



Different Kingdoms

No careful Bible student takes the position that every time the word “kingdom” occurs in the Bible it refers to the kingdom of Christ on earth or the church. It was pointed out by H. Leo Boles in the Boles-Boll Debate that “as applied to God’s power or dominion,” the “kingdom of God” may have five applications:

1. **God’s physical kingdom.** His natural laws govern all animal and vegetable life. (2)
2. **God’s ethical or moral kingdom.** Moral government in the world argues a moral governor (Psa. 103:19; Dan. 4:25. 32. 34-36; Psa. 22:28; 93:2).
3. **God’s kingdom of fleshly Israel** (2 Sam. 5:12; 1 Kgs. 9:3-7: 11:11).
4. **God’s eternal kingdom—heaven** (Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 4:18; 2 Pet. 1:11).
5. **God’s kingdom of Christ—the church.**

For premillennialists to deny that the “kingdom” of Daniel 2:44; 7:18-19; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; and Matthew 16:19 is the same institution as the “church” of Matthew 10:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:28-29; Colossians 1:18, 24; and 1 Timothy 3:15 is nothing new, but for persons who deny anything in common with the “future kingdom on earth” advocates, likewise to deny that these and other passages identify the church with the kingdom is doctrine that cannot long go unnoticed and unchallenged. It will behoove lovers of “**the house of God which is the church of the living God**” (1 Tim. 3:15), the kingdom of Jesus Christ our Lord, and His only kingdom peculiar to this earth, to be “**set for the defense of the gospel**” (Phil. 1:17).

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church ceases on this earth at the same time the kingdom comes to an end on this earth.

It is objected that Peter speaks of “**the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (2 Pet. 1:11). True enough, but that is not the “kingdom” under consideration here for the context shows that kingdom is one that shall be entered as a result of adding the so-called “Christian graces” (2 Pet. 1:3-10). That kingdom will not have the same laws nor the same territory nor men in the flesh as subjects, nor will Christ reign in that kingdom in the same relationship to the Father as He reigns now (1 Cor. 15:24-20).



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Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
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The Church Is the Kingdom

By James R. Cope

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
10:00 AM
11:00 AM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
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Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

Within the past twenty years [i.e. 1932-1952] much has been written and spoken about the “church phase of the kingdom” in connection with premillennialism. For the most part the influence of those who would deny the “**eternal purpose**” of God in and through the church has been curbed (Eph. 3:11). A few years ago, there arose a school of-thought not identified with premillennialism but nevertheless denying that the church and the kingdom are the same. Though by no means agreed among themselves on all points, some exponents of the idea take the old Missionary Baptist position that the church began during the personal ministry of Jesus and contend likewise that the kingdom is more comprehensive and inclusive than the church or that the church does not include the kingdom in its entirety.

The Essential Elements of a Kingdom

Destroy the necessary elements of any person, thing, or institution and that person, thing, or institution is destroyed. The thing itself cannot exist without its necessary elements. An element may exist yet have no significance in relation to some other person or thing unless connected or united with that other person or thing. Hydrogen and oxygen unite to form water. Either of these chemical elements may exist separate from the other but water cannot exist without both. Each has its peculiar qualities but when united in water these qualities are lost in the liquid formed. Hydrogen alone cannot slake thirst but as an essential element of water it makes physical life possible.

A kingdom cannot exist without a king, subjects, laws, and territory. Remove or destroy any one of these essential elements and the nature of the institution itself is changed. It is possible to use metonymy and speak of a part and mean the whole or speak of the whole and mean a part or parts, but the whole cannot be considered actually and literally in the absence of any of its parts. A king may make a decree, for example, and men say, "It is the kingdom's decree that such and such be done," but all understand that "kingdom" as here used refers only to the king (the whole put for a part). Again, "The kingdom declares so and so," and men speak of what the king says, yet everybody knows that law, subjects, and territory are involved in that declaration (a part put for the whole). Metonymy occurs frequently in the Bible, was often employed by Jesus and the apostles, and sometimes was used with reference to the kingdom, but in no instance is the kingdom of Christ on earth contemplated as existing with all its essential elements prior to Pentecost and nowhere is this same kingdom contemplated with its same essential

elements following the Second Coming of Christ and the judgment of the world.

No kingdom can exist in reality without king, subjects, law, and territory. Remove any one of these elements and no kingdom can exist in fact. One may be called a king but unless he rules subjects by law over a given territory he is not part of a kingdom in fact. Men may be called subjects but without statutes to declare the king's will within certain boundaries they are not part of a kingdom in fact. Statutes may be written, but with no subjects to heed them, no king to enforce them, and no territory over which they extend they are not part of a kingdom in fact. Likewise, territory may exist without a king to subdue it, citizens to honor it, or laws to define its borders. It takes all of these—king, citizens, statutes, and territory—to constitute a kingdom in the complete sense of the word, and this is as true of the kingdom "**not of this world**" (John 18:36) as it is of "**the powers that be**" of this world (Rom. 13:1).

In any kingdom authority must reside somewhere and in an absolute monarchy it is vested always in the king. The king is the source of all authority or power. It is his prerogative to will and decree. Laws or statutes are the means by which he declares his will. Subjects are the recipients of his will through the laws he makes known in words. Territory is properly the area which the king rules.

When the kingdom of Christ is analyzed in view of the foregoing considerations it is found to coincide in every detail. Jesus Christ himself is the king claiming and possessing all authority. He has made known his will through words supplied directly by the Holy Spirit; hence, his law. Those who willingly yield their hearts and lives to the Spirit's law (Rom. 8:2) are his subjects. This earth is the territory of the kingdom or, to be more explicit, wherever a willing subject of the king is found on earth there the scepter of the king holds sway.

The Kingdom and the Church

Because the word *church* and the word *kingdom* do not mean the same it does not necessarily follow that they are not the same thing. Words may signify different meanings yet refer to the same institution. The words *church* and *body* have different meanings, yet the church is called "**the body**" of Christ (Eph. 1:22). The church is also called the "**house of God**" (1 Tim. 8:15), a "**temple**" (1 Cor. 3:17), "**building**" (Eph. 2:21), and "**household**" (Eph. 2:19). These various terms emphasize different features of the church—its family, worship, fellowship features,

etc. Likewise, when the church is called a kingdom its governmental feature is brought into prominence.

When the church and kingdom are studied, they are found to agree in the following particulars: (1) The source of authority or the head, (2) the laws, (3) the subjects, and (4) the territory. As observed above each of these is an essential element to the kingdom's existence. It will now be seen that the church has these same essential points.

CHRIST

Head of the church (Eph 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18)

King of the kingdom (Acts 17:7; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 1:5; 17:14)

LAWS

Of the church

Of the kingdom

(Heb. 12:28; 13:9; Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 3:15)

SUBJECTS

Members of the body (1 Cor. 12:13)

Citizens of kingdom (Eph. 2:19)

Washing of water by word (Eph. 5:25): church

Born of water and the spirit (John 3:5): kingdom

Placed in the body (1 Cor. 12:13): church

Translated into kingdom (Col. 1:13): kingdom

Saved added (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 47): church

Born again (John 3:3-5): kingdom

TERRITORY

Of church (Col. 3:15): heart

Of kingdom (Heb. 8:10): heart

CHURCH SAME AS KINGDOM (Heb. 12:18-29)

"Not to Sinai" (v. 18)

"But to Zion" (v. 22)

"To CHURCH of firstborn" (v. 23)

"Wherefore we receiving a KINGDOM" (v. 28)

A study of the above passages reveals that the church and kingdom are identical in the chief executive, His laws, His subjects, and His territory or realm of influence. It is impossible for one to be in the kingdom and not be in the church and equally impossible for one to be in the church and out of the kingdom. Members of the church are citizens of the

kingdom and vice versa. Christ does not have one institution on earth called the "**kingdom**" and another called the "**church**." The law of admission into both is the same and the laws governing conduct of subjects are identical. Both are confined to earth while their chief executive is in heaven and the heart of the subject is the realm of influence in this world. Further identity of the church and kingdom as one and the same is revealed in Matthew 16:18-19, where the Lord declares, "**I will build my church**" and said to Peter, "**I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.**" In one breath he calls it "**my church**" and in the next "**the kingdom of heaven.**"

Confine the reign of Christ to the abode of men and it is impossible to distinguish between the kingdom of Christ and the church of Christ except as to the feature emphasized in each term. To further emphasize this, point the duration of both may be considered. So far as the writer knows none argues that the church will continue beyond the Second Coming of Christ end judgment, for men will cease to be "**called out**" from the world "**by the gospel**" with that event (2 Thess. 1:7-10), but at that point shall also come Christ's delivering up of the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:24-26): thus the