



THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

“KINGDOM” OR “KINGSHIP”?

In the English versions of the Old Testament and the Gospels, before the day Yahweh raised Jesus as King, we read about “the Kingdom of God” (the term “Kingdom” is the wrong translation, but I’ll explain this later).

After the Father raised Jesus from the dead and declared that He was now to be recognized as having “all authority in heaven and earth,” the term “Kingdom” also began being used in connection to Jesus’ Kingship status as appointed by the Father (Matthew 28:18).

When referring to God’s position and oversight, English Bibles almost universally use the term “kingdom.” They also use the term “kingdom” to refer to Jesus’ Reign. This is a disappointing and confusing stumbling block for Bible students trying to make sense of it all. Plus, I think this wrong translation is not merely a mistake, but has been perpetrated to mislead Bible readers and to support a number of false doctrines including the belief that Jesus is not King now and is waiting somewhere in the sky until some future time when He will literally descend back to Earth ... and only then will He be accepted as King.

LET’S GET IT RIGHT

In the English Bible versions, the Hebrew and Greek words translated as “kingdom” are being mishandled. “Kingdom” is not the right translation of those original words as they first appeared in the Hebrew and the Greek. The translation should be “kingship” or “reign.”

To a new or ill-equipped reader (which is just about all churchgoers) all three of the terms are thought to be interchangeable. But they are not! So what is the difference, and why are the terms “kingship” and “reign” more correct than the term “kingdom?”

The point may seem trivial to some folks. And clearly the church world doesn’t get it. But I am going to show the important doctrinal implications that come from this misuse of the original wording and the mistranslation of these

words. Theologically the differences are great.

The problems this misunderstanding causes are similar to the mishandling of the words “church” and “ecclesia.” These two words are also generally treated as interchangeable by the churches. But they are absolutely not, and I have explained that error in my published treatise “What Is The Ecclesia?” Grasping the difference in these terms has huge ramifications for understanding the message of Christ. This study is available free on my website, benwilliamslibrary.com.

But now back to the difference between “kingdom” and “kingship.” Like the difference between “empire” and “imperium.” One is a place, the other is a condition.

KINGDOM IS A PHYSICAL AREA

The word “kingdom” evokes a vision of an area or location. On the other hand, the terms KINGSHIP and REIGN mean the condition of a king’s reign. His reign is a condition, not a physical area.

KINGSHIP IS A CONDITION

To speak of the “Kingship” of Christ is to speak of his “Reign.” The English word comes from the Greek “basileia.” English versions of the Bible wrongly render this word as “kingdom.” This common error is mostly due to the fact that churches, translators, and Bible publishers promote the error of Dispensationalism and Futurism.

Dispensationalism is a recently developed doctrine introduced in the 1800s by John Nelson Darby. Darby claimed that God designed transitional eras in which his relationship with mankind changes as the eras pass. Thus, God changes his way of dealing with mankind, and this changes the way men are supposed to interpret the Bible.

Darby introduced the idea that God dealt with men one way before the time of Moses, then a different way after the time of Moses. He then claimed that God changed again when Jesus died and supposedly flew away to outer space.

Furthermore, Darby taught that God will change again

when Jesus returns to Earth to start yet another era which the churches call "the Millennium." He referred to these "eras" as "dispensations." They were sections of time in which God "dispensed" his godship differently.

Before Darby this was not the general belief of Bible readers. Then, after Darby, Dispensationalism was championed by Cyrus Schofield who published the Schofield Reference Bible in which he added notes to support the doctrine of Dispensationalism. The false doctrine became popular in the churches and most have adopted it even though God tells us that He never changes:

6. For I am Yahweh, I change not; therefore you sons of Israel are not ended.

Malachi 3:6

The doctrine of Dispensationalism presents people with an unsolvable problem. It causes people to have cognitive dissonance [believing in two mutually exclusive things]. On one hand God tells us He does not change, then on the other hand they are taught to believe that He does change from one dispensation to another.

The ensuing confusion then presents another problem for churchgoers. The other popular church doctrine of Futurism teaches that Jesus is not reigning yet, but rather is waiting in outerspace until He can return to Earth, become King, and initiate the age they call "the Millenium."

This doctrine, of course, is completely false. Jesus has been reigning as King for almost 2000 years.

God's truth and his law do not change. Men change, but God does not. The Ten Commandments have never changed. The Sabbath law has never changed (see Exodus 16:23-29). This incident happened before the Old Covenant was given. Indeed, God refers to his law as early as Genesis 2:16 where God gave commands (laws) to Adam.

Covenants can change, but God's basic law never changes. If God's law changed it would mean that right and wrong changed. But that never happens.

Covenants, on the other hand, are like contracts. Contracts can be added and taken away. And like contracts, covenants contain agreements and specific rules, or ordinances which are created at the time the contract is created. These rules, or laws, apply only to those particular conditions contained in the wording of the contracts. It is contractual law. Contractual law is created anew every time a new contract is agreed upon. When God and Israel agreed to the Sinai Contract (or "Old Covenant") it was a new contract, and it contained new conditions and new laws that applied only to the new conditions listed in that contract. Those added agreements, and the laws that pertained to them, were newly created ... and they were later discarded when the contract (or Old Covenant) was dissolved. It was dissolved at the time of Samuel (see 1 Samuel 8).

The Sinai Contract (the Old Covenant) was added to the basic laws of God at the time of Moses, and likewise the ordinances and laws that pertained to that covenant were added at that time (see Galatians 3:19). These statutes, ordinances, and rituals dealt only with that contract, referred to as "The Old Covenant." And that contract was made only with Israel.

Covenants (contracts) have beginnings and ends. The Old Covenant ended when Israel broke the contract. Israel abandoned God and sought after the Beast System like the other nations around them (see 1 Samuel 8). That was the end of the Old Covenant, but God's basic laws of creation stayed the same. They do not change and do not end. Likewise, God's promises to Israel do not change, and that is why He has not allowed Israel to totally destroy herself, as stated in Malachi 3:6.

Men change. Israel changes. But God does not change. God's Kingship is dependable and unchanging. The societies and areas that recognize and honor God's Sovereignty always remain in God's Reign, and his laws do not change. His sovereignty and laws are unchanged.

GOD IS OUR ONLY LAWMAKER

22. For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our lawgiver, Yahweh is our king; He will save us.

Isaiah 33:22

12. There is one lawgiver, having power to save and to destroy:

James 4:12

The churches teach that God's law has been done away. They say that men can create law. They have perverted the words and concepts of the Scriptures. This is an important distinction and deserves our attention. Who is lawmaker, and who is not? The oldest and worst sin on record is man's attempt to usurp God's position as lawmaker. When men make laws everything goes bad. That is why Scripture carefully tells us that only God can rightfully make our laws. Men can administer God's laws, but man is not supposed to take it upon himself to make law.

That gets us back to the question of kingship. God is the only lawmaker, and He has appointed Jesus as King over men. Jesus, as King, promotes and enforces God's law, but Jesus himself does not make law. There is only ONE Sovereign lawmaker. He is Yahweh.

The Old Testament Hebrew word which the churches consistently translate wrongly as "kingdom" is the Hebrew word "mamlakah." It is a form of the word "melek" which means "king." "Mamlakah" refers not to a physical area but to the reign or the status of being a king.

By the same token, the New Testament Greek word is "basileia" which the churches have translated "kingdom." Basileia is a form of "basileús" which means "king." So "basileia" refers to the reign or status of being a king. Likewise, the Greek term does not refer to a place or physical area, but rather to a king's reign or influence.

For instance, the word "leadership" is not a physical area or piece of land, but rather a status or condition. Also, "reign" and "kingship" refer to status, condition, or state of affair.

Bottom line: the Reign of Christ is not a location, a physical city, or a place. Rather it is a state of affair. In this case, it is the status or condition of Jesus being King and reigning. It is not about an area over which Jesus is King. Rather it is about Jesus being King. Jesus' Kingship is

authorized under Yahweh's Sovereignty.

Thus, the best translation of "basileia" is "kingship" or "reign" whether referring to God's Reign, or Christ's Reign. So every time you read "kingdom" in your English version Bibles, just remember that in most instances it is more correctly translated "kingship" or "reign."

In the New Testament, when it refers to "the Reign of God" or "the Reign of Heaven" is talking about a universal condition of kingship. It says that God reigns, heaven reigns, or Christ reigns. "Heaven," when used in this context, refers to high office, not a physical place in outer space. As when we refer to something being "heavenly," whether a tasty food or a comfy chair, we mean it is delightful. We are not talking about a place or an area.

So, how do we access this kingship? Who can enter?

HOW DO WE ENTER?

1. *And he (Jesus) said to them, Verily I say to you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingship of God come with power.*

Mark 9:1

The Kingship of God was already there, but few men could see it because they had blinded themselves to it. Jesus came to them to bring "sight to the blind." Jesus was declaring that some of those present with Him at that time would regain their spiritual sight to see (perceive) the Kingship in their lifetimes.

The Kingship of God has been available to men from the beginning. Adam and Eve were offered citizenship under God's Kingship, but they chose to be their own lawmakers and they rejected God's offer.

Many years later, when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, the tempter (probably a preacher or politician) tried to get Jesus to do the same and rebel against God and exert his own powers and make his own laws. The test was the same one that Adam failed. But Jesus didn't fail. He always replied that He must obey God.

One example Jesus gave us to help us understand the nature of the Kingship of God was in Luke 18:

15. *And they brought to Him also infants, that He might touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.*

16. *But Jesus called them, and said, Let little children come to me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingship of God.*

17. *Truly I say to you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingship of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.*

Luke 18:15-17

As can be seen in this passage, God's Kingship must be accepted with a childlike faith and honesty.

This clearly is talking about Jesus receiving God's appointment as King which was laid out in Matthew 28:

18. *And Jesus coming to them, speaks saying, All authority is given to me in heaven and on the earth.*

19. *Go therefore, and teach all the nations, ...*

20. *Teaching them to keep all things what ever I command you: and, lo, I am with you all the days, to the end of the age.*

Matthew 28:18-20

Here Jesus clearly states the time of his Reign. It is "all the days to the end of the age." What age? He was talking about the age of his New Covenant Reign. It began when God raised Him from the tomb and declared that He was the new King and men should listen to Him and obey Him.

The Book of Acts is the record of the beginning of the Reign of Jesus. It began back then, and continues today. It verifies Jesus' appointment and authority as King ... as God set Him in his office at his right hand.

And again, in Matthew 19:

27. *Then Peter replies and says to Him (Jesus) , Behold, we forsake all things, and follow you; what then will be to us?*

28. *But Jesus says to them, Truly I say to you, That you who follow me, in the new birth when the Son of man may sit upon the throne of his glory, also you shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

29. *And every one who leaves houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, on account of my name, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit eonian life.*

30. *But many first shall be last; and last shall be first.*

Matthew 19:27-30

WHO CAN SEE IT?

In verse 28 Jesus says that to follow Him required man to have a new birth. This explains that the things that are important and come first in God's system usually come last in men's system. Thus, many who are considered unimportant in man's system are considered very important in God's system. That is the nature of Christ's Reign. It rates men opposite from the way the Beast System rates them. Those who are "last" in the Beast System are actually "first" under the current Reign of Christ.

28. *But we know that for those loving God all things are working together for good to those being called according to preplan.*

29. *For whom he foreknows, he also preplans to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Romans 8:29

A man must be born from above in order to receive the sight and the life that Christ offers. Then he can perceive, or “see,” God’s Kingship. That means that people are blind to God’s ways or Christ’s Reign unless they are born again.

4. *In Him (Jesus) was existing life; and the life was being the light of men.*
5. *And the light now shines in darkness; and the darkness overcomes it not.*
12. *But as many as receives Him, to them he gives authority to become the children of God, even to them that are believing in his name.*

John 1:4-5, 12

3. *Truly, I say to you, Except a man be born from above, he cannot perceive the kingship of God.*
5. *Jesus answered, Truly, truly I say to you, if anyone is not born of water and of spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingship of God.*
6. *Marvel not that I say to you, you must be born again.*

16. *... everyone believing in Him (Jesus) should not be lost, but have eonian life (the life Jesus gives to those who believe in Him).*

John 3:3

Jesus was speaking to his disciples about life and light that He was offering right then. The light (understanding), and eonian life, were available to men at that time. Jesus offered light, life, and sight to the blind. Most of Israel had been blind until they were born again into the Reign of Jesus (see Romans 11:25-27). The same is true for Christ’s Kingship today.

SAME MESSAGE, DIFFERENT TIME

26. *Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;*
27. *A blessing, if you obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I command you this day:*
28. *And a curse, if you will not obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which you have not known.*

Deuteronomy 11:26-28

15. *See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.*
16. *In that I command you this day to love Yahweh your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes and his judgments, that you may live and multiply; and Yahweh your God shall bless you in the land whither you go to possess it.*

17. *But if your heart turns away, so that you will not hear, but will be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;*
18. *I denounce to you this day, that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land, ...*
19. *I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live:*
20. *That you may love Yahweh your God, and that you may obey his voice, and that you may cleave to Him: for He is your life, and the length of your days: that you may dwell in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.*

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Jesus reminds us that God does not change.

17. *Think not that I am come to abolish the law, or the prophets: I am not come to abolish, but to enact.*
18. *For verily I say to you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all shall be manifested.*
19. *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 5:17-19

Here, Jesus clearly explains how life flows in his present Reign. Those who believe and follow God are blessed, and those who don’t believe or follow God are cursed. That’s just the way it is. Look around you and you can see it.

2. *And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and those conquering over the beast, and over its image, ... standing on the sea of glass, ...*
3. *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are your ways, you King of the nations.*

Revelation 15:2-3

Here the saints are singing two songs. One is the song of Moses (i.e., the message Moses gave Israel in Deuteronomy 11 & 30 - see above). The second song was the song of the Lamb (Jesus). You see, God does not change. Jesus’ present Kingship continues the song of Moses. Both tell us that God does not change.

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