

95 THE KINGDOM OF GOD—PHYSICAL OR SPIRITUAL?

INTRODUCTION: Jesus said His purpose for coming to earth was to establish the Kingdom of God. “I must preach the good news of God’s Kingdom...for this reason I have been sent.” Lk 4:43. This necessitated His substitutionary death on the cross for our sins to reconcile us to God. But current materialistic teachings fail to convey the Biblical understanding of the Kingdom of God. Immersed in an expectation of a coming earthly paradise, believers miss the riches that are theirs today. In fact, a cultic belief gaining unusual popularity currently is the false notion that Jesus is prevented from “coming back” until we have “Christianized” the “seven spheres” of society—a completely unbiblical works-based construct. We have shown many times in previous papers, that the “Day of the Lord” occurred in the first century (P.P. #1, #2, #49, etc). In this paper, we will seek to show the Kingdom of God is a present reality that we need only accept and live, taking Jesus and the inspired scriptures at their word.

1. JESUS ESTABLISHED THE KINGDOM OF GOD DURING HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY.

- A. “Jesus said to them, ‘Most certainly I tell you that the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering into God’s Kingdom before you [religious leaders].’” Mt 21:31
- B. “The time is fulfilled, and God’s Kingdom is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News.” Mk 1:15
- C. “But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then God’s Kingdom has come upon you.” Mt 12:28
- D. Jesus told the disciples, “Into whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat the things that are set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘God’s Kingdom has drawn near.’” Lk 10:8.
- E. Jesus told the disciples, “As you go, preach, saying, ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!’” Mt 10:7

2. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS A SPIRITUAL REALITY, NOT PHYSICAL.

- A. Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not of this world.” Jn 18:36
- B. “Being asked by the Pharisees when God’s Kingdom would come, he answered them, ‘God’s Kingdom doesn’t come with observation [visibly]; neither will they say, ‘Look, here!’ or, ‘Look, there!’ for behold, God’s Kingdom is within you [invisibly].’” Lk 17:20-21
- C. “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking [material], but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Romans 14:17
- D. “Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Mt 6:10. (It is God’s will no one perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2 Pt 3:9)
- E. “We don’t look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Cor 4:18

3. THE PROUD AND UNREPENTANT CANNOT ENTER GOD’S KINGDOM.

- A. “Whoever will not receive God’s Kingdom like a little child, he will in no way enter into it.” Mk 10:15
- B. “Unless one is born anew [turn from godlessness], he can’t see God’s Kingdom.” Jn 3:3
- C. “Blessed are the poor in spirit [know their need for God] for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven....” Mt 5:3
- D. “Don’t you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God’s Kingdom? Don’t be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor extortionists, will inherit God’s Kingdom.” 1 Cor 6:9-10.
- E. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” Mt 7:21 (God’s will is that all turn to Him.)

4. THE KINGDOM IS GOD’S LOVING PRESENCE WITH US IN ALL THINGS.

- A. “We love him, because he first loved us.” 1 John 4:19
- B. “Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance.” Eph 5:2
- C. “For you, brothers, were called for freedom. Only don’t use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants to one another.” Ga 5:13
- D. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” Jn 13:34-35
- E. “Doing nothing through rivalry or through conceit, but in humility, each counting others better than himself; each of you not just looking to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.” Phil 2:3-4

5. WE APPEAR TO HAVE “DUAL CITIZENSHIP”, BUT OUR RESIDENCE IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

- A. “I pray not that you would take them from the world, but that you would keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” John 17:15-16
- B. “But God... made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Eph 2:4-6

6. WE FEEL ABANDONED IN HARDSHIP, SICKNESS AND WANT, BUT JESUS ABIDES WITH US IN OUR PAIN.

- A. "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering and acquainted with disease. He was despised as one from whom men hide their face; and we didn't respect him." Is 53:3
- B. "Surely he has borne our sickness and carried our suffering; yet we considered him plagued, struck by God, and afflicted." Is 53:4
- C. "All we like sheep have gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way; and Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Is 53:6
- D. "Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying... 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" Mt 27:46
- E. "For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin." Heb 4:15

7. KINGDOM LIVING IS SURRENDERING TO GOD'S PRESENCE IN ALL THINGS.

- A. "Always rejoice. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you." 1 Thess 5:16-18
- B. "Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. A second likewise is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Mt 22:37-39
- C. "Beloved, let's love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God." 1 Jn 4:7
- D. "In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." Phil 4:6-7
- E. "Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God." Rom 12:2

8. BEING GOD'S TEMPLE AND INHABITING THE KINGDOM INDICATE THE SAME REALITY.

- A. "Don't you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" 1 Cor 3:16-17
- B. "For you are a temple of the living God. Even as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them. I will be their God and they will be my people.'" 2 Cor 6:16
- C. "Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God?" 1 Cor 6:19

9. HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM ARE NOT OUTWARDLY REMARKABLE.

"Listen, my beloved brothers. Didn't God choose those who are poor in this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which he promised to those who love him?" James 2:5

10. AT PHYSICAL DEATH, WE MOVE INTO THE UNALLOYED PRESENCE OF GOD.

"Therefore we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body, we are [apparently] absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are courageous, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord." 2 Cor 5:6-8

CLOSING THOUGHTS: Many in Christendom, contrary to the teachings of the Bible, live in a state of deferred fulfillment believing that the Kingdom of God is in the future. Proverbs wisely states, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when longing is fulfilled, it is a tree of life." (Pro 13:12) The good news is that Revelation 21 and 22 are already fulfilled in Christ and we have a deep and abiding relationship with the giver of wisdom and Lover of our souls. "Behold, God's dwelling is with people; and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God." Rev 21:3. Please see P.P. #8 for a fuller treatment of this passage, as well as P.P. #7 that explains some confusing language regarding the "Already but not Yet". This is an intensely practical study and deserving of serious reflection.

Please see:

- P.P. #8 "Revelation 21 and 22 Are Already Fulfilled"
- P.P. #7 "Already, But Not Yet" (regarding apparently contradictory language.)