

TEN FACTS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. The Greek word for “kingdom” is *basileia* and means primarily the rule of God and secondly the realm over which the rule and reign is exercised. In other words, those people who have accepted God’s rule, His subjects. To accept God’s rule requires a change of heart and mind known in the scriptures as repentance leading to conversion a turning around to follow the King.
2. The Kingdom is Soteriological, that is it leads one to salvation. The object of the divine rule is the redemption of men and their deliverance from the powers of evil. Christ’s reign means the destruction of all hostile powers, the last of which is death. The kingdom of God is the reign of God in Christ

that destroys all that is hostile to the Divine rule (I Cor. 15:23-28).

The New Testament sees a hostile kingdom standing against God's kingdom. The "kingdom of the world" is opposed to God's kingdom (Rev. 11:15) and must be conquered. The kingdoms of the world are under satanic control (Matt. 4:8-9; Luke 4:5-6). Matthew 12:26 and Luke 11:18 speak of the kingdom of Satan, whose power over men is shown in demon possession. This world or age opposes the working of God's kingdom; the cares of the age will choke the word of the kingdom (Matt. 13:19, 22). This opposition between the two kingdoms, of God and of Satan, is summarized in 2 Cor. 4:4. *The devil who rules this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. They cannot see the light of the Good News — the Good News about the glory of*

Christ, who is exactly like God (NCV). Satan is called the god of this age and is seen to exercise his rule by holding men in darkness. This statement must be understood in light of the fact that God still remains the King of the ages (1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 15:3).

The kingdom of God is the redemptive rule of God in Christ defeating Satan and the powers of evil and delivering men from the sway of evil. It brings to men “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). Entrance into the kingdom of God means deliverance from the power of darkness (Col. 1:13) and is accomplished by the new birth (John 3:3, 5).

3. The Kingdom is Dynamic, Energetic, and Forceful. The kingdom is not an abstract principle; the kingdom comes. It is God’s rule

actively invading the kingdom of Satan. The coming of the kingdom, as John the Baptist preached it, would mean a mighty divine act: a baptism of judgment and fire (Matt. 3:11-12). God was about to manifest his sovereign rule in the Coming One in salvation and judgment.

4. The Kingdom Comes at the End of the Age. John looked for a single, though complex, event of salvation-judgment. Jesus separated the present and the future visitations of the kingdom. There is a future coming of the kingdom at the end of the age. Jesus taught the prayer, “Thy kingdom come” (Matt. 6:10). When the Son of man comes in his glory, he will sit on the throne of judgment. The wicked will suffer condemnation; the righteous will “inherit the kingdom” (Matt. 25:31-46). The same separation at the end of the age is pictured in Matthew 13:36-43. This coming of

the kingdom will mean the regeneration, rebirth and transformation of the material order (Matt. 19:28). In Matthew 19:28, the Greek word for “regeneration” *palingenesia* means “re-creation, a making new.” Here the re-creation is the social order, and the renewal of the earth spoken of in Isaiah 11:6-9 and Romans 8:19-23.

5. The Kingdom Has Come Into History.

Jesus taught that the kingdom, which will come in glory at the end of this age, has come into history in the person and mission of Jesus Christ. The redemptive rule of God has now invaded the realm of Satan to deliver men from the power of evil. In the casting out of demons Jesus asserted the presence and power of the kingdom of God (Matthew 12:28). While the destruction of Satan awaits the second coming of Christ (Matthew 25:41; Rev. 20:10), Jesus

has already defeated Satan (Col. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:8). The strong man (Satan) is bound by the stronger man (Christ) and men may now experience a new release from evil (Matthew 12:28-29). The mission of the disciples in the name and power of Jesus casting out demons meant the overthrow of Satan's power (Luke 10:17-18). Thus Jesus could say that the kingdom of God was present in the midst of men (Luke 17:21). In the Messianic works of Jesus fulfilling Isaiah 35:4-6, the kingdom manifested its power (Matt. 11:12).

6. The Kingdom Is Supernatural. As the dynamic activity of God's rule the kingdom is supernatural. It is God's deed. Only the supernatural act of God can destroy Satan, defeat death (1 Cor. 15:26), raise the dead in incorruptible bodies to inherit the blessings of the kingdom (1 Cor. 15:50), and transform the

world order (Matt. 19:28). The same supernatural rule of God has invaded the kingdom of Satan to deliver men from bondage to satanic darkness (Colossians 1:13-14; Acts 26:18). Men can reject the kingdom of God and refuse to receive it or enter it (Matt. 23:13), but they cannot destroy it.

7. The Mystery of The Kingdom. The presence of the kingdom in history is a mystery (Mark 4:11). A mystery is a divine purpose hidden for long ages but finally revealed (Rom. 16:25-26). The Old Testament revelation looks forward to a single manifestation of God's kingdom when the glory of God would fill the earth. Daniel chapter 2 sees four human kingdoms, then the kingdom of God. The mystery of the kingdom is this: Before the end of this present evil age, before the destruction of Satan, before the age to come, the kingdom

of God has entered this age and invaded the kingdom of Satan in spiritual power to bring to men in advance the blessings of forgiveness (Mark 2:5), life (1 John 5:12), and righteousness (Romans 14:17) which belong to the age to come. Hebrews 6:5 speaks of tasting the powers of the age to come in this present evil age.

The kingdom has come among men but not with the power which compels every knee to bow before its glory; it is rather like seed cast on the ground which may be fruitful or unfruitful depending on its reception (Matthew 13:3-9). The kingdom has come, but the present order is not disrupted; the sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one grow together in the world until the harvest (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). The kingdom of God has indeed come to men, not as a new glorious order, but like a

small mustard seed. However, its insignificance must not be despised. This same kingdom will one day be a great tree (Matthew 13:31-32). Instead of a world-transforming power, the kingdom is present in an almost imperceptible form like a bit of leaven hidden in a bowl of dough. However, this same kingdom will yet fill the earth as the leavened dough fills the bowl (Matthew 13:33). The coming of the kingdom of God in humility instead of glory was an utterly new and amazing revelation. It will one day divide the good from the evil and bring salvation and judgment (Matthew 13:47-51). A reign must have a realm in which its authority is exercised. There is both a future and a present realm of the kingdom.

8. The Future Realm. God calls men to enter his own kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2:12). In

this age the sons of the kingdom will experience suffering (2 Thess. 1:5) and tribulations (Acts 14:22), but God will rescue them from every evil and save them for his heavenly kingdom (2 Tim. 4:18). Men should be careful to assure entrance into the kingdom of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:11). Paul frequently speaks of the kingdom as a future inheritance (1 Cor. 6:9-10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5).

In the Gospels the future aspect of salvation is described as entrance into the kingdom of God (Mk. 9:47; 10:24), into the age to come (See Mark 10:30), and into eternal life (See Mark 10:17, 30; Matthew 25:46). These three idioms are interchangeable. The consummation of the kingdom requires the coming of the Son of man in glory. Satan will be destroyed (Matt. 25:41), the dead in Christ raised in incorruptible bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-50) which

are no longer capable of death (Lk. 20:35-36) to inherit the kingdom of God (See 1 Cor. 15:50; Matt. 25:34).

9. A Present Realm. Because the dynamic power of God's reign has invaded this evil age it has created a present spiritual realm in which the blessings of God's reign are experienced (Heb. 6:5). The redeemed have already been delivered from the power of darkness and brought into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). Jesus said that since the days of John the Baptist the kingdom of God has been preached and men enter it with violent determination (Luke 16:16). The present and future aspects of the kingdom are inseparable tied together in Mark 10:15. Those who now receive this offer of the kingdom with complete childlike trust will enter into the future aspect of God's kingdom.

10. The Kingdom And The Church. The kingdom is not the church. The apostles went about preaching the kingdom of God (See Acts 8:12; 19:8; 28:23); it is impossible to substitute “church” for “kingdom” in such passages. However, there is an inseparable relationship. The church is the fellowship of men who have accepted his offer of the kingdom, submitted to its rule, and entered into its blessings. The kingdom in Christ is offered on an individual basis in terms of personal acceptance (Matt. 10:35-36) rather than in terms of the family or nation. Because Jews rejected the Saviour, He was offered to another group of people, the church (Matt. 21:28-32, 43). Thus we may say that the kingdom of God creates the church. The redemptive rule of God brings into being a new people who receive the blessings of the divine reign. Furthermore it is the activity of the divine rule which will bring judgment.

Individually the kingdom means salvation for some and judgment for others (Matt. 25:34, 41, 46). The kingdom also works through the church. His disciples preached the kingdom of God and performed signs of the kingdom (Matt. 10:7-8; Lk. 10:9, 17). The powers of the kingdom are operative in and through them (Mk. 16:15-18). When the church has proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom in all the world as witness to all nations, Christ will return (Matt. 24:14) and bring the kingdom in glory.

Sources Cited

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Discipleship Questions

- 1.** The word “kingdom” means first, the authority to rule and secondly the realm over which the reign is exercised. The “Kingdom of God” means primarily the rule of God and those who have accepted that rule. How does this fact bring both the teaching of justification and sanctification together? Stop and discuss.
- 2.** The object of the divine rule is the redemption of men and their deliverance from the powers of evil. True or False.

Answer: [13] For he has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, [14]who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins. (Col. 1:13-14, LB)

3. The New Testament sees a hostile kingdom standing against God's kingdom. Satan is called the god of this age and is seen to exercise his rule by holding men in darkness. True or False.

Answer: [4] The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Cor. 4:4, NIV)

4. The kingdom of God is the redemptive rule of God in Christ defeating Satan and the

powers of evil and delivering men from the sway of evil. True or False.

Answer: [8] The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8, NASV)

5. At the end of this age the wicked will perish and the righteous will inherit the kingdom. True or False.

Answer: [31] When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: [32] And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: [33] And he shall set the sheep on

his right hand, but the goats on the left. [34] Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: [41] Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: [46] And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Matt. 25:31-34, 41, 46, KJV)

6. Through the coming of the kingdom (at the end of this age) there will be a rebirth of transformation of the material order. True or False.

Answer: [28] And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the **regeneration** when the Son of man

shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [29] And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. (Matt. 19:28-29, KJV) The word *regeneration* is the Greek word *palingenesia* and means *re-creation, making new*. Here it means the re-creation of the social order, and renewal of the earth when the kingdom shall come. (Socfield note, p. 1026).

7. Jesus taught that the kingdom, which will come in glory at the end of the age, has come into history in his own person and mission. The redemptive rule of God has now invaded the realm of Satan to deliver men from the power of evil. In the exorcism of demons

Jesus asserted the presence and power of the kingdom. True or False.

Answer: [26] And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? [28] But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. [29] Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. (Matt. 12:26, 28-29, KJV)

8. Men can reject the kingdom and refuse to receive it or enter it. True or False.

Answer: [3] Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. [4] Nicodemus saith unto him, How can

a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? [5] Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:3-5, KJV)

9. Jesus said that since the days of John the Baptist the kingdom of God has been preached and men enter it with violent determination. True or False.

Answer: [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. (Luke 16:16, NIV)

10. The offer of the kingdom in Christ was made on an individual basis in terms of

personal acceptance rather than in terms of the family or nation. True or False.

Answer: [10] So, friends, confirm God's invitation to you, his choice of you. Don't put it off; do it now. Do this, and you'll have your life on a firm footing, [11] the streets paved and the way wide open into the eternal kingdom of our Master and Savior, Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10-11, The Message)

11. When the church has proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom in all the world as witness to all nations, Christ will return and bring the kingdom in glory. True or False.

Answer: [14] And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:14, KJV)

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