

A PRIMER ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

By Scott Tiede

For quite some time, the concept of the 'Kingdom of God' (also known as the 'Kingdom of Heaven' in the book of Matthew) has been a confusing one to me. In order to help clarify it in my mind, I've looked at the passages that contain the word 'kingdom' in the New Testament. The following is my analysis. I hope this clarifies things for all who read it. This is not a perfect document, and I intend to refine it over time.

1. A kingdom requires a king

- a. Jesus' incarnation
 - i. Jesus announced the kingdom - Mt 4:17; Mk 1:15; Ac 1:3
 - ii. Jesus had the proper pedigree to be King - Mt 1
 - iii. Demonstrated who He was through His dominion over people, sickness, nature, and the demonic forces - Mt 12:28; Mk 1:21-3:12
 - iv. Became the Suffering Servant spoken about in Isaiah 53 paying the penalty of our sins on the cross and resurrecting confirming He was God.
 1. This act of mercy and grace led to followers who were loyal even unto death.
 2. As news of this king and His acts of suffering servanthood has reached the far ends of the earth, people from every tribe and tongue have made Him their King.
 - v. The King (Jesus) sent the Holy Spirit to convict subjects of sin and to transform their lives - Jn 14:26
 - vi. The King is constantly working in the lives of His subjects - 2 Ti 4:18
- b. Jesus' second coming
 - i. He will come unexpectedly, so His subjects are to keep watch - Mt 25:1-13
 - ii. He will gather His subjects - Mk 13:26-27
 - iii. He will judge everyone - 2 Th 1:15; 2 Ti 4:1
 - iv. He will overthrow His enemies - Ro 16:20
 - v. He will set up His earthly kingdom for 1,000 years - Rev 20
 - vi. His subjects will fellowship with Him in His future kingdom - Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25; Lk 13:29, 14:15, 22:16-18
 - vii. He will set up His eternal kingdom that will never end - Lk 1:33; Heb 1:8, 12:28; Rev 21

2. A kingdom requires subjects

- a. Which is better: for a king to establish a kingdom through violence (that would lead to rebellion), or through benevolence (that would lead to loyalty)? King Jesus came to seek and save the lost - Lk 19:10
- b. Not about a specific bloodline - Mt 8:10-11
- c. The King calls subjects to Himself - Mk 1:17, 1:20; 1 Th 2:12; Ro 8:29
- d. The King established a covenant with His subjects - Lk 22:20; Jer 31:31

- e. His subjects turn away from sin and turn toward trusting in the King (Jesus) by doing what He commands - Mt 5:19, 7:21, 21:31, 21:43
 - i. Believers are initiated into the kingdom through baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is verified by others already in the kingdom through water baptism of believers - Mt 16:19; 28:19-20; Mk 1:8
 - ii. Continuing through commitment (through formal or informal membership) to the local church and observing the Lord's Table (communion) - Lk 22:14-23
- f. These subjects have duties
 - i. Proclaiming the kingdom to those who don't know about it - Mt 24:14; Ac 8:12, 19:8, 20:25; 28:23, 28:31
 - ii. Showing them how to follow the King (make disciples) by teaching them what Jesus taught - Mt 10:7, 28:19-20; Mk 4:26
 - iii. The primary goal is to make followers of the King, as that is happening, there will be a positive impact on society (especially on the community of the King) - Mt 5:13-16, 7:12, 25:35-36; Ro 12:15-18; Ga 6:10; Jas 1:27
- g. Marks of the King's subjects
 - i. Born again - Jn 3:3-5
 - ii. Repentance - Mt 3:2
 - iii. Faith - Mk 4:30; Lk 13:18; Jas 2:5
 - iv. Poor in spirit - Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20; Jas 2:5
 - v. Willingly persecuted for righteousness - Mt 5:10
 - vi. Righteousness - Mt 5:20; Ro 14:17
 - vii. Live seeking the kingdom and the King's righteousness - Mt 6:33; Mk 15:43; Lk 9:60-92, 11:2, 12:31, 23:51
 - viii. Humility - Mt 11:11, 20:1-16; Lk 7:28
 - ix. Childlike love of the King - Mt 18:3-4, 19:14; Mk 10:14-15; Lk 18:16-17
 - x. They use what the King has given them to produce more followers - Mt 18:23
 - xi. They consider the King more important than their own desires - Mt 19:12
 - xii. Often in the minority - Mt 22:1-14
 - xiii. Loyal to the King even under suffering or death - Mt 11:12, Rev 1:9; Ac 14:22
 - xiv. The subjects are being transformed to be like the King - 2 Pet 1:11; 1 Co 15:50
 - xv. Experience peace - Ro 14:17
 - xvi. Experience joy - Ro 14:17
- h. There are those inside the kingdom and those outside
 - i. Those inside have understanding those outside do not - Mk 4:11; Lk 8:10
 - ii. The keys to the kingdom have been given to the church - Mt 16:19
 - iii. Those who refuse to repent will be on the outside - Mt 18:15-20
 - iv. It is very difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom - Mt 19:23-24; Mk 10:23-25; Lk 18:24-25
 - v. Those who continue in unrighteousness will be on the outside - 1 Co 6:9; Ga 5:21; Eph 5:5

vi. When the King returns, He will separate those inside from those outside - Mt 25:34

3. A kingdom requires a location

- a. The kingdom is not just spiritual, but physical (the people who compose the church) - Rev 5:10
- b. The kingdom is not typical of an earthly kingdom - Lk 17:20-21; Jn 18:36; Ac 1:6
- c. The kingdom has arrived now
 - i. The kingdom is near - Mk 1:15; Lk 10:9-11
 - ii. His subjects have been transferred into the kingdom - Col 1:13
 - iii. The kingdom is in our midst - Lk 17:20-21; 11:20
- d. The kingdom will arrive more fully on the earth later - Lk 21:31
- e. The new heaven and new earth after that - Rev 21

4. A kingdom requires regulations

- a. The Word of God - 2 Ti 3:16-17
- b. The Law of Christ - Mt 22:36-40

5. A kingdom has characteristics

- a. The coming of the kingdom was good news - Mk 1:15
- b. It is open to those who will receive the King - Lk 8:1, 9:2, 9:11; 12:32
- c. It highly valuable to be part of the kingdom - Mk 9:47; Lk 13:20-21, 16:16; 18:29-30

6. A kingdom has defenses

- a. The Mighty King Himself - Jn 10:28
- b. Armor of God - Eph 6:10-20

7. A kingdom does battle

- a. Against Satan - Eph 6:12
- b. His subjects will reign as a kingdom of priests on earth - Rev 1:6; 5:10
- c. Jesus will reign as King on the earth - Rev 11:15
- d. Satan is defeated - Rev 12:10
- e. The kingdom is powerful - 1 Co 4:20

SUMMARY

- Jesus Christ is the King of the kingdom of God / kingdom of heaven.
- The subjects of the kingdom are all followers of Jesus Christ as demonstrated by their confession of allegiance to the King and displayed by their manner of life.
- The kingdom exists on the earth now, but without a defined territory. There will be a defined territory when King Jesus returns. For now, the kingdom of God exists wherever His people are living under His rule.
- The regulations of the kingdom are contained in the Bible, the Word of God.
- The kingdom will be victorious over its enemy, Satan, and will exist forever.