

The Kingdom is Now the Church

By Charles Dailey

The beautiful figure of the Church as the *Kingdom of God* teaches many truths about the *Church* and shows several relationships, too. Christians are in the *Church* and in the *Kingdom of God*.

King David had been promised an everlasting *kingdom* for a descendent of his to rule. 2 Samuel 7:12- 16. Jesus was from the line of David. Luke 1:31 - 33; Acts 2:30 - 31.

When it seemed that the promise to David wasn't working out, Amos revived it. (Amos 9:9 - 12.) In Acts 15:16 - 18, James (the Lord's half-brother) applies it to the *church*.

The prophets of old spoke of the coming *Kingdom*. Among them was Daniel who spoke of a *Kingdom* to be established during the days of the fourth great earthly kingdom, the Roman Empire. (Daniel 2:44, 45.)



Jesus alluded to the nature of his *Kingdom* in John 18:36 when he said that it would not be a political kingdom where citizens war with others.

Matthew, Mark and Luke each spoke of the *Kingdom*. Matthew spoke of the *Kingdom of Heaven* while Mark and Luke used *Kingdom of God*. Matthew, in writing to Jewish readers, used the milder term because of the reluctance of Jewish people to speak God's name.

This chart shows parallel passages, demonstrating that the two terms are identical:

Matthew	Mark	Luke
3:2	1:15	
11:11		7:28
13:11	4:11	
19:23	10:25	
His Kingdom 16:28	Kingdom of God 9:1	

Sharpening the Sword

Charles Dailey
Northwest College of the Bible
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These notes may be copied unless otherwise stated in the text.

CHURCH / KINGDOM

This term *Kingdom* applies to the *church* when speaking of the *Kingdom* on earth.

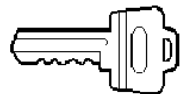
1. It is used interchangeably with *church* in Matthew 16:18.
 - a. I will build by *church* . . .
 - b. I will give you the keys of the *kingdom of heaven*
2. Christ is the King of the *Kingdom*
 - a. He so stated. Luke 23:3
 - b. Paul said this about him. Acts 17:7
3. As King, he overcame the *Kingdom*'s mortal enemy - Death. Hebrews 2:9, Revelation 1:18; Hebrews 2:14, 15.
4. His rightful territory is heaven and earth. Matthew 28:18; 1 Peter 3:22; Mark 16:19. In the light of the authority given to Jesus, those who are outside of his *Kingdom* are rebels to His authority.
5. His words are law. John 12:28; 2 Peter 3:2
6. There are specific citizenship requirements:
 - a. Citizens have to be born into the *Kingdom*. John 3:3
 - b. Remaining requires growth. Colossians 1:10

The *Kingdom* was the subject of John the Baptist's ministry. Matthew 3:2. However, he did not set up the *kingdom* because it was to begin in Jerusalem and we do not have any record of John preaching there. He was not in the *Kingdom*. Matthew 11:11.

The *Kingdom* was the thrust of Jesus' own ministry. Luke 4:43. Healing and his other miracles were to establish his authority in the minds of the multitudes. Luke 9:11.

Our Lord sent out the Twelve that he had trained and their message was the immanence of the *Kingdom*. Matthew 10:5 - 7. Later, he sent out 70 disciples and they preached the same thing. Luke 10:8-11.

Christ taught the disciples to pray for the *Kingdom* to come in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 6:10. He promised the keys of the *Kingdom* to Peter in Matthew 16:19 and Peter used them to unlock the doors for Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2) and Gentiles (Acts 10) at Caesarea.



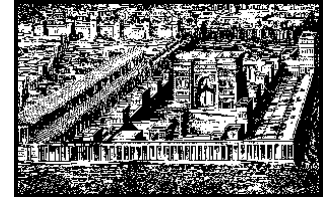
Jesus told his disciples (Mark 9:1) that they would live to see the *kingdom*. He said that he would not again partake of the fruit of the vine until he could partake with the disciples in the *Kingdom*. Matthew 26:29. He communes with us each Lord's Day. 1 Corinthians 10:16.

He promised that his apostles would be ruling judges in the *kingdom*. Luke 22:28-30. This has happened because of the Scriptures they wrote. Ephesians 2:20.



LUKE AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Luke was fascinated with the *Kingdom* and its opening at Jerusalem. His story opens with Zacharias in the temple at Jerusalem. He tells us of the angel promising the *kingdom* to the son of Mary. 1:32. When Joseph and Mary took the baby to the temple in Jerusalem, they heard from the prophet Simeon that he was the Christ. 2:26. On the same trip, Anna the prophetess connected the babe with the redemption of Jerusalem. 2:38. Jesus first recorded words were spoken at Jerusalem. 2:49.



Temple

One of the temptations and Jesus' successful resistance to it was at Jerusalem. 4:9. When Jesus began to travel with the Twelve, their message was the *Kingdom*. 8:1. He reports that the *Kingdom* was to come soon. 9:27. He looks ahead at Jesus' death at Jerusalem and calls it an exodus. As Jesus' ministry moved into high gear, the target was Jerusalem. 9:51; 53. The *kingdom* remained the subject. 9:60 - 62. When the ministry was more mature, Jerusalem was still the goal (13:22) and the death that was to occur there. 13:33-34.

Luke quotes Jesus as predicting his death at Jerusalem to the disciples. 18:31. It is clear that the disciples connected arrival at Jerusalem with the appearance of the *kingdom*. 19:11. As the traveling group neared Jerusalem, the pace of reference to it picks up in the Luke account. Luke 19:28 says that Jerusalem is still the goal.

The story of the Triumphal Entry refers to Jerusalem often. 19:37-48. All of chapter 20 is about confrontations that Jesus had at the temple in Jerusalem. Chapter 21:20 begins a warning about the destruction of Jerusalem and connects the *kingdom* with these events. 21:31. The death and resurrection were at Jerusalem and the apostles were temporarily headquartered there. 24:33. Jesus is quoted as saying that Jerusalem would be the base city for world evangelism. 24:47.



As Luke opens Acts, the *Kingdom* is still on his mind and the risen Christ is at Jerusalem. Acts 1:3. In chapter 2, Luke develops the opening of the *Kingdom* in full detail.

OTHER REFERENCES TO THE PRESENT KINGDOM

Paul sees the *kingdom* as present when he says in Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the *kingdom* of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The *Kingdom* was his message, too. "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the *kingdom* will ever see me again. Acts 20:25.

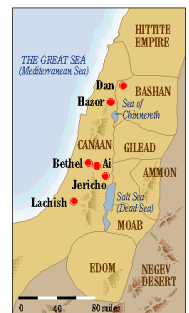
In Romans 14:17, Paul says: For the *kingdom* of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ

in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. The *Kingdom* is present.

There are other passages that show the *Kingdom* was a current reality.¹

WE SHALL INHERIT THE KINGDOM

There is a phase of the *kingdom* yet to come. Today we are citizens of the *kingdom*. At the Judgment, we will *inherit* the territory of the *kingdom*. It is like Israel leaving Egypt. They were citizens of the nation as soon as the nation was formed. However, they did not *inherit* the promised land until they crossed the Jordan and began taking territory. Joshua 1:6 Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to *inherit* the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.



The picture for us is much the same. We are citizens now. Later we *inherit*. 1 Corinthians 15:50 says, I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot *inherit* the *kingdom* of God, nor does the perishable *inherit* the imperishable. Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes will *inherit* all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. Only the overcomers will *inherit*.

¹Revelation 1:6,9; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 4:20.