

## The Mediatorial Kingdom in the Epistles

The Epistles are sent to churches or members of churches ... No epistle is addressed to the saints in “the kingdom of heaven/God”.

### **Ekklesia:**

- 3x in gospels, in prophetic sense, looking forward
- 19x in Acts
- 67x in epistles (87x including Rev. 2-3)

Birth – Pentecost, by special work of the Spirit sent by Christ

End – Rapture as we meet Him in the air

Life in the Church Age? The Cross, not a Crown

### **Basileia:**

- 121x in synoptic gospels
- 8x in Acts
- 18x in epistles referring to the divine rule
  - 8x “kingdom of God” – some of these may refer to heaven
  - 7x Kingdom of Christ

Some passages are explicit – the kingdom belongs to the future:

- 2 Tim. 4:1 “... and by His appearing and His kingdom”
- 2 Tim. 4:18
- Rom. 11:25-27

Members of the Ekklesia shall inherit, in the future, the Kingdom:

- I Cor. 6:9,10; 15:50
- Gal. 5:21
- Eph. 5:5
- James 2:5

“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him” – 2 Tim. 2:12

What about these “problem” passages?

- Rom. 14:17 meat and drink are pretty important now, but won't mean anything to the church age saints in the kingdom. Therefore, since we are to reign in that kingdom to come, we should not judge or grieve each other now in such matters. This is a call to live now in the church in light of the realities of the coming Kingdom.
- I Cor. 4:20 Here is a description of the basis of the kingdom to come. It will be characterized by power, not talk. The same word is used in Hebrews 6:5. Cf. vv. 5 and 8. Again, this speaks of blessings of the kingdom without the established presence of it. In fact, the church can also expect the conditions described in vv.10-13 in the meantime!
- I Cor. 15:24 – the order is clear. First Christ is resurrected, then His saints at the Rapture (Phase I of the Second Coming), then the resurrection of the unsaved at the end, the Great White Throne judgment. The Kingdom of Christ is established at the second coming of Christ and then delivered up to the Father at the end, before the eternal state.
- Col. 1:12-13 THE go-to verse for “already/not yet” position. Rather, this is like being seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. 2), our place in the kingdom, our seat at the table so to speak, is so certain, we can speak of it as already done (futuristic aorist).
  - “We have been transferred judicially into the Kingdom of our Lord even before its establishment.”
  - “Believers are translated into God’s kingdom in expectation and inheritance, but are yet to see the installing of the kingdom and receive that inheritance to which they are heirs.”
  - We have been transferred to citizenship in a future kingdom but experience spiritual blessings now as we wait for it as strangers and aliens. Our reign with Christ is yet future (Rev. 20:6).
- Col. 4:11 “for” is eis in Greek, unto. All the labors of the church are directed toward or unto the glorious goal of a future kingdom.
- I Thess. 2:12 We are called unto, eis, something not yet realized in Christian experience (like I Pet. 5:10)
- II Thess. 1:5 See Luke 20:35 for same Greek word translated “consider worthy”
- Heb. 12:28 Scripture often asserts ownership re: certain blessings before they are experienced or possessed; see I Cor. 3:21-22. Ownership is legally certain; experience of possession is yet future.

McClain then asks: Is there any sense in which we can say there is a present existence on earth of the Mediatorial Kingdom of God?

- 1) Christ does rule in the Church as Head of the Church. But the nature of this rule is very different from that of the Mediatorial Kingdom.
- 2) Our Lord does rule over the Universal Kingdom of God, thru providence. But again, this rule is distinguished from the direct and supernatural rule that will be His in the Kingdom.

Conclusion: The reign of Christ in the M.K. will be drastically different from His rule now in the Church or over the Universal Kingdom of God.

“But the basic assumption is always the same: The Church in some sense is the Kingdom, and therefore has the divine right to rule; or it is the business of the Church to “establish” fully the Kingdom of God among men. Thus the Church loses its pilgrim character and the sharp edge of its divinely commissioned “witness” is blunted.” It becomes an ekklesia which is not only in the world, but also of the world.”

Then what is the relationship of the Basileia to the Ekklesia?

- 1) During the present Church Age, the Mediatorial Kingdom is held back in suspension, not yet established on earth.
- 2) In another sense, however, it might be said that the Mediatorial Kingdom does have a present de jure existence (de facto, in reality existence), even prior to its establishment.
- 3) The Church is experiencing now many of the spiritual blessings the OT predicted in connection with the Messianic Kingdom.

### **Summary of Biblical teaching on the Kingdom:**

Not as obscure and confusing as some would make it out to be. Dr. Farnell writes, “many views on the kingdom evidence captivity to philosophy and traditions of men that obscures the perspicuity of the NT teaching on Christ’s future reign ...”

**From KBC Doctrinal Statement:**

We believe and teach that the great tribulation of the earth will be climaxed by the bodily return of the Lord to the earth. Christ, in great glory, will bring with Him the church-age saints (His bride) as He begins the program to restore the creation from the curse, bind Satan, give Israel her promised land, and fulfill the covenants in a thousand-year reign (Millennial Kingdom). At the end of the thousand-year reign, Christ will give the Kingdom to the Father and all believers from all ages will dwell in the new heavens and new earth with the new Jerusalem at its center. (Deut. 30:1-10; Isaiah 11:9, 65:17, 66:22; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Matt. 24:15-25, 46; Acts 15:16-17; Romans 8:19-23, 11:25-27; I Cor. 15:24; I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 3:1-5; II Pet. 3:10; Rev.21-22)

**From The Master's Seminary Doctrinal Statement:****The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign**

We teach that, after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7).

We teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29).

We teach that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11; 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7).