

The Kingdom of Heaven

In Matthew, Jesus mentions the “kingdom of God” or the “kingdom of heaven” 48 times. This is the single most important theme of the Gospel.

Matthew emphasizes that the life and teachings of Jesus fulfill God’s plan to reign over His people from heaven. In Jesus, the end-times reign of God has come.

The word “kingdom” is found in every chapter except 1, 2, 14, 15, and 17.

The people were expecting “a political kingdom, in which the Jewish nation, under the Messiah, would rule the world:

- Herod shared that notion and tried to destroy Jesus in Childhood, because he thought that Messiah’s kingdom would be a rival political kingdom that would pose a threat to his own. See Matthew 2
- John the Baptist share that notion, and when Jesus gave no indication of being that kind of king, John began to doubt whether Jesus was the Messiah after all.
 - Matthew 11:2-6
 - See TLSB ftnt. for 11:3
- The 12 apostles shared the notion until after Jesus’ resurrection. What was the last question they asked Jesus? See Acts 1:6

“What was the kingdom that Jesus came to found?”

Not a political kingdom, but God’s reign in the hearts of people that will control and transform their lives. The human heart is the realm in which Jesus came to reign. He came for all mankind to love Him, so that He can change us into His own image. Out of an affection for Him, devotion to Him, and adoration of Him will grow all the beauty and comfort of life, the transformation of character, the regeneration of the soul.” *Halley’s Bible Handbook p. 601*

The word “kingdom,” as used in the New Testament, has a range of meanings.

- Jesus’ dominion in the hearts of His people
- Various aspects or stages of that dominion:
 - The reign of God in the individual
 - The general reign of righteousness among men.
 - The church
 - Christendom
 - The millennial reign (which we teach began after His resurrection)
 - Heaven.

Mt. 3:2 John: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Mt. 4:17 Jesus: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Mt. 4:23 "...teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people."

Mt. 5:3, 10 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.... Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Mt. 5:19-20 "Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Mt. 13:11 He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them."

Mt. 16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven

Mt. 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

The kingdom of heaven is like...

Mt. 13:24 A man who sowed good seed

Mt. 13:31 A mustard seed

Mt. 13:33 yeast

Mt. 13:47 A net

Mt. 20:1 A landowner

Mt. 22:2 A king who prepared a wedding banquet