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The Kingdom of God (Heaven) in Matthew

The terms “*Kingdom of God*” and “*Kingdom of Heaven*” are used interchangeably throughout the book of Matthew to mean the same thing (cf. Matt. 19:23-24; Mk. 1:15 comp. to Matt. 3:17). Matthew refers to the Kingdom of God (heaven) more than any of the other gospel accounts (three times as much as is found in the book of Mark).

Jesus is king of God’s Kingdom

The Old Testament prophets foretold of God establishing David’s throne as an eternal kingdom (cf. II Sam. 7:12-13). The government of God’s eternal kingdom would rest upon the shoulders of the “*Mighty God*” and it was to uphold “*justice and righteousness*” (cf. Isa. 9:6-7). Luke plainly tells us that Jesus is the son of David that was to reign as king on his father’s throne (Lk. 1:30-33). The king of God’s kingdom is further identified as Jesus by Zechariah’s prophecy regarding the Lord being “*lowly and riding upon an ass*” (Zech. 9:9). Matthew 21:4-5 records the fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy as Jesus makes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The multitude of witnesses in Jerusalem who saw the Lord on the donkey recognized these Old Testament prophecies and thereby shouted, “*Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest*” (Matt. 21:9). Furthermore, the prophet Daniel referred to the king of God’s eternal kingdom as the “*son of man*” (Dan. 7:13-14). Jesus applied the phrase, “*Son of man*” to himself at Matthew 8:20 and 29 other times in the book of Matthew. Jesus indeed fulfilled all scriptures relating to the king reigning in God’s kingdom. The Lord came into the world during the days of the Roman Empire and thus fulfilled even the time frame (Dan. 2:44; Lk. 3:1-2). The king of God’s kingdom is Jesus (Col. 1:13).

The Establishment of the Kingdom

Matthew records the coming of the kingdom of God to be the primary message of Jesus (cf. Matt. 4:17). Jesus taught His disciples the importance of teaching about the kingdom of God too (Matt. 6:9; 10:7). Jesus spoke of the nearness of the kingdom when he said that many currently alive would see its establishment (Matt. 16:28; Mk. 9:1). The Old Testament prophets foretold of God’s kingdom being established in the “*latter days*” (Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:28). These “*latter days*” would be a time of Roman rule (Dan. 2:43-45; 11:38-40). The geographic location of Jerusalem is given as the kingdom’s starting place (Isa. 2:2-3). God’s law was to go forth from the city of Jerusalem when His kingdom was established (Isa. 2:2ff; Lk. 24:46-49). Furthermore, the word of God tells us that the kingdom would be established with great power (Mk. 9:1; Lk. 24:49).

When one turns to the New Testament we find the Roman Empire reigning supreme on the earth (Lk. 3:1-2; Acts 18:1-2). After Jesus was resurrected he appeared to the apostles and commanded them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they be clothed with power to preach “*repentance and remission of sins*” (Lk. 24:46-49). The day of Pentecost came fifty days after Jesus was crucified. The apostles were tarrying in the city of Jerusalem just as the Lord had instructed them to. Acts 2 records the miraculous power of the Holy

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors. We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please come back at your every opportunity.

Tom Witherspoon took a stress test this past Monday to see how his heart has responded to the rehabilitation work he has done. He will not know the results of the test until next week; however, he feels that it went well. Let us continue to pray for Tom's complete recovery.

Remember the brothers of **Tolene Witherspoon** (Clifford and Jim) in your prayers.

Keep **Nina Gray** in your prayers too. Nina continues to take medication for her heart and rehabilitate her knee.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

Bessie Murphy
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Spirit coming upon the apostles just as Jesus had said it would. Peter stands before the multitude and preaches the first gospel sermon (the law going forth from Jerusalem) (see Acts 2:1-5, 21, 37-39). These events add up to the establishment of the kingdom of God on the day of Pentecost after the Lord's crucifixion just as the prophets had foretold.

Identity (what is the kingdom)

To successfully trace the establishment of God's kingdom to Acts 2 is to identify it as the church of Jesus Christ. The word "church" is first used at Acts 5:11 in relation to the baptized believers in the kingdom of God. Luke records at Acts 4:4, "*But many of them that heard the word believed: and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*" Recall that at Acts 2:41 there were about "*three thousand.*" After the word church is used in relation to the kingdom of God at Acts 5:11 Luke writes, "*and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women...*" (Acts 5:14). This growing number of believers, who had been called into God's kingdom by the gospel message, are referred to as "*disciples*" at Acts 6:1. Further proof of the church and God's kingdom being terms that are interchangeably used in the scriptures may be found at Matthew 16:16-18 and II Thessalonians 1:4-5. God's kingdom will always exist. After the Lord comes to judge the world and take his saints to glory, the kingdom will be handed over to God and will continue for eternity (I Cor. 15:24ff).

The church is comprised of people, and always will be. Said people are prepared at all times through meditation, prayer, and spiritual interest (cf. Matt. 25:1ff). God has a wonderful heavenly place prepared for these prepared people (Matt. 21:33ff). God's kingdom is different than all other kingdoms because it is spiritual in nature (Matt. 22:15-22; Jn. 18:36) and endless in its boundaries (Matt. 13:31). The kingdom of God continues its growth as the gospel changes the hearts of sinners (Matt. 13:33).

Who is in the kingdom?

Peter said that those who hear, believe, repent, and are baptized enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 2:38-42). Said people are forgiven of their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ (see Col. 1:20) and comprise a "*kingdom and priests*" (Rev. 5:9-10). Peter said that God "*calls*" men according to His "*promise*" into this kingdom (Acts 2:39). The apostle Paul said that God's call comes through the gospel message (II Thess. 2:13-14). People are added to the kingdom of God as they answer the call of the gospel to change their sinful style of life and be baptized for the forgiveness of those sins (I Thess. 2:12).

The Peculiarity of the citizens of the Kingdom of God

The book of Matthew has much to say about the identity of the kingdom of God. Throughout the book, Matthew "*likens*" the kingdom to various associations. When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount he revealed God's kingdom people to be poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3), persecuted for righteousness sake (Matt. 5:10ff.), and those who keep the commandments of God (Matt. 5:19-20; 7:21). The peculiarities of citizens of God's kingdom continued to be revealed by Matthew as those interested in spiritual matters (i.e., the eternity of the soul) (Matt. 13:11-12) and able to distinguish between things spiritually healthy and unhealthy (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43). Citizens of the kingdom of God view their future spiritual well being as the greatest treasure that one may obtain (Matt. 13:44). Church people realize that to trust in this world's riches is to be an eternal failure (Mk. 10:24). These peculiar people see immeasurable value to God's kingdom (Matt. 13:45-46) and so they humbly submit to all of God's commands (Matt. 13:47ff; 18:1-4; 19:14-15). Kingdom people are different than those of the world in that they exercise mercy, compassion, patience, and kindness toward others (Matt. 18:23-35). Church people understand duty and are thereby loyal and obedient to God (cf. Matt. 25:14ff). The citizen of God's kingdom is different than the world (i.e., sanctified) in that their interest, goals, language, actions, and direction of life are governed by the word of God. Are you a citizen in the kingdom of God (cf. Eph. 2:19ff)?

John C. Robertson