

Meeker Christian Church
Pastor Jim Pelley
Kingdom 1
5/4/25

It is my privilege this morning to examine a response to the Newsletter invitation for sermon topics. The response was: "I have always been a little confused concerning the topic of, "The Kingdom of God" (or the "Kingdom of Heaven" which I have always assumed to be referring to the same thing). Having questions like this is like giving a kid a piece of candy!!! I just love it. It prompts fresh research, sharing commentaries, education, experience, lots of prayer, meditation and self discipline.

For this subject, I want to be little mischievous and read 1 Chronicles 29:10-11 and then suggest therein is the answer, and now we can all go home early!!!!10 Therefore David blessed the Lord before all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. 11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, And You are exalted as head over all.

No no Frank and my wife Jean, sit back down, I was only kidding you can't go home yet... I am delighted and anxious to share- starting with Psalm 103:19 The Lord has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.

Between 1 Chronicles and this Psalm, we may agree that God's kingdom is universal, and has existed forever - even before creation and extends eternally! Anything that exists,- exists under the ultimate kingdom authority of HIS KINGDOM. Anything that exists and is be referred to or described as a kingdom exists with only the authority or power and limitations they have received from HIS KINGDOM.

With that clarification and declaration as our source and authority for truth we may proceed: And we do so by examining sub-issues that come under the contention that everything falls under divine authority as the Psalmist entitled it: , - HIS KINGDOM. Under that universal premise are the two often used terms "The Kingdom of God" and The "Kingdom of Heaven." In essence they are sub descriptive terms within or under the same concept and authority of HIS KINGDOM.. However, in our written and verbal English language usage the terms have specific reference that necessitate contextual analysis and definition with a multitude of yet more specific reference under each of them.. In others words, as we will see the context of usage of the term in question describes it's specific application, but always under the broader and all encompassing meaning of God's realm "His Kingdom."

I have discovered that for this subject and because of the above criteria, academia, translations, paraphrases, commentaries are unable to be crystal clear, unanimous and consistent on their contextual interpretation, - so it is a wonderfully interesting subject to investigate, and add our conclusions. For example from one commentator:

The term "Kingdom of God" is used over 80 times in the New Testament. It appears four times in Matthew, fourteen times in Mark, thirty-two times in Luke, twice in the Gospel of John, six times in Acts, eight times in Paul, and once in Revelation. The exact term is not found in the Old Testament, but the existence of God's Kingdom is expressed similarly in the Old Testament. Another commentator helps us with the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" it too appears more than 80 times in the New Testament with most of those references occurring in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. It is exclusively used in the Gospel of Matthew occurring approximately 32 times.

It is helpful to remember Matthew 4:8 (NKJV) Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. (you recall that passage from the devil's direct temptations of Jesus).

This verse is inserted to help us understand that there are many things described as kingdoms in this world, but without exception they ultimately are sub-, sub-sub or sub-sub-sub places or descriptions of something within and under authority of the ultimate HIS KINGDOM.

Another commentator adds: The concept of a Kingdom of God is not primarily one of space, territory, or politics, as in a national kingdom, but instead, one of kingly rule, reign, and sovereign control. The Kingdom of God is the realm where God reigns supreme, and Jesus Christ is King. In this kingdom, God's authority is recognized, and his will is obeyed.

For this definition, the Kingdom of God is the realm where Jesus Christ reigns as King and God's authority is supreme. This Kingdom exists here and now (in part) in the lives and hearts of the redeemed, as well as in perfection and fullness in the future.

Matthew 25:31-34 31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: Last week we spoke of the place being prepared for you in that kingdom. Prepared for you and all believers of God's authority, and His sacred will is obeyed. And in the same message showed the Biblical parable of the other kingdom that has been prepared for the unbelieving, unrepentant, ultimate adherents of Satan.

In This Matthew 25 context the Kingdom is the kingdom of God and is where He is, but it also is the Kingdom of Heaven where we will be with Him. Sometimes the Bible refers to the Kingdom of God as a present reality, while others times as a future realm. Paul explains that for us in Romans 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Paul gives us another example in a discussion of the topic regarding salvation in Colossians 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, We are in HIS KINGDOM, in Romans also called the Kingdom of God and herein by the same author calls it The Kingdom of the Son of His love which by definition and in context is the Kingdom of Heaven. But all of them fit comfortably and completely within the overarching title of HIS Kingdom.

The Apostle Peter is inspired to write helping us recognize this variety of descriptions referring to the same place but --with a timely and audience sensitive intention,-- in this scripture the Kingdom is described as a future inheritance.: 2 Peter 1:11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Look at Matthew 8:11 at Jesus using an Old Testament reference and explanation the Jews of his audience would readily grasp: 11 And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

The title - His Kingdom - encompass our Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Heaven because they are where Jesus reigns as King and God's authority is supreme. It exist here and now and lives in the hearts of the redeemed, as well as in perfection and fullness in the future of those who are saved and obey the Heavenly Father's will.

SO is the Kingdom of Heaven actually a place or is it a concept (physical or spiritual)? Both is the answer. Whatever is being discussed in the Biblical context reveals the answer: Here are some examples: John the Baptist began his ministry announcing that the kingdom of heaven was at hand: Matthew 3:2 saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Jesus used the same instruction in Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Jesus later taught his followers how to enter the Kingdom of Heaven along with the dramatic truth that not everyone would! Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Jesus lays it on the line - knowing who Jesus is, even accepting Jesus or going through any number of traditions or rituals is not going to be the ultimate key to that kingdom with a place prepared - but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. All we earthly and present day kingdom representatives are like wind blowing through a forest of trees unless this kingdom service teaches and models the Jesus revelation of who actually will be in HIS KINGDOM. - but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Jesus urged his followers to pray for the coming of the Kingdom: Matthew 6:9-10 *In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

His Kingdom exists because God exists. His Kingdom in practical reality verses the existing divine ideal has many earthly descriptions used through the ages to describe the variety of

specific circumstances produced and frustrated by satan to confuse earthlings. His Kingdom is made real on earth by Christians who make it real by the attitudes, actions, activities, that portray God's unadulterated truths carefully given to us through the revelations of the Bible.

To the observing eye there is a clear and constant disparity of the ideal of His Kingdom compared to the actual realities of life on earth. That is why we encounter so many and often times confusing descriptions in scriptures. The bottom line for today is this: God in his trinitarian activity, heaven the present realm of the physically deceased believers with it's opposite counterpart the place of punishment and our present physical earth where satan and some 1/3 of fallen angels cast out of heaven I believe are the demons. All encompassed under the ultimate description of HIS KINGDOM. You see this congregation and our delegated responsibility as HIS KINGDOM servers called Christians is responding to John 13:34-35 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Our lives along with kingdom tools we employ become the assurance of our eternal destiny.