

Kingdom of God

“No one can make a serious study of the subject without discovering that the Kingdom of God is a many-sided conception, and that its presentation in the Gospels is complex rather than simple. The study of its various aspects leads to a difference of emphasis; and this, in turn, give birth to a large number of, often disparate, views.”¹

1. Various Approaches to the Topic:

- a. **Gospel Scope** - I have seen some approach this topic from the standpoint of what Jesus talked about during his earthly ministry in the gospel accounts. This approach certainly makes a great deal of sense because the word “kingdom” is used 119 times in the gospels. No other portion of Scripture is so saturated with the topic. How does this method fall short?
- b. **New Testament Scope** – Some have approached the topic as a word study of the Greek word “Βασιλεια”. This definitely appears to be a good approach since word studies are a standard method of exegesis. How does this method fall short?
- c. **Whole Biblical Narrative** – To best understand the use of the expression Kingdom in the Scriptures is it is important that we understand the context of the Old Testament prophecies that are being fulfilled by the kingdom. With the prophecies in view, we can more clearly see what Jesus and the other New Testament authors were explaining. How does this method fall short?

2. Kingdom in the Context of the Old Testament:

- a. “Here again, it should be observed, if men would understand clearly the future consummation of the Kingdom, they must first understand the Kingdom in history; if they expect to understand the Kingdom of which our Lord spoke, they must first consider what the Old Testament prophets have said about it; if they desire to expound the Book of Revelation, they must begin with the Book of Daniel.”²
 - i. “In a very real sense, all Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament is Kingdom prophecy.”³
 - ii. John the Baptist’s proclamation alone (Matt. 3:2, Mark 1:15) should cause us to pause and consider what the prophets before had said about the kingdom.
- b. In the Old Testament, we find a range of qualities attributed to Kingdom. Dr. Alva McClain observes the following:

¹ L. Berkhof *The Kingdom of God*.

² Dr. Alva J. McClain *The Greatness of the Kingdom* p.6

³ Dr. Alva J. McClain *The Greatness of the Kingdom* p.145

- i. The Kingdom is something which always existed (Ps. 10:16), yet in other places it seems to have a definite historical beginning among men (Dan. 2:44-45)
- ii. The Kingdom is universal in scope (Ps. 103:19) and also at times a local rule established on earth from Jerusalem (Is. 24:23).
- iii. The Kingdom is a direct rule (Ps.59:13) in some places and in others through a mediator (Ps. 2:4-6).
- iv. The Kingdom is future (Zech. 14:9) and also it is described as a present reality (Ps. 29:10).
- v. The Kingdom is described as God's sovereign, unconditional rule (Dan. 4:34-35) and sometimes it is described as a covenant between man and God (Ps. 89:27-29)
- vi. How do we reconcile these differences?

3. **Two Kingdoms** - "...we must at the same time guard carefully against the notion that these two kingdoms are absolutely distinct one from the other."⁴

a. Universal Kingdom⁵

- i. It exists without interruption throughout all time
 1. Ps. 145:13
 2. Ps. 29:10
 3. Jer. 10:2-5,10
 4. Lam. 5:19
 5. 1 Cor. 15:50
- ii. It includes all that exists in space and time
 1. Jer. 10:7
 2. Dan. 2:19-21
 3. Dan. 4:17,25,32
 4. Psalm 103:19
 5. God is the King of hell, just as He is the King of everything else in time and space – Deut. 32:22
 6. Psalm 139:7-10
 7. 1 Chr. 29:11-12
 8. Matt. 12:25-28
 9. Luke 17:20-21
- iii. God often controls by indirect means
 1. Ps. 148:8
 2. Ex. 14:21
 3. Isaiah 10:5-15
 4. Jer. 29:9
 5. Isaiah 44:28-45:4
- iv. God also controls by supernatural means

⁴ Dr. Alva J. McClain *The Greatness of the Kingdom* p.21

⁵ Dr. Alva J. McClain *The Greatness of the Kingdom*

1. Dan. 6:27
2. Ps. 135:6-9
3. Deut. 4:34-35
- v. It always exists regardless of the attitude of its subjects
 1. Dan. 4:35
 2. Eph. 1:11
 3. Ps. 103:19
 4. Ps. 75:4-7
 5. John 18:36
- vi. It is administered through the Son at this time
 1. Col. 1:17
 2. Rom. 1:20
 3. Heb. 1:2-3
 4. Rev. 3:21 and 1 Cor. 15:24-28 indicate the transfer of authority to the Father

b. Millennial Kingdom

i. Follows after the Universal Kingdom

1. Matt. 6:10 – the expectation of the Lord’s prayer
 - a. Is. 11:1-6, 42:1-7,
 - b. Dan. 7:14

ii. The Time of its Coming - Hab. 2:3

1. Nearness of the coming
 - a. Hag. 2:6-9 A little while
 - b. Isaiah 29:17-18 a very little while
 - c. Hos. 3:4-5 many days
 - d. Is. 2:2 last days
2. Events beforehand
 - a. Devastation in Israel – Is. 6:11-12, 32:13-18
 - b. World-wide dispersion – Amos 9:8-11
 - c. Israel without king, prince, or sacrifice – Hos. 3:4-5
 - d. After the succession of 4 world empires – Dan. 7:17-27
 - e. After the resurrection of godly Israelites – Dan. 12:1-3
 - f. 1 Thess. 4:13-18
 - g. 1 Thess. 5:9
3. The Coming King
 - a. Dan. 9:24-25
4. The Establishment of the Kingdom
 - a. Not in Dan. 9 because in Dan. 9:26 – he will be “cut off” and “have nothing”
 - b. The Blessings of verse 24 don’t happen yet, but wait to be fulfilled until after the 70th week.
 - c. Luke 24:25-27
 - d. 1 Peter 1:11
 - e. Matt. 24:36

- f. 1 Thess. 5:1
- g. Acts 1:7
- h. Rev. 11:15

iii. *Manner of the Kingdom's coming*

1. Sudden and Catastrophic

- a. Malachi 3:1-5, 4:1-2
- b. Zeph. 1:18/1:12
- c. Joel 3:1-4
- d. Dan. 2:45
- e. Matt. 24:27,43-44
- f. 1 Thess. 5:3
- g. 2 Peter 3:10
- h. Rev. 3:3, 16:15

2. Supernatural

- a. Isaiah 52:7-10, 63:1-5
- b. Ez. 20:33-34
- c. Matt. 24:30
- d. 2 Thess. 2:8

3. Tangible

- a. Isaiah 40:5
- b. Again Isaiah 52:7-10
- c. Isaiah 6:1
- d. Acts 1:11
- e. Rev.1:7
- f. Rev. 20:1-6, (Ez. 37:11-14)

c. Why doesn't the Scripture give us two terms for these two kingdoms?

- i. Why I don't think that the phrase Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Heaven are distinctions: Matt. 13: 19-14, Matt. 19:23-24, Matt. 3:2 and Mark 1:15.
- ii. Can you think of anything else in Scripture that was similar yet distinct, but not described with different terms?