



The Spiritual Kingdom of God

in the

New Testament.

(2019)

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The Spiritual Kingdom of God in the New Testament.

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INTRODUCTION

The Gospel proclaims the Kingdom of God (Matt. 9:35) (Matt. 24:14) this refers to the following two Kingdoms:

1. The present spiritual Kingdom being established by faith in the hearts and minds of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The future literal Kingdom to come on earth when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace during his glorious millennial reign on earth, before God Himself descends on a Great White Throne and is ALL in ALL and the fullness of ETERNITY begins in all its majestic and royal glory.

These are not really two different Kingdoms since they are both the Kingdom of God, they are simply the same Kingdom, but in a different form and shape. God only has one Kingdom, but throughout history it has taken on different shapes and forms, under the Judges it had one form, under David and Solomon another, while it appeared different again under

the Kings of Israel, but though it appears in different shapes and forms it is the one Kingdom because regardless of what shape or form it takes God is always its King. The present spiritual Kingdom being established by faith in the hearts and minds of those who believe will take on a different form when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords, but even this is not the final shape of God's Kingdom since at the end of this glorious age God Himself descends to earth on a Great White Throne and is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY in its fullness and majestic glory begins.

NOTE: the majority of Paul's teaching is focused on the present spiritual kingdom that exists by faith and love in the hearts and minds of those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and manifested outwardly in good works and behaviour that endeavours to honour God and shows compassion, grace and forgiveness toward others.

MATTHEW 11

John the Baptist and the Least in the Kingdom.

- **Matthew 11:11:** Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (A parallel passage is in Luke 7:28).

When looking at the Kingdom of God it is important to understand that the title, the Kingdom of heaven does not mean that the Kingdom is in heaven, Matthew is the only writer that uses this term, both Mark and Luke for the same Scriptures use the title the Kingdom of God. Both titles refer to the same Kingdom which is God's Kingdom on earth.

The Kingdom of heaven: Matthew is the only one that records this parable there is no record of it in the books of Mark, Luke or John. The title in this verse, the Kingdom of Heaven does not mean that the Kingdom is in heaven. The following Scriptures are just a few of the many that show that the Kingdom of Heaven is the same as the Kingdom Of God.

- The Kingdom of God was the message Jesus called the apostles to proclaim.
- The Kingdom at hand refers to the present spiritual Kingdom of faith, grace and conscience that began with the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus death and resurrection, is the Gospel of the Kingdom Christ's resurrection was the beginning of the new covenant and totally destroyed the Old Testament covenant by doing away with the need for the Levitical priesthood, a human high priest, the holy days and sacrifices because everything now needed for salvation is in Christ. The Kingdom that now exists is a global spiritual Kingdom that exists by faith and God's grace and love in the hearts and minds of those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness that leads to eternal salvation and everlasting glory. This present spiritual Kingdom dwelling in the heart and minds of all who are devoted in love to the Lord will be manifested on earth when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's literal and visible majestic and glorious Kingdom on earth.

The least in the Kingdom of God: even though John the Baptist never did any miracles he is considered the greatest prophet this is because it was John who was privileged with the message "Prepare the way of the Lord" (Luke 3:4) all other prophets spoke of the coming Messiah the Christ, but John actually introduced Christ to the world making him the greatest of all prophets. The one who is considered the least in the Kingdom is Jesus, the religious leaders, the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes considered Jesus to be born of fornication because of the virgin birth (they knew Jesus was born out of wedlock) (John 8:39-41) added to this they

considered Jesus a blasphemer and false prophet. It is Jesus Christ, who is the one considered, the least in the kingdom of God. Jesus in these verses is saying, John is the greatest prophet of all, but he is greater than John.

The Kingdom of God Old and New Testament: The Kingdom of God existed in the Old Testament under the Judges, David and Solomon and the kings with Israel being submitted to God the King of the Kingdom. Now in the New Testament the Kingdom of God at this present time exists in spiritual form in the hearts and minds of every faithful brother and sister in Christ. During the Lord's majestic and glorious millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords the Kingdom of God will exist in another form, but even this is not the final shape of God's Kingdom since at the end of this glorious age God Himself descends to earth and is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its majestic royal fullness and eternal glory.

The Kingdom of God in the New Testament that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ proclaims is both the present spiritual Kingdom and the future literal Kingdom to come. The context reveals which of the two Kingdoms the writer has in focus. In this study we will be focusing on the present spiritual and global Kingdom being established by faith in the heart and mind of every faithful brother and sister in Christ.

The Kingdom of Heaven has Suffered Violence.

- **Matthew 11:12:** From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force (a similar verse is in Luke 16:16).

During the Old Testament era the Promised Land (the Kingdom of God) was taken by war, and Israel had to constantly go to battle to maintain it. Now under the new covenant of grace there is no allowance for Christians to go to war to defend the present spiritual Kingdom of God, should anyone doubt this statement see:

- Jesus Famous Sermon.
- In Matthew chapter 5 in Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

At the time of John the prideful hypocritical religious leaders (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) maintained the Kingdom of God at Jerusalem by spiritual religious control power and legalistic and dogmatic teaching, but since Christ's death and resurrection it is the lowly, the poor and humble who are possessing the Kingdom through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is because the present Kingdom of God is not majestically built cathedrals and religious pious priests dressed in holy garments, but is spiritual and exists in the hearts and minds of every humble and faithful brother and sister in Christ by faith and love. Certainly, even today there are prideful hypocritical religious leaders ruling global religious empires, but just because a minister may have a worldwide religious empire does not guarantee that they belong to the present spiritual Kingdom of God since the Lord sees the heart, the intent and the motives.

There is no doubt that when we all stand before the Lord on that glorious day of the resurrection there will be some humble servants who have faithfully cleaned the church and seen to the mundane chores who will be exalted far above some religious leaders who have ministered and preached in very large churches. This is because God's eyes see the heart and judges accordingly since some can be in the ministry for their own gain (as the religious leaders of Jesus day were) and for the riches, wealth, importance and fame it rewards them with.

NOTICE: Matthew records Jesus saying, the Kingdom of heaven has suffered violence (Matt. 11:12) referring to the Kingdom of God on earth up to the time of John the Baptist.

This clearly shows that the title the Kingdom of Heaven does not refer to a Kingdom in heaven, but God's Kingdom on earth. Matthew is the only writer that use the title the Kingdom of Heaven Mark and Luke use the title, the Kingdom of God for the same Kingdom which is God's Kingdom on earth, not a Kingdom in heaven.

MATTHEW 12

Satan's Kingdom.

- **Matthew 12:25-28:** Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁸But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (A parallel passage is in Mark 3:23-24 and Luke 11:17-20).

This verse clearly shows that Satan has an invisible spiritual kingdom. This kingdom of Satan dwells in the heart and minds of those who deny God and oppose His ways and is manifested outwardly in evil and wicked actions that are in opposition toward God, toward Christ, toward the law of love and toward those who belong to God's Kingdom. In the same manner God has an invisible spiritual Kingdom that is established by faith in the hearts and minds of all who are faithful and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ that is outwardly manifested in love toward God and in showing compassion and forgiveness toward others and doing-good. In the fullness of time Christ's present spiritual Kingdom will be a literal Kingdom on earth when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory to rule and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords and the sons and daughters of God are manifested in immortal bodies and majestic eternal glory to reign with the Lord as a kingdom and priests to God (Rev 1:5-10).

The Kingdom of God has come upon you: refers to the power of God that has come to them through the King of God's Kingdom who was standing right next to them at that time, but these words are not limited to those who Jesus is talking to, but apply to every generation since the time Jesus began his ministry on earth. Though the power embraces the stunning wonders and miracles Jesus performed the primary focus of the power of God that has come is the power of the Gospel message to save even the lowest of sinners to eternal life apart from self-effort or adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions.

The Kingdom of God has Come.

- **Matthew 12:28:** But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

These words of Jesus clearly show that God's Kingdom has come, it is existing now by faith and love in the hearts and minds of all who are devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and is outwardly manifested in good works and love, compassion and forgiveness toward others (howbeit not perfectly, nevertheless there is a deep desire in the heart of those who belong to the Lord to honour God and Christ's good name.

MATTHEW 13

The Word of the Kingdom.

- **Matthew 13:19:** When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.

The word of the Kingdom is the same as the Gospel of the Kingdom it refers to the message of salvation. When a person hears the Gospel of the Kingdom, but does not understand what they have received in their heart it is very easy for their unbelieving family, friends and peers to talk them out of continuing in the faith or for the cares, luxuries and pleasures of this world to draw them away from following Christ. Since Jesus is speaking in the present tense what he is saying clearly shows that the Kingdom of God has come and the words, sown in the heart show us that the Kingdom Jesus has in mind is not beautifully built church buildings, but a spiritual kingdom existing in the heart and mind of those who believe.

MATTHEW 16

The Son of Man Coming in His Kingdom.

- **Matthew 16:28:** Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Prior to Jesus death and resurrection, he told some of those with him that they would see the Son of man coming in his Kingdom. Clearly Jesus was not referring to his millennial Kingdom when he returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth since all the disciples he was speaking to have died. This means Jesus either had it wrong or he had something else in his mind when he said, "Some standing here will not taste death until they see the Son of man coming in his Kingdom." Jesus was not talking about his return as King of kings and Lord of lords, but his resurrection. Many who were with him not only saw Jesus in his resurrected immortal and eternal body, but also saw him ascend to heavenly glory. The Kingdom of God in this context refers to the present spiritual Kingdom of grace of which Christ is the King. This Kingdom began with Christ's death and resurrection and is established by faith and love in the heart of every faithful brother and sister in Christ and will be literally manifested in majestic and eternal glory when Christ returns.

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MATTHEW 18

Receiving the Kingdom like a Child.

- **Matthew 18:1-5:** At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ²And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me. (A parallel passage is in Mark 10:14-15 and Luke 18:16-17).

The title, the Kingdom of Heaven is the same as the title, the Kingdom of God. Matthew in his parables uses the title the Kingdom of Heaven while Mark and Luke for the same Scriptures use the title, the Kingdom of God which means that the title the Kingdom of Heaven does not mean that the Kingdom in focus is in heaven. Mark records Jesus saying, "Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it," meaning whoever does not come to God in humbleness and through faith and trusting in God's grace in contrast to prideful self-effort and trusting in religious works and intellectual head knowledge cannot enter the eternal Kingdom of God. The Kingdom Jesus has in focus here is the present spiritual Kingdom established by faith and love in the heart and mind of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is telling the disciples with him that if they don't receive him by faith they cannot be saved to eternal life which is the same as saying that they cannot enter the present spiritual Kingdom of God since God is creating a new eternal

nation in Christ and their citizenship is not of this world, but of heaven. The disciples asking the question, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" most likely wanted to know which one of them was considered the greatest in the Kingdom of God existing on earth during their lifetime.

A note of encouragement: these words of Jesus, "Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" shows that no-one has to be a walking Bible encyclopaedia to be saved to eternal life, but simply believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in God's grace. This is the majestic glory of the Gospel message of the Christian faith.

MATTHEW 20

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a Master who Hired Labourers.

- **Matthew 20:1:** For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard.

Prior to Jesus death and resurrection, he said the Kingdom of heaven (i.e., the Kingdom of God) is (present tense) like the master of a house. In this parable Jesus teaches that there are two types of labourers in the existing spiritual Kingdom of faith and grace at this present time.

The two different types of labourers are:

1. Those with the right heart attitude.
2. Those with a wrong heart attitude.

Those in group number one willingly accept God's will and have compassion and mercy toward others and are not envious or jealous of the success or blessings God showers others with. In contrast to this those in the second group have a selfish attitude they question God's will and are not only envious of God's blessings toward others (especially those they think do not deserve the Lord's favour) and are jealous of those who they feel God has showered blessings on more than themselves. This parable is teaching that brothers and sisters in Christ who have endured for many years' persecution, suffering, hardships and sorrow because of their faith should not be jealous of sinners who are equally saved to eternal glory in the last hour.

Consider: how cutting to our hearts it would be to hear Jesus say, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong" (v13). Envy and jealousy have no place in the Kingdom of God. In contrast to this self-focused attitude of envy and jealousy those filled with God's Spirit rejoice in seeing others abundantly blessed regardless of their own circumstances or how much they many have suffered to serve the Lord.

MATTHEW 21

Tax Collectors and Prostitutes will go into the Kingdom.

- **Matthew 21:31:** Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you.

Prior to Jesus death and resurrection, he made a stunning statement that no-doubt shocked the religious leaders of his generation (the chief priests and the elders of the people) (v23) by saying that, "Tax collectors and prostitutes will go into the Kingdom before them." This is because the tax collectors and the prostitutes honestly humbled themselves before God and repented and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, whereas the religious leaders trusted in their own self-righteousness, religious works and

rejected the Lord. These words of Jesus teach us a very important lesson, what is that you might wonder? Simply this, "No-one will enter the Kingdom of God by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions etc." The religious leaders of Jesus generation strictly held fast to all kinds of religious customs and works yet Jesus told them God will accept tax collectors and prostitutes before them. These words of Jesus magnify the truth that the only way to enter the Kingdom of God is through humble and honest repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords he is going to separate humble and honest repentant believers from those who use Jesus and the glorious Gospel of grace for their own selfish gain and use those who are seeking after God as merchandise to extend their own religious empire, riches, wealth, importance and fame. Since Jesus throughout the New Testament saved multitudes of sinners of all types, we know that the Kingdom in focus in these verses is the present spiritual global Kingdom being established by faith in the hearts and minds of all who trust in the Lord for their righteousness to be save to eternal life and everlasting glory.

The Kingdom of God will be Given to a People Producing its Fruits.

- **Matthew 21:43:** Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you (the chief priests and the elders of the people) and given to a people producing its fruits.

Jesus tells the chief priests and the elders of the people (v23) the Kingdom of God will be taken away from them and given to a people producing its fruits. Obviously for something to be taken away it must already exist. These words of Jesus show that the Kingdom of God has always existed howbeit in many different shapes and forms. God only has one Kingdom, but throughout history it has taken on different shapes and forms, under the Judges, it had one form, under David and Solomon another, while it appeared different again under the kings of Israel, but though it appears in different shapes and forms it is the one Kingdom because regardless of what shape or form it takes God is always its King. The present spiritual global Kingdom being established by faith in the hearts and minds of those who believe will again take on a different form when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords, but even this is not the final shape of God's Kingdom since at the end of this age God Himself descends to earth on a Great White Throne and is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY in all its royal and majestic eternal fullness and glory begins. The Kingdom is taken away from the religious leaders of Israel (the chief priests and the elders of the people) for following two reasons:

1. They rejected the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. They controlled and ruled those who were honestly seeking God by dogmatic legalistic teaching rather than showing them love, mercy and grace.

The fruit Jesus had in mind is love, compassion, mercy, kindness grace, forgiveness and such like things.

Acceptable fruits of the Kingdom: when Jesus was asked, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" He answered, "The most important is, "God is one and you shall love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength" The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" there is no other commandment greater than these two" (Mark 12:28-31) James refers to Jesus commandment, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" as the Royal Law (James 2:8). These are the only two commandments anyone needs to know simply because if a person loves God and their neighbour as themselves they will never hurt or harm another human in anyway therefore no other commandment would ever be broken. The command, "Love your neighbour as yourself," means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The

thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, mentally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour.

Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount: the constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing all we can do to protect people from harm and being dominated by the thought, "What action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person." It is all about doing right to others. This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). A wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans. For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see:

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

MATTHEW 22

A King who gave a Wedding Feast for his Son.

- **Matthew 22:2-10:** The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son,³ and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.⁴ Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.'⁵ But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business,⁶ while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.⁷ The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.⁸ Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but *those invited were not worthy*.⁸ Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy.⁹ Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.'¹⁰ And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, *both bad and good*. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Jesus words, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to," clearly show that in Jesus mind the Kingdom of God already existed. This parable teaches the following four truths:

1. In this present New Testament age of grace Jesus is inviting sinners into his eternal Kingdom.

2. Everyone who confesses the name of Jesus and honestly believes in their heart and their mind that Jesus is who the Scriptures proclaim him to be form the present global and worldwide spiritual Kingdom of God on earth.
3. There are worthy and unworthy servants in God's present spiritual Kingdom of at this present time.
4. When Christ returns, he will cast the unworthy servants out of his Kingdom.

NOTE: the unworthy servants in the context of this parable are the Jewish religious leaders of Israel (Matt. 22:1-6) because they trusted in strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious works, customs and traditions etc., rather than trust by faith in Christ and God's grace. In contrast to this many that were counted worthy were sinners who had not only worshipped pagan gods, but also had never kept any religious customs or traditions. This is the majestic wonder and glory of God's wisdom, salvation is not dependent upon self-effort or adhering to religious customs and traditions, but on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and upon trusting in God's grace. This puts us all on a level playing field since salvation has nothing to do with:

- What family we are born into or having a brilliant I.Q.
- Having a Bible school certificate or knowing the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.
- Strictly adhering to ceremonial rites or keeping holy days, religious customs and traditions.

Though these may be good in themselves for some not one of them has any power to save a person to eternal life. The only way to enter God's eternal Kingdom is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and trusting in God's grace. For a complete interpretation of this parable see Matthew 22 in Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

MATTHEW 23

You Shut the Kingdom of Heaven.

- **Matthew 23:13:** But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.

To shut the Kingdom of heaven and stop people entering it the Kingdom has to already exist. The hypocritical and prideful Pharisees (the religious leaders of Jesus generation) through their lack of love, compassion and mercy and grace toward those seeking God and their legalistic dogmatic teachings made the glorious Kingdom of God so difficult to enter that they may as well have bolted up the doors of their Temple.

MATTHEW 24

The Gospel of the Kingdom will be, Proclaimed to the World.

- **Matthew 24:14:** this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

It is certainly possible to fulfil the words, "The Gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world" in our day and age of global technology, but this does not mean that everyone will accept or embrace it. To some the Gospel will bring life while to others it will bring death.

NOTICE: it does not say that every individual on planet earth will hear it, but that it will go out to all nations. Obviously if the heads of a nation reject the Gospel the nation as a collective whole will suffer loss, (i.e. in Communist countries the government stands against those who proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ), nevertheless even in extreme darkness if a person's heart is seeking God, God will respond.

The Gospel of the Kingdom: is the message of salvation from eternal death to eternal life it is about salvation by faith and grace through believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel of the Kingdom begins with the universal law of sin and death which states, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) meaning whoever sins is already judged and condemned to eternal death and since not one of us is without sin we all stand guilty before this universal Law. Whereas the Gospel of the Kingdom states, "All who trust in Christ have been granted the free gift of God which is, eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:23), because, "The law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). The Gospel of the Kingdom proclaims that the universal law of sin and death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him they like Christ will be raised to eternal life and everlasting glory. The focus of the Gospel of the Kingdom is salvation from eternal death to eternal life by faith and grace it is about believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and recognising that one falls short of God's Glory and absolute Holiness. It is about repentance, baptism and abiding in the faith. Throughout the entire history of mankind there has only been one man who has ever been able to attain to God's perfect standard. The Gospel of the Kingdom is about recognising this reality, repenting before God and accepting His foreordained plan of salvation.

It is about trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for one's own righteousness, looking forward to his return and being raised to eternal glory. The majestic Good News of the Gospel of the Kingdom states that whoever comes to God through repentance and faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ is not only approved of and accepted by God the Father but all their sins are forgiven, not because they are deserving of it, by any self-effort or religious good works, but because through faith in Christ, righteousness is imputed from God to them as a pure and free gift, but this is not the end of the Gospel of the Kingdom since it also states that the faithful in Christ will inherit the future glorious Kingdom of God and eternal life when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. This is the reason the glorious message of salvation is called, the Good News of the Gospel of the Kingdom. It should be mentioned that the Kingdom is not the path to salvation, but the inheritance of those who are already saved. There is only one path to God's eternal and glorious Kingdom and to walk on that path one must have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus is the royal and golden path to the eternal Kingdom of God.

MARK 1

The Kingdom of God is at Hand.

- **Mark 1:14-15:** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand repent and believe in the gospel."

John is arrested and Jesus begins to proclaim the Gospel saying, the time is fulfilled, meaning it is the time for many of the prophecies that the Old Testament prophets spoke to be fulfilled (i.e. Christ's death and resurrection etc.). The Kingdom of God is at hand means two things:

1. Jesus the King of God's Kingdom is standing right there with them and among them at that time.

2. Jesus is about to be cruelly put to death and gloriously raised on the third day.

Jesus death and resurrection put an end to the Old Covenant and introduced a totally New Covenant of grace called in this verse the Gospel of God. The New Covenant in contrast to the Old proclaims that salvation is now available to whoever will believe (i.e., the Jew and Gentiles alike) and comes by grace and not by self-effort or by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions etc. The Gospel of God declares that whoever repents and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and his message by faith become part of God's present spiritual global Kingdom on earth. At this present time the Kingdom of God is a spiritual Kingdom which exists by faith in the mind and heart of those who belong to Christ. This spiritual Kingdom will be literally manifested on earth when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's literal Kingdom of righteousness, justice joy and peace on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

MARK 9

The Kingdom came with Power at the Resurrection of Christ.

- **Mark 9:1:** And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

Clearly this verse does not refer to the future literal Kingdom of God to come when Jesus returns since those who Jesus said, "There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Kingdom of God are all dead. The Kingdom Jesus had in mind was the spiritual Kingdom of grace that came into existence after Christ's death and resurrection. Those who Jesus was talking to not only saw Jesus in his glorified resurrected eternal body, but also saw him ascend to eternal glory. The power that the Kingdom of God came with was the manifested power of God when He resurrected a human man the Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life never to see death again and the present worldwide spiritual Kingdom of God existing now in the heart and mind of all who belong to Christ is globally manifested in their lives by the fruits of the Spirit and their testimony and collectively through faithful churches amongst all nations.

11

MARK 10

The Rich Enter the Kingdom with Difficulty.

- **Mark 10:23:** Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God!"

This verse clearly shows that no-matter how rich or wealthy a person maybe their money is worthless in regards to entering the Kingdom of God and purchasing eternal life. It should be pointed out that Jesus is not saying it is impossible, but enormously difficult which implies that it is far easier for the poor to enter the Kingdom of God. This is because the poor have very little to give up whereas the rich do, they are able to enjoy every luxury and pleasure the world has including the feeling of fame, importance and success, because of this the poor who have eternal life should never be envious of the rich.

NOTE: Jesus does not expect the rich to give up everything so that they become dependent on others to support them. This man was enormously rich he had more than enough to support himself and his own family. The principal of giving in the New Testament is that no brother or sister should have too much or too little. The idea is that those who have more than enough are to share their excess with those who lack and then when those who lack prosper, they in turn will do the same. The principal is equality

that is why God says, "If a person deliberately refuses to work for no good reason (i.e., medical difficulties, deep despair or depression etc.,) let them starve." God does not expect honest hard-working people to support those who are lazy, everyone is expected to work. This is because no brother or sister in Christ or church has an endless supply of money to give therefore it should go to those who will in turn help others in similar circumstance. If they cannot find jobs or work, but the desire is in the heart to work it is acceptable to God, but we are all expected to help the family of the Lord in whatever way we are able.

MARK 12

Jesus tells a Man he is, Not far from the Kingdom of God.

- **Mark 12:34:** when Jesus saw that he (the scribe) answered wisely, he said to him, "you are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

The reason Jesus was able to say, "You are not far from the kingdom of God" is because the Kingdom is only a confession away from anyone. The apostle Paul wrote, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved (Rom. 10:9-10). Clearly this shows that the Kingdom of God exists now by faith in the hearts and minds of every faithful brother and sister who confesses and believes in their heart that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

LUKE 8

12

The Secrets of the Kingdom of God.

- **Luke 8:10:** he (Jesus) said, "To you (the apostles) it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.

The prideful, hypocritical religious leaders of Jesus day (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) literally saw Christ, heard his messages and witnessed his amazing miracles that only a man with God's Spirit flowing through could possibly do, but because of their pride, hypocrisy and selfish ambition they could not perceive who he was or understand the glorious spiritual message contained in the parables he spoke. In contrast to this the disciples had a right heart attitude and left all to follow Christ therefore perceived who he was and accepted him as the Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world. They endured persecution and hardship to followed Christ therefore everything concerning forgiveness of sin, God's grace, God's eternal promises, and fellowship with God and eternal life was added to them. In contrasted to the disciples blessing the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes had everything taken away (i.e. the need for the Levitical priesthood, a human high priest and adhering to holy days and ceremonial laws etc., was abolished at the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, added to this the temple was destroyed in 70 AD by the Romans and even worse than all these is the reality that without Christ they will not inherit eternal life.

NOTICE: it did not matter how obvious and clear the Gospel message was the Pharisees chief priests and scribes' pride was so great it stopped them from accepting Christ. They had even seen Christ perform amazing miracles and had him standing in front of them and still they could not accept. Sometimes no matter what you do or say a person's pride and desire to do their own thing will stop them from perceiving and accepting the wonder and beauty in the truth you are sharing with them.

The practical application today: by extension what Jesus said to the disciples applies to everyone who accepts Christ. Everyone who endures in faith despite persecution, troubles and hardships will be given everything needed to receive favour from God, forgiveness of sin, fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved to eternal life and everlasting glory, but only spiritual blindness and the darkness of the grave awaits those who deny Christ.

LUKE 9

Jesus sent the Apostles to Proclaim the Kingdom of God.

- **Luke 9:2:** he sent them (the disciples) out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

It is interesting to notice as one reads through the New Testament that there is no detail given of a literal Kingdom of God on earth. The message concerning the Kingdom of God that the apostles proclaimed was not the detail of a literal Kingdom of God to come, but upon a present spiritual Kingdom established in the heart and mind by faith and love through belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel of the Kingdom the apostles proclaimed primarily concerned the following two aspects:

1. The brutal, bloody and cruel death of the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorious resurrection to eternal life and everlasting glory. After Christ's death and resurrection, the Gospel message of the Kingdom primarily focuses on the truth that salvation to eternal life is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by God's grace in contrast to adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions.
2. How to live and behave as a brother or sister in Christ in a manner that honours God and brings a good testimony to Jesus name.

The reason the New Testament does not need to focus on or give any detail of the future literal Kingdom of God to be established on earth is because whoever belongs to Christ's present spiritual Kingdom belong to his family and are thereby adopted sons and daughters of God and as such will inherit God's promised eternal Kingdom that Christ their King will majestically and gloriously establish when he returns. It is very much like children who have a billionaire father, it is very unlikely they would understand every detail of his global companies or what bank accounts he keeps all his riches in, but because they love their father, are his children and he loves them they are the rightful legal heirs to his worldwide empire. Likewise, every adopted child of God is the rightful legal heir of their heavenly Fathers Kingdom. Added to this it is God's heartfelt desire to give His royal majestic eternal Kingdom to all who love His Son.

NOTE: throughout the New Testament there are Scriptures that refer to the glorious Kingdom of God to be established on earth when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords, but to find the detail of this Kingdom age one has to go the Old Testament (especially the many prophecies of the prophets that by the inspiration of God refer to it).

LUKE 11

Jesus Spoke to the Crowds about the Kingdom of God.

- **Luke 9:11:** When the crowds learned it, they followed him and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing.

The Kingdom of God in this context refers to the present spiritual Kingdom established in the heart and mind by love and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that is manifested outwardly by showing compassion, mercy and grace to others and in good works.

NOTE: no brother or sister in Christ is saved by good works, but living a lifestyle that endeavours to honour God outwardly manifests the faith that dwells inwardly.

Law and grace: the law is splendid as a guide to understanding of God's will, but as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure. Nevertheless, both the law and grace go together. This is because the law without the Gospel is diagnosis without remedy, but the Gospel without law is only the good news of salvation for people who don't believe they need it, because they have never heard the bad news of judgment. The Law is not the Gospel, but the Gospel is not lawless (Rom. 3:19-20) (Eph. 2:13-22) (author unknown).

LUKE 12

Seek God's Kingdom and these things will be added to You.

- **Luke 12:27-31:** Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! ²⁹And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

The Kingdom in this context is God's eternal Kingdom which embraces both the present spiritual Kingdom and the future literal Kingdom to come when Jesus returns and ETERNITY in all its majestic royal fullness begins when God Himself descends to earth and is ALL in ALL. The reign of King Solomon is known as the golden years of the Kingdom of Israel which was God's Kingdom on earth at that time. Solomon built the temple of God and many other majestic and amazing buildings. Jesus says, even Solomon's glory was not like that of the lily which does nothing to grow and points out that God causes the grass to grow just to be cut down and thrown away.

In these two examples it is God who gives life to the lily and life to the grass and causes them to grow they do nothing. Jesus is using these two examples to show those who trust in him that they should not doubt that God will give them eternal life, which like the lily and the grass they can do nothing to create it in themselves. The focus in the mind of Jesus in this story is mortal life (temporary life) he is saying if God gives a lily so much beauty and gives life to grass which is simply thrown away how much more will he clothe those who are so much more valuable to Him. In the context of this story the clothing primarily applies to the resurrection. Jesus is saying, "When you die God knows it" (i.e. the story of the sparrow and the hairs on your head) (Luke 12:6-7).

In the resurrection God will clothe all those who belong to Christ with glory that will far surpass that of Solomon and the beauty of a lily. Jesus words, "O you of little faith," refers to salvation and eternal life. Jesus in these conversations is telling his listeners not to allow the cares; stresses and possessions of this world stop them from accepting eternal life (v22). People without God are anxious and worried about how they look and what they wear, about how big their house is and what decor they will furnish it with, what people will think of them, their future, their financial security and their health etc. All these cares; stresses and worries choke out any focus of God and the desire to seek after what is the most important of all, eternal life, because all these things including their life are as the life of the lily and the grass, no matter how glorious they may appear for a moment they are mortal and will decay and pass away.

All things will be added to you: within Christianity there are two understandings to Jesus words, "All things will be added to you" (v31).

1. Some believe (especially those who teach a prosperity gospel) it means God will give those who belong to Christ good health, riches and wealth, majestic houses, expensive cars and designer clothes in this life and in the world to come.
2. Others believe Jesus words apply to the resurrection of those who belong to Christ when God clothes them with eternal life and eternal glory and gives them all things in the eternal Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. They believe this concept because at the beginning of the chapter Jesus said to those who belong to him not to worry about their mortal life because life is more than food and clothing and not to fear those who can take their mortal life. Added to this in verse (v33) Jesus says to those who belong to him "Sell your possessions and give to the needy and you will have treasure in the heavens that does not fail.

The glory of Christ: in verse thirty-seven Jesus says, "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them." (Luke 12:37). How glorious, beautiful and humbling are these words of the Lord Jesus Christ, truly he sees those who love him as his brothers and sisters. Jesus is the true shepherd of the flock; he does not exalt himself above those who are faithful to him but rather happily serves them as they have served him.

LUKE 17

The Kingdom of God is in the Midst of You.

- **Luke 17:20-21:** Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, ²¹nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you (within you in KJV).

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The word, midst (within in the KJV) means inside or within. When Jesus said that the Kingdom is not coming with signs that can be seen he was not referring to healing signs, but signs as in the days of Moses and Elijah.

The following are the two most common interpretations to Jesus words, "The Kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

1. Jesus is the King of the Kingdom so some teach that by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the Kingdom of God is spiritually within a believer because Christ is pre-eminent in their heart and their mind and the King over their conscience and their life.
2. Jesus is talking to the Pharisees so others reason that it is hardly likely he would be saying the Kingdom of God is within them. Therefore, they say Jesus was telling the Pharisees the Kingdom of God has already come because the King of the Kingdom is already amongst them. They support this idea by the fact the Pharisees never accepted Jesus so the focus of his answer is not on his second return, but the present moment telling the Pharisees the Kingdom of God (Jesus Christ) is already amongst them.

There is no need to be so dogmatic that one teaching must be right and the other teaching wrong simply because both interpretations can fit what Jesus is saying. There is no-doubt that in this present age the Kingdom of God is dwelling within the heart and mind of every faithful brother and sister in Christ and that when Jesus the promised Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world appeared the Kingdom of God had come because its King had arrived, but this is not the final shape or form of the Kingdom since it will take on a far more majestic royal and glorious beauty when the Lord returns in glory as King of kings and Lord and lords.

Unless one is Born Again, they cannot see the Kingdom of God.

- **John 3:3-7:** Jesus answered him (Nicodemus) "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is *born again* he cannot see the Kingdom of God." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be *born again*."

When Nicodemus hears Jesus words, "Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." He is stunned and confused by Jesus statement because he thought Jesus was talking about a natural birth, so Jesus repeats his statement adding that to enter the Kingdom of God one must be, "Born of water and born of the Spirit," otherwise no-one can enter the Kingdom of God. The fact Jesus told Nicodemus twice that he must, "Be born again to enter the Kingdom of God," Shows how important it is to understand the expression, born again. The words born of water refers to being water baptised while born of the Spirit refers to believing the Good News of the Gospel of grace, repenting before God, and having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for one's salvation to eternal life. A person is born of the Spirit in that moment when their mind is enlightened to their fallenness before God, the heart is full of honest remorse and repentance and they accept by faith Christ as their Lord and Saviour. In this supernatural moment a person's heart and life is transformed toward the things of God and toward God Himself.

That which is born of the flesh: refers to a natural birth and the words, "It is flesh" means those born by a natural birth remain flesh, meaning that they are earthy minded meaning that their mind gives no thought toward God it is solely focused on the things of this world it is caught up in either the cares and anxieties this world brings or on gaining material possessions or chasing after the luxuries, pleasures and indulgences of this world. They are separated from God and more concerned about protecting and satisfying their own pride, ego and wellbeing than they are about how their life reflects God to others.

That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit: refers to those whose minds at the hearing of the Good News of the Gospel are illuminated to their fallenness and separation from God and brought to honest heartfelt repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and eternal salvation. In this spiritual moment their sins are forgiven and God's eternal favour is toward them. A person's life and heart is supernaturally transformed toward God when this life changing event occurs and they are transformed from being earthly minded to being heavenly minded which means that their mind is more concerned with the things that concern God and His Kingdom than the things of this world. Added to this they now care about how their life reflects God's character and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ more than they are about their own pride, ego and wellbeing. Paul explains this life changing event with the following glorious words:

- God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13-14).

The Kingdom in focus in these verses is the present spiritual Kingdom established by faith in the heart and mind of all those who are born again and transferred in the Kingdom of God's beloved Son.

Jesus Kingdom is Not of this World.

- **John 18:36:** Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”

Twice Jesus tells Pilate that his Kingdom is of this world meaning, it is an invisible spiritual Kingdom that comes by faith and is governed by different laws. Christ's Kingdom in contrast to the kingdoms of the world that exist through visible material possessions and by owning the riches and wealth of this world is a spiritual Kingdom that exists by faith in the heart and mind of every faithful believer. At God's appointed time Christ will return and the sons and daughters of God will be manifested in eternal and immortal glory when this breathtaking and world changing event occurs Christ's present spiritual Kingdom will be literally manifested on earth in its most royal and majestic beauty.

ACTS 12

The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ.

- **Acts 8:9-13:** there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. ¹⁰They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man *is the power of God* that is called Great.” ¹¹And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. ¹²But when they believed Philip as he preached *good news* about the *Kingdom of God* and the *name of Jesus Christ*, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

Prior to Phillip arriving in Samaria the people paid attention to a man named Simon because he was able to do some form of mystical trickery that deceived all the people of the city into believing that he was not only a man with the power of God, but that the Spirit of God was flowing through him (v10) and therefore they all paid attention to him until Phillip came with the Good News of the Kingdom of God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ after hearing Phillip proclaim the Good News of the Gospel Simon and the men and woman with him believed and were water baptised.

The Good News of the Gospel of the Kingdom: is the message of salvation from eternal death to eternal life it is about salvation by faith and grace through believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel of the Kingdom begins with the universal law of sin and death which states that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23) meaning whoever sins is already judged and condemned to death and since not one of us is without sin we all stand guilty before this universal Law. Whereas the Gospel of the Kingdom states that all who trust in Christ have been granted the free gift of God which is, eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23), because, the law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2) which means that the Gospel of the Kingdom proclaims that the universal law of sin and death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him they like Christ will be raised to eternal life and everlasting glory. The, focus of the Gospel of the Kingdom is salvation from death to eternal life by faith and grace it, is about believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and recognising that one falls short of God's Glory and absolute Holiness. It is about repentance, baptism and abiding in the faith. Throughout the entire history of mankind there has only been one man who has ever been able to attain to God's perfect standard. The Gospel of the Kingdom is about recognising this reality, repenting before God and accepting His foreordained plan of salvation. It is about trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for one's own righteousness, looking forward to his return and being raised to eternal glory.

The majestic Good News of the Gospel of the Kingdom proclaims that whoever comes to God through repentance and faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ is not only approved of and accepted by God the Father, but all their sins are forgiven, not because they are deserving of it, by any self-effort or religious good works, but because through faith in Christ, righteousness is imputed from God to them as a pure and free gift, but this is not the end of the Gospel of the Kingdom since it also states that the faithful in Christ will inherit the future glorious Kingdom of God and eternal life when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:11-16) to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. This is the reason the glorious message of salvation is called, the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is not the path to salvation, but the inheritance of those who are already saved. There is only one path to God's eternal and glorious Kingdom and to walk on that path one must have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus is the royal and golden path to the eternal Kingdom of God. Can there be any better news than this? Clearly another reason it is called the Good News of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Consider: if our world's top scientist and medical practitioners could invent a pill that would give people eternal life, the billionaires of this world would write out a cheque no matter what the cost to buy them for all their family and friends, and almost all people of the world would sell everything they had to purchase one. This is the high value Paul placed on the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. To Paul and the faithful brothers and sisters who supported him there was nothing in this world more valuable for any man or woman to possess than the gift of eternal life. How sad it is that in some modern churches today this high value of eternal life has been lost and replaced by a Gospel that focuses on a blessed, prosperous and successful life now in this mortal and corrupt world and messages that appeal to self, ego and pride. Especially when one considers what it cost God the Father and the high price his Son paid to purchase this gift of eternal life for all who would humbly accept by faith the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTICE: because Simon was able to do some form of magic or mystical tricks that the people did not understand he was able to amaze and bewilder them which resulted in them believing he was a great man of God and that his deceptive power came from God's Spirit flowing through him. For a man to deceive a city on such a vast scale it is most likely he was a great orator, speechmaker and storyteller and presented himself as a man of God to the people and proclaimed a spiritual message of some form of a pagan faith that already existed in Samaria or speeches that appealed to the flesh (i.e., self, ego and pride etc.), and able to perform some kind of acts that appeared as miracles of God and that resulted in the people believing he was and man of God.

ACTS 14

Through many Tribulations we enter the Kingdom of God.

- **Acts 14:22:** (Paul and Barnabas were) strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom in focus here is both the present spiritual Kingdom and the future literal Kingdom. We know this because the disciples Paul and Barnabas were talking to were already in the faith, they had already accepted Christ as their Saviour and were following him. Paul and Barnabas are not trying to save them, but encourage them to remain in the faith so that they will be accepted into the future Kingdom when Christ returns.

This verse shows us the following three things:

1. The Kingdom of God at this present time is a spiritual Kingdom within the heart and mind of every faithful brother and sister in Christ.
2. During this present New Covenant age of grace our faith will be tested by the hardships and troubles we experience in this fallen world.
3. If our faith endures to the end of this age and the return of Christ, we will be accepted into the literal future Kingdom of God and rule and reign as priests to God with our KING the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 19:11-16).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total and utter extinction) (also called the, second death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

ACTS 19

Paul Reasoned with Jews about the Kingdom of God.

- Acts 19:8: And he (Paul) entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the Kingdom of God.

Paul had a brilliant knowledge of the Old Testament and used the Scriptures very skillfully to prove that Jesus was the Christ that they and the prophets said was to come. It is interesting to notice when Paul is referencing the Old Testament, he is very rarely teaching it to his audience, but mostly using it to prove to the Jews Jesus is their Messiah the Christ their prophets spoke about.

NOTE: though God never changes the way His Spirit moves on earth to achieve His eternal plans and purposes does. In the Old Testament God moved mightily through Moses and in a different way through David and Solomon then in a unique manner God's Spirit moved through the prophets.

During the era of the apostles God's Spirit was moving on earth through the apostle's faith in Christ in a miraculous fashion and in a manner that God has not done with any previous or future generation. The era of Jesus and the apostles was a unique time on earth as was the era of Moses, David, Solomon and the prophets nevertheless each of these Kingdoms was the Kingdom of God because God has always been the King of His people despite the different ways throughout history in which He revealed Himself to His people and despite the different ways His people responded.

NOTICE: when Paul is referring to the Old Testament Scriptures his primary focus is not on teaching them, but using them to prove to unbelieving or doubtful Jews that Jesus is the one the prophets said was to come and the ONE who the Scriptures speak of.

ACTS 20

Christ Obtained the Church with His Own Blood.

- **Acts 20:25-29:** now, behold, I (Paul) know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom will see my face again. ²⁶Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, ²⁷for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock.

Paul is talking to those who have been redeemed and who the Holy Spirit has made overseers of those who have been saved. The Kingdom in this context refers to the present spiritual Kingdom that dwells in the heart and mind of all who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: the words, "God, obtained the church with his own blood" are used by some to support the mistaken theory that Jesus is God, but this is misreading the verse. God did not die on the cross we know this because the Scriptures state that God is immortal and eternal and therefore cannot die. The very meaning of the word eternal is never-ending which means that God is an eternal Spirit without beginning and without end and cannot be killed or die especially at the hands of sinful human men. Rather the words, "God obtained the church with his own blood" means with his own Son. Christ was born of God and is His only beloved Son it is in this sense that Paul said, "God obtained the church with His own blood" meaning His own Son we know this because John writes, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Words of Comfort and Encouragement: since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states:

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God the Son will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim:

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). For further information see the title: "Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity)" in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The cost of purchasing the church to God was to sacrifice His most beloved Son and the cost to His Son was his life this should give everyone in the global church of the Lord Jesus Christ an idea of how much the Father and the Son love and value them. The only thing Paul preached in the entire New Testament was the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ,

that forgiveness of sin is in Christ and the things concerning salvation and godly behaviour. Paul never gives any detail of the glorious literal Kingdom of God to come when Christ returns, his message is always, the message of the cross, Christ crucified, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and godly behaviour. The Kingdom of God in Paul's teaching is not the Kingdom to be inherited when the Lord returns, but the Gospel of the Kingdom, because it is believing this Gospel that a sinner enters into the present spiritual Kingdom being established in the heart and mind of all who belong to Christ and it is by the Gospel that they are saved to eternal life and will inherit the glorious future literal Kingdom when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. This present spiritual Kingdom is manifested outwardly in the lives of each individual believer who endeavours to live to honour God and shows compassion, mercy, grace and forgiveness toward others and collectively through the faithful churches scattered worldwide amongst the nations.

NOTE: when Paul does refer to the Old Testament and the prophets he is very rarely teaching it, but mostly using it to prove to the unbelieving and doubting Jews that Jesus is who he claimed to be and the one the prophets said was to come and who the Scriptures speak off.

ACTS 28

Paul used the Old Testament to Convince Jews Jesus is the Christ.

- **Acts 28:23:** When they (the local leaders of the Jews at Rome) had appointed a day for him (Paul) they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the prophets.

The local Jewish leaders in Rome desired to hear Paul's views regarding the sect called Christians because they were spoken against by the Romans and the Jews who opposed the Christian faith so Paul holds meetings in his hired home (v30) and people in great numbers come to him. Since the Jewish authorities had meticulously kept the writings of Moses and the Prophets on scrolls and read them every Sabbath in the synagogues Paul focuses his teachings on the Old Testament writings that speak of Jesus being their Messiah the Christ that Moses and the Prophets spoke of. Since the Jewish religious rulers had most likely memorised the Old Testament Scriptures and treasured them more than gold it should have become very clear to them that Jesus was the Christ as Paul in his teachings skillfully and brilliantly shone a spotlight on the Scriptures that speak of Moses telling the people that a prophet would come like him and the many verses that speak of the promised seed of Abraham and of promised seed of David and the one the prophets said was to come and the one the Old Testament Scriptures speak off.

A word of encouragement: this should be a great encouragement to every brother and sister in Christ who find that after sharing the Good News of the Gospel it is rejected. Paul was masterfully brilliant and skillful at using the Old Testament Scripture to prove to the unbelieving Jews that Jesus was the Christ and yet they not only rejected the Lord and Paul, but plotted Jesus murder and aggressively set about persecuting Paul. This very clearly shows that if a person's heart is full of pride, ego and selfish ambition it matters little what a person says no matter how brilliant they will not receive it. The Jewish religious leaders should have recognised their Messiah when he came especially since he was performing supernatural miracles that only a man with God's Spirit flowing through him in such a majestic and awesome manner could do.

It is interesting to notice: Paul often refers to the Old Testament Scriptures when talking to unbelieving and doubtful Jews, but his primary focus is not upon teaching them, but using them to prove that Jesus is their Messiah the Christ and the one the prophets said was to come and the Old Testament Scriptures speak off.

Paul proclaimed the Kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Acts 28:30-31:** He (Paul) lived there (at his lodgings) (v23) two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, ³¹proclaiming the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Paul proclaimed the Kingdom of God and the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. As one reads through all Paul's writings it becomes very clear that the only thing Paul focused on in his messages was the present spiritual Kingdom that is being established by faith in the heart and mind of all who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. These verses show us four magnificent truths:

1. No-one who is passionate about God and has made the Lord the KING of their heart, mind and life needs a beautifully built church or cathedral to be successful in serving the Lord or to proclaiming his KINGDOM. The only place Paul had to teach was the place where he lived and he had multitudes come to him.
2. The path to success is sacrifice and to use what we have. Paul was not a rich man and certainly could not afford expensive buildings so he sacrificed his privacy and used what he had (i.e., the place where he lived).
3. If teaching the Old Testament Scriptures to the unsaved teach them in a manner that proves Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the promised seed of Abraham and the promised seed of David and the one the prophets said was to come. The reason this is important is because the purpose of all Scripture is to lead us to the Lord Jesus Christ and not simply to give us intellectual head knowledge. This is because it is not head knowledge that has the power to save to eternal life, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the golden door and the royal gate to the eternal Kingdom of God.
4. Never rely on others to financially support you (if they do that is an abundant blessing) Paul supported himself, for two reasons, firstly so he would not be controlled by anyone so that he was free to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel without compromise. Secondly so that he would not be a burden on anyone's life and thereby hinder them from accepting the Lord.

The present spiritual Kingdom of God and the global church: since in this present era the Kingdom of God is a global spiritual Kingdom that dwells in the heart and mind of those who believe in Christ and is manifested outwardly in compassion, mercy, grace and forgiveness toward others and good works no-one should make the mistake of limiting Christ's Kingdom to only the established religious institutions, denominations or church buildings, they may be a part of the Kingdom of Christ but they are not the only part. There are many individual Christians in all countries of the world who meet in coffee bars, social outings and mostly their own homes to give thanks to Christ and share their discoveries of God's word and their spiritual experiences with Him. Many of these people are helping others and simply manifesting the reality of their faith to the people that come into their lives. God is not limited to any one pattern or organisation; He is far too creative for that. Jesus church is global and is manifested in a vast variety of ways across the face of the earth. In many third world countries church is held outside under a tree (for shade) with its members sitting on the dusty ground often with dogs, chooks and other animals roaming around.

Remember: not everyone who confesses to know Christ belongs to his Kingdom there are those in his present spiritual Kingdom who he calls wicked servants. They use his name and his Gospel for their own selfish gain and line their own greedy pockets with the wealth and riches of this world by making merchandise of those who do belong to him. Nevertheless, Jesus knows those who are his and those who are not and

will not only reject anyone who use his message of grace, mercy, compassion and love for their own selfish gain, but when the Lord returns, he will deny them entry into his eternal Kingdom. Jesus said:

- I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (John 10:14) (John 10:26-27).

ROMANS 14

The Kingdom of God is Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit.

- **Romans 14:17:** For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

This verse is about the following two things:

1. It is about conscience (i.e., living with our conscience before God and not before man) it is about allowing our conscience to be influenced by Christ and not by man (especially dogmatic legalistic religious leaders). A good example of this principal is drinking alcohol, one Christian may feel is OK to have a couple of cold beers after a hard day's work in the sun, another may feel it is OK to have a bottle of wine when he takes his wife out for a romantic dinner, while others believe it is totally sinful to drink any alcohol at all. Paul's advice to those whose conscience is clear before the Lord in regards to drinking alcohol would be that they should leave the bottle of wine at home if they are going out with those who believe it is sinful to drink. The principal behind this advice is that it is better for us to lay aside what we want for the sake of our brother or sister's conscience while we are with them rather than cause tension during our fellowship.

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NOTE: The Bible does not teach that drinking alcohol is sinful, but it does clearly warn against drinking an excessive amount of it. Drinking alcohol is not sinful, but since and excess of it lowers inhibitions, our will and distorts the thinking and thoughts of our mind the behaviour that results from drinking an excess can result in sinful behaviour that we may regret for the rest of our lives or even worse cause harm to another person (i.e., driving while influenced by alcohol). The underlying thought of what Paul is saying is living with our conscience before Christ and not before man, God wants us to be free from the influence of other people's conscience and walk alone with our own conscience before the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The words, eating in drinking in this context are not limited to eating and drinking only since the principal behind what Paul is saying also applies to ceremonial rites, holy days and religious customs and traditions etc. Paul in this conversation is saying that the present spiritual Kingdom is not about striving to adhere to ceremonial rites, holy days or keeping religious customs, and traditions etc., but about striving to live a life of doing good to others maintaining peace when it is in our power to do so and being happy and joyful in good and wholesome things.

1 CORINTHIANS 4

The Kingdom of God does not Consist in Talk, but in Power.

- **1 Corinthians 4:20:** For the Kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

Though the word power can refer to the working of miracles that the first preachers of the Gospel had by which the Gospel was greatly confirmed,

in this context it is more likely to be referring to the power Paul speaks of in the book of Thessalonians when he made the statement, "Our Gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). The power in this verse is referring to the quickening, converting, influence and power of the Holy Spirit on the heart in converting spiritually dead sinners to Christ, enlightening spiritually blind eyes, unstopping spiritually deaf ears and softening the hardness of a person's heart and delivering them from the Kingdom of darkness into the glorious Kingdom of God. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that transforms a sinner both inwardly and outwardly toward the things of the Lord and God's power that works through their faith to carry on the finishing the saving work of grace and keep them for eternal salvation, in contrast to the godly life which the arrogant and egotistical men Paul refers to who lack the convicting and transforming power of the Holy Spirit and therefore enforce upon their followers through clever speech and persuasive and intimidating language their morals, laws and traditions.

COLOSSIANS 1

Delivered from the Domain of Darkness into Christ's Kingdom.

- **Colossians 1:13:** God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of his beloved Son. ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

This means that God the Father has delivered Jews and Gentiles alike from being separated from God to being united with God and that God does not forgive our sins and redeem us because we strictly adhere to ceremonial rites holy days and keep religious customs and traditions etc., but because of our faith in His beloved Son. It is by faith in Christ that God the heavenly Father is able to reach down to the lowliest child of Adam and lift them in Christ to the highest heights of eternal glory. At this present time the Kingdom of God's beloved Son spiritually exists in the heart and mind of those who are devoted by love and faith to the Lord Jesus Christ.

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A brief overview of the past, present and future Kingdom of God

Prior to Christ's death and resurrection the Jews focus was the promised literal Kingdom to be established on earth rather than the present spiritual Kingdom this is because prior to Christ's death and resurrection no-one, not even the apostles fully understood that Jesus was going to be crucified and rise again this is why prior to the Lord's brutal, bloody and cruel death the primary focus is upon the Kingdom of God on earth. After Jesus death and resurrection the focus of the apostles message changed from being on the Kingdom to being upon the message of the cross, upon the King of the Kingdom and to being upon the Gospel of the Kingdom which proclaims that sinners are saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and not by self-effort or by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or by keeping religious customs and traditions. It is interesting to notice almost every verse in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John that speak about the Kingdom of God are spoken by Jesus prior to his death and even when others speak of the Kingdom, they are all prior to Jesus death. The following comments are what people other than Jesus said about things concerning the Kingdom of God:

- John the Baptist said, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt the people shouted, "Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our father David!"
- Joseph of Arimathea, was also looking for the Kingdom of God.

- Gabriel prior to Mary's conception said, "Her child will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his Kingdom there will be no end."
- The criminal on the cross said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

The death of Jesus abolished the need for the Old Testament Kingdom of God with its outward priesthood and human high priest and all its ceremonial rites, holy days and religious customs and traditions and his resurrection established a new spiritual Kingdom in the heart and mind of those who by faith and love belong to God's beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ. This present spiritual Kingdom will be manifested to the world when Jesus returns as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:11-16) to gather to himself out of this present spiritual Kingdom those who have died in faith and those who are alive and then the sons and daughters of God will shine like the sun (Matt. 13:36-43) and reign with Christ on earth as a Kingdom and priests to God (Rev. 1:5-10) to establish the majestic, royal and glorious promised literal Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

At the end of this majestic, royal and glorious Kingdom age God Himself is pictured descending to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total and utter extinction) (also called the, second death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal eternal glory.

The Kingdom of God is not perfect: The Kingdom of God existed in the Old Testament under the Judges, David and Solomon and the many kings of Israel in different shapes and forms. It was not a perfect Kingdom and many of the kings that did reign were far from godly, nevertheless it was God's Kingdom because God was the sovereign King of it. Now in the New Testament God's Kingdom has taken on a different shape and different form to that of the Old Testament Kingdom and like God's Kingdom in the Old Testament is still not a perfect Kingdom nevertheless it is still God's Kingdom because the Lord Jesus Christ is its King.

What this study teaches us

From this study we learn that it is the King who determines whose Kingdom it is and not the shape or form of it. Even though all the Kingdoms mentioned have been different in shape, form and appearance they are all called God's Kingdom whether the Kingdom is seen or unseen simply because God and the Lord Jesus Christ is their King. This is why the apostles and Paul's primary focus after Jesus death and resurrection is on the King of the Kingdom rather than the actual Kingdom because whoever belongs to the King will inherit the Kingdom.

The literal future Kingdom of God is not the path to salvation, but the inheritance of those already saved. The path to salvation is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ he is the golden door and the royal path to salvation to eternal life while the Kingdom of God is the inheritance of those who have already been saved and belong to the King.

NOTE: when Jesus, the apostles and Paul refer to the Law of Moses, the Old Testament Scriptures and the prophets their primary focus is not on teaching the Old Testament Scriptures, but using them to prove to the unbelieving and doubting Jews that Jesus is the one the prophets said was to come and the one the Scriptures speak of.

For further information see titles:

- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Bible House of Grace