

Episode #424 The Kingdom of God 7 – What Is a Kingdom?

I. As expressed in my message on “The Theme of the Bible,” I believe that the Kingdom of God is the theme of the Word of God. Christ is the Main Character, and salvation is the most crucial first thing for us to know, true. Yet the Kingdom of God is the ultimate theme of all God has written. We will now study that theme, and see what God teaches about His Kingdom.

II. The Kingdom of God being so important, what this phrase means becomes crucial.

- A. Before we discover what this Kingdom is, we must first consider what A kingdom is.
- B. When we think of a “kingdom,” we often think of a man wearing long robes, sitting on an ornate chair, and wearing an expensive hat. Yet many tribal chieftains in Africa are called “kings” and yet have none of these things.
- C. Ultimately it matters little what the English word “kingdom” means, but what the Greek and Hebrew inspired words of the Bible mean.

III. The Greek and Hebrew words for “kingdom.”

- A. The Greek word for “kingdom” is *basileia* (basilEia). It occurs 162 times in the New Testament Scriptures. In KJV, 161 times it is translated “kingdom,” once “reign.”
- B. This is related to the Greek *basileus*. In KJV, the 118 times this occurs are all translated “king.” If we change the emphasis, baSILeia, we have the word for queen.
- C. The Hebrew word for “kingdom” is *malkuwth*. It occurs 91 times in the Old Testament Scriptures. In KJV, 51 times “kingdom,” 21 times “reign,” 13 times “royal,” 4 times “realm,” 1 time “empire,” 1 time “estate.”

1. Related is the Hebrew *mamlakah*, with 117 occurrences, 110 times “kingdom,” 4 times “royal,” 2 times “reign,” 1 time “king’s” in KJV.
2. Also related is *meluwkah*, with 24 occurrences, 18 times “kingdom,” 4 times “royal,” 2 times “king’s” in the KJV.
3. Do these words match up? Hebrews 1:8 translates Psalm 45:6, *malkuwth*, as *basileia*.

D. This is related to the Hebrew word for king, *melek*. In KJV, the 2,523 times this occurs are translated “king” 2,518 times, “royal” 2 times, “Hammelech” 1 time, “Malcham” 1 time, and “Moloch” 1 time.

1. A study of this word leads to the conclusion that it speaks of anyone who has absolute authority over men, with no peer or equal. He could rule over 100 men, or a vast empire. This is never connected with the things we think of as the “trappings” of a king.
2. It is similar to what “monarchy” used to mean (mono, alone; archy, ruler).
3. Not applied to Moses, Joshua, or any of the judges.
 - a. I Samuel 8:4-5. Israel wanted a human king like the other nations, a man whom they could manipulate.
 - b. I Samuel 8:6-7. Their words were really a rejection of Jehovah as King over Israel. This is why there was no King in Israel before this.

E. The Greek *basileus* is the same, it always meant an absolute ruler. Even vassal kings like Herod were absolute rulers over those who were their subjects.

IV. The English word Kingdom.

- A. In the Middle Ages the English “kingdom” came from “king’s doom.” “Doom” meant “law” or “judgment.” The “king’s doom” was the king’s laws or judgments.

- B. The meaning was later transferred to the territory over which the king reigned and where these laws held power, but this was not its original meaning.
 - C. The original English translators were from England, so they used this traditional word of England, which is a kingdom. In the United States we have governors, so our similar word is “government.”
 - D. In the Bible, the word “kingdom” means “government.” Or, as E.W. Bullinger wrote, the kingdom of God means the “sovereignty or rule of God.”
- V. Can “Kingdom” meaning “Government” be established from the Bible?
- A. Luke 19:11-27. Note verses 12 and 15. A “kingdom” is received in a far country. So a “kingdom” cannot be a territory ruled over by a “king.” Nor can it mean the people ruled over by a king. What this man received was authority.
 - B. Govern originally meant “to steer as a pilot.” The one who reigns governs and rules.
 - C. Psalm 103:19. The kingdom (*malkuwth*) is not the realm ruled, but that which rules!
 - D. Revelation 11:16-17. The Lord exercises His authority.
 - E. The Lord Jesus will be a king. Will He wear a fancy hat and sit in an ornate chair?
 - 1. Revelation 19:12. A crown is not just a fancy hat. Think how ridiculous Christ would look with many hats on his head! A crown is symbolic for an authority.
 - 2. The “throne” of the United States is its seat of government, which is Washington, D.C. The “crown” is in the hands of the people.
 - F. We must use care. In a way, many things could be called God’s “government.”
 - 1. Genesis 1:17-18. Even the heavenly bodies could be termed as a government of God that rules over the day and night. God’s rule is over everything in the universe, His universal sovereignty could rightfully be called His kingdom.
 - 2. But that is not what Christ meant when He spoke of the Kingdom of God in the New Testament! This meaning cannot fit the New Testament use.
 - 3. I Corinthians 2:9 (Isaiah 64:4) speaks of this future reality.
 - G. Luke 23:50-51. Joseph of Arimathea was not waiting for God’s universal sovereignty. He was waiting for God to take control of the governments of the earth!
 - H. Ephesians 1:11. Many argue this means He has universal control already.
 - 1. Colossians 3:8 uses the same phrase *ta panta*, “all things,” but it clearly does not mean everything in existence here!
 - 2. In Ephesians 1:11, “all things” also has a context. It means the things God is working in Ephesians 1. It does not mean all things in the universe.
 - 3. There is a difference between having power and exercising it. Our President doesn’t always use every power He has. So God might have all power, but that does not mean He uses every power He has. Acts 14:15-16. Clearly in this passage God did not utilize His sovereignty!
 - 4. Revelation 11:17. Someday, God will utilize His power to rule!
 - I. Matthew 28:18. Christ was given all authority. Clearly, He has not yet utilized that power.
 - J. When God utilizes His authority, we could call this, in a term some rabbis use, the “manifest Kingdom of God.”
- VI. Psalm 93, a psalm regarding the Kingdom of God to come.
- A. Verse 1. This Psalm is about the time when the LORD will rule. The world today is in flux and turmoil. In God’s government, it will be stable and firmly established.

- B. Verse 2. “Of old” = Hebrew *az*, from then. God’s throne is established when God takes control of this world. *Olam* refers to the everflowing power of God to the earth.
- C. Verse 3. The floods of people lift up their voices to Jehovah Who now rules them.
- D. Verse 4. Yahweh is mightier than all the leaders of the world.
- E. Verse 5. His testimonies are sure: He will rule as He has promised to do.

VI. Conclusion: “The Kingdom of God” is nothing less than the government of God, which someday will rule over this earth. This is not just God’s universal control, but something specific that is coming in the future. It will not just be in heaven, but will be over all the governments of the earth. May God speed the day!