

The Messianic Monarchy

What is the Kingdom of God?

The Kingdom of God is an ambiguous expression that doesn't communicate much to the modern reader. This is sad really, because the terminology Jesus used when teaching the Jews was so full of excitement and expectation for faithful Jews. Jesus preached about the kingdom wherever he went. He told people to seek the Kingdom of God as of first importance. It was central to his message and is spoken about in most NT books. But who dares to preach on it today? Rather it is used commonly as if it is equivalent to the church.

The background to the phrase is steeped in Jewish theology going back 3,000 years to promises made by God to King David and even to the Jewish patriarch Abraham 1,000 years earlier. The God of Israel is the God of history; he has a plan for his chosen people which will be revealed at the end of the present age: a plan for his chosen nation, Israel, and an even greater plan for his Church, the elect from every tribe, people, nation and language.

God is the source of all things and many 'of God' expressions are better translated as 'from God'. The peace of God that passes all understanding is not God's own personal peace, it is the peace he gives. Similarly, with the joy of the Lord. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is not God's pet lamb, but the Lamb he provided for the perfect sacrifice which takes away our sin. The translation 'Kingdom of God' gives the wrong impression because it is easily interpreted as possessive, God's kingdom or sovereignty, which is not the case. God's kingdom cannot be spoken of as coming or as being inherited by man. For Jesus' Jewish audience, the Kingdom of God was an earthly kingdom that they longed for with a Jewish Messiah as the king.

The word 'kingdom' conjures up many meanings and to the modern reader, it usually means a country led by a monarch. The Greek word, βασιλεία, is attested by all Greek lexicons to mean kingship, an abstract word that refers to the royal authority of a king and his government, the monarchy. In many contexts, it refers to the kingship in action: the reign where that authority is exercised. There are 140 references to the kingdom in seventeen books of the NT of which:

43 occurrences relate to Jesus as *king*

46 relate to Jesus' disciples, his *monarchy*, God's elect

51 relate to the future Messianic *reign*

When those three meanings are understood, the interpretation of the Kingdom of God verses becomes clear. The habit of English Bible translations to consistently translate βασιλεία as kingdom is not helpful and has resulted in confusion and ignorance of this important concept. Who is the king? Is it God the Father or God the Son? Where is the reign? Is it in heaven or on Earth? Has the reign begun or is it still to come? The answers to these questions becomes clear when we understand the meaning of βασιλεία του θεού, the kingship from God.

Jesus, although born king of the Jews (Matt 2:2), had to proclaim his message in the presence of hostile Jewish religious leaders and a Roman military whose job was to suppress any signs of rebellion. He could not speak openly and clearly about his identity as the Messiah or of God's plan for him to rule the world. He consistently used cryptic Jewish terminology, 'the Son of Man', to refer to himself as the human Messiah, and 'the Kingdom of God' and 'the Kingdom of Heaven' to refer to his kingship that is established by God. There was no doubt that he claimed to be the promised Jewish Messiah who would save Israel from her enemies. The OT prophets had declared that the Messiah would be a descendant of David and one day rule over the remnant of his people Israel on David's throne. Jesus used this kingdom terminology to teach the Jewish faithful and his disciples that he was the promised Messiah. At the same time, his terminology and parables made it difficult for his enemies to accuse him of blasphemy or sedition.

The Amazing Visions in the Book of Daniel

The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, had a dream which Daniel interpreted for him. It is foundational to the Jewish Messianic hope (Dan 2:31-45). In his dream, the king saw a huge statue, the parts of which represented powerful world empires centered around the Middle East, including parts of Asia, Africa and Europe. The head of gold was the Babylonian Empire, the chest and arms of silver, the Persian Empire, the belly and thighs of bronze, the Greek Empire, the legs of iron, the Roman Empire, and the feet of iron and clay, an extension of the Roman Empire, a coalition of nations that will come into being at the end of the present age. As the king dreamed, a rock was cut out, not by human hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them, and all the world empires were swept away without leaving a trace. Then the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain that filled the whole Earth. Daniel explained to Nebuchadnezzar: “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever” (Dan 2:44). The rock is the Messiah. The destruction of world empires will occur when Jesus returns to Earth and strikes down the nations gathered in rebellion against Jerusalem at the battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:12-16). The Messiah will rule over the survivors with an iron scepter as “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Daniel had his own dream about the coming of the conquering Messiah (Dan 7:7-27). He saw four beasts (world empires) and the final one had ten horns, three of which were uprooted by a little horn, the Antichrist, who spoke boastfully and exercised his authority for a time, times and half a time, the forty-two months during which the saints will be delivered into his hands (Rev 13:5-7). This little horn is the man of lawlessness that Paul warns us about (2 Thess 2:1-4), the beast whom all the inhabitants of the Earth will worship (Rev 13:1-10) and who is eventually slain and thrown into hell (Rev 19:20).

The following verses reveal the outcome of what Jesus called “great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now” (Matt 24:15-22).

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached

the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power, all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (Dan 7:13-14).

“But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom

“And the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the people of the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him” (Dan 7:27).

In the resulting kingdom, all nations and peoples of every language worship the Messiah, but it is the holy people (or saints) who possess the kingdom. “The Lord will be king over the whole Earth ... Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty” (Zech 14:9, 16). “The nations will walk by its (the Holy City) light, and the kings of the Earth will bring their splendor into it (Rev 21:24).

In Daniel, the phrase “saints of the Most High” contrasts with the Jews who are consistently referred to as “your people,” (Dan 9:15-16, 19, 24, 10:14, 11:14, 12:1). Keil says “The saints of the Most High,” or briefly “the saints,” are neither the Jews, who are accustomed to call themselves “saints” in contrast with the heathen, nor the converted Israel of the millennium, ... they are the congregation of the New Covenant, consisting of Israel and the faithful of all nations; for the kingdom which God gives to the Son of Man will, according to Daniel 7:14, comprehend those who are redeemed from among all the nations of the Earth” (Commentary on Daniel, p. 239).

Daniel 7 and Revelation 6-19 reveal to us details about the final years of this age when a world coalition under the Antichrist devours the whole Earth, but God gives victory to the Messiah and the saints.

The Messianic Monarchy

One-third of the Kingdom of God/Heaven verses have Jesus’ disciples, as representative of all the saints, in focus. The Kingdom of God is

theirs. They enter it through being born again. They are presently heirs of the kingdom, and they hold the keys to the kingdom. They will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom, which is the Messianic monarchy. Jesus confers kingship on them (Luke 22:29-30). They will eat and drink at his royal table and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. They are called into his kingdom and glory (1 Thess 2:12), not as subjects but as rulers. God chose those who are poor in the eyes of the world to inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him (James 2:5). They will receive a rich welcome into the eternal reign of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet 1:11). The Lamb is praised in heaven because he was slain and he purchased with his blood people from every tribe, language, people, and nation, and made them a kingdom of priests who will reign on Earth (Rev 5:10). That is the divine purpose for redeemed mankind.

The kingdom is not mentioned specifically everywhere where it is in focus. For example:

“To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations – that one will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery – just as I have received authority from my Father” (Rev 2:26-27).

“To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne” (Rev 3:21).

The Kingdom of God phraseology has three distinct meanings. If they are not understood, it makes it hard for interpreters to harmonize the Kingdom of God verses.

1. When Jesus spoke about the *kingship* in its present context, he was often, by metonymy, referring to himself as the Messiah.
2. When he spoke about the *kingship* in relation to his disciples, he was referring to his future government, the Messianic monarchy. He explained on many occasions, usually via parables, that the Jewish nation had disobeyed God, broken the covenant, and forfeited the kingship that had been promised to them. As a result, the kingship would be given to others, those who believe in Jesus, including faithful Jews of all ages. As children of God,

they constitute the royal family. They will inherit the kingship and rule with the Messiah.

3. When Jesus spoke about the kingdom in a future context, he was referring to his earthly reign, a concept that was understood and eagerly expected by godly first-century Jews.

This interpretation avoids the clumsy conclusion that the kingdom is both present and future; that it has been inaugurated but is not yet. It maintains the focus on ‘kingship,’ and avoids the unbiblical and contrary-to-fact teaching that Jesus is ruling the world now. It emphasizes the fact that Jesus’ disciples are heirs of the kingship, a concept that is generally misunderstood and ignored. As children of God, they are co-heirs with the Messiah that they may share in his glory (Rom 8:17). The visible church is not, as per Augustine, the Kingdom of God. Rather, it is the elect who are the monarchy, a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language who will reign with Christ over the Earth (Rev 5:9-10). They will begin their reign when the Messiah returns to Earth and they are resurrected and raptured. But as heirs, they have already entered the Messianic kingship and monarchy. Flesh and blood, people in their present bodies, cannot inherit the kingdom (1 Cor 15:50). The kingdom will follow the resurrection and the resurrected monarchy will not live on Earth. Their home during the Millennium will be in the heavenly New Jerusalem (Rev 21:2 – 2:5). This city is presently in heaven (Heb 12:22-25), but as this age passes at Jesus’ return, New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven from God and rest in the sky above the earthly Jerusalem (Rev 21:2). “The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the Earth will bring their splendor to it” (Rev 21:24).

Interpreting the ‘Kingdom of God’ phrase

The – the definite article indicates that the Jews knew what Jesus was talking about. It is not an indefinite kingdom, it is *the* kingdom that the OT prophets had predicted would come. Jesus was the promised Messiah, and his teaching focused on his coming kingdom that we pray for when we say: “Your kingdom come!”

kingdom – A vague word that may refer to the king, his kingship, his monarchy, his domain, or his reign. The basic meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words for kingdom is ‘kingship’: royal power or authority. Put into action, it means ‘reign’.

of – It looks like a simple word, but it translates the Greek genitive which has many shades of meaning; basically, that of a close relationship. The most common meaning is possession, which would mean that the Kingdom of God is God’s kingdom, but God’s own kingdom, his sovereign reign over the universe, can’t come as the Kingdom of God does, and we can’t possess it. The Kingdom of God is something else. In this expression, the *of* is ablative, meaning ‘from.’ The Kingdom of God is about kingship that comes from God. It is about a king whom God has appointed, and about the elect, whom God has chosen to be his children and be heirs of the kingdom. God is the source and origin of the kingdom. The kingdom verses are about the king, Jesus the Messiah, his future reign on Earth, and his government.

God – God the Father is the source of all things, and in that sense, the kingdom comes from him. But the king is a man, Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, so the kingdom should normally be thought of as belonging to him as the Jews did. It is an earthly kingdom ruled by a man, the Jewish Messiah, when he descends from heaven to rule the new world.

What the Kingdom of God is not

Accepting the above explanation of the Kingdom of God phrase, we can discard some common false teachings about the kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is not, following popular belief, heaven. There is only one Bible verse that relates the Kingdom of God to heaven (2 Timothy 4:18) where ‘heavenly’ relates to its origin. The Jewish hope was always on a renewed Earth. Like Abraham, who was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God, we are looking for the city that is to come (Hebrews 13:14), a city that comes down out of heaven from God (Revelation 21:10).

The Kingdom of God is not, following Augustine, the Catholic church or any other organized church. The Jews that Jesus taught about the

Kingdom of God knew nothing about the Church which had not yet commenced. However, the true followers of Jesus, referred to in Scripture as the elect, the righteous, the saints, and the servants of God, are the true Church, the monarchy that will reign with the Messiah. This is the only connection between the Kingdom of God and the Church.

The Kingdom of God is not, following Luke 17:21, God's rule in our hearts. Poor translations (NIV 1978, GNT, LST) say "the Kingdom of God is within you" but a careful study of the Kingdom verses shows that this is not taught. The focus is on Jesus and his followers ruling the world, not on God ruling in people's hearts. The correct translation is 'the kingdom of God is in your midst' as the NIV 1984 has it.

The Kingdom of God is not, as many eschatologists claim, 'now but not yet' or 'inaugurated but not yet established.' Christ's kingdom on Earth cannot exist without him present. This present evil age (Gal 1:4) is under the control of the evil one (1 John 5:19). Kingdom terminology is political, and it should be obvious to all that Jesus is not yet in charge. God's purpose for the present age is to call out a people for himself from every tribe, people, language, and nation to be a kingdom of priests during the coming kingdom age. Born-again believers are co-heirs with Christ and neither they nor Christ have yet received their inheritance. God has raised us up and seated us with Christ in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages he might show us the incomparable riches of his grace. Paul made it clear to the Corinthians that they were not reigning yet (1 Cor 4:8). Jesus will begin his reign when he returns (Rev 11:15, 19:6), not before. The verbs are aorist meaning that Jesus becomes king at a point in time, precisely when the kingdoms of the world are defeated by him and Satan is imprisoned in the Abyss. Jesus ascended to heaven and is seated at God's right hand, and there he *waits* for his enemies to become his footstool at Armageddon, after which he will begin his reign.

The substitution of Jesus' cryptic phrase in the following verses by overtly Messianic phrases is not presented as a new translation but as the meaning that Jesus intended in his proclamation, and it reflects what would have been the Jewish understanding of his message. However, it does not convey the care that Jesus had to take in the

sensitive political situation in which he lived. You will find that understanding the Kingdom of God verses in this way results in an accurate, harmonious, and enlightening interpretation of this allusive subject.

When he proclaimed the kingship in a present context, he was, by metonymy, *referring to himself as the Messiah*.

When he spoke about kingship in relation to his disciples, he was *referring to the Messianic monarchy*. He explained on many occasions that most of the Jews had disobeyed God and were rejected, but those who believed in him would become God's children and as royal family would inherit the kingship and rule with him

When he spoke about the kingship in a future context, he was *referring to his earthly Messianic reign*, as was understood and expected by godly first-century Jews. The Kingdom of God verses are now presented in three groups reflecting the focus of the verses, whether it be on the king, the monarchy, or the reign.

Initially, the Kingdom of God means Messiah

Metonymy is the substitution of an attribute for the thing meant, 'crown' for the king, 'turf' for horse racing. In the following verses 'the Kingdom of God' is interpreted as 'the king appointed by God,' which to first-century Jews only meant one thing, the promised Messiah. The kingship was his. It is only in this sense that the Kingdom of God is God's kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news about the Messiah. He had arrived but the kingdom had not. There are several reasons why Jesus expressed himself in this way. Due to the sensitive political situation, he could not openly broadcast the fact that he was God's appointed king. Using the Kingdom of God/Heaven phrases made his message less comprehensible to the Romans and took attention away from himself. However, for faithful Jews, it had the opposite effect. The Kingdom of God was their hope of salvation from their oppressors. Hyperbole was frequent in Jesus' teaching and kingdom terminology also attracted his audience's attention. While the religious leaders

accused him of blasphemy, the faithful followed him in their thousands.

Jesus announces the Messiah's arrival

Matt 4:17 From that time on, Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messiah has come near.”

Matt 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the ~~kingdom~~ Messiah, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Matt 9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the ~~kingdom~~ Messiah, and healing every disease and sickness.

Matt 11:12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messiah has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been ~~raiding it~~ attacking him.

Matt 12:28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah has come upon you.

Mark 1:15 “The time has come,” he said. “The ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah has come near. Repent and believe the good news.”

Luke 4:43 But he said, “I must proclaim the good news of the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.”

Luke 8:1 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news about the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah.

Luke 9:11 He welcomed them and spoke to them about the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah and healed those who needed healing.

Luke 11:20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah has come upon you.

Luke 16:16 The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news about the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah is

being preached, and everyone going to him is under attack. (The last phrase is my translation.)

Luke 17:20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here ~~it~~ he is,’ or ‘There ~~it~~ he is,’ because the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah is in your midst.”

Jesus’ gospel was simply that he was the Messiah. He was sent by God to reveal himself to Israel. The Kingdom of God only had significance to the crowds insofar as they recognized Jesus to be the Messiah. John’s baptism was performed so that Jesus might be revealed to Israel. There was no kingdom then and it has not arrived since. To say that the kingdom arrived at Jesus’ ascension is not scriptural, it awaits his second coming. Without a king present in the world, how can there be a kingdom? Jesus couldn’t say much about his death and resurrection and the gospel of salvation because these events were still future. His Jewish audience was encouraged to follow him, not because of his crucifixion which had not happened yet, but because of who he was, the Messiah.

Others proclaim the Messiah

Matt 3:2 Repent, for the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messiah has come near.

Matt 10:7 As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messiah has come near.

Matt 24:14 And this gospel about the ~~kingdom~~ Messiah will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Luke 9:2 And he sent them out to proclaim the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah and to heal the sick.

Luke 9:60 And Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah.

Luke 10:9 Heal the sick who are there and tell them, “The ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah has come near you.

Luke 10:11 Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah has come near.”

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 19:8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah.

Acts 20:25 Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the ~~kingdom~~ Messiah will ever see me again.

Acts 28:23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus.

Acts 28:31 He proclaimed the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ – with all boldness and without hindrance.

Jesus sent his disciples out to proclaim the arrival of the Messiah and they were given power to heal the sick and exorcise demons as evidence that their message was true. Throughout the book of Acts, there is evidence that the apostles proclaimed the Messiah by using kingship terminology. Philip and Paul proclaimed the good news about the Messianic kingdom and made it clear that Jesus was the coming Messiah. Believers had the responsibility of spreading the good news of the kingdom to the whole world, and then the end of the age would come when the Messiah returned. It is the gospel of the kingdom that is preached to the whole world. By preaching Jesus, people from all nations are brought into the monarchy, and when Jesus returns, they will be revealed as we will see in part three. When Jesus said that the gospel would be preached in the whole world and then the end would come, he was not talking about the end of the world, but the end of the Church age and the consummation of prophecy. Many verses refer to

the righteous inheriting the Kingdom of God after the second coming. Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in, so the Parousia is not the final event of this world's history.

Believers understood Jesus to be the Messiah

Matt 13:11 He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messiah has been given to you, but not to them.”

Matt 13:19 When anyone hears the message about the ~~kingdom~~ Messiah and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.

Matt 13:52 He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple of the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messiah is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

Mark 4:11 He told them, “The secret about the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables.”

Luke 8:10 He said, “The knowledge of the secrets about the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables so that though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.”

Jesus often taught in parables and many people, including his disciples, did not always discern what he was talking about. He told his disciples that the secrets of the Kingdom of God were not for everyone. They were for his followers to understand, not for outsiders. So, he explained his parables to them. The kingdom message is a message of salvation; forgiveness, sanctification, and glorification, and Satan does his best to keep people from understanding it.

The Messiah is to be sought

Matt 6:33 But seek first his ~~kingdom~~ Messiah and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matt 13:44 The ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messiah is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all that he had and bought that field.

Matt 13:45 Again, (seeking) the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messiah is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

Luke 12:31 But seek his ~~kingdom~~ Messiah, and these things will be given to you as well.

Luke 23:51 (He) had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah.

The Kingdom of God is so important that Jesus told the Jews that seeking it and God's righteousness are of prime importance. They go together, you can't have one without the other. If you are made righteous through faith in Christ, you are an heir of the kingdom, and those who inherit the kingdom will be dressed in white linen, symbolic of their righteousness. Finding the kingdom, kingship under the Messiah, and reigning with him, is like finding a great treasure or a very expensive jewel. It is worth surrendering all you own to obtain it.

The Messiah will Return to reign

Matt 6:10 May your ~~kingdom~~ Messiah come, your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.

Matt 16:28 Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his ~~kingdom~~ royal power.

Mark 9:1 And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah has come with power”

Luke 9:27 Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah (come).

Luke 11:2 May your ~~kingdom~~ Messiah come.

Luke 21:31 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah is near.

As Meyer says: Let the kingdom of the Messiah appear! (Matt 6:10). (Meyer’s NT Commentary.) When Christians pray “Your kingdom come,” they should be thinking about the Lord’s return and his reign on Earth when the will of God will be done during the Millennium.

The transfiguration occurred a week after Jesus announced to his disciples that some of them would not die before they saw the Son of Man coming with his royal power. He was giving Peter, James, and John a glimpse of his future glory. This supernatural appearance of Jesus to three of his disciples is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the terminology each one uses is different. Matthew describes the transfiguration as the Son of Man coming with his kingdom (= kingship or royal power). Mark describes the same event as the Kingdom of God (Messiah) coming with power, and Luke says that they will see the Kingdom of God (the Messiah coming). By understanding kingdom as ‘kingship’ or ‘royal power’ and ‘Son of Man’ as a title for Jesus as the Messiah, what Matthew says is clear. To understand Mark’s terminology, we must understand ‘the Kingdom of God’ as a metonym for the Messiah himself. The disciples saw Jesus in his Messianic glory. Luke says that they will see the Kingdom of God, which would be hard to understand if we didn’t have Matthew’s wording. Luke says that Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus about his departure (Gr. exodus), the events surrounding his death.

Secondly, the Kingdom of God Means the Messianic Monarchy

Jesus the Messiah is coming back to reign on Earth during the Millennium. During the Church age, which began at Pentecost and will cease upon his return, Jesus is building his Church community, millions of people from every nation, tribe, language, and people. The gospel is being preached and people are believing the message and being saved. They are saved from their sins, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and will be glorified at Jesus' return when they are resurrected. Their special role in the new world is to reign with the Messiah as his monarchy. As children of God, believers enter the Messianic monarchy when they are born again (John 3:3, 5). They are presently heirs of the kingship and will inherit it (take possession of it) when Jesus returns. The Kingdom of God has not been inaugurated because the king has not yet returned. You can't have a kingdom without a king. Jesus reigns in heaven, but he is sitting on God's throne not the Messiah's (David's) throne. This is the age for building a monarchy. Jesus is not reigning and nor is his monarchy. He sat down at the right hand of God and since that time he *waits* for his enemies to be made his footstool (Heb 10:13).

In the following verses, the Kingdom of God is translated as the Messianic kingship or monarchy. The visible Church is not the monarchy because the redeemed are only a fraction of the visible church. The monarchy consists of God's elect, also known as the righteous, the saints, or the servants of God. They may be poor, meek, and persecuted now, but they will inherit the Earth. They are not subjects in the Messianic kingdom; they are the government. Most of Jesus's parables are about the development of the Messianic community. The Father will crush kings on the day of his wrath, he will judge the nations, crushing the rulers of the whole Earth (Psalm 110:1, 5-6). Then, and only then, will his Messiah reign.

The Messianic Monarchy Consists of Believers in Jesus

Matt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy.

Matt 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy.

Matt 13:38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the ~~people of the kingdom~~ Messianic monarchy (Lit. the sons (princes) of the kingdom). The weeds are the people of the evil one.

Matt 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy belongs to such as these."

Mark 10:14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy belongs to such as these."

Luke 6:20 Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy."

Luke 12:32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the ~~kingdom~~ Messianic kingship.

Luke 18:16 But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy belongs to such as these."

Luke 22:29 And I confer on you a ~~kingdom~~ kingship, just as my Father conferred one on me.

Rev 1:6 (He) has made us to be a ~~kingdom~~ monarchy and priests to serve his God and Father – to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

Rev 1:9 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and ~~kingdom~~ monarchy and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Jesus is currently building his Church from every nation, language, and cultural group, gathering the Messianic community that will be his monarchy during his earthly reign. True believers will show their worth by living good lives in reverence and awe of God. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God and that makes them

heirs; heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. When Christ returns to reign, his community reigns with him. Many of them are poor, meek, and persecuted for following Jesus, but in the future, the sovereignty of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the saints to possess (Dan 7:27).

Entering the monarchy

Matt 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy.

Matt 19:23-24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you; it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy.

Matt 21:31 Jesus said to them: “Truly I tell you; the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy ahead of you.”

Mark 9:47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell.

Mark 10:15 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy like a little child will never enter it.

Mark 10:23-25 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy!” The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy.”

Mark 12:34 You are not far from (entering) the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy.

Luke 18:17 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy like a little child will never enter it.

Luke 18:24-25 Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy.”

John 3:3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see (experience) the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy unless they are born again.”

John 3:5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy unless they are born of water and of the Spirit.”

Col 1:12-13 And giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the (kingdom of) light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the ~~kingdom~~ monarchy of the Son he loves.

Entering the Kingdom of God means entering the Messianic community that Jesus said he would build. Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish ruling council and may have aspired to rule with the Messiah. Jesus told him he would have to be born of water, symbolic of repentance, and the Holy Spirit. Entering the Kingdom of God is entering the royal family and becoming an heir to the throne, the Messianic kingship. “To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne” (Rev 3:21). Believers enter the kingship here and now by being born again of God’s Spirit, but they will not begin to reign until they inherit the kingdom at Jesus’ return. The teacher of the law was “not far from the Kingdom of God.” It is not easy to interpret that statement correctly while giving justice to the meaning of the kingdom. Was it metonymy? Was Jesus telling him he was close to the Messiah? If not, it must mean that this teacher’s faith was such that he was not far from entering the monarchy.

These verses tell of the qualifications for entering the Kingdom of God. Repentance is a prerequisite which enables the worst of sinners to enter. On the other hand, there is a warning to the unbelieving Jewish authorities. It is necessary to have the humility of a child; God opposes

the proud but shows favor to the humble. One needs to be born again to enter God's family, born from above, born of the Holy Spirit. The sort of people who typically do not qualify are the rich and the hypocritical religious leaders. Persistent sin is a hindrance, what one needs is persistence in faith.

Israel lost its claim to the monarchy

Matt 8:12 But the ~~subjects of the kingdom~~ original heirs of the reign will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matt 21:43 Therefore I tell you that the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy will be taken away from you (Israel) and given to a people who will produce its fruit.

Matt 22:2-3 The ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

Matt 23:13 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

Israel forfeited their right to be the Messiah's monarchy that would rule the world with him. The parable of the wedding banquet in Matthew 22 follows the parable of the talents in Matthew 21. When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these parables, they knew Jesus was talking about them. Israel was rejected and the servants were told to go to the street corners and invite anyone they found to replace them. In a similar parable (Luke 14:16-24), the host says that not one of those who were originally invited will get a taste of his banquet.

At the wedding banquet at Jesus' return, Christians from all nations are called the bride of Christ, Israel having refused the invitation. A man there was ejected for not wearing the right clothes. Jesus told us to

seek God's kingdom and his righteousness, symbolized by fine linen, bright and clean (Rev 19:8, 14).

Israel will continue to be God's chosen nation, but they will be subjects of the kingdom, not rulers. God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. All of Israel as a nation will be saved at Jesus' return and will live in their land as God's people, but they will not reign with the Messiah. Jesus will reign from the heavenly Jerusalem with his resurrected monarchy, while his earthly people, Israel, will be responsible for the temple ministry where all the nations on Earth will come to worship.

These are Isaiah's final words:

"As the new heavens and the new Earth that I make will endure before me," declares the Lord, "so will your name (Israel) and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the Lord. "And they will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind" (Isa 66:22-24).

Service in and for the Messianic monarchy

Matt 19:12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others – and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy. The one who can accept this should accept it.

Luke 9:62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy."

Luke 18:29-30 "Truly I tell you," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life."

Rom 14:17 For the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. (It is spiritual, not legalistic.)

1 Cor 4:20 For the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy is not a matter of talk but of power. (c.f. 1 Cor 2:4 It is concerned with persuasive words, but a demonstration of the Spirit's power.)

Col 4:11 These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy.

Those who follow Jesus are God's servants. They are expected to give up all for their Lord's sake and the commission he has given them. Some remain celibate for his sake. Others leave houses and family. No one should look back to their previous way of life. The focus of the present monarchy should be on righteousness (being right with God), peace (harmony between individuals and with God), and joy in the Holy Spirit. It should not be on legal quibbles on what people eat or drink. Demonstrations of the Spirit's power is more important than persuasive talk.

When Paul talks about his co-workers for the Kingdom of God, he thinks about their ministry regarding the monarchy: evangelism, preaching, teaching, pastoring, etc. If a priest chooses to remain unmarried or if a missionary leaves home and country, he is doing this for Jesus' sake, and ultimately to minister to the saints.

Development of the Monarchy

Matt 13:24 Jesus told them another parable: "The ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. (The weeds are burned; the harvested *wheat* is gathered into his barn (13:30.)

Matt 13:31 He told them another parable: "The ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy is like a *mustard seed*, which a man took and planted in his field. (c.f. Ezekiel 17:23).

Matt 13:33 He told them still another parable: "The ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic kingship (message) is like *yeast* that a woman took

and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

Matt 13:47 Once again, the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of *fish*. (When the net is full, at the end of the age, the righteous are retained and the evil thrown away.)

Matt 16:19 I will give you the keys of the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy; whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth will be loosed in heaven. (c.f. Matt 18:18).

Matt 18:23 Therefore, the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants (Messianic salvation is about *forgiving one another*).

Matt 20:1 For the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. (Messianic salvation is about *grace*.)

Mark 4:26 He also said, “This is what the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy is like. A man scatters *seed* on the ground.” (As in the parable of the sower, believers are compared to productive seed that an evangelist has sown).

Mark 4:30 Again he said, “What shall we say the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? (A mustard seed.)

Luke 13:18 Then Jesus asked, “What is the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy like? What shall I compare it to? (A mustard seed.)

Luke 13:20-21 Again he asked, “What shall I compare the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic kingship to? It is like yeast that a woman mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked through the dough.”

Entering the monarchy is one thing, the growth of the monarchy is another. The Christian community is compared to a mustard seed, starting as a small group but finally growing into a tree large enough for birds (all nations) to come and nest in the branches. To begin with, there were the twelve disciples and others outside that inner

group, like the women who followed along and cooked for them. They weren't born again yet, but they had faith in Jesus. At Pentecost, they received the gift of the Holy Spirit and 3,000 were added to the initial Messianic community. Soon the number of men who believed grew to 5,000. Including women and children, that would mean 20,000 souls.

Jesus liked to compare the growth of the kingdom to that of seed. The growth is imperceptible. Sometimes the seed represents the word of God which the elect believe, sometimes it means the elect themselves, and then there are the weeds who are excluded. They won't be separated until harvest time when the righteous are resurrected at Jesus' return and the wicked are destined for hell. The field is the whole world, as Messiah's message must be heard everywhere. The work of evangelism and instruction is compared to a woman mixing yeast with a large quantity of dough until it permeates the whole batch.

The Pharisees shut the door on those who wanted to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, so Jesus gave the keys to Peter as leader of the disciples. They had the responsibility of building the Christian community on the basis that Jesus was the Messiah. Just as a couple are bound to each other and should not seek to be released (1 Cor 7:27), so the disciples had the responsibility of binding people to the Lord. Those they bound were already pledged in heaven, those they spurned were already rejected in heaven.

Jesus will come again one day to fulfill the OT prophecies and the plan that God has had for the world and our glorification. He planned the Messianic monarchy for us since the creation of the world, it was not an afterthought.

Finally, the Messianic Reign

The verses in this section are all in a future context. They relate to the Messianic reign of Jesus and his monarchy after his return to Earth. Some verses deal with the inauguration and consummation of the thousand-year reign while others deal with the character of the reign.

Some verses relate to the monarchy; their qualification for entering the reign, the hierarchy within the reign, and their feasting at the king's table. As most amillennialists don't believe in a future, earthly, Messianic reign, they must interpret these passages differently, but the interpretation given here is natural, literal, and harmonious with all the Kingdom of God/Heaven verses. The Messianic reign describes the kingship in action whether by the king or his monarchy.

The Chronology of the Reign

Mark 11:10 Blessed is the coming ~~kingdom~~ reign of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!

Luke 1:32-33 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will rule over Jacob's descendants forever; his ~~kingdom~~ reign will never end.

Luke 19:11 While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic reign was going to appear at once.

Acts 1:3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave them many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic reign.

Acts 1:6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

1 Cor 15:24-25 Then the end will come when he hands over the ~~kingdom~~ kingship to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

2 Tim 4:1 In the presence of God and of Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his ~~kingdom~~ reign, I give you this charge:

An earthly reign by the Messiah was the fervent hope of first-century Israel. Gabriel confirmed this hope to Mary when he told her that her son would rule over Israel forever on David's throne. God had promised David on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne (2 Samuel 17:12-13, Acts 2:30). According to Psalm 2, God will install his king on Zion, his holy mountain, and make the nations his inheritance and the ends of the Earth his possession.

During the forty days before Jesus ascended to heaven, his message to his disciples was about the kingdom, so his disciples enquired about when he would now revive Israel's kingdom. He didn't deny it would happen but indicated that it would not be soon because they had a commission to be his witnesses to the end of the Earth and that would take a long time. Paul charged Timothy in the presence of God and the Messiah Jesus, and in view of Jesus' appearance on Earth and subsequent reign, to preach the word. He was expecting Jesus to return to Earth to judge the living and the dead and to reign.

The apostle John informs us that the kingdom will last for a thousand years, after which the Earth and the heavens pass away, the wicked are judged, and death is annihilated. Having subdued all enemies, Jesus will hand his kingship back to the Father who gave it to him. However, he and his bride, the Church, will continue to reign forever in the heavenly realm. The Bible is silent on whether there will be a new creation.

The Character of the Reign

John 18:36 Jesus said, "My ~~kingdom~~ kingship is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my ~~kingdom~~ kingship is from another place."

Heb 1:8 But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your ~~kingdom~~ reign."

Rev 11:15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The ~~kingdom~~ kingship of the world has become the ~~kingdom~~ kingship of our Lord and his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever."

Rev 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the ~~kingdom~~ reign of our God and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before God day and night, has been hurled down.”

Jesus told Pilate that his kingdom was not from this world, it was from another place. He meant that he was not a part of world politics, his kingship had its source in God. God will give him sovereignty over the world and all nations will worship him. However, there is no mention of Jesus appearing on Earth as king during his millennial rule, but his glory will fill the temple (Isa 9:6-7, Eze 43:2-5, Zech 9:10).

The blowing of the seventh trumpet is the climax of the tribulations described in Revelation 4-18. It announces the Messiah’s arrival and the beginning of his earthly reign “You have taken your great power and begun to reign” (Rev 11:15-17). The celebration is repeated in Revelation 19:6 and in both announcements the verb ‘reign’ is in the aorist, it happens at a point in time, best translated as ‘has begun to reign’ or ‘has become king.’ The celebration is in heaven, but the context is Christ’s defeat of the nations on Earth and the inauguration of his kingdom on Earth. “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah.” This is a future event that occurs at Jesus’ return to Earth and should not be confused with his ascension to heaven. It is at this time that the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven are handed over to the holy people of the Most High (Dan 7:27).

There will be a total change in the character of the world rule caused by a change in government from Satan to the Messiah. Since the fall of man, Satan has led the whole world astray (Rev 12:9) and the world is still under his control (1 John 5:19). Jesus is not yet reigning on Earth! But in Revelation 12, John sees a vision of the birth of the Messiah who would become the Savior of Israel, the Church, and the Earth. Jesus gave his life on the cross to redeem lost mankind, and the tribulation martyrs will also give up their lives, triumphing over Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. There can be no pretribulation rapture! It is the overcomers from the churches who lay down their lives and win the victory, conquering

Satan so that he can no longer accuse them before God. He is thrown down from heaven and during the last 3 ½ years, he and the Antichrist and the False Prophet do their best to destroy God's plan, by exterminating Israel and the Church, but they do not succeed.

Qualifications for Entering the Reign

Matt 5:5 Blessed are the *meek*, for they will inherit the Earth.

Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic reign, but only the one who does the will of the Father who is in heaven.

Matt 13:41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his ~~kingdom~~ reign everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

Matt 25:1 At that time the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. (The wise who had oil went into the Messianic wedding banquet, the others were excluded.)

1 Cor 6:9-10 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic reign? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic reign. (Dan 7:18)

1 Cor 15:50 I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic reign, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Gal 5:21 I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic reign.

Eph 5:5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person – such a person is an idolater - has any inheritance in the ~~kingdom of Christ and of God~~ Messianic reign which is from God.

Only those who are saved, sanctified, and resurrected can enter the Messianic reign (1 Cor 15:50). The five foolish virgins were

unbelievers; they were not born again of the Holy Spirit and marked with his seal (Eph 1:13). The Messiah will rule from the heavenly realm, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from God and his bride will rule him. This confirms other passages that indicate that the Messianic reign does not begin until Jesus returns. The monarchy must be resurrected or raptured and become immortal first.

The Righteous will be Glorified.

Matt 13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the ~~kingdom~~ of their ~~Father~~ reign established by their Father.

Matt 25:34 Then the king will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the ~~kingdom~~ reign prepared for you since the creation of the world.

Luke 23:42-43 And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come ~~into your kingdom~~ to reign. Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Acts 14:22 (They were) strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic reign," they said.

1 Thess 2:12 Encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his ~~kingdom and glory~~ glorious Messianic reign.

2 Thess 1:5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic reign for which you are suffering.

2 Tim 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly ~~kingdom~~ reign. (i.e. in New Jerusalem.)

Jas 2:5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the ~~kingdom~~ reign he promised those who love him? (c.f. Jas 1:12, Luke 6:20, Dan 7:22).

Heb 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a ~~kingdom~~ reign that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.

2 Pet 1:11 And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal ~~kingdom~~ reign of our Lord and Savior Jesus ~~Christ~~ the Messiah.

Rev 5:10 You have made them to be a ~~kingdom~~ monarchy and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on Earth.

Rev 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and *reigned* with Christ a thousand years.

The monarchy is the royal family, they were born again as God's children at their conversion, and they will possess the kingdom at the resurrection. Whether dead or alive at Jesus coming, they will be transformed and rise to meet the Lord in the air and be installed in New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven from God. The Holy City is the bride of Christ. And he will glorify them there where the throne of God and the Lamb will be, and they will serve him there. "Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High (Daniel 7:27).

After the enormous destruction and judgment of the nations at the second coming, the authority and kingship of the nations will be exercised by the saints. Their physical presence will be necessary for the Messiah's reign to be effective, as his presence on Earth seems to be restricted to the millennial temple (Eze 43:1-7). The elect monarchy is predestined, called, justified, and glorified, and Jesus confers kingship on them. They will eat and drink with him at his table as his royal family. The apostles will judge Israel, which suggests that the redeemed from other tribes, nations, peoples, and languages may rule over peoples from where they came. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom because the rulers are no ordinary humans, they are supernatural beings who live and rule with the Messiah from New

Jerusalem in the sky (Rev 21:2-3, 9-10, 23-26). They will shine like the sun in their celestial paradise (Dan 12:2-3). Jesus gives them authority to rule the nations with an iron scepter (Rev 2:26).

Hierarchy and Status in the Monarchy

Matt 5:19 Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy.

Matt 11:11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy is greater than he.

Matt 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy?”

Matt 18:3-4 And he said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy.”

Matt 20:21 “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right hand and the other at your left in your ~~kingdom~~ monarchy.”

Matt 25:14 Again, ~~it~~ the Messiah will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. (One is rewarded with five cities, another ten.)

Luke 7:28 I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John, yet the one who is least in the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy is greater than he. (Those in the monarchy have greater status than one who proclaims it.)

All who are in Christ are God’s children through faith, but not all will be equal, there will be a hierarchy. The hierarchy does not depend on

race, sex, or social standing (Gal 3:28). The judgment seat of Christ will determine rewards for service and grant status during the Millennium. Many who are first here will be last there. Salvation is by grace, but future rewards are given for faithful service.

The parable of the bags of gold is about a man going on a journey and giving his servants work to do until he returns. He said to faithful servants “You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.” The parallel passage in Luke 19:11-27 is about a nobleman who went to a distant country to have himself appointed as king. When he returned to reign, he settled accounts with his servants, giving one charge of five cities, and another, ten. The woman who asked for her sons to sit at Jesus’ right and left in his kingdom was probably Salome, Jesus’ aunt, and the sons James and John, Jesus’ cousins. But there is no nepotism in the kingdom.

The Monarchy Feast at the King’s Table

Matt 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their place at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the ~~Kingdom of Heaven~~ Messianic monarchy.

Matt 26:29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you, in ~~my Father’s kingdom~~ the monarchy established by my Father.

Mark 14:25 Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy.

Luke 13:28-29 There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy, but you yourselves thrown out. People will come from East and West and North and South and will take their places at the feast in the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy.

Luke 14:15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy.”

Luke 22:16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messianic monarchy.

Luke 22:18 For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the ~~Kingdom of God~~ Messiah comes.

Luke 22:30 So that you may eat and drink at my table in my ~~kingdom~~ monarchy and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (c.f. Matthew 19:28).

The Messianic feast is based on a prophecy from Isaiah 25:6-8: “On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine – the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all people, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people’s disgrace from all the Earth.” The wiping of tears from their faces and the absence of death describes life in New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:4).

The above verses relate to the Messianic kingship, suggesting that the banquet is a regular meal that the monarchy shares at the king’s table. Just how literal or appropriate that will be for the redeemed remains to be seen. King Solomon’s daily provisions included thirty head of cattle and a hundred sheep and goats. Royal banquets were lavish affairs. Matthew 19:28 places these events “at the renewal of all things,” in the new world during the Messianic reign.

Jesus said that he would not eat the Passover meal again until it found fulfillment in the Kingdom of God. It will be a celebration of the saint’s salvation arising from Christ’s death. The Passover celebrates Israel’s escape from slavery in Egypt, while the Lord’s Supper celebrates the Christian’s salvation from sin, proclaiming the Lord’s death until he comes. The Messianic banquet will celebrate the consummation of our salvation wherein death is swallowed up forever, tears are wiped away from all faces, and the disgrace God’s people have suffered is removed from all the Earth, for the old order of things will have passed away.

This heavenly city with perhaps a billion inhabitants is hard to imagine. Where would food and musical instruments come from? We

know the result is eternal joy, but just how earthly joys will be experienced in the heavenly realm has not been revealed. The Jews always thought of the future in relation to the Earth and we should too. Ruling the Earth for a thousand years is our destiny.