

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

By Ron Harvey

God, since He is the creator of all things, and since He is infinite in His being and in His perfections, and since He is all wise and all powerful, by His very nature He is the sovereign of the universe. Not only is God sovereign over the material world, but also He is sovereign over all creatures. Therefore, bow down all ye creatures in heaven and earth and worship Him.

However, there was a revolt in ages past in heaven, led by Satan himself, and a kingdom of darkness was established. Now God cast the devil and all his evil henchmen out and Satan has been the head of his kingdom ever since. This kingdom of which Satan is the head is an evil kingdom marked by rebellion against the true God.

Now Satan was put out of the presence of God and cast to the earth where he tempted Adam and Adam sinned and the human race fell with him and we became a slave in the kingdom of darkness. Therefore Paul says:

Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (Romans 5:12)

But, even though some of the angels revolted, and mankind was fallen, God still had a kingdom of loyal subjects. From the moment he created his creatures, there have been those elect angels who did not sin against God. And they serve God day and night and they worship Him and they do His bidding and they live in glory with Him and they enjoy all the wonderful blessings of being in the presence of God.

And God will never be without a kingdom, because He is a King. Actually, he is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the sovereign of all sovereigns and his kingdom is established forever and of His kingdom there will be no end. Satan's kingdom is but for a moment, but God's kingdom is forever and ever and ever more.

The fallen angels and the masses of fallen mankind belong to the kingdom of darkness. This dark kingdom stands in opposition to the kingdom of God and foolishly wrestles against God and his purposes.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Eph. 6:12

So, there is a kingdom of darkness composed of fallen angels and fallen humanity and there is a kingdom of God composed of God's loyal subjects.

GOD HAS CHOSEN TO REDEEM SOME FROM SATAN'S KINGDOM

The Scriptures bring us some very glad tidings. God has graciously chosen to redeem some of mankind out from Satan's kingdom, to bring them into his kingdom and to restore all the blessings that were lost in the fall?

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

(Colossians 1:12, 13)

From this passage we note:

1. God did the delivering. We didn't save ourselves. The picture is of a Deliverer who rescues a helpless people from bondage.

Example: Occasionally you will hear in the news that our country has rescued one of our citizens from the hands of an enemy. We send special-forces, perhaps Navy seals, to penetrate foreign borders by night and with high intelligence and brave courage they sweep in by surprise and find their comrade in bonds and they snatch him from the hands of the enemy and they rush him away to safety under heavy security. And when they reach the home shores and the life has been saved, there is great rejoicing and a grand celebration.

This is the beautiful picture that is portrayed in Colossians 1:13. God swept in, when we were held in chains by the enemy, and with great power He delivered us and brought us out. And He carried us to the safety of His own kingdom. And there is great rejoicing in heaven and a grand celebration over each sinner so redeemed. Remember, it is God who delivers from the bondage of sin and from the hands of the great enemy.

2. God moved us from one kingdom to another. Let me tell you about the kingdom from which you have been rescued.
 - a. It is a kingdom characterized by great darkness.
 - Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of moral darkness.
(Lies, adulteries, murders and poison under their lips. There is cursing and bitterness and deceit.
 - Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of spiritual darkness. (dead, blind, deaf)
 - Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of intellectual darkness.

But, you have been delivered from this kingdom of darkness.

- b. It is a kingdom ruled by the prince of darkness.
 - He is THE evil one.
 - He is the father of lies.
 - Hate is in his heart. He hates you with a pure hatred. And he was your king seeking to do you evil. He would keep you from the truth. He would keep you from God. He would kill you. He would keep you in bondage to sin. And so he did for a time.

- c. It is a kingdom predestined to outer darkness.

There is a predetermined place for all Satan and all his children of darkness and that is OUTER DARKNESS.

Jesus said, But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 8:12)

But praise be to God, we have been delivered by a Savior to a different kingdom. We have been marvelously rescued by one who was stronger than Satan. And he bound Satan and translated us into his own kingdom.

- d. You have been delivered to Christ's kingdom
 - Rescued from the bondage of sin to a kingdom characterized by moral purity.
 - Rescued from spiritual death to vibrant and everlasting life
 - Rescued from spiritual blindness to restoration of sight.
 - Rescued from the rule of one who hates you by the One who loves you
 - Rescued from a fate of eternal misery to one of eternal ecstasy
3. Our great obligation is to give God thanks. That's why Paul started the verse with two words, "*Giving thanks*"

You should know that God began translating fallen men into His kingdom from the very beginning. God saved Adam and Eve and God saved their son Abel and there was a righteous line through their son Seth. And God, from the beginning, translated many human beings out of the kingdom of Satan and into the kingdom of his dear Son.

This great endeavor, to gather a people into His kingdom, has been the purpose of God throughout all generations and all dispensations. It is the reason why his Son, took on human flesh and why he suffered and why he died. It was to secure a people for his kingdom. For you

see, he was born to be a King. To this end He lived and died and rose again, that He might be King of all those given him by the Father.

In the book of Daniel, Daniel dreamed a dream and was given the interpretation thereof. The dream was a prophecy of the kingdoms which should soon rise and fall on the earth. But all of those earthly kingdoms would fall and have their end. But, there was another kingdom revealed unlike the other earthly kingdoms.

One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Daniel 7:13

This is an interesting verse obviously referring to Jesus, "One like the Son of Man." And it says Jesus came with the clouds of heaven. And when you read this, from your perspective on earth, it appears Jesus is coming to the earth, perhaps at his incarnation or at his second coming. But, this vision is from the perspective of heaven, for he came to the Ancient of Days who is God the Father.

So, it appears this is a reference to the ascension of Christ in the clouds, after he had made the once for all sacrifice for sins. He ascended out of sight and he went immediately to meet with the Father face to face -- right into the Holy of Holies. (The Bible teaches that He is now our great high priest.)

One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Notice that He was gloriously and triumphantly escorted there by the angels of heaven.

And the Father announced to all the heavenly throng that He was well pleased with the sacrifice of the Son because he gave him dominion, and glory and a kingdom -- not that Jesus didn't have right and title to these things from all eternity, but his right and title was now formally confirmed and announced.

The kingdom of Christ is **different** from the other four kingdoms of the world in Daniel's dream:

1. **It is a kingdom consisting of people from all nations.** It is not a national kingdom. He was not to be the King of any one nation. It is an international kingdom composed of people from all nations and languages.
 - a. This is what we find in the example of Abraham's call where God promised to bless all families of the earth through him.
 - b. This is what we find in the New Testament when God revealed that it was always his purpose to take the gospel to the world.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- c. Christ's kingdom was never localized in one nation.

- (1) God saved people before Abraham.
 - (2) God saved people from other nations after Abraham.
 - (3) God continues to save people from all nations and languages.

2. **It is an everlasting kingdom and not a temporal kingdom.** It is unlike all other earthly kingdoms in that it will not pass away.

- a. It will not pass away because the King is the Lord Jesus Christ and who shall wrest the kingdom from his hands?

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- b. It will not pass away because it is a spiritual and heavenly kingdom and not an earthly.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.

But, Christ's kingdom shall never pass away.

3. **It is a kingdom quite different from the one anticipated by the Jewish nation that rejected him and crucified him.**

- a. They should have known what to expect because their Scriptures foretold of a lowly Savior.

Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Zechariah 9:9

- b. But the Jews would have no such one as their King. They wanted a king born in a palace not in a manger. They wanted a King riding on their shoulders, not on a donkey. They wanted an earthly king, sitting on an earthly throne, offering liberation from the Romans.

But listen to what Jesus said about his kingdom.

My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

John 18:36

The Kingdom of Christ is not of this world. It is heavenly, not earthly.

There are various names of the Kingdom:

1. Kingdom of God
2. Kingdom of Christ
 - because Christ is God
 - because the Kingdom has been delivered unto Christ for administration
3. Kingdom of Heaven
 - because the King dwells in heaven
 - because the kingdom is spiritual and heavenly
 - because the place of eternal consummation of the kingdom is in heaven.

SPHERES OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Christ's Dominion Over the Universe

Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.

Hebrews: 2:8

In this sense, the Kingdom of God includes everything over which he has complete and absolute sovereignty. And that is everything -- all created things, all creatures, every evil thing, every good thing. Jesus has been seated at the right hand of God. That is equivalent to saying Jesus has all authority in heaven and in earth. He is King over all.

Christ's Spiritual Kingdom

This is a kingdom of grace. This kingdom is composed of all his true people whom he has translated from the kingdom of darkness into his spiritual kingdom. We are uniquely His because he bought us. We are redeemed from the clutches of Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by His strong arm. We are rescued from darkness and into his glorious light. He changes our inward parts and brings us into subjection to himself and we are a kingdom of loyal subjects.

And what a King we have:

- A King whose laws are right and just
- A King who will supply all our need
 1. As for our physical needs, we will never lack for He owns the cattle on a thousand hills.
 2. As for our spiritual needs, he will pour living water on our thirsty souls such that we will never thirst again.
- A King full of grace and mercy
 1. He forgives once and for all and casts our sins behind his back.
 2. We may sin against him 10,000 times and because of the great sacrifice, he will never lay it to our charge.
- A King who can comfort us in our suffering, for he took on flesh like unto ours and suffered all things that we might be comforted
- A King of unlimited strength who can protect us from all peril

- A King of unlimited knowledge and wisdom who is able to work all things for good to those who love Him.
- A King of unlimited generosity for he has made us to be joint heirs with himself in his kingdom
- A King who will give us eternal life with an incorruptible body which will see no more pain, shed no more tears, and most importantly, will know no more sin

THINGS THAT WILL NOT GET YOU INTO THE KINGDOM

- External profession

Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 7:21)

- The performance of rites and ceremonies (This was the error of the Pharisees)

Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:20)

- Water Baptism doesn't save you (I Pet. 3:21)

- Membership in an external community (a church)

This was one of the great errors of the Jews who felt secure in being a member the visible nation of Israel. But Jesus said unto them:

Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father." (Mt. 3:9)

And Paul said,

They are not all Israel who are of Israel. (Romans 9:6)

Thus, the kingdom of Christ is a purely spiritual community, consisting of those who are truly and inwardly his people.

TERMS OF ADMISSION INTO THE KINGDOM

1. Regeneration

I used to think that regeneration was something that happened to me because I repented and believed. But, upon further investigation, I found out that I repented and believed because I was regenerated. And that is a huge difference

He saved us – not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)

This is an operation of God upon our souls before we ever believe or repent or do any acceptable service to God. He creates life where there was no life. He cries Lazarus come forth and Lazarus lives.

Jesus tried to explain this to Nicodemus when he told him, “*Ye must be born again.*” (John 3)

Paul termed it being made alive (Eph. 2:4,5)

But God, who is abundant in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses.

Paul also called it a new creation (II Cor.5:17)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. (II Cor. 5:17)

For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift – not from works, so that no one can boast. For we are His creation – created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:8-10)

2. Repentance. When you see yourself as you really are, and as God sees you, then you will be filled with godly sorrow. And you will view things differently. Whereas before you ran headlong into sin and couldn’t wait to get there, now you will hate it and resist it and you will cry tears of remorse when you fall into it. And you will confess your sins and confess your need of a Savior.

3. Believe. You will believe in the finished work of Christ.

- That He has died for your sins
- That your sins were laid on Him
- That His righteousness was imputed to you

- That you are child of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ
- OUR DUTIES AS MEMBERS OF THE KINGDOM

1. It is our duty to love God.
 - a. Matthew 10:37, 39
 - b. Luke 14:26
 - c. I Cor. 16:22
2. It is our duty to worship God. (I Cor.1:2)
3. It is our duty to obey God.
4. It is our duty to be holy in heart and life.
5. It is our duty to love one another.
6. It is our duty to permeate the whole world with the gospel of God.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:

Matthew 28: 19, 20