

## What is the Kingdom of God?

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*President Dwight Eisenhower and Sun Myung Moon, Gettysburg, PA, 1965*

My purpose is a prayerful effort to help our estranged and divided brethren co understand Christ's meaning concerning the Kingdom of God. God is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33).

Satan, with his subversive nature among God's fallen creatures, has sown discord among brethren. He has invaded and divided the family unit and so retarded the restoration process and the Kingdom of God.

Whatever our concept of the Kingdom, remember, "A Kingdom divided... cannot stand" (Matt. 12:25). Strife and division have existed among Christ's followers from the start (Luke 22:24).

The division we see today within the ranks of the holiest groups mocks Christ. Unless your righteousness is more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 5:20).

Then, too, there is a spiritual Kingdom of God, just as there is a physical Kingdom of God, but neither has been opened up by Christ yet. What Christians usually refer to as the Kingdom of God or Heaven is not the completed physical and spiritual Kingdom.

When Jesus said the Kingdom of God is within you and among you, it was only the formation stage of the Kingdom symbolized as the grain of mustard seed (Matt. 13:31, 32). When John the Beloved referred to his being "your brother and companion-sharer and participator with you in the tribulation and Kingdom and patient endurance... ", it was not the completed physical and spiritual Kingdom Christ will finally establish on this earth physically and in the spirit world. There'll be no tribulation, thus, no need for patient endurance in that final Kingdom of God on earth or in spirit world.

If Christians were as holy or perfect as they claim to be, even as holy and/or perfect as Jesus was, Christ could establish the Kingdom now, today. The Kingdom of God is the perfect control of God in the lives of every being involved on earth and "heaven"... even in spirit world... Satan's spirit keeps Christians divided because of Perspective -- some "holier-than-thou" groups, feeling themselves more spiritually qualified to interpret the Bible than others, and possibly so; but those who believe the Kingdom has been established probably believe an acorn was a tree.

In a sense, there are Bible scriptures which suggest that the Kingdom of God already exists; yet, through the light of this end time truth, it obviously has not been established. There has been formative preparation, but that's all. In fact, Jesus said, "My Kingdom belongs not to this world... has no such origin or source" (John 18:36). He said signs would announce the coming of his Kingdom (Luke 21:31). In the

kingdom of plants and lower animals which exist without rational choice, there is complete obedience to God's laws. One of the distinguishing features of man and lower animals is man's capacity to reason and, therefore, to choose; this tends to retard his total commitment to God, though eventually he learns and grows into perfection. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; nor is this possible" (I Cor. 15: 50). We cannot even envision it until we are born of the spirit of God (John 3:3-8)... to say nothing of entering it. After spiritual birth, we must grow toward perfection.

Only perfect people could be candidates for the Kingdom of God. However, even the holiest and most perfect (if there are such) cannot inherit it until it is established by Christ (Matt. 25:31, 34).

### **The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are the same**

There is no distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. They are used interchangeably. Let's review some cases in point (King James Version). "Jesus said... "A rich man shall hardly enter the Kingdom of Heaven.... It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God' " (Matt. 19:23, 24). "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven " (Matt. 5:3); "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20). "John the Baptist preached, saying, 'Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'" (Matt. 3:2). "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached" (Luke 16: 16). Concerning John the Baptist, Jesus taught, "He that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11: 11). But, in Luke, Jesus said, "He that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28). Jesus compared both kingdoms to a grain of mustard seed (Matt. 13:31; Mark 4:30, 31). Also compare Matt. 13:33 with Luke 13:20, 21. It's the same Kingdom every time.

### **God's idea of the Kingdom Unchanged**

From the creation, He has been trying to get man's proper cooperation through diverse ways, including this article. Man can neither see, nor enter, the Kingdom until man is spiritually reborn (John 3:3-5). In fact, only perfect people will gain the eternal life in that Kingdom. We must be just as holy as Christ is holy (I Pet. 1:15, 16), unified perfectly with each other as Christ is unified with the Father (John 17:23). We must, as Christ, present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, (devoted, consecrated) and well-pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship... not conformed to this world... this age, fashioned so as to prove the perfect will of God (Rom. 12:1, 2).

The Kingdom of God must come to earth just as it is in Heaven (Matt. 6: 10). We will truly become holy temples in which God's spirit perpetually dwells (I Cor. 3: 16). Once we are perfectly holy, it will be impossible to become otherwise. No longer will there be a need for a savior.

Had Adam kept his first estate, he would have reproduced nothing but children in God's own image and likeness to fully replenish the earth and take unlimited control over it and all things around it (Gen. 1:28). He would be the first perfect man and God could have established His Kingdom from Adam's family centered on God. When man is 'right with God, he will be right with himself and his fellows. Where there is righteousness in the heart, there'll be harmony in the home, order in the nation, and peace in the world.

From creation, the Kingdom of Heaven was intended to be a system functioning as the human body. Had Adam properly fulfilled his assignment, there would have been no need for a Christ; he would have been the Christ in his own time. The Kingdom of Heaven would have been duplicated even as Jesus, 4000 years later, taught his disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). Perfect children would have been produced as vital cells in a healthy human body... all coordinately responding to the brain, God. Sin complicated the social order as sickness does the body.

This "body of Christ" idea was not original with Paul (I Cor. 12:14-27); rather, it was all a part of God's "logos" or plan for perfect man in the beginning. No wonder Paul experienced such a traumatic encounter with the spirit of Jesus enroute to Damascus. Through the light of the human body concept, we may discern how Adam was actually the Tree of Life, before sin separated him from this most glorious status before God and a world co come. Then we can see how Jesus, the second Adam, improved upon the first, from a spiritual standpoint. We can also understand how Christ will finally be the Tree of Life, the true Father of all mankind forever.

There'll be no more death nor sorrow, for Satan and all negativity shall be destroyed (Rev. 20:14; 21:4). In the same way that the universe is a gigantic macrocosm of the atom, and the human body is a gigantic cell, so God shall establish His Kingdom with perfectly composed and coordinated perfect people of His identical nature.

### **Now or later?**

Once we clearly understand the true meaning of the fully established physical Divine Kingdom in contrast to the Christian Kingdom, we quickly must agree that the Divine Kingdom does not exist yet. Satan is

indeed king and god of this world. "For the god of this world has blinded the unbelievers' minds" (II Cor. 4:4). He is yet playing havoc with souls, minds, spirits, and bodies of most people alive today... to some degree, still "going around seeking whom he may devour"... I Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:12).

### **On earth or elsewhere?**

Jesus said, "I will come again to receive you" (John 14:3), but he'll actually have another name (Rev. 3:12). Shall we meet him in the air (I Thess. 4:15-17) and so shall we ever be with the Lord? The meek shall inherit the earth, not the sky (Matt. 5:5). "Air" is a figure of speech... an allegory, extravagant exaggeration, to create an impression, and not intended for dogmatic teaching. Wise virgins went out to meet the bridegroom, but didn't elope with him before he could get married, but escorted him to the wedding and there attended him and his bride... on the earth (Jude 14, 15; Zech. 14: 1-11). He will be accompanied to this earth (or on this earth) by resurrected physical and spiritual bodies. The Lord shall not only reward every man and spirit according as his accomplishments shall be (Dan. 7:27; Matt. 16:27; II Tim. 4: 14), but shall help them to examine and judge themselves so that God will not have to judge them (I Cor. 11:28-32).

Yes, the meek shall inherit the earth, and the sky, incidentally; God promised Abram and his children land as far as he could see (Gen. 13: 14, 15) as an eternal inheritance. This promise was reassured to Isaac and his children forever by God saying, "... and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed, all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 26:2-5). Again, this pledge was reaffirmed to Jacob and his descendants (Gen. 35:9-12). "These people all died controlled and sustained by their faith, but not having received the tangible fulfillment of God's promises, only having seen it and greeted it from a great distance by faith..." (Heb. 11:13). Now, when Jesus came, he said, "I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, while the sons and heirs of the Kingdom will be driven out into the darkness outside..." (Matt. 8:11, 12). The Kingdom of God is a future experience on this earth.

There will be "a new heaven and a new earth" but the reason why they will be new follows" wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. 3: 13; also see Eccl. 1:4). But you certainly know that "If you are Christ's... you are Abraham's children, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). "Know you, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7).

Even on the cross, the thief acknowledged that Jesus had no Kingdom as yet by asking, "Lord, remember me when you come into your Kingdom" (Luke 23:42). May be he heard Jesus confess this fact earlier in Pilate's judgment hall (John 18:33-36).

### **How will the Kingdom come?**

I must repeat with emphasis, the Kingdom of God has not been established yet, but is a future inheritance through faith demonstrated by sacrificial work (James 2: 17-22). In the same way Christ has been building his church through the faithful effort of his followers, so he will build his Kingdom on this earth; only, this time, the faithful shall inherit the whole earth, not just millions of isolated, competitive lots of impressive real estate. Solomon said, "Go to the ant, you habitually lazy person; consider her ways, and be wise." She is not only diligently building the only Kingdom she will ever know, but she is totally controlled by the laws of her creator in a unified, ingeniously coordinated Kingdom-building effort.

Solomon was wise enough to know that if he ever acquired a Kingdom even from God it would require such hard work to establish it. Paul taught "that it is through many hardships and tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

As God views us, some are actually dead (Rev. 3: 1). Through our cooperation with Christ, following our resurrection from hell or spiritual death we shall build the Kingdom.

"For just as (because of union of nature) in Adam all people die, so also (by virtue of their union of nature) shall all in Christ be made alive. But each in his own rank and turn: Christ, the Messiah, is the first fruits, then those who are Christ's (will be resurrected) at his coming. After that comes the end (the completion), when he delivers over the Kingdom to God the Father after rendering inoperative and abolishing every (other) rule and every authority and power.

For Christ must be King and reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be subdued and abolished is death. For He, the Father, has put all things in subjection under his (Christ's) feet. But when he says, 'All things are put in subjection under him,' it is evident that He, Himself, is excepted who does the subjecting of all things to Him.

However, when everything is subjected to Him, then the Son himself will also subject himself to the Father who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all -- that is, be everything to everyone,

supreme, the indwelling and controlling factor of life" (I Cor. 15:22-28).

### **Who will be there?**

Perfect people as perfect as God the Father is perfect (Matt. 5:48).

Jesus was made perfect (Heb. 5:8). Adam didn't quite reach perfection... "very good" or otherwise. Jesus said, "Why call me good? There is none good but God" (Matt. 19:17). However "perfect" Jesus may have been made through suffering (Heb. 2:10; 5:9), before this refinement process, he resented being classified as "good." He taught, "The good seed are the children of the Kingdom" (Mate. 13:38); but according to Jesus, not even he qualified, yet. Maybe that's why he and the thief on the cross went to paradise? You see, some things are a matter of perspective. The Holy Spirit is still guiding men into all truth... sharpening our perspectives.

"But then," you protest, "if no one is actually already in in the Kingdom, why would Jesus say, 'The children of the Kingdom shall be cast out...?'" Whatever Jesus meant by the Kingdom then, it was obviously only spiritual and not the completed Kingdom some inherit when the Messiah comes to earth (Matt. 25:34), and raises men from hell or spiritual death, and they are perfected as he and God are.

Speaking of paradise, the place Jesus and the thief on the cross went, they are there and not in the Kingdom of Heaven merely because when they were alive they were not living in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Jesus did go away to prepare a place for the faithful; and that place in spirit world called the Kingdom of Heaven has been prepared-but 'til this day it is empty, awaiting the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven (or God) on earth. This is some of that "all truth" Jesus said would later be revealed (John 16: 13). This is also one of the areas of spiritual insight Paul admittedly lacked (I Cor. 13:9-12). There are "many mansions" in the Kingdom of Heaven in spirit world, but all are vacant-prepared, but empty, as so many "prepared" houses are today.

If one has physically died, and yet his spirit lives in the heavenly domain of God, he is still alive in God's sight. This is why Jesus said, "He who believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live" (John 11:25] -- perhaps with Jesus in paradise, but not yet in the Kingdom of Heaven, until he first has lived in the Kingdom of Heaven on this earth.

Those spirit men of the New Testament Age who believed in Jesus on earth and thus went to paradise are to come again to the earth after the second advent of the Messiah. These spirits, by cooperating with the earthly saints, as Elijah did with John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14), believing in and serving the Lord of the Second Advent, thereby elevating them to the divine spirit stage, would themselves become divine spirits. Thus, they can enter the Kingdom of Heaven in the spirit world with the earth Iv saints who would enter this Kingdom after leaving their physical bodies (Heb. 11:39, 40).

All these saints of the Old Testament Age, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised (chat is, permission to enter the Kingdom of Heaven) since God had foreseen something better - - the Kingdom of Heaven -- for us (earthly men) chat apart from us (earthly men) they (spirit men) should not be made perfect citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Paradise, garden of bliss, will merely be the approach to the indescribably glorious Kingdom of Heaven. Paul will discover that it transcends being with the Lord in paradise, now. Had he seen farther and more clearly beyond paradise, he would have longed to be with God, not Jesus.