59:13 *Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah. KJV* with Ps 2:4-6. Ps 2:4-6 *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. KJV*
- d. The kingdom is described as something wholly future; whereas in other texts it is said to be a **present reality**. Compare Zech 14:9 *And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one. KJV* with PS 29:10 *The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever. KJV*
- e. The kingdom is set forth as an unconditional rule arising out of the **sovereignty** of God yet it sometimes appears as a kingdom based on a covenant made by God with man. Compare Dan 4: 34-35 *And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? KJV* and Ps 89: 27-29 *Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. 28 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. 29 His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. KJV*
- f. While there have been many attempts to offer a reasonable explanation of these seeming contradictions, it is useful to think of these of different aspects of the kingdom of God as ways to **distinguish** the Universal from the Mediatorial.
- g. These terms describe different qualities; universal kingdom referring to the extent of rule and Mediatorial Kingdom referring to the method of rule (**a mediator**) 1 Tim 2:5 *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; KJV*

### VI. Various Ideas About The Kingdom

- a. The study of the Kingdom of God is a many sided, complex subject which throughout Church history has been interpreted in several **very different** ways. Some of the most widely held views follow.
- b. The **National** Kingdom idea is a pre-Christian view referring to a literal people, the nation of Israel and an earthly rule of Messiah.
- c. Following the destruction of the Jerusalem temple was **written** about the kingdom of God because such references would have unnecessarily provoked hostility and the accusation of treason against Rome.
- d. The **Celestial** Kingdom idea emerged in the early Christian centuries in which the phrase "the kingdom of God" was used to designate heaven itself.
- e. The Celestial Kingdom is broken down into **two** variations: a future reign of God in eternity after the close of human history, and second, a present reign of God in heaven.
- f. The **Millennial** Kingdom idea is also an early Christian interpretation. Here the Kingdom of God is thought to be established on earth at the second coming of Christ, who will reign with His saints for a literal 1000 years.
- g. The Ecclesiastical (**Church**) Kingdom idea fathered by Augustine sees the kingdom as a visible hierarchy (Roman Catholic) while the Protestant variation refers to the church as the invisible presence of the Kingdom.
- h. The **Spiritual** Kingdom idea finds that the Kingdom of God is the inner and unseen rule of God over the hearts of men who yield themselves to His will.
- i. The Liberal **Social** Kingdom idea posits that with the coming of the Gospel, mankind is progressively improving as the Christian Social Order is established and spread throughout the earth.

### VII. Application

- a. What are some of the attributes or characteristics, the power and authority that describe Christ as your King?
- b. Create a word picture that will help you to comprehend the significance of Christ as your King.
- c. If Christ were REALLY King over you what impact would that have upon your thoughts? Your words? Your deeds? Your possessions? Your hopes and dreams? Your fears and concerns? Your future?

Primary References: **The Greatness of The Kingdom**, by Alva J. McClain  
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- d. Provide a \_\_\_\_\_ basis for reaching your own understanding and conclusions about the nature of the kingdom.
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