

## THE FUTURE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE ON EARTH

When God's Kingdom did not come within the first few centuries after Jesus' ascension the church officials made the change of what was meant by the kingdom, so that it now became attached to the idea that at the moment a Christian dies he departs for heaven which is the Kingdom. Apart from this idea being based on a further unbiblical view of a soul that lives on after death, is this idea even vaguely connected to God's promises to faithful Christians?

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the coming Kingdom of God will be set up on earth with a returned Jesus as King in the literal Jerusalem of the future. Jesus, with his associate rulers, will immediately set about the task of bringing about paradise conditions so that all war, crime, poverty and pollution are steadily eradicated. Increasingly the nations will be living in harmony. This is in contrast to the invisible kingdom that Jehovah's Witnesses declare was set up in heaven in 1914.

### THE KINGDOM WAS DESCRIBED AS AND FORETOLD TO BE ON EARTH

As shown in STUDY 12 no Christians are promised a destiny of going to heaven. Therefore the Kingdom they will inherit, although originating with God in heaven, will be a kingdom established on earth:

- ❖ "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin ... a stone [*The kingdom*]...struck the image on its feet (*therefore on earth*) ... the stone became a large mountain and filled the whole *earth*" (*Dan. 2: 44, 34, 35*).

#### *THE KINGDOM ABSORBES THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD AND IS THEREFORE ON EARTH*

- ❖ "The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our lord and of his Christ..." (*Rev. 11:15*).
- ❖ "And the kingdom and the rulership and the grandeur of the kingdoms **under** all the heavens were given to the people who are the holy ones" (*Dan. 7:27*).

*The phrase "under all the heavens" means that it will be on earth.*

#### *THE KINGDOM IS AN EARTHLY PARADISE RELATED TO ISRAEL*

- ❖ "And God planted a garden [Gk. *paradeison*] eastward in Eden" (*Gen. 2:8*). Also in *Genesis 2:9; 2:10; 2:15; 3:2*. The Greek Septuagint translates garden as *paradeisos*.

*Also in Genesis 2:9; 2:10; 2:15; 3:2. The Greek Septuagint translates garden as "paradeisos." These facts give us the definition of the word 'paradise' for the rest of the Scriptures. So living in such a future **earthly paradise** is what Jesus offered the dying criminal, Paul had a vision of, and is the promise in the Book of Revelation:*

#### *THREE OCCURRENCES OF THE WORD 'PARADISE' IN THE NT*

*The seditious man hung next to Jesus pleads*

- ❖ "...remember me when you come into your **kingdom!** He [*Jesus*] said to him... truly I say to you today, you will be *with me in paradise*" (*Luke 23:42, 43*).

*Jesus here equates the Kingdom with paradise, and paradise was thought of by first century Jews, only as related to the earth. So this evildoer is to be resurrected on the earth and so showing that the Kingdom will be on earth.*

- ❖ *Paul states that "...a man [probably himself]...was caught away as such to the third heaven ... he was caught away into **paradise**" (2 Cor. 12:2, 4).*

*This seems most likely to be the 3<sup>rd</sup> "heavens and earth" that Peter later described in 2 Peter 3:5, 7, 13 as new heavens and a new earth and was therefore Paul's vision of the coming paradise on earth which John also describes where:*

- ❖ *Jesus promises Christians: “To him that conquers, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the **paradise** of God” (Rev. 2:7).*

So the Scriptures consistently use the term *paradise* in a setting that is of the earth. There is no thought of it as being relocated to heaven as the following verses show:

- ❖ “the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them...they will inherit the **earth**” (*Matt. 5:3, 5*).
- ❖ “...your **kingdom** come. Let your will take place, as it is in heaven, also **upon earth**” (*Matt. 6:10*).
- ❖ “...they will reign **upon earth**” (*Rev. 5:10 KIT*).
- ❖ “Lord, are you restoring the **kingdom to Israel** at this time?” (*Acts 1:6*).

*Jesus did not correct the disciples as regards the location of the Kingdom, but only showed that the time of its appearance would not be known.*

#### *THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS IN THE KINGDOM*

- ❖ “...many from eastern parts and western parts will come and recline *at the table* with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob **in the kingdom of the heavens**” (*Matt. 8:11*).

*So, here, Jesus showed the physical conditions of “the kingdom of the heavens” as being on earth and clearly Abraham will be resurrected on earth.*

- ❖ “I will not **drink** again from the **product of the vine** until the kingdom of God arrives”  
*(Luke 22:18).*
- ❖ “...just as my Father has made a covenant with me for a kingdom, that you may **eat and drink** at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel” (*Luke 22:29, 30*).

After discussing the *Parable of the Soils* in relation to the Kingdom... Professor W.C. Allen stated that:

There is nothing here nor elsewhere in this Gospel to suggest that **the scene of the Kingdom is other than the present world renewed**, restored and purified.

So here he shows that Matthew did not expect believers to ‘go to heaven,’ but that Jesus will return to the earth to rule with Christians on a renewed earth.

### KINGDOM OF HEAVEN = KINGDOM OF GOD

The term “kingdom of heaven” is often used as if it meant a kingdom in heaven. However, of the gospel writers, this term is used only by Matthew who wrote for a Jewish audience. The other gospel writers used the term “kingdom of God.” Yet Matthew used the two terms together in *Matthew 19:23, 24* and by a comparison of parallel accounts it is evident that the two terms are exact equivalents i.e. they refer to the one kingdom. One can also see this if one compares the parallel account of Matthew 19:14 with Mark 10:14; and the account of Matthew 8:11 with Luke 13:28-29. Matthew’s use of the word ‘heaven’ in “kingdom of heaven” is what is called a *‘periphrastic’*, where the common Jewish practice was to use the word *heaven* as an indirect reference to God himself, rather than saying the word ‘God.’

#### *EXAMPLES OF “HEAVEN” BEING USED AS A REFERENCE TO GOD*

- ❖ “The baptism by John, from what source was it? **From heaven** [*i.e. God*] or from men?”  
*(Matt. 21:25).*
- ❖ “A man cannot receive a single thing unless it has been given him **from heaven**” i.e. from God”  
*(John 3:27).*

#### *‘HEAVEN’ WAS NOT PROMISED TO THE DISCIPLES*

Additionally, at no time did Jesus offer his followers a life in heaven but he came to **“to confirm the promises made to the fathers...”** (Rom. 15:8) and those promises concerned only the earth – mankind’s natural home even as Paul said: “And we declare to you good news—**that promise** which

was **made to the fathers**" (Acts 13:32) i.e. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Even Jesus was resurrected on earth and only after the 40 days did he ascend to heaven and even then only to be there for a certain length of time when "...he [*Jehovah*] may **send** the Christ appointed for you, *Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring* all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago" (Acts 3:20, 21). In fact, the concept of going to heaven originated entirely within pagan Greek philosophy to fit in with the idea of an immortal soul and the churches of Christendom further developed it.

**So 'Kingdom of Heaven' means that it is a kingdom belonging to or originating with God and is superior to all other kingdoms. It does not mean that it is located in heaven as can be seen from all of its descriptions in the Bible as being on earth.**

#### THE KING RULES ON EARTH

- ❖ "May he rule...to the ends of **the earth**" (*Ps. 72:8 NASB*).
- ❖ "And a king will certainly reign and act with discretion and execute justice and righteousness **in the land**" (*Jer. 23:5*).

*The strong indication given here would be that Jesus must also be "in the land."*

#### THE THRONE OF DAVID IS ON EARTH

- ❖ "The **government** will rest on his shoulders...**On the throne of David** and over his kingdom" (*Isa. 9:6, 7 NASB*).

❖ "God will give him [*Jesus*] the throne of David his father" (*Luke 1:32-35*).

❖ "God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne" (*Acts 2:30*).

*How can an intangible spirit qualify to be the seed of David? David's throne is an earthly one and will be re-established:*

- ❖ "When the Son of Man **arrives in his glory**, and all the angels with him, then he **will sit on his glorious throne**. And all the nations will be gathered before him" (*Matt. 25:31*).

Jesus is here prophesied to reign on David's throne, which no Jew of the time would have imagined to be anywhere but on earth (Luke 1:32, 33). This totally excludes any thought of a Kingdom in heaven as further shown in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* 1986 edition:

The coming of God's kingdom is an eschatological event when the kingly reign of God...will be manifested on earth *de facto*, so that His will is done on earth as it is in heaven. This means two things: negatively, the judgement of the wicked and the **subjugation of every hostile power**: positively, the salvation of the righteous and the redemption of a fallen creation from the burden of evil.

#### JESUS' RULERSHIP IS IN LITERAL ISRAEL

- ❖ "From you there will come out to me the one who is to become ruler in Israel" (*Mic. 5:2-4*)
- ❖ "And I saw, and look! the Lamb **standing upon** the *Mount Zion*" (*Rev. 14:1*).

This scene is on earth because the voice that John hears is **from** heaven. The parables of the Nobleman in Luke 19:11-27 and of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30 both show that Jesus will return to where he left, namely the earth:

- ❖ "And his *feet* will actually **stand** in that day **upon** the mountain of the olive trees, which is in front of Jerusalem" (*Zech. 14:4*).

*As God's representative it will be the feet of Jesus that stand on the Mount of Olives.*

## CHRISTIANS DO NOT RULE FROM HEAVEN

- ❖ "...kingdom and priests, and they are reigning **upon the earth** (Gk *epi tes ges*) (Rev. 5:10 KIT).

All examples of this Greek phrase are translated as 'upon/on' in NWT in Revelation except 5:10. These are: 5:3, 5:13, 6:10, 7:1, 10:5b, 10:8, 11:10a, 11:10b, 13:8, 13:14, 14:6, 14:16, 16:18, 17:8, 18:24.

There are also many similar phrases: Rev. 3:10: "upon the whole inhabited earth"

" 10:5a: "upon the sea."

" 14:14: "upon the cloud."

The Greek word *epi* is also many times translated as *over* but not properly for the phrase *epi tes ges* or similarly structured phrases. The NWT reference Bible footnote for 5:10 says: "epi with the genitive, as in 9:11; 11: 6." This is given by the NW Translation notes as proof of the translation 'over' in 5:10.

However, both of these verses are with reference to authority/power and are the same in all translations. Hence, for the correct choice of translation in 5:10 one has to decide whether the immediate and broader contexts are substantial enough to translate as *over* while flying in the face of almost all other committees of translators and the overwhelming evidence as to the way the phrase is translated in the rest of Revelation in the NWT. In Revelation 11:6 although the 2 witnesses "*have authority over the waters*" they are still on the earth. "*The holy ones*" of 5:8 are later described as being attacked by the misled nations when the 1000 years have ended:

- ❖ "And they advanced over the breadth of the **earth** and encircled the camp of the *holy ones* and the beloved city" (Rev. 20:9).

Only an unwarranted interpretation, to the effect that these are different holy ones at the end of the Millennium than before it, can make 20:9 lose its force to show that 5:10 refers to these ones reigning *on* earth. Of course, they will reign over the mortal population of earth as any King or Queen can rule over their populations whilst sitting on a throne on earth. These holy ones are certainly to reign with Messiah who is himself prophesied in many Scriptures to reign on earth e.g.:

- ❖ "And a king will certainly **reign** and act with discretion and execute justice and righteousness **in the land**. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will reside in security" (Jer. 23:5, 6).

Jesus is here prophesied to reign on David's throne, which no Jew of the time would have imagined to be anywhere but on earth (Luke 1:32, 33).

### THE KINGDOM WILL BE "INHERITED" AND "ENTERED INTO"

- ❖ "Come...**inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the founding of the world" (Matt. 25:34).
- ❖ "Not everyone... will **enter into the kingdom of the heavens**" (Matt. 7:21, 22).
- ❖ "We must **enter into** the kingdom of God through many tribulations" (Acts 14:22).
- ❖ "...do you not know that *unrighteous* persons will **not inherit** the kingdom of God? Do not be misled. Neither fornicators...will inherit God's kingdom" (1 Cor. 6:9)

### A CONTRADICTION IN JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES TEACHING

- ❖ "**Unless anyone is born again**, he **cannot see the kingdom** of God" (John 3:3).
- ❖ "Do you not know that unrighteous persons will **not inherit God's kingdom**? Do not be misled. Neither fornicator's ... nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom" (1 Cor. 6:9, 10)

The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses denies the "other sheep" class the status of having been *born again* because in their teaching the "other sheep" do not inherit the heavenly kingdom. Yet the Governing Body pressures them with 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 to behave correctly otherwise they will not inherit God's kingdom, which they cannot actually do according to this teaching. The Governing Body argument is that it is only the **earthly domain** of God's kingdom that will be lived in by the "other

sheep” class. This does not ring true because Matthew 25:31ff shows that the “sheep” will “inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” Anointed Christians “will inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5) just as Abraham had “the promise...that he should be of [the] world” (UBS interlinear) along with all faithful Christians (Dan. 7:22).

## JERUSALEM WILL BE THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE KINGDOM

### DOESN'T “HEAVENLY JERUSALEM” MEAN THAT THE KINGDOM IS IN HEAVEN?

Regarding “Heavenly Jerusalem” mentioned in Hebrews 12:22: the adjective *heavenly* is **qualitative** and is not referring to a location. It is a *present* condition of Christians just as in Ephesians 1:3 and 2:6. Hence the “*heavenly Jerusalem*” is the glorious city of the **future** which Christians have now approached. Nevertheless, Jesus spoke of it as “*Jerusalem...the city of the great King*” (Matt. 5:35). Revelation 21:10ff describes the “new Jerusalem” in all its glory further indicating that “heavenly” in Hebrews 12 is descriptive of Jerusalem rather than a statement about its location.

### A LITERAL JERUSALEM

The fact is that we are to connect the arrival of the Kingdom with the future return of Jesus to literal Jerusalem:

- ❖ “[*Jesus*] proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because **they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately**. He said therefore, “A **nobleman** went into a far country to **receive for himself a kingdom and then return**. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas... When he **returned, having received the kingdom...**” (*Luke 19:11-12, 15*).
- ❖ “The rod of your strength Jehovah will send forth **out of Zion**, saying, ‘Go subduing in the midst of your enemies.’” (*Ps. 110:2*).
- ❖ “I will bring back again judges for you as at the first...After this you will be called the City of Righteousness, Faithful Town” (*Isa. 1:26*).
- ❖ “For **out of Zion** law will go forth, and the word of Jehovah out of **Jerusalem**” (*Isa. 2:3/Mic. 4:2*).
- ❖ “For Jehovah of armies has become king in Mount **Zion** and **in Jerusalem**” (*Isa. 24:23*).
- ❖ “...they will call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and to her all of the nations must be brought together to the name of Jehovah at Jerusalem” (*Jer. 3:17*).
- ❖ “Jerusalem itself will reside in security” (*Jer. 33:16*).
- ❖ “Abraham...was awaiting the city having real foundations ... they are reaching out for a better [place] that is, one belonging to heaven” (*Heb. 11:8-10, 16*).
- ❖ “And they advanced over the breadth of the **earth** and encircled the camp of the *holy ones* and the *beloved city*” (*Rev. 20:9*).

*All of this clearly shows that the beloved city heavenly Jerusalem will be on earth at the end of the Millennium.* In confirmation of this Justin Martyr in his Dialog with Trypho said:

But I and others who are right-minded Christians on all points are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a **thousand years in Jerusalem**, which will then be built, adorned and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah and others declare ... And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the Apostles of Christ, who prophesied by a revelation that was made to him that *those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem*; and that thereafter the general and eternal resurrection of all men would take place.

## THE KINGDOM IS YET FUTURE

Although Paul in Colossians 1:13 says that Christians have been “transferred us to the Kingdom of [God’s] beloved Son” and so are experiencing the Kingdom now, the vast majority of texts show that the full experiencing of Kingdom is yet future. So what is meant by the statement in Colossians? Simply that Christians now live their lives in harmony with the precepts of the coming Kingdom. However, Jesus made it plain that the Kingdom in its full expression will arrive when he himself returns:

❖ ““Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, I say to YOU, **In the re-creation when** the Son of Man sits down upon his glorious throne...’” (Matt. 19:28).

*The term “the re-creation” is expressed as “the new world” or “the regeneration” in other versions.*

❖ *In his great prophesy concerning the time of the end Jesus said: “When you see these things [The disgusting thing that causes desolation and the Great Tribulation] occurring, know that the Kingdom of God is near” (Luke 21:31).*

*Because the United Nations organization is not “the disgusting thing that causes desolation” (please see STUDY 21) and the Great Tribulation have not yet occurred it is evident that the Kingdom is still not “near.” So Christians must wait for the time when:*

❖ “The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ” *at the second coming.* (Rev. 11:15).

*Christians must be patient while anticipating Jesus’ return to establish the Kingdom with its centre in Jerusalem. This was why Jesus gave:*

❖ The parable of the Nobleman who goes “...to a distant land and to return”.....verse 23 indicates a long time lag: “why is it you did not put my silver money in the bank? Then on my arrival, I would have collected it with interest” (Luke 19:11-27).

❖ *At his last Passover Jesus went on to say: “I will not drink again from the product of the vine **until the kingdom of God arrives**” (Luke 22:18). And so showing that the kingdom has not yet arrived because we do not yet see Jesus drinking “from the product of the vine.”*

## BUT IN WHAT SENSE IS THE KINGDOM PRESENT NOW?

❖ “But if it is by means of God’s spirit that I expel the demons, the kingdom of God has really overtaken you” (Matt. 12:28).

*This gives a taste of the power of the coming kingdom because Jesus defeated Satan on numerous occasions including his expelling of demons.*

### *A TASTE OF THE KINGDOM NOW*

❖ “...those who have once been enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift...and have tasted the.....powers of the age to come” (Heb. 6:4, 5 *ESV*).

❖ “He delivered us from the authority of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son of his love” (Col. 1:13).

❖ “For the Kingdom of God [means]...righteousness and peace and joy with holy spirit” (Rom. 14:17). *The message of the kingdom and preparation for it by the development of the Christ-like character are how the kingdom is present now.*

## CONDITIONS IN THE KINGDOM

- ❖ “New Heavens and New Earth...I create *Jerusalem* for rejoicing (***the capital of the kingdom will be on earth***)...no longer the voice of weeping...no longer an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days (***natural death of mortals at very old ages still occurs in this quasi paradise***); for the youth will die at the age of one hundred and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred will be thought of as accursed. They will build houses, plant vineyards...for as the lifetime of a tree so will be the days of my people” (*Isa. 65:17-25 NASB*).
- ❖ ‘wolf/lamb; leopard/young goat; calf/young lion; cow/bear; a little boy will lead them’ (*Isa. 11:6-9*).
- ❖ “...the wicked one will be no more” (*Ps. 37:10*).
- ❖ “...the righteous will sprout, and abundance of peace” (*Ps. 72:7*).
- ❖ “...plenty of grain” (*Ps. 72:16*)
- ❖ “...for all the peoples...a banquet of well oiled dishes” (*Isa. 25:6*).

## CONCLUSION

- Because the Jehovah’s Witnesses declare that an invisible kingdom was set up by God in heaven in 1914, they are not expecting Jesus to come back really, even though he said “I will come again” (John 14:3). Furthermore, they are preaching about a kingdom that has made no progress in bringing the nations of the world to be weapons free (*Isa.2:4*). Clearly Jesus must return as promised and set up a real tangible kingdom that will actually bring paradise. Furthermore, the Kingdom cannot be paradise *in heaven* because it is paradise *on earth* that is promised to all God’s faithful people.

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## SUGGESTED READING

*The Theocratic Kingdom* (3 volumes) by George N.H. Peters.

*The Presence of the Future* (339 pages) by George Eldon Ladd.

