## When is the Kingdom of God?

Imagine a Kingdom so large and expansive; many of its subjects don't even know they are part of it. There was a time when the phrase, "The sun never sets on the British Empire" expressed the breadth of that great kingdom, meaning of course, as the sun travelled around the globe in its 24 hour trek, it was always lighting some part of the countries ruled by Britain.

There's a kingdom today wider and larger in scope. Many of the subjects are unaware the kingdom exists, and fewer still know they are a part of it. The population of the realm consists of subjects and foreigners, as the Kingdom took over and broke all others. Not all the population are kingdom subjects, but many may become subjects over time at the king's discretion. Those that are made to be subjects by the king will have a desire to learn more about him and his rule.

The kingdom has rules, laws and benefits, and they are equally available to all the subjects, but they must search out the kingdom.

The kingdom has realms, regions and domains. Among these small domains and regions, the subjects who are knowledgeable of the kingdom may gather, and join together, where they can find common ground, strength, and encouragement against the day to day trials. They can talk of and praise the King, learning His ways, rules and history.

The more they learn and study of the King and the kingdom, the more benefits they enjoy within. In fact, those willing to publicly align themselves with the King and swear allegiance to Him he names and considers members of his royal family.

Small regional groups of the King's family meet together on a weekly basis. There they invite others who have come to the understanding they are in the Kingdom to join and share the fellowship and benefits of being a family member. Even outsiders are invited to come and learn about the King and his domain. Each regional group follows the same direction set by the King and although there may be several groups within a community, each answers only to the King and none is greater than the other, for size and membership are not considered, but only their loyalty.

A good friend and Elder who has long since gone home to be with the Lord told me of his conversion from the hard-charging, convert at any cost Missionary Baptists to the faith that was once delivered to the Saints. He was challenged, after seminary training to biblically prove the Kingdom of God was future, as he had been taught, and as he taught in the churches he served. In his exhaustive study through the old and new testaments, he came to the conclusion he was living in the kingdom – now, and that the future theology he taught was based on grave error.

Understanding enough about the word of God to know the Lord would have a witness teaching the truth, he sought out to find who taught this Kingdom Now doctrine and soon became a Primitive Baptist.

So many people today are looking for the Kingdom WHERE, but would be better served to look for the Kingdom WHEN.

People want to know whether the writers of the New Testament were speaking of the same thing when they used the phrase Kingdom of God, and Kingdom of Heaven, and we declare that they are. Matthew's gospel used the term "of heaven," and his intention was to portray the fully God nature of Christ.

You would think something as big as a kingdom could be easily understood. But even those who claim to know the scriptures struggle over the Kingdom of God, thinking it to be something that will "someday" be set up on the earth as an example of "how it could have been."

The timing of the kingdom is as important as the location. Once you've decided what the kingdom is, and where, you need to ask, when? As you consider all three, perhaps his kingdom will be revealed in a new light.

Let's consider some bible verses about the Kingdom and see if we can determine where, and when it takes place.

The Kingdom – Where? When?

The Kingdom of God:	
Mat 6:33 is to be "sought first."	Before Heaven?
Mat 11:12 suffers violence – is taken by force.	Will Christ let heaven be taken? Overthrown?
Mat 12:28 is come unto you.	Not "you go to it?"
Mat 19:24 is hard for a rich man to enter.	Abraham was rich. Will he be in heaven?
Mat 21:31 allows the publicans and the harlots to	Harlots in Heaven? Oh my! Must we wait for the
enter first	publicans to enter first in a future kingdom?
Mat 21:43 can be taken from you	Doesn't sound heavenly. Must be earthly.
Mar 1:15 is at hand:	"At hand" sounds close.
Mar 4:11 is a mystery revealed to insiders, told	How do we get to be an insider?
in parables to others.	
Mar 9:1 would be seen by some at the time of	On Earth, 2000 years ago
Christ	
Mar 9:47 can be entered into "halt or maimed."	Halt or maimed are present tense. Will we still
	deal with infirmities in heaven?
Mar 12:34 is not far.	Like "at hand" it sounds close. Not far way like
	heaven Not thousands of years in the future.
Mar 15:43 was anticipated by those living.	Earthly and soon. 2000 years ago.
Luk 6:20 is given to the poor.	Will there be "poor" in heaven?
Luk 14:15 is a place where bread will be eaten.	Will we eat in heaven?
Luk 16:16 is pressed into.	Pressing sounds like works. No "pressing" in
	heaven.
Luk 17:20 comes not with observation:	Can't be seen with the "natural" eye.
Luk 17:21 is within you.	Now. "You" are in the present, aren't you?
Jhn 3:3 cannot be seen unless one is born again	Requires spiritual eyes.
Jhn 3:5 cannot be entered unless one is born of	
water and [of] the Spirit,	
Act 14:22 is entered through much tribulation	Sounds conditional – not at all like grace.
1Cr 6:9 is not inherited by the unrighteous	But we're ALL unrighteous
1Cr 15:24 is to be delivered up to God	(from where it was, on Earth)

When you consider carefully the folks entering, the need for spiritual eyes, the struggling continuing, the timing and all the statements the Lord made about the Kingdom, we have to conclude that A) it won't be heaven itself, and B) the earthly Kingdom won't be a future perfect heaven on earth. There will still be folks scrambling for food and clothing, undergoing much tribulation, halt and maimed (not healed and in perfect health), full of harlots and publicans, etc.

Given all that, we have to place the kingdom beginning at the time of Christ's earthly ministry, and allow that it exists in a still sin-cursed earth, inhabited by sinners, albeit, sinners saved by grace.

So now we look to scriptures describing this kingdom and see if our understanding is correct.

Dan 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Rev 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Let's reason a little, shall we? The verse above clearly marks the WHERE of the kingdom, making it earthly, UNDER the heaven. So now, WHEN?

The scripture teaches **he hast (past tense)** made us Kings and Priests. It doesn't say he will make us kings and priests, it says he **hast made us** thus. I'm alive right now. I trust I'm serving in His kingdom; therefore, my participation can't be future. It must be now. Otherwise, I'm not a King and a Priest, but only have a hope to be one someday? When? In eternity? That won't stand up.

Dan 4:3 How great [are] his signs! and how mighty [are] his wonders! his kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion [is] from generation to generation.

First, the kingdom **IS everlasting**, not WILL BE. Second, it's from generation to generation.

Dan 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, [but] it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

The "days of these kings" can not be futuristic post tribulation/rapture etc. It's happened and the kingdom is NOW.

The error can be traced to one man's failure to rightly divide the word of truth. C.I. Scofield wanted to force his idea of a future kingdom so strongly he convinced people that the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel had to be separated from the first 69. It does not.