

THE KINGDOM
of the
HEAVENS and the EARTH

by David E. Stewart

All Scriptures are from *The King James Version*
of the Bible
unless otherwise noted.

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Introduction

The Kingdom of Heaven is not heaven. At least not in the sense of being the final, eternal things of God. There is an interpretation that theorizes that the Kingdom of Heaven is the **same** thing as the Kingdom of God. This book investigates the interpretation that suggests that the Kingdom of Heaven is something **unique**.

There is a religious organization that makes much noise about “the Kingdom”. However, if we do not know the King we will never see the Kingdom.

I know this can be confusing but it is only confusing because we have been taught only the interpretation theory that says that all Bible terms are interchangeable terms for the same thing. I think **that** is confusing.

Everyone sees some level of apparent disconnect in Matthew 25 with the rest of Scripture. Hence, many explanations and theories. This book attempts to bring some clarity without violating the Bible. The purpose of this book is to help in our study of the Bible by providing another vantage point.

Chapter 1

Kingdoms

The kingdom of a king is his right to rule. It may also refer to the territory over which he exerts his authority. When we say “the kingdom” referring to the Most High we mean His rule. There is a place where His will is done without resistance. But God's will is not done everywhere. Jesus taught us to pray

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (Matt 6:10)

The will of God is not done on earth, yet, if you have noticed. The will of God is done perfectly “in heaven”. That is, in the abode of God, in the eternal things of God. in His immediate presence.

At the same time, the will of God is **not** done “in heaven”.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
(Eph 6:12 KJV)

Another translation says

“...the evil in the heavenly places”
(YLT)

What is this? There is evil in heaven? How can we pray that God's will should be done on the earth as it is in heaven? The King James translators used “high places” here to refer to spiritual evil. I suspect they used this phrase to try to make it distinct from the other uses of the Greek word. Young's translation uses “heavenly places” in the same verse. Both translations are from the same original word.

“Heaven” can refer to the perfect, unpolluted abode of God or it can refer to a place of rebellion and unspeakable evil. Some Bible students refer

to the second heaven when speaking of an area ruled by evil. This comes from Paul's relating his experience in the *third* heaven (2 Cor 12:2). God is even said to be "above the heavens" (Ps 57:5). All of the "heaven" regions are above the earth, either in actual distance or in "otherness".

Birds fly through the heavens or sky. Planets and stars are said to "declare the glory of God" (Ps 19:1) along with the firmament or expanse of heaven. "Heaven" in this sense is the creation of the physical dimension with the earth as its focus.

The devil is a created being. He may have been around for thousands of years or longer but at some point he was perfect and sinless.

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. (Ezek 28:15)

*Thou hast been in Eden **the garden of God**;... every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in*

thee in the day that thou wast created.
(Ezek 28:13)

He lived in the presence of God. He had to observe and be apart of the hierarchy of God's order. Most fundamentally, the Kingdom of Heaven is God's hierarchy, seen played out upon the earth, brought by Satan from God's abode and set up as a counterfeit to God's rule. The devil rules from the air or heavens.

One day Jesus will come and take over this political Kingdom of Heaven and personally rule upon the earth in righteousness.

Chapter 2

The Created and Uncreated Kingdoms

There is a Kingdom which is Eternal which is the Kingdom of God. Then, there is another aspect which is a created kingdom that is “under the whole heavens”.

*and the kingdom, and the dominion, even the greatness of **the kingdom** (of Heaven) **under the whole heavens, is given to the people—the saints of the Most High, His (God's) kingdom** (of God) **is a kingdom age-during, and all dominions do serve and obey Him.** (Dan 7:27 YLT) (Parenthesis mine.)*

In the beginning God created the heavens (that includes everything inside it). God remains eternal. However, everything created, the heavens, has a start time, therefore it is non-eternal. The Creator is Eternal, Hence, His kingdom: “**The Kingdom of God**”, the Uncreated Kingdom, which is outside of creation.

There exists the created Kingdom, everything “**UNDER the whole heavens**” (Dan 7:27) or in other words, “**The Kingdom of Heaven**”.

The Creation is temporal in that it had a beginning (Gen 1:1). All of creation fits into the heaven (with the earth as its focus), hence “**The Kingdom of Heaven**”. Why isn't it called the Kingdom of Earth? Because the second heaven is very much involved in ruling the earth, in the ancient past, in the present day, and by the Church from “heavenly places” someday. This is the Kingdom that is **under** the Creator, the created heavens and everything in it.

Someday Jesus will rule over the entire earth. He will redeem the creation and bring the Kingdom of Heaven to its fullness. This is still only temporal and physical but it is part of His plan for the earth. The resurrected saints from the Church

Age will rule over the earth **from** the heavenly places and also **upon** the earth.

However, one still **must** be born again. Just because one will live in the (near) paradise of earth under King Jesus does not mean they are regenerated. Perhaps living in an environment without blatant sin will cause many to see no need for repentance. Living with and seeing Jesus physically will not be enough. Today, sin and its resulting pain may help to drive us to trust in Christ. In the Millennium that will be absent. It will be a very different world where death is rare.

Evangelism may still go on but it will take a different form. A person has to see their need to submit to the Lordship of Jesus. Many will not, sadly.

The Kingdom of Heaven roughly equates with the Millennial Kingdom. That is the 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, salvation, the Kingdom of God is unto eternal redemption. The Gospel of the Kingdom (of Heaven) is not unto salvation. It is the fulfillment of the promises made unto the fathers and to David.

The Kingdom of Heaven is going to merge with the Kingdom of God someday. Therefore many things said of one will be also true of the other. One who can see the Kingdom of Heaven might not see the invisible Kingdom of God.

When the kingdoms merge there will be natural persons and supernatural persons involved. Only resurrected bodies can be in the Kingdom of God. Supernatural (Abraham, etc) and natural persons could be in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the kingdom of the Abrahamic birth. The Kingdom of God is the kingdom of the second birth. The Kingdom of Heaven is not unto salvation. It is the promise made to the fathers. The Kingdom of God **is** unto salvation.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like the ideal Old Testament life but without the New Testament reality. I think it could be said that the Kingdom of Heaven will be just what Jews expected but not what God planned. One can be in the Kingdom of Heaven but not in the Kingdom of God.

The unbelieving Sons of the Kingdom (Israel) will be cast out. Unbelieving Jews will be lost. If

we refuse the King, we are refused entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of Heaven is not offered to the Gentiles anyway but it was offered to Israel during the ministry of Jesus the King.

There is not one means of salvation for Israel and a different method of salvation for the Gentiles. “You **must** be born again.”

Chapter 3

The Kingdom of Heaven

vs

The Kingdom of God

The word “kingdom” refers to the realm of a king or ruler. Whether that realm was obtained rightfully or wrongly, it refers to his authority to bear rule. When we say “The Kingdom”, referring to The Most High, it means God's general rule. The New Testament talks about **The Kingdom of God** and **The Kingdom of Heaven**. These are specific things and they are opposites in many ways. They refer to God's general rule of things but how and where are determined by which of these 2 titles are used.

The Kingdom of Heaven

It is very important to understand that the Kingdom of Heaven is not Heaven. Here are some characteristics of the Kingdom of Heaven:

Temporal

Earthly

Visible

Political

Based on works

Inhabitants are *severely* dealt with

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the **kingdom of heaven**; but he that **doeth** the will of my Father which is in heaven. (Matt 7:21)*

The Kingdom of God

Here are some characteristics of the Kingdom of God. Notice how they are opposite from the above.

Eternal

Heavenly

Invisible

Spiritual

Based on faith

Inhabitants are secure

*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the **kingdom of God**. (John 3:3)*

*Now having been asked by the Pharisees when the **kingdom of God** would come, He replied, “The **kingdom of God** is **not** coming with signs to be observed or with a **visible display**; (Luke 17:20 AMP)*

This difference between the 2 main aspects of the Kingdom may be somewhat similar to the Catholic Church and the “Roman” Catholic Church. The word *catholic* can mean **universal**. There is the Universal Church and the human institution that we call “church”. The real Church is an invisible reality which is the Body of Christ. There is also the visible man-made organization that we all are familiar with. All believers are part of the real Church. Persons in the artificial “church” may or may not be actual Christians. All genuine Christians are a part of the Kingdom of **God** right now. No Christian is in the Kingdom of **Heaven** today.

As you read the New Testament you will come across these 2 aspects of the rule of God. There is *some* overlap with the two. In other words, what is said of one is also said of the other. This has given many people the idea that they are 2 interchangeable terms for the same thing.

I think you will find, in your reading, that when these 2 aspects of the rule of God are developed at all, they will follow the above mentioned characteristics. The **consistency** by which the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are described is remarkable. It may seem as if you are

reading a new Bible but it has been there for centuries. Be careful to notice if you are reading a Kingdom of Heaven parable or a Kingdom of God teaching. May God bless you and guide you in your reading.

If we are not regenerated, it will do no eternal good for the Kingdom to be upon us physically. There is no promise of forgiveness or salvation in the Kingdom of Heaven. This will be the case for millions or perhaps billions of natural people who will be born into the Millennial Kingdom. Even if you happen to be living in the political Kingdom of Heaven, you cannot see the Kingdom of God unless you are regenerated (John 3:3).

Chapter 4

Birds, Stars, and Princes

And God said,...and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. (Gen 1:20)

At the beginning of the creation of Adam's environment, the birds were created to fly in the sky or heaven. Obviously, this was not in the Eternal abode of God but in the created heavens as part of the creation. Here the sky is understood to be the atmospheric heavens but not the immediate presence of God.

And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the

sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? (Matt 16:3)

In Matthew 16 Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees and Sadducees. He says to them they are able to discern the appearance of the sky (ouranos Gr.) as to what the weather will be like.

When He speaks in chapter 7 about the Kingdom of Heaven, the same word is used, *ouranos*. Jesus could be speaking about the Kingdom of the Sky where birds fly or the Kingdom of the Planets and Stars. He could be speaking about the abode of God as well but the use of the word “ouranos” is often used to refer to the created world that God made. Everything that God made fits into the heavens meaning the created physical universe.

Birds can both represent God's provision (Luke 12:7) and evil activity such as in Jesus' parables about birds symbolizing devils' activity in stealing the Word sown in human hearts (Luke 8:5, 12).

*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to **the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: (Eph 2:2)*

When Paul the apostle speaks of Satan in Ephesians 2 he calls him “the prince of the power of the air”. Satan is also a created being, not eternally existing. He does have access to God in some type of celestial courtroom (Job 1:6) or lobby but he does not dwell in the eternal things of God since his rebellion.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high (epouranos = above the sky, heaven, ly) places.(Eph 6:12)

Satan's present day dwelling is in the air, above the sky, even heaven or heavenly places. But he does not dwell in the heavens in the sense of where God lives, an eternal, uncreated realm.

Since at one time Satan did, no doubt, dwell in Heaven, as we commonly think of it, He had ample opportunity to observe God's hierarchy. When he rebelled against God he set up his own hierarchy. He has princes, powers, military leaders, rankings, and foot soldiers, trying to imitate what he saw in Heaven. This kingdom of darkness is now residing in “the air”.

We understand birds flying in the sky (heaven), planets and stars in outer space (heaven) and Satan dwelling in the air (heaven). None of these “heavens” is to be understood as the Eternal Heavens – the abode of God.

Chapter 5

Gospel of Matthew

Matthew's Gospel is the only one that speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven. The phrase is not found anywhere else in the whole Bible. The Gospel of Matthew is special. It uniquely presents Jesus as the King of the Jews and the coming Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Ironically, it also is singled out as **the** message to teach to all the Gentiles. The final words of Jesus as recorded by Matthew are found in chapter 28:

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

*19 Go ye therefore, and teach **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

*20 Teaching them to observe **all things** whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt 28)*

These are the final words of Jesus as recorded by Matthew. Jesus definitely said things that were directed to Israel specifically. But here He seems to command His disciples to teach **all the nations** (Gentiles) **all** of the words in red. In other words, everything that the Holy Spirit moved upon Matthew to record. His companion, John (John 21:25), says that all the books in the world could not contain everything that Jesus did (and no doubt said). So, Matthew's account holds a small amount of Jesus' words. It is **all** of these that we are to teach to **all** the Gentiles. It is not an entire biography that we are to have new Christians memorize, just the relatively small book of Matthew. This does not mean that we are not to teach the whole Bible but the words of Jesus in the book of Matthew are especially singled out.

However, very strangely, we are told by many teachers that major portions of this book are not for us today, they do not apply to the Church, or they are “only for the Jews”. This might be reasonable were it not for the direct command of the King to teach all these things.

Nevertheless, I believe there are portions that do not apply to the Church Age. Super-strangely, many assign to Christians the parts of what Jesus said concerning the Millennial Kingdom and ignore what He said to the disciples concerning watching for His return. This is backwards.

Are we going to listen to Jesus or to the seminaries? It may seem unwise to contradict or ignore men who are more intelligent than we are. But remember, we are all going to stand before Jesus Himself and give an account. It will not be a college professor sitting upon the throne of the universe.

If this is true, we see a couple of things that are of great importance. Matthew is the only New Testament writer that talks about the **Kingdom of Heaven**. If put very simplistically, it deals with the natural descendants of Abraham entering into the future Millennial Kingdom. This will be a

literal one thousand year reign of Jesus and/or David. There is no such kingdom today. Christians, both Jew and Gentile, are in the Kingdom of God **now**. Christians are in the invisible Kingdom of God now. Israel will have a chance to be in the political Kingdom of Heaven in the near future. Even though the Church is predominantly Gentile today, Jesus wants us to be sure that we have the understanding that He will deal with Israel in a special way in the future. He does not want us to lose sight of that. Apparently, it is very personally important to Him. If we do not understand it completely, we still say, “Yes, Sir!”.

The other thing we see is end times teaching in remarkable detail. In Matthew 24 Jesus' disciples ask Him about the signs of the end of the Age. The most common modern teaching concerning this chapter is that this is for the very end of the Age when none of us Christians are here. We will have been raptured off the earth 7 years earlier. Therefore none of this is for us. Jesus said, **Teach** all of it. Experts say, **Ignore** most of it. What am I going to do? I do not have any choice. I have to go with Jesus' words as best as I understand them.

Jesus tells the disciples, and therefore us, about the Coming of Jesus on the clouds, not the “Second Coming”. He describes it as being accompanied by a great trumpet sound, angels as reapers, and a gathering of the elect. Clouds, angels, trumpet sound, and a gathering together. No white horse, no sword, and no rivers of blood this first time. Jesus told us about the part that may concern **us** or end-time disciples. He tells us about the resurrection/rapture event. He does not tell us about the latter coming event. Later, in the book of Revelation, John tells us about more final events from the viewpoint of heaven.

Pastors, Bible colleges, and study Bibles are greatly offended. Sorry. We have to side with the Lord Jesus, not with men on this one.

Then...

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. (Matt 25:1)

Then (at that time, not just any old time, only at that time) the Kingdom of Heaven (which is not heaven in any sense) will be **opened** or **refused** to

natural Israel and those alive at the end of the wrath of God after Daniel's 70th week. Jesus wants all disciples to know about His dealings with national Israel so that the (mostly) Gentile Last Days Church would not become conceited against Israel.

If you are looking for the work of the Devil (or careless teachers), look for teaching that diminishes Israel and that pushes the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24, 25) to the very end of all things. You do not win any friends this way but you will win the approval of the Teacher Jesus.

Though we are to teach the words of Jesus found in the book of Matthew, the author speaks very specifically to the Jews. He presents Jesus as the King of the Jews and the King of the coming Kingdom.

All the other Gospels are written to Gentiles. When Jesus talks about “The Kingdom” in Matthew, He is usually referring to the earthly Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus or the Gospel writers never talk about the Kingdom of Heaven in any of the other Gospels. They never mention it. They only refer to the Kingdom of God which will concern the mostly Gentile audience.

There are consequences for disobedience in the Kingdom of God but no casting out.

In Luke there is no “**Then...**” passage as in Matthew describing the Kingdom of Heaven. There is no such mention in Mark, either. John only mentions the word “kingdom” in 3 verses.

In the book of Matthew Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven. In Luke Jesus says that the Kingdom of God is near (Luke 21:31). There is no reason to tell the Gentiles about the promises made to the fathers. The Church Age saints will be resurrected or changed anyway. They are looking for the Kingdom of God to come in its fullness.

Only Luke has Jesus saying that He will not eat the Passover meal again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God (22:16). In Matthew's parallel account Jesus very carefully avoids confusion by calling it “My Father's kingdom” (Matt 26:29).

The Gospel of John has such unsurpassed words of comfort and security. Matthew cannot do that as he often refers to national Israel rejecting their King (Jesus) both before the cross and at the end of the Age of Grace.

Matthew 24, the Olivet Discourse, is the chief passage that has to do with the end times. That is, the end time events that would concern the last generation of the Church Age and the Jews who might be alive at the very end of the wrath of God. Luke 21 and Mark 13 deal with the end times also but omit mention of the Kingdom of Heaven. The concern of these 2 Gospels is the Gentile Believers of the Church Age. There is no reason to mention the Kingdom of Heaven to Gentiles, except to point out the uniqueness of Israel.

Jesus' Olivet Discourse in Matthew deals with the end times as it segues into the Kingdom of Heaven. Matthew deals with King of the Jews during Jesus' public ministry and the coming Kingdom of Heaven as well.

If Matthew is going to deal with the end times, being the one that presents Jesus as the King of the Kingdom, he will have to present **Jesus' words**, not his own, about the Kingdom of Heaven.

As Luke and Mark write about the end times they do not mention the Kingdom of Heaven because **it does not apply at all** to their Gentile audiences.

Those Believers (Jew and Gentile) are in the Kingdom of God. Only the unbelieving Jews *might* be in the Kingdom of Heaven - hell on earth for unbelieving Jews, now and then.

The most common reason cited for Jews not believing in Jesus? He's not how we expected the Kingdom to be. So...it will be super-Old Testament for unbelieving Jews.

The Sons of the Kingdom

In Matthew chapter 8 we read the account of the centurion imploring Jesus to come and heal his servant. The centurion then told Jesus that it was not necessary to come into his house. The soldier said that he understood authority. “Just speak the command and my servant will be healed” (Luke 7:7). Jesus marveled. He turned to the crowd around Him and said that he had not found such faith in anyone in Israel (Matt 8:10).

This was the occasion for Jesus to reveal this information we find in Matthew 8:11-12.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit

down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

*12 But the **children of the kingdom** shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt 8)*

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves (someone from villiages on Jesus' cuircuit) thrust out. (Luke 13:28)

Jesus said that the Patriarchs and the Old Testament prophets will be in the Kingdom of God but they will also be present in the future Kingdom of Heaven. They are in the Kingdom of God because they died in faith. They are in the Kingdom of Heaven according to the promises made to the Fathers.

We know that a person must be born again to see the Kingdom of God (John 3:5). To see the Kingdom of Heaven is particularly promised to the children of Israel. For Jews that are holding to the idea of the Millennial Messianic Kingdom (the Kingdom of Heaven), they will not see it

unless they are in the Kingdom of God now by faith in Christ or if they would physically survive the wrath of God at the end of the Age.

The Sons of the Kingdom think they will be granted entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven because they are descendants of Abraham. Jesus said that Jews will see Abraham, the Patriarchs, and the prophets in the Kingdom of God because these men died in faith and have also been granted a significant place in the coming Kingdom of Heaven. Present day unbelieving Jews will neither see the invisible Kingdom of God nor the physical Kingdom of Heaven, even though they are “Sons of the Kingdom”. Neither will anyone else who refuses to place faith in Christ's sacrifice on the cross – be they pagans or Sons of the Kingdom.

If anyone survives until the initiation of the earthly Kingdom of Heaven, they might enter it or their natural descendants will live in it. Even being in the Kingdom of Heaven will not offer salvation, forgiveness, or even heaven. It offers a paradise as long as they comply by outward behavior. But even the residents of the Kingdom of Heaven will not see the Kingdom of God unless they are born again. This is true of Jews as

well as Gentiles.

There is only one path to God for everyone. “You must be born again”.

When we step outside of the book of Matthew, all of this nuance disappears. The other 3 Gospels are written to the Gentiles.

If we didn't have Matthew we would have **almost none** of the present day doubts about the teachings of Jesus. The parallel passages of Olivet discourse do not have any of the Matthew threats.

No other Gospel mentions the Kingdom of Heaven. No other Gospel has these same troubling passages – when they are understood wrongly.

Chapter 6

Suffer Violence

Some things that are said about the **Kingdom of Heaven** are also said about the **Kingdom of God**. This “overlap” feeds the idea that they are two terms that are interchangeable. I suggest that these are actually two separate terms speaking about two very different things. Their occasional similarity reveals they are related in that they can both speak about the rule of The Supreme Deity but they are opposites in their characteristics.

There are two verses in the New Testament that appear similar. One of them speaks about the **Kingdom of Heaven** and, of course, is found in the Gospel of Matthew.

*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the **kingdom of heaven** suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. (Matt 11:12)*

A similar verse is found in Luke and it speaks about the **Kingdom of God**.

*The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the **kingdom of God** is preached, and every man presseth into it. (Luke 16:16)*

Both verses sound similar. Both verses use the Greek word biazō. It is translated "suffers violence" in Matthew and "presses" in Luke. However, in Matthew the Kingdom of Heaven is acted upon by violent men but in Luke, men (try to) force their way into the Kingdom of God.

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Matt 3)

John, the Baptizer, came preaching the offer of the Kingdom of Heaven to Israel. The first

requirement was to repent or turn from ones' own ways and follow God's ways.

Jesus came on the public scene a short while later and also preached the same message (Matt 4:17) as John. Jesus also commanded His disciples to preach the same message about the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 10:7).

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. (Mark 1)

When John the Baptizer was imprisoned, Jesus changed His message to the Kingdom of God. With the death of John, the offer of the Kingdom of Heaven to national Israel was withdrawn.

The offer of Kingdom of Heaven was short. "From the days of John the Baptist **until now**" (Matt 11:12) The offer of the Kingdom of God, by contrast, is centuries long. There is no "until now" in the Kingdom of God.

John preached the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus, his disciples, and John all preached the Kingdom of Heaven in the same season. When John was killed, Jesus changed the offer of the political Kingdom of Heaven to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus changed the emphasis of His message from the political Kingdom of Heaven message for Israel to the eternal, spiritual Kingdom of God message for all people.

However, Jesus spends considerable time in the rest of Matthew to indicate that the expected Kingdom of Heaven will indeed come to Israel **after** His Second Coming (Matt 24:29 25:1). It will be everything the prophets said about it in the Old Testament except...for those who will not accept the fact the God sent Jesus as King of this future Kingdom, it will not go well.

The Door of Grace will have been shut. The earthly Kingdom will indeed be a near paradise for the compliant but it will be "hell on earth" for the slightest infraction of the rules. It will be similar to the Old Testament but with a "Super-Moses" ruling the entire earth.

Nearly paradise for those who are outwardly obedient but without overt sin it will be difficult to see the need for a Savior. Nonetheless, "you must be born again" (John 3:7) to see Eternal life.

Chapter 7

Promises Made to the Fathers

and David

In about the year 1920 BC God found a man in the Middle east named Abram. Perhaps there was something in this man that God liked. In any case, God chose this man and his descendants to be a special people group. Where they more righteous or more obedient than any other group of people upon the earth? Probably not. For His own reasons, God chose this man Abram's descendants to be the nation that would keep His Words alive (sort of) and this was the nation that God chose to cause His Son to be born into at the proper time.

In the same day the LORD made a

covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: (Gen 15:18)

The seed is Abram's children, his descendants, and the nation that would come from them. Most of these people would be place-holders. Of special importance would be David the King and Jesus, the King of the Jews.

*And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an **everlasting covenant**, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. (Gen 17:7)*

God made an everlasting promise to Abram that his family would own the land of Canaan indefinitely. God reaffirmed this promise to Abram's son Isaac and later to his grandson Jacob.

16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan

Speak unto David. (2 Sam 7)

While God promised Abram that his family, if they would remain faithful to God's commands, would be residents in the land forever, God promised to David that his throne and dynasty would be established forever. Pauses and delays came about because of unfaithfulness but the promise of God will ultimately be fulfilled. This will finally come about in the Kingdom of Heaven, the literal reign of Abram's descendant, Jesus, as the King of this thousand year Golden Age. The resurrected man, David, may also have a literal place in this Kingdom. The disciples of Jesus definitely will play a part in the administration of this reign (Luke 22:30).

*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon **his kingdom**, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isa 9:7)*

Jesus and possibly David will reign upon the earth in a physical, political 1,000 year administration called the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: (Rom 15:8)

Chapter 8

The Two Gatherings

In this chapter I point out a little-noticed difference between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. These are 2 aspects of the **rule** of God. Not noticing the difference is a cause of all kinds of grief and concern. We see one example of this difference in the *gatherings* that Jesus spoke about.

We have the promise of the Lord Jesus that He will come again for the purpose of receiving us unto Himself (John 14:3). Paul talks about this.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by

our gathering together unto him, (2Thess 2:1)

Paul is addressing the believers. He is not talking to the world. He calls it our gathering. Jesus appears and sends His angels for the purpose of gathering His followers unto Himself. At the end times, things upon the earth are disturbing for most people. During that time Jesus releases 7 events that are distressful (Rev 6) but necessary to set things up for God's final dealing with Israel and the entire world. These may be approximately one event per year, on average. Jesus tells us how to deal with each challenge in the letters to the 7 churches (Rev 1:11).

The first 6 years/seals/events are not fun for anyone but they are very different from the last one, the 7th one. People who focus on the Law of Moses in the Old Covenant will tell us that the 7th in a series is always different from the other 6. The seventh day, the seventh year, the seventh time around the walls of Jericho, etc.

Until someone gets more insight than what we have currently, we see the Gathering of the believers at the 6th seal (Rev 6:12-7:17). This is after distressing events are upon the earth but

before the real trouble begins, at the 7th seal. Jesus sends His angels to gather the believers out of the earth. They leave everyone else to deal with the 7th year, if they can.

Note: The 7th seal is the start of The Day of the Lord. Like all Biblical days, it begins with darkness/evening (Gen 1). It is a day of vengeance or a literal **year** of wrath (or at least 5 months, 150 days). This “day” is a prelude to the 1,000 year **Millennium** which is *also* referred to as The Day of the Lord.

A Kingdom of Heaven parable (which is the opposite from a Kingdom of **God** teaching):

*24 ..The kingdom of heaven is **likened unto** a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

*30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together **first** the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*

*41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather **out of** his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; (Matt 13)*

Another Kingdom of Heaven parable:

*47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is **like unto** a net,...*

*49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked **from among** the just, (Matt 13)*

This is another gathering that Jesus talks about several times (Matt 13:30, 41, 49). In this other gathering, the angels are, again, the reapers. In this event they take the wicked **first** and leave the righteous. These are 2 different events since they are described as having a different sequence of happenings. At the first event the angels take the elect out of the world. In the other event the angels take the wicked out first.

At the first gathering, the angels take the righteous in Christ and leave the wicked. At the second event, the angels take the wicked and leave the righteous. To try to reconcile these 2

separate things as the same thing will produce pointless confusion. Matthew is the only Gospel book that speaks of these things because he is the only one who speaks of the Kingdom of **Heaven**. Although the Bible does not endorse hyperdispensationalism, in places it does speak some things to certain people and not to others.

We could equate, in a very broad general sense, the Kingdom of Heaven with the Millennial reign of Christ. No Christian is in the Kingdom of Heaven **today**. Many of the Matthew parables of Jesus were about the Kingdom of Heaven. This was offered to the Jews, but rejected by the leadership and thus it was postponed until God is done dealing with the Gentiles. When the Kingdom of Heaven is finally instituted, in the future, we will see its great difference from the Kingdom of **God**. In the Kingdom of Heaven/Millennium we see, at a certain point, the angels removing the wicked and leaving the righteous. This is the **Second** Gathering, the one that we Church Age Christians are not a part of.

We, who are believers during the Church Age, are looking for the **first** Gathering that the angels participate in. This is the one where the righteous

are taken out from among the wicked and removed from the wrath of God.

Matthew is the only Gospel writer that deals with The Kingdom of Heaven. This is the earthly, political kingdom that God has promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is important to God. It was necessary that this be offered to Israel while Jesus was in His public ministry. The King and, therefore, The Kingdom of Heaven was rejected by the leadership at that time. It has been postponed but not canceled. When it is come in its fullness at the Millennium, it will have saved and unsaved people in it. Violations of the will of God will be **severely** dealt with as shown by the Kingdom of Heaven parables that Matthew records spoken by Jesus. This has caused great concern among people in our current day who are told by preachers that this means them.

I am not suggesting that disobedient Christians will not see the consequences of their faithlessness as unimportant. However, no genuine believer is ever thrown out of the Kingdom of **God**. The wicked that are in the political Kingdom of **Heaven** are thrown out,

though. Not thrown out of heaven – thrown out of the earthly kingdom.

Let me state that again. There will be serious consequences for actual heaven residents due to their disobedience during their short lifespans. However, no one is ever admitted to God's Heaven and then later thrown out of it. Eternal life is not that fragile or fickle.

I know that this is confusing, especially when we have been taught erroneously. A complete study of the difference between the 2 aspects of The Kingdom is a huge study. It is far beyond the scope of this short book.

A saved person has been a partaker in the Eternal Life of God. He is in the spiritual Kingdom of **God** right *now*. To believe or be taught that you are subject to the temporary politics of the Millennial Kingdom (though it is very special) is an error. In contrast to the Kingdom of Heaven (which is not heaven), the Kingdom of God is permanent, spiritual, eternal, heavenly, and invisible. What a great privilege to be called and to be granted access by faith in Jesus into this Kingdom now during the Church Age!

*For the **kingdom of God** is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Rom 14:17)*

Chapter 9

Troublesome Passages

Our theology suffers some serious damage when we try to combine the unbelieving Jews trying to enter the Kingdom of Heaven with the message of the Kingdom of God for all people.

Almost all of this would never had existed in the first place if we did not have the Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel of John, for instance, gives such great promises of peace and security. John focuses on the eternality of Jesus, the Word, and the future of the Believer.

The parallel passages of the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24) in Mark 13 and Luke 21 do not contain **any** reference to the Kingdom of Heaven. No

threats, no curses, no promise of being cast out.

Everyone sees some level of apparent disconnect in Matthew 25 with the rest of Scripture. Hence, many explanations and theories. I think we find the answer in verse 1.

“Then...” (Matt 25:1)

In the previous chapter, 24, Jesus had just described, at some length, to His disciples about His appearing. After that comes our chapter 25 verse 1.

Then, at that time, not at some other time, not before that point...Then, the Kingdom of Heaven will be comparable to 10 virgins.

This is found in Matthew and only here. No other Gospel includes such language or imagery. No other Gospel deals with the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus is talking about unsaved Jews who are alive at the time of the initiation of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Jesus was rejected by the Jewish leaders and others who thought He did not match the profile of the Messiah. Many of them were looking for

the political Kingdom that was promised to David. Fine. But Jesus is saying that if the nation does not believe that He is the Anointed One sent by God they will never see the reign of Messiah. To reject Jesus in exchange for acceptance of the Kingdom of Heaven means they will have neither.

Of course, that is true for anyone but Matthew is writing to the Jews specifically. Reject the King. You will not see the Kingdom (of Heaven), either. In the Church Age we could say, Reject Jesus and you will not see the Kingdom **of God** (John 3:5). The Gentiles have no understanding about the Kingdom that the Jews were expecting.

Matt 8:11-12 talks about the irony of the sons of the kingdom being cast out. Unbelieving Jews will be lost. Same as anyone. Being “Sons of the Kingdom” will not save you.

Chapter 10

War in heaven

*7 And there was **war in heaven**: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,*

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and

strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (Rev 12)

This passage about war in heaven is placed in the book of Revelation just after the 7th trumpet. If this is intended to be associated with the last trumpet, we see something interesting. Something very similar is described at the 6th seal as well. I would like to suggest that war in heaven is initiated at the 6th seal and is brought to its completion at the 7th trumpet. Perhaps this war is spanning a period of several months and not a single-day event.

The war in Ukraine has lasted for longer than most people would have thought and certainly longer than some people have wanted. This is a little artificial since some people in the warfare industry are glad that it has extended out so far. The cleanest of wars usually are drawn out for a period of time. So it appears to be the case with war in heaven. This is not in the abode of God but in the spiritual realm; the second heaven. It takes Michael and his forces a while to totally defeat Satan and company and throw them to the earth.

And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. (Rev 6:13)

In the book of Revelation (and much of the rest of the Bible) stars are always angels. This looks like the beginning of war in heaven.

A very special day is coming, likely in our near future. Several events are going to occur simultaneously, perhaps all on the same day. The Bible marker for this special day seems to be at the Sixth Seal (Rev 6).

War in Heaven

Wait. I thought Revelation 12:7 shows war in heaven at the seventh trumpet.

That is the conclusion of the war and the final result of it, the removal of Satan from the heavenlies. The 6th seal shows some angels falling from the second heaven to the earth. These may be lesser ranking princes, the first casualties of the coming war. Their presence on earth is complicated by the presence of God's angels also on earth who are the reapers for the Rapture (Matt

24:31). God's angels will also be the reapers for a different gathering of the wicked out of Christ's Kingdom later (Matt 13:41, 49).

The Gathering unto Jesus

Receiving our Resurrection Bodies

Initiation of The Wrath of God or The Day of the Lord

At the fifth seal (Rev 6:9-11) we see an **incomplete number** of martyrs. By Revelation 7:9 we see a **complete number** of saints "...clothed in white robes...". The martyrs were souls, given a white robe which they were unable to put on. Then later, the multitude is the entire family together wearing their white robes. Something has happened during the time of the 6th seal. Mass resurrection has happened. White robes in the book of Revelation indicate resurrected humans. Paul tells us that the believers, dead and alive, are given their resurrection bodies at the instant of the Rapture (1 Cor 15:51, 52, 1 Thess 4:16, 17).

At this point the Wrath of God occurs in increasingly intense and widespread events. God

is trying to flush out any remaining persons who may repent (Rev 9:21).

Also, in this time between the 6th seal and the 7th trumpet, Jesus has apparently evaluated His people and assigned them their place in the coming Kingdom of Christ. After the war in heaven is successfully completed, Satan and his princes are forcibly thrown out of the heavenlies. The Kingdom of Christ can come in its fullness as the saints occupy the second heaven, administering Jesus' Kingdom from heavenly places (Eph 2:6) as well as on the earth (Rev 5:10).

You do not want to miss or be disinherited by disobedience from the things that Jesus has prepared for you.

Chapter 11

A Kingdom of Children

*But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the **kingdom of heaven** belongs to such as these.” (Matt 19:14 NASB)*

*(Jesus)...said to them, “Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the **kingdom of God** belongs to such as these. (Mark 10:14 NASB)*

Here we have one of the occasional examples of what was said of the Kingdom of Heaven is **also** said of the Kingdom of God. This has led many to conclude that these 2 aspects of the Reign of The

Most High are identical; that these are just interchangeable terms for the same thing.

The Kingdom of God is a situation where literal children have a special status. Jesus pronounced the most incredible curse upon those who might offend children – be that a literal child or a new Believer (Matt 18:6). Jesus has paid the price to bring us to God (1 Pet 3:18). The only way one can miss Eternal Life is to reject Christ, the message of the Gospel, and the Father's Spirit's drawing us to Him. Children have not and cannot do that. Every person that has died in childhood, every aborted baby, and every failed conception is a person who has not rejected Christ. The love of God for these is measureless. “...of such is the Kingdom of God.”

The Kingdom of Heaven, I believe, is also uniquely composed of many literal children, especially at the early part of it. After the catching away of the Church, the resurrection of the dead who will enter the Millennium is recorded in Revelation 20, just before the 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth begins. These are all the faithful who are not part of the Church but who have not worshiped the Beast (Rev 20:4) plus children.

Things become severe before this resurrection into the Millennial Kingdom. There are various plagues which have never been seen upon the earth. Sadly, many people die. In one judgment alone, **one third** of the earth's remaining population dies (Rev 9:15,18). That could be as many as 2 billion people. Many of these are children. Many of the adult casualties are lost eternally but not the children.

Revelation 20:4 tells us that those who did not worship the Beast will be raised to life to enter and enjoy the Reign of Christ for 1,000 years. They are not part of the Church but they will enjoy living in the Kingdom of heaven for a long lifetime. The second death will not affect these who are raised in this resurrection unto Life. An infant will live to be 100 years old and still be considered a child (Isa 65:20). Hence, there will be children in this kingdom for a long time – literally a Kingdom of Children for a couple of centuries.

Chapter 12

Going To Heaven

Note: This chapter is referring to Heaven as the eternal abode of God.

“Going to heaven when you die.” A desire or hope that many people have.

That's not wrong but it's not right. As Jesus was getting ready to leave this earth and His disciples, He was aware of going, not to a *place* so much, as to a **Person**, His Father.

*Then Jesus said to them, “I shall be with you a little while longer; and then **I go to Him** who sent Me.” (John 7:33)*

*“A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because **I go to the Father.**”* (John 16:16)

Heaven is a real literal place with architecture, rivers, and trees. However, we do not look forward to that place because it is foolishly reported by some to be a celestial Disneyland but because of Who is there. Some of our departed loved ones may be there. That will be joyous but to see Jesus is supposed to be the cause of a greater joy.

*“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; **that where I am, there you may be also.**”* (John 14:3)

Not only that but it is the desire of the Lord also.

*“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me **where I am,...**”* (John 17:24)

Paul the apostle does not tell us that we have a certain location as our destination. He tells us that we are going to a Person.

We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. (2 Cor 5:8)

For the Believer, dying from this physical natural life equates to **being with** the Lord.

Perhaps God meets us in a courtroom as in the account of Job. Maybe in a great hall or plaza like a great park. This might be a lobby or courtyard when people tell of going to heaven. This is probably not the final things of God.

In Esther 5:1 the Masoretic text suggests that King Ahasuerus sat in a throne room that was separate from the royal residence. This is no doubt where he did business and heard other officials. In Esther 6:4 it tells of a man who came into the outer court to speak to the King. This was separate from his personal dwelling. Verse 7 mentions a palace garden which may have been another place to possibly meet with the King in order to do Kingdom business.

When people are granted a visit to heaven it is probably in a place like these. It is probably not the actual dwelling of God. Some tell of seeing a great throne which also suggests that this is not

the final things of God but a hall in which to do Kingdom business.

Only the resurrection body will inherit the administration of the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 13

Eternal vs Temporary Forgiveness

God regarded King David as a special man. God said he was a man after His own heart (1Sam 13:14, Acts 13:22). God loves everyone because He is love but some people are just easier to be around. God found something in this man that He liked.

While David was a man with a sensitive heart toward the things of God, there was another aspect to him as there is in all of us. One night he saw a beautiful woman and got her pregnant. He tried to get her husband Uriah to lay with his wife to cover up the crime but was unsuccessful. David then planned the military death of Uriah which no doubt necessitated the death of several other

soldiers as well. He now felt he could rightfully marry the widow.

David went on for several weeks or months without considering the incidents as sin. Finally, God sent a prophet to stealthily confront David about the crimes he had committed. King David, in ignorance and with an oath, pronounced death upon a man who would dare do such terrible things.

When David was confronted by the man of God that is was **he** that had committed the capital crimes, he admitted his sin. Then the prophet declared something unto him,

*And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also **hath put away thy sin**; thou shalt **not die**. (2Sam 12:13)*

David admitted his guilt before God and before the prophet. He repented. He could not make anything right with the people involved but he did call it **sin**. God put away his sin as if it never happened. God canceled David's oath that pronounced death upon himself. God promised there would be no death to David because of these

terrible crimes. Whew! Done. Forgiven. Pardoned. Death penalty removed. What a relief! Now life can go on.

No. Now all hell is going to break loose in David's life, family, and in his empire.

Wait! I thought all was forgiven. I thought God forgot all about it. I thought the death penalty had been canceled.

This is extremely difficult to understand. As far as the **Eternal** God is concerned (and that is what really matters) David's sin was put away. That means it is as if it never occurred. However, now the **temporary** consequences are going to start. And they lasted for a lifetime. Immorality plagued his household. His sons were murdered.

Forgiveness is different in the spiritual realm than it is in the earthly realm. Forgiven in the spirit is different than it is for the soul. Forgiveness is different in the eternal realm than it is in the temporary realm. Forgiven is different for the unchangeable realm than it is for the realm that is subject to change.

As Christians we are forgiven of all sin, past present, and future. On the cross Christ worked eternal redemption (Heb 9:12). Yet we are to confess our sins. How can we confess our sins if they are already forgiven?

While all our judicial penalty is taken away in Christ, there remains our practical relationship with Christ and the record of our Christian service and transformation.

If I ignore Jesus and His commands, how is my heart filled with confidence that my daily walk with Him is unhindered? If we have an actual relationship with Him, we will want to walk as transparently with Him as possible. We all sin in ways that we do not even understand but to try to walk with Christ while also walking hand in hand with known disobedience has a consequence.

While this does not mean eternal condemnation, it does involve temporary consequences such as no participation in the Kingdom of Heaven and not receiving our intended position in the Kingdom of God for 1,000 years (1 Cor 6:9,10, 15:50, Gal 5:21).

Chapter 14

Tours of Heaven

In our day there are many accounts of visiting heaven or hell. Books have been written. Testimonies of such have been recorded on video. So many people have claimed that these are fakes, frauds, and liars. Many times, the basis for determining the experiences of others is **our own** experience (or lack thereof). It has to be the depth of arrogance, to judge someone's experience as not valid because **we** did not have it. Unbelievable. This is childish, a conclusion reached based upon **zero** knowledge.

Having said that, there are some testimonies that do not seem to have the *ring of truth* to them. A semi-hypothetical example:

“It was a dark and stormy night when I was suddenly taken up from my bedroom to a beautiful place. A huge angel was there to meet me. He said I was to have a tour of heaven. We saw a petting zoo. Every dog who had ever existed was there, playing. The angel told me there were trillions of puppies there. Next, we went over to a ring toss. I won a huge stuffed teddy bear. My tour guide said we have to hurry because there were many more places to see. I asked the angel at the ring toss if He could keep it for me. He said that my teddy bear would be here waiting when I got back.”

If you can sense what I mean, the “ring of truth” seems to be missing here.

A missionary told me about another supposed tour of heaven. He may have flavored the story a bit.

A man who claimed to have visited heaven was telling of this experience at a church. He told about seeing many children and a nursery. A grieving woman in the crowd, who had recently lost a small child to death, wanted some clarification about children being in heaven. The dead child's name was Rachel or something. The man said, “Was Rachel a small person, who sort

of looked like you?” The mother said, Yes! The man continued, “I saw Rachel!”. The woman screamed and went into hysterics. Several other people did, too.

I want to be the **last** person to call someone else a liar but this is stretching all credibility beyond its limit. Maybe the report was not faithfully repeated to me. It still leaves a giant question mark over this incident.

Another thing that is commonly reported is seeing Christians and demons in hell. Interesting, especially since Christians and demons **cannot** be in hell. Of course, I am referring to real, genuine Christians. The fakes, the frauds, the pretenders, the deceived, and the wannbes, yes. Perhaps that is what they mean.

Many report seeing demons in hell laughing and having a great time, like a party. When I read the Bible, I see demons shaking with fear as they consider their eternal fate. They are terrified of the pit and, apparently, of something that is in there. There is no laughing on the part of demons when they are threatened with hell. There probably are some other creatures in the pit, the Tormentors. These things are so terrible that God

will not let them have any contact with people...normally. At the very end, God will allow **something** to be released from the abyss that has never been loose upon the earth. Maybe that is what people with hellish experiences actually are seeing.

This may be a little subjective but I believe that **real** spiritual experiences may have some common traits.

If a visit to the spiritual plane is for God's purpose to use someone to announce a truth or warning about something, He will usually give the person great enunciation and clarity. But, one possible characteristic of a genuine spiritual experience is that the person may not be able to talk about it. Paul, reluctantly relating his trip to heaven, heard **unspeakable** things (2 Cor 12:4). John also could not write **some** of what he heard spoken in heaven (Rev 10:4). Some people who claimed to have visited heaven, felt that they could not speak of it for several years or decades, if at all.

Another trait common from most people who claim a trip to heaven is the **colors**. Almost everyone, upon first seeing the invisible, is shocked by the intensity and the variation of the

colors of that place. There is almost nothing to compare them to. Our everyday life looks like a 1930s black and white film compared to the visual senses of the spirit. I had a friend from many years ago that died and was resuscitated. His attempt at describing the colors of heaven fits with the description others have tried to give.

I have watched some videos of persons that are going to be interviewed about their visit to or view of hades. They say something like, “It was like...was like...sort of like...it reminded me of...kind of like...” They stumble and stammer around and soon the half hour program is out of time. It does not seem like they have said hardly anything. They want to describe the horrors they saw but it not **like** anything. They cannot find **anything** to compare it with.

*And no man hath ascended up to heaven,
but he that came down from heaven, even
the Son of man... (John 3:13)*

Some of the apostles have seen heaven. Others and some prophets may have been granted a view of the spiritual realm. There are many liars and deceivers. Many times people with near-death experiences (NDEs) are “sent back” with

teachings and doctrines that claim to be authoritative. With all the fraud mixed in with the genuine, whom can you trust? Jesus said He **alone** has been sent from heaven, in an authoritative sense. (That does not mean that His servants, apostles, and angels do not have a valid message.) That means that Jesus Christ is alone in His claim to be God's way to eternal life. In this specific context, John chapter 3, that involves being born the second time, from above (v. 3, 5, 7).

Chapter 15

My Concern

So...what's the point?

You cannot reconcile the Kingdom of Heaven parables with the Kingdom of God teachings. You must **not** get Church-Age doctrine from Kingdom of Heaven parables. You must see the difference. Why? So I can be “right”? So I can win at Bible Trivia? No! It's so we do not get our Church Age theology from Kingdom of Heaven parables.

I do not want my brothers and sisters to be mistakenly laboring under the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven when it is not in force during the Church Age. I want to see them enjoying the security and eternity of the Kingdom of God

now, in Heaven later, in whatever place they may have in the Millennial reign of Christ in the future, and in the New Heaven and New Earth someday.

If we understand ourselves to be in the Kingdom of Heaven instead of the Kingdom of God, we would have no security, no eternity, and ironically, no hope of Heaven, But do not worry. There is no Christian that is in the Kingdom of Heaven today. If our situation is only that of definitions, there is no danger. The problem is this:

Much of Theology today is from Jesus' Kingdom of Heaven parables in the Gospel of Matthew. If we get our understanding of Christian doctrine from such parables we will be very unsuited to live in the Church Age. Today is the Age of the Kingdom of God, the (mostly) Gentile Church, and the period of time before God's final dealings with national Israel. He promised them an earthly Kingdom and He will not fail to fulfill His Word to David (2 Sam 7:16). This is ultimately through Jesus as King of an earthly, political Kingdom. A near paradise that is run on the most severe standard of righteousness.

You do not want to be a natural resident of this Kingdom. Of course, the alternative (hell) is really bad. The best place to be is in the Kingdom of God by faith in the work of Christ.

Chapter 16

Thy Kingdom Come

Joining of the “Kingdoms”

In the days when I worked in Mexico, I would come to the US about once a year to try to raise financial and prayer support. One Sunday I was speaking at a church in Illinois. At a certain place in my message, I could not think of how to say my next point. All I could think of was *Venga Tu Reino*, which is how I would say it in Spanish. So I said that. Probably almost no one understood me yet I could not think of my original point, either. I said it again, “Venga Tu Reino”. The congregation stared at me. I stared back. I could not think of how to continue my message in English. I said it

again as if that were going to help, *Venga Tu Reino.*

The pastor's daughter was present in the congregation that morning. She had married a man from Guatemala. She finally shouted out, “**Thy Kingdom come!**” Relieved, I said, “Thank you!” and I was back on track with my message. I told the people that believers for the past 2,000 years have been praying that. Some day someone will make that petition for the last time and the Kingdom on earth will become a realization instead of a promise.

Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He will reign for ever and ever. (Rev 11:15 NASB)

Someday the kingdom of this world will become the promised Kingdom of **Heaven.**

The Kingdom of Heaven will join with the Kingdom of **God** and become the Kingdom of **Christ.**

The Kingdom of Christ will become the Kingdom of the **Father**, as Jesus taught His followers to pray:

*And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, **Our Father** which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **Thy kingdom come**. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. (Luke 11:2)*

This is when Jesus has reigned as Sovereign Dictator for 1,000 years. After He, a resurrected and glorified Man (though also Divine), has put down all rebellion and resistance, will hand His Kingdom over to the Father (1 Cor 15:24). **Then**, will brought to pass the fulfillment to the petition, “Our Father...Thy Kingdom come!”

Who will rule the Kingdom then? “...and **He** will reign for ever and ever.” Jesus never stops ruling (Isa 9:7). The end of the One Thousand Years is not so much an event as it is a marker. The end of the Millennium marks the point where God wants to do the next thing on His agenda, The Father's Kingdom. This is a universe characterized by no more warfare or conflict. This is because Jesus has made it all possible.

King of kings forever and ever
And Lord of lords hallelujah hallelujah
And he shall reign forever and ever
King of kings and Lord of lords
King of kings and Lord of lords
And he shall reign forever and ever
Forever and ever and ever and ever
(King of kings and Lord of lords)

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah!

(George Frideric Handel 1742)

END

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