

# The Kingdom

by  
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Is the Church the Messianic kingdom or is the kingdom something that is to be revealed at the end of time? In order to have a proper understanding of the Church, this question must be answered. The answer will affect the way a person views, reacts, and esteems the Church.

During the public ministry of Jesus, the kingdom was spoken of as being "at hand" (Mt. 3:1,2; 4:17; Mk. 1:14,15). Jesus even promised that some of His generation would not taste of death until they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Mk. 9:1; Mt. 16:28). With statements like these it is difficult to understand the kingdom in terms of an end time kingdom only.

Kingdom preaching dominated the attention of Jesus as well as the apostles. There was an urgency about it. It characterized their preaching (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; Mk. 1:14; Acts 8:12; 15:13-18; 28:23). The kingdom was coming soon. It is quite possible that the apostles could have misunderstood when and what the kingdom was to be, but surely Jesus would have known when and what the Kingdom was, and He said, that His generation would see the kingdom. Either the Church is that kingdom or there are some very old people walking this earth that most of mankind is unaware of.

The ancient Jews as well as the apostles were looking for a physical kingdom. Even after spending over three years with Jesus, at the time of the ascension they were still looking for a physical kingdom (Acts 1:6). The idea that the kingdom will be at the end of time and established here on earth seems to be the very same misconception that the apostles had. Jesus did say that His kingdom was not of this world (Jn. 18:36; Rom. 14:17; I Cor. 15:50).

The terms Church and kingdom are synonymous in Matthew 16:15-19. In verse 18 Jesus tells Peter that upon his statement that Jesus is the Christ, He would build His Church. A little later on in verse 19 Jesus tells Peter that He is giving him the keys to the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom and the Church are the same thing. It is also of interest to note that before Pentecost the kingdom is always referred to as being in the future. However, after Pentecost it is referred to as being in existence (cf., Mt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7 are all future tense; Acts 8:12; 28:23; Rom. 14:17; I Cor. 4:21; Col. 1:13 et al, is all present tense).

Some may wish to argue that the kingdoms of Christ, of God, and of Heaven are three different kingdoms. However, parallel passages in the Gospels use both kingdom of Heaven and kingdom of God demonstrating they are one and the same (Eph. 5:5; Mt. 11:12; Lk. 16:16; Mt. 4:17; Mk. 1:14,15; Mt. 5:3; Lk. 6:20; Mt. 10:7; Lk. 9:2).

Christ, at His ascension, declared that all authority had been given to Him both in Heaven and on earth (Mt. 28:18). In other words, He was King. If He is King then He must have a kingdom. It seems quite silly to imagine Jesus, who has all authority and power, waiting to the end of time to establish His kingdom.

Much of the confusion concerning the kingdom originates in Revelation 20:1-7. The confusion stems from misunderstanding the meaning of the thousand years. Those who do not accept the Church as the kingdom claim that Christ has not bound Satan for a thousand years, nor set up His thousand year kingdom. Psalm 50:1 says that the cattle on a thousand hills belong to the Lord. Does this mean that on hill number one thousand one those cattle belong to someone else; that they do not belong to the Lord? Of course it doesn't have that meaning! II Peter states that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day. Does this mean that the all knowing God cannot tell time? Of course not!! The number one thousand is used symbolically to represent the whole. All cattle belong to the Lord. God perceives all of time at once. Christ's kingdom is to last to the completion of time on this earth. It was established at Pentecost and will continue on earth until God decides to put an end to time, in which the kingdom will then continue on in Heaven throughout eternity. A person cannot allow one passage (in this case Rev. 20) to interpret the whole of Scripture concerning the kingdom. Instead, one should interpret Rev. 20 in light of what the whole of Scripture has to say on the subject.