

BF&M 9: THE KINGDOM

"The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age."

Memory Verse: *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:33*

Kingdom and King

The idea of a kingdom implies a king. The basic meaning of both the Greek and Hebrew words for *kingdom* is "rule, reign, dominion." The Bible presents God as the Creator and Ruler of His universe. God's rule or dominion over His creation is a _____, **Psalm 47:2,7; Daniel 4:34-35**. Therefore, in one sense, the kingdom of God refers to God's absolute reign or s_____ over all.

As Creator, God has the right to be sovereign. While presenting this self-evident truth, the Bible also shows that S_____ disputed this right, claiming sovereignty for himself, **Luke 4:6-7**. The i_____ of Christ was designed to prove Satan's claim to be false, **1 John 3:8**. This He did through His death and resurrection.

The Bible also uses royal imagery to refer to C_____. Jesus told His disciples to look for Him to return and sit on a glorious throne, **Matt. 25:31**. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, the Alpha and Omega who sits on the throne of His kingdom, **Is. 9:6; Rev. 21:5-6**.

Nature of the Kingdom

When Jesus was examined by Pilate as to His kingship, He said, "My kingdom is not of this world," John 18:36. It is neither of a worldly n_____ nor to be established by worldly m_____. Earthly kingdoms are temporary; the kingdom of God is eternal. Earthly kings rule over finite kingdoms, but God's rule knows no limitations. When He gave His disciples the Great Commission, Jesus told them that His authority knew no bounds, **Matt. 28:18**. This authority is unseen presently in that, as the author to the Hebrews wrote, "At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him," Heb. 2:8. But because it is unseen does not mean that it is not r_____. So, although, as the BF&M states, "The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ an the end of this age," in one sense, the kingdom has come because the King has come.

Christians are to "pray and labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth," **Matt. 6:9-10**. What does this mean? While God's sovereignty

over the natural universe is presented in the New Testament, the major emphasis is placed upon God's reign in the h_____ of all who receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. In His preaching, Jesus announced that the kingdom of God (or heaven) was at hand, **Matt. 4:17**. In other words, where Christ is present, the kingdom of God is present.

We should not think of the kingdom of God as an observable political unit; it is the reign of God among/within men and is not to be identified with any current nation or political entity. So, in truth, the kingdom may be seen as h_____ c_____ when the King appeared; it is c_____ in the sense of being established in believers' hearts; it w_____ c_____ in final consummation at the Lord's return.

The Kingdom and the Church

We must be careful not to make an absolute identification between the c_____ and the kingdom. The church is the eternal p_____ of God, whereas the kingdom is the eternal r_____ of God. God's kingdom extends beyond the church, even throughout the new heaven and the new earth and to all orders of created beings, even angels.

However, in this age the church is the visible representation of the kingdom of God:

Although God's rule extends to all people in all places and at all times, the kingdom of God is identified with and understood by those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. Christians have experienced the arrival of the kingdom of God in the person and work of Jesus Christ. They have submitted themselves to His authority over their lives, their behavior, and their possessions. In other words, everything in a believer's life is under Jesus' authority. Thus, those who have experienced the new birth and have joined the body of Christ understand that the kingdom of God is present in their personal lives and in the church, but they also know that God's kingdom will ultimately be realized at the end of time, when Christ reigns over the entire cosmos (111).

Match each Scripture reference with the correct summary statement:

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| _____ 1. Isaiah 9:6-7 | a. The new birth is essential to enter the kingdom. |
| _____ 2. Matthew 6:33 | b. The kingdom of God begins small but grows. |
| _____ 3. Matthew 13:3-9 | c. People who have entered the kingdom and those who have not must coexist. |
| _____ 4. Matthew 13:24-30 | d. The Son's kingdom will be established forever. |
| _____ 5. Matthew 13:31-32 | |

____6. Matthew 13:47-50

____7. Matthew 26:29

____8. Mark 1:14-15

____9. John 3:3

____10. Colossians 1:13

- f. Believers have been transferred from darkness to Christ's kingdom.
- g. Christians should seek God's rule in their lives.
- h. Repentance and believing God's good news are the proper response to the presence of His kingdom.
- i. Good and evil will be separated at the end of time.
- j. The gospel of the kingdom will receive a variety of responses.