

REVIEW:**I. The definition of the Kingdom.**

“The kingdom of God is the sovereign rule of God, manifested in the person and work of Christ, creating a people over whom he reigns, and issuing in a realm or realms in which the power of his reign is realized.” Ladd.

II. The Nature of the Kingdom.

- A. There is only one Kingdom of God throughout Scripture.
- B. We considered the one kingdom under different aspects.

There are timeless and temporal aspects to the Kingdom.
- C. God’s Kingdom though timeless, universal, present, and future, suffers from the challenge of a Usurper who desires to dethrone God and enthrone himself. Ezek 28.11-19, Isa 14.12-17.

III. The person of the King

- A. The OT prophesied a coming King. Isa 32:1-2.
- B. The NT presents Jesus as that King.
- C. The Kingdom was present in the person of the King.

THIS WEEK:**IV. The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven.**

- A. These two terms “have essentially the same meaning.” — BAGD

“The expressions vary; β. τοῦ θεοῦ [kingdom of God] and τῶν οὐρανῶν [of heaven] have essentially the same mng., since Israelites used οὐρανός (-οί) [heaven] as well as other circumlocutions for θεός [God] (cp. **Mt 19:23f**; s. Bousset, *Rel.*³ 314f); the latter term may also emphasize the heavenly origin and nature of the reign.”¹

1. “Kingdom of heaven” arose from Dan 2:44. “the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom.”
 - a. The Jews avoided mentioning the name of God where possible.
 - b. The intertestamental literature shows that “heaven” was a frequent substitute for the name *God*.

¹ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*.

2. The N. T. shows this use of the word *heaven* for *God*.
 - a. The prodigal son said: "I have sinned against heaven ..."
 - b. Jesus said: "The baptism of Jn, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?"
 3. Matthew, written to Jews, usually uses *Kingdom of heaven*.
 - a. Mark and Lk in parallel passages use *Kingdom of God* because they have Gentile readers in mind.
 - b. A harmony of the Gospels is the greatest refutation of any distinctions.
 - c. Even Matthew once uses the terms interchangeably. Mt 19:23-24.
- B. Scofield makes several distinctions between the *Kingdom of God* and the *Kingdom of heaven*. p. 1003.
1. He says: The *Kingdom of God* is universal; *Kingdom of heaven* is Messianic, based on Lk 13:28-29.
 - a. In contrast, consider the parallel passage Mt 8:11-12.
 - b. The same language makes both universal.
 2. He says: subjects enter the *Kingdom of God* only by the new birth (Jn. 3:3); but subjects of *Kingdom of heaven* depend on the sphere of profession, true or false.
 - a. Yet it is hard for a rich man to enter the *Kingdom of heaven*. Mt 19:23.
 - b. Truly, it is not hard for a rich man to enter the professing church.
 - c. But it is hard for a rich man to humble himself and to be born again in the true church.
 - d. Thus, *Kingdom of heaven* again describes a similar sphere as *Kingdom of God*.

3. He says: These two terms “have almost all things in common.” (commenting on Mt 6.33)

“Since the kingdom of heaven is the earthly sphere of the universal kingdom of God, the two have almost all things in common.”²

- a. Yet he says that the omissions are important.
 - b. This is arguing from silence.
4. The leaven also weakens his position. Compare Mt 13.33 and Lk 13.20-21.

C. This should not make us deny that there is an outward, visible manifestation of the Kingdom as well as an inward, universal quality to it.

1. However, this distinction doesn't depend on the two terms themselves.
2. The distinctions between visible and invisible manifestations must come only by a careful interpretation of the context.

V. The eschatological aspect of the Kingdom.

A. This aspect has the position of importance and emphasis in the N.T.

1. The conclusion of the principles of the Kingdom emphasizes it. Mt 7:21-22.
2. The mystery parables repeat it. Mt 13:39-43, 47-50.
3. Jesus taught it in the Olivet Discourse. Mt 24:27-31.

B. It agrees with the OT teaching concerning this aspect.

1. The Kingdom will come after the Tribulation Period. Mt 24:29-30, Jer 30:1-9.
2. The coming of the Son of man in glory will establish the Kingdom. Mt 24:27-31, Dan 7:13-14.

² C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Scofield Reference Bible: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1917), 1003.

3. The Kingdom will be worldwide. John 10:16, Dan 2:35.
 4. The saints will form a ruling class in the Kingdom. Mt 19:28, Dan 7:27.
 5. It will be a righteous Kingdom. Mt 5:20, Is 11:4.
- C. It was the present church age, the slow growth aspect, which OT prophecy did not see; Jesus modified this aspect of the Kingdom.

VI. The Kingdom and the Church.

- A. The Kingdom is not identical with the Church; if we substitute the word church for kingdom, we can see the difference:
1. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the church! Mt 5:3.
 2. Hallowed be thy name. Thy church come! Mt 6:9-10.
- B. The NT mentions the Kingdom as a topic with which the Jews were quite familiar, but the church is something future, not yet established.
1. Jesus said: "Repent, for the *Kingdom of heaven* has come near." Mt 4:17. (He gave no definition of terms.)
 2. But He said: "I will build my church." Mt 16:18.
 3. The word for church (ἐκκλησία) was familiar because the Septuagint used it to translate the Hebrew word for assembly or congregation.
 4. The word *church* denoted something new in degree, not kind.
- C. The Kingdom includes the Church just as it does all God's people, believers in every age.
1. The True Church is a part of God's universal Kingdom. Mt 8:11.
 2. The requirement for entering the Kingdom or for entering the True Church is the same: The New Birth. John 3:3.
 3. The "mystery kingdom" aspect includes saved and unsaved under the over-all rule of God. Mt 13.