

## "The Kingdom of God"

When did the Lord Jesus set up His kingdom? Is it future or present today? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're examining the kingdom of God. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God's wisdom and plans for His people show the great love within His heart. Ephesians 2:4 to 7 reminds us, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Yes, God loves His people. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

The Scriptures proclaim Jesus as king. 1 Timothy 6 verse 15 calls Jesus "the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords." Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 9:6 to 7, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."

The kingdom of God is where God reigns supreme. It's where God is loved and where His Word is taken seriously. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Now we offer this study on the kingdom of God free! And if you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have programs and free materials on our website, [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). Look for them in the Resources section. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Revelation 1:4 to 6, and examine what we can do to keep God alive in our hearts and be a part of His kingdom.

Our reading today comes from the book of Revelation chapter 1 verses 4 to 6. And there John proclaims that God has put us in His kingdom.

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and (released) has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Let's pray. Heaven Father we are so grateful that we are in Your kingdom. That we can have the joy and the promise of being able to live close to You. To know that You reign over us. And Father help us to do Your will always and to love You. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, amen.

The Old Testament predicted when God Himself would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed. Daniel revealed to Nebuchadnezzar there would be four great kingdoms in the future, but

something divine would happen during the days of the fourth kingdom. First was the Babylonian kingdom and then the Persian kingdom, third is the Greek kingdom, and fourth is the Roman Empire. Now Daniel spoke specifically of what would happen during the fourth kingdom. Daniel 2:44 says, "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."

Later Daniel explains in Daniel 7:13 to 14, "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed." Oh I tell you the Lord Jesus was to be given dominion over all things.

The New Testament also predicts the coming of the eternal kingdom. The angel Gabriel told Mary, the mother of Jesus, in Luke 1:31 to 33, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, the apostles, and the seventy predicted the coming of the kingdom of God. Matthew 3:1 to 2 says: Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 4 and verse 17 says, "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"

In Matthew 10:6 to 7 Jesus sent the twelve to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Jesus said, "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" In Luke 10 verse 9 Jesus sent out the seventy and told them to preach, "The kingdom of (heaven) God has come near to you." That it's at hand.

When Pilate asked Jesus if He was a king, He responded in John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." The kingdom of God is not like the nations of this world; it's a spiritual kingdom. The kingdom of God doesn't have a capital on earth. It's throne is in heaven.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 28 and verse 18, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Peter at Pentecost said in Acts 2:36, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ (that is Messiah), this Jesus whom you crucified." As the Christ, He is the promised Messiah, the king of Israel prophesied in the Old Testament. And as Lord, He rules of all people and all powers.

Paul said in Ephesians 1:20 to 23 that God raised Jesus "from the dead and seated Him at (the) His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." The Lord Jesus is indeed over all things in the church, but He's also over all people everywhere. Peter proclaimed in Acts 3:22 to 23, "Moses said, 'The LORD God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed to everything He says to you. 'And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'"

Now all people everywhere are accountable only to the Lord Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." And whether you believe in Jesus or not, folks you're accountable to Him. Whether you agree with Him or not, you will appear before Him to be judged by His words according to John 12 and verse 48.

Now we need to come to understand the kingdom of God comes about through the church. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 16:18 to 19 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give (to) you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you (shall) bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." Now the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection is that key to the kingdom of God. Peter preached this gospel at Pentecost and told the people how to be forgiven. He opened the kingdom to those who obeyed.

Everett Ferguson on page 72 of his book, *The Everlasting Kingdom*, explains the relationship of the kingdom and the church and how they share that relationship. He said, "The church is the present manifestation of the kingdom of God." He states the church is the people who accept the rule or kingdom of God. They are the people of the kingdom. The kingdom today is made up of people "who have been transferred into the kingdom, for God places them there. The church is not the kingdom itself in the primary meaning of the kingdom, but in the secondary sense of a realm the church is the kingdom now."

The church is composed of those who have citizenship in the kingdom and enjoy the grace of the King of kings and Lord of lords. This grace is redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Paul wrote to the church in Colossae in Colossians 1:13 to 14, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us (in) to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." When we obey the gospel and are redeemed and forgiven through the blood of Jesus, God transfers us into the kingdom of His beloved Son Jesus. Now forgiveness of sins and the kingdom are closely linked. If you're in the kingdom, you're redeemed and you have the forgiveness of sins.

The blood that purchased the church purchased those in the kingdom. Now Paul urged the elders in Acts 20 and verse 28, "to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." Well then, the 24 elders in Revelation 5 verses 9 to 10 declared about Jesus the Lamb, "for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. (And) You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

1 Peter 2 and verse 9 proclaims of all Christians, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." Christians in Christ's church are a royal priesthood. They is that they belong to the King and are royal, and they are priests to God. We must be in the kingdom of God in order to be priests.

John in Revelation 1 verses 4 to 6 wrote to the seven churches of Asia and said that Jesus Christ, "loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen." The church was loved and loosed from the sins by His blood. The people of the church was made to be a kingdom. The apostle John later said in Revelation 1 verse 9, "I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because

of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.” You see, John made it clear that he was a partaker in the kingdom of God.

Friends if you’re not in the kingdom of God, you’re in the domain of darkness. Satan has a kingdom too. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 12:26 that, “If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; (well) how then will his kingdom stand?” And John wrote in 1 John 5 and verse 19, “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” Well, do you belong to the Lord? Have you had your sins been forgiven? If not, you’re in the power of the evil one.

To come to the Lord and His church is the way you come to kingdom of God. Hebrews 12 verses 22 and 23 says to Christians, “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.” Yes, those who come to God come to the church. They are under the reign of God. Later Hebrews 12:28 to 29 says, “Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.” The kingdom of God is not something that will one day happen. No. We can receive a place in the kingdom now. Yes.

Paul described the spiritual condition of people outside of Christ in Ephesians 2:1 to 3. He said, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. (and he says) Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” In verse 12 he told the Gentile Christians in Ephesus to remember their situation before they became Christians, “remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, (you weresss0 excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, (you were) and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”

Oh, these Ephesian Gentiles, though were brought near to God by the blood of Christ. They didn’t remain lost in sin without hope and without God. Paul describes them differently when they became Christians. He said in Ephesians 2:19, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, (yes citizens) and are of God’s household (His family).” Rather than being lost and outside, now they are citizens in the covenants of promise and in family of God. They are in God’s kingdom and in His blessing. Oh how wonderful that is.

Let’s pray together. Heavenly Father we’re thankful that You have a kingdom in this world today. That You have reigned over all. But Father we’re thankful that we can be citizen in Your kingdom through the blood of Jesus Christ. That we can be priests, royal priests, that belong to You. And You are our God and we are Your people. Father bless us and help us to be a part of Your kingdom. To live according to Your will always. And to love You and to love one another. In Jesus name, Amen.

Have you considered what will take place once this life is over? Will you have an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven? 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 9 says, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.” Many people think they can live in sin and still inherit a home in the kingdom of heaven, but they’re deceiving themselves. An inheritance in heaven is promised not to evildoers but to the righteous. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 10, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Are you right with God?

Now our inheritance in heaven matters. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:3 to 4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you." An inheritance in heaven means eternal life with God without sorrow, pain, or death. Psalm 16:11 says about God that, "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Heaven offers an inheritance above all else.

To enter the kingdom you must believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. You must turn your heart from sin to righteousness in repentance. You must be willing to confess your faith in Jesus Christ and to be baptized in His name for the forgiveness of your sins. The Lord Jesus said in John 3 and verse 5, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." This rebirth includes both water and the Spirit; and that takes place when we're baptized into Christ.

Now we hope our study of the kingdom of God has blessed you. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now we stream our programs on Searchtv.org. And you can find many programs in the resource section. There's also a nationwide map of churches in your area and a schedule of our programming. SEARCH is also on YouTube! So subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and like the programs you watch. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

Show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. And if you can attend, don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about the program. And as always, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.