**Kingdom of Heaven**

Jesus often talked about the Kingdom of Heaven in his ministry (around 24 times in Matthew) but what was it? Is it a place, a belief, an attitude or frame of mind? Are we there now or do we have to wait till we die? What do I need to do to find it, earn it, receive it,…? If this was so important that Jesus often talked about it then why does the concept seem so elusive and shouldn’t we spend some time understanding it.

In the [Gospel of Matthew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew) the phrase “Kingdom of Heaven“ is often used during Jesus teaching while the [Gospels of Mark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark) and Luke use the phrase "[kingdom of God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingship_and_kingdom_of_God)".

The phrase “kingdom of heaven” occurs only in the Gospel of Matthew and is used 32 times. The phrase “kingdom of God” occurs 68 times in 10 different New Testament books.

There are many interpretations of what this kingdom is.

Some have interpreted the Kingdom of Heaven/God as the process whereby God begins to reign / act as king by manifesting himself in the world.

Others interpret it as the process where God is making the world right again by calling all people to himself, through Jesus Christ, and the more we yield to God the closer the kingdom Gets.

The Lord’s prayer may reflect this theory when we pray “may your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven”

Many believe the Kingdom of God to be a place like Heaven

# Luke 13:29-30 People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. Indeed, there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.”

# Luke 22:28-30 “You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Some have suggested the Kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are two different things. With one being within the heart of the redeemed (spiritual in nature - KG) and the other coming in the end times when the risen Savior returns to Earth to rule (physical in nature - KH). Jesus uses both when talking to the rich young ruler:

Matthew 19:23-24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom of heaven**. Again, I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom of God**.”

But we find Mark and Luke using “kingdom of God” where Matthew used “kingdom of heaven” in parallel accounts of the same parables suggesting they are the same thing. Some examples include:

* [Matthew 13:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2013.11) vs [Mark 4:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark%204.11) and [Luke 8:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%208.10)
* [Matthew 13:31](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2013.31) vs [Mark 4:30](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark%204.30) and [Luke 13:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2013.18);
* [Matthew 18:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2018.3) vs [Mark 10:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark%2010.14) and [Luke 18:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2018.16);
* [Matthew 22:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2022.2) vs [Luke 13:29](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2013.29).

If you search the internet you will find many who support that the two terms are the same and many that support that they have different meanings and they all suggest different interpretations of what the terms mean.

-So let’s look deeper into what these terms might mean-

***What Did Jesus say about the kingdom Of Heaven/God***

Jesus Describes the Character of the Citizens of Heaven in the Beatitudes. For example:

[**Matthew 5:3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:3&version=NIV)*it belongs to the Poor in spirit*

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the **kingdom** **of** **heaven**.

[**Matthew 5:10**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:10&version=NIV) *it belongs to the Persecuted*

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the **kingdom** **of** **heaven**.

# [Luke 17:21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+17%3A21&version=NIV) It is in your midst

# Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst.” (KJV “Is within You”)

[**Matthew 4:17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+4:17&version=NIV)*we must Repent*

*From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”*

[**Matthew 5:19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:19&version=NIV) we must t*each and practice his commands*

Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the **kingdom** **of** **heaven**, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the **kingdom** **of** **heaven**.

[**Matthew 5:20**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5:20&version=NIV) *We must surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees*

For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the **kingdom** **of** **heaven**.

[**Matthew 7:21**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+7:21&version=NIV) Must do *the will of God*

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the **kingdom** **of** **heaven**, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

[**Matthew 8:11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+8:11&version=NIV)We will feast with Abraham

I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the **kingdom** **of** **heaven**.

[**Matthew 11:11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+11:11&version=NIV)*Greater than John the Baptist*

Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the **kingdom** **of** **heaven** is greater than he.

[**Matthew 13:24**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13:24&version=NIV) *separates the good from the bad*

Jesus told them another parable: “The **kingdom of heaven** is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

 “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them.  Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

[**Matthew 13:31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13:31&version=NIV)**-32** *It grows*

He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

[**Matthew 13:33**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13:33&version=NIV)*It spreads*

He told them still another parable: “The **kingdom** **of heaven** is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

[**Matthew 13:44**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13:44&version=NIV)*Give up everything to have it*

“The **kingdom** **of** **heaven** is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

[**Matthew 13:45**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13:45&version=NIV)*Give up everything to have it*

“Again, the **kingdom of heaven** is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it

[**Matthew 13:47**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13:47&version=NIV)*Separate the good from the Bad*

“Once again, the **kingdom of heaven** is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.

[**Matthew 13:52**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+13:52&version=NIV)*is a new treasure*

He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the **kingdom** **of** **heaven** is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

[**Matthew 18:3**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18:3&version=NIV)*Must become like a Child*

And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the **kingdom** **of** **heaven**.

[**Matthew 18:23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18:23&version=NIV)*Forgive others*

 “Therefore, the **kingdom of heaven** is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.  As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’  The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

**Matthew 20:1-16** *We are all rewarded Equally/ God’s offers grace to all*

"For the **kingdom of heaven** is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. "When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. "And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the market place; read more. He pays them all the same

**Matthew 22:1-14** *Not all are willing*

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, "**The kingdom of heaven** may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.

**Matthew 25:1-13** *Must be prepared*

"Then the **kingdom of heaven** will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. "Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. "For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,

**The Kingdom of God**

the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God seem interchangeable. As Matthew often stated Kingdom of Heaven where Luke and Mark would write Kingdom of God when documenting the same parables. Some theologians suggest they are different

[**Matthew 12:28**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+12:28&version=NIV) *Has come*

But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the **kingdom** **of** **God** has come upon you.

[**Matthew 21:31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21:31&version=NIV)*Sinners are entering*

There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ “‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go. “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you; the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the **kingdom of God** ahead of you

[**Matthew 21:43**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21:43&version=NIV)*You must produce fruit*

“Therefore, I tell you that the **kingdom** **of** **God** will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.

[**Mark 1:15**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+1:15&version=NIV)*The time has come*

“The time has come,” he said. “The **kingdom** **of** **God** has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

[**Mark 9:1**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+9:1&version=NIV)*The time has come*

And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the **kingdom** **of** **God** has come with power.”

[**Mark 10:15**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10:15&version=NIV) *Must be like a child*

Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the **kingdom** **of** **God** like a little child will never enter it.”

[**Mark 10:23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10:23&version=NIV) *Hard for the Rich to enter*

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the **kingdom** **of** **God**!”

[**Mark 10:25**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10:25&version=NIV)*Hard for the Rich to enter*

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom** **of** **God**.”

[**Mark 12:34**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+12:34&version=NIV)

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the **kingdom of God**.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

**Luke 18:29-30** *Have to put all else behind*

And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the **kingdom of God**, who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

**Putting it all together**

**If we put together all the things Jesus says about the Kingdom of heaven it would go something like this:**

To be part of the Kingdom we need to be like a child, repent of our sins, believe in Jesus, be poor in spirit, use our talents wisely, Not be rich, forgive others, produce fruit and be prepared to receive it.

We need to Love the Lord our God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and Love our neighbor as our self, then we are not far from the Kingdom.

We need to be willing to be persecuted for our righteousness, that has to surpasses that of the Pharisees, by doing the will of the Father so that we can be called great in the **Kingdom of Heaven** but onlyIf we practice and teach Jesus commands**.**

We know the Kingdom of Heaven has come near, grows like a tree, spreads like yeast, has already come and those who find it will give up everything to have it! The good will be separated from the bad in the end and the good will have a feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Not everyone will receive it or want it and the enemy will try to steal it and others will try to force their way in.

The Kingdom is wherever Christ (God) is and it is now & it is yet to come

**My Thoughts**

As Christians we often think that God’s purpose is to get everyone to believe in Him and his son so we can get to heaven when we die. But Jesus prayed in Matthew 6:10 Let your kingdom come and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven which would lead us to believe that the Kingdom, he is talking about exist, here on Earth.

# The Bible tells us that when we except Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior that he comes and lives in us

# Galatians 2:20: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

# The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit lives in us

# 1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

# If we have the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ living in us, who are from heaven, and we ourselves no longer live in the flesh, then are we not part of the Kingdom of Heaven at the moment they come in?

# Colossians 1:13-14 For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us (Past tense) into the kingdom of the Son he loves, whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

We see here that God brought (“transferred” (ESV)) us into His Kingdom when we commit our lives to Him. So, we put behind our life, focused and aligned with the world, and we become part of God’s Kingdom. So, the Kingdom would be the process where God is making the world right again by calling all people to himself, through Jesus Christ, and the more we yield to God the closer the kingdom becomes. So, when we except Jesus Christ as our lord then God comes into our lives and takes over and we have heaven here on earth.

**But Wait**! Just when you begin to think you understand:

[**Luke 19:11-26**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+19%3A11-26&version=NIV) (won’t come to Jesus returns)

While they were listening to this, **he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.** He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘**until I come back**. …

This seems to suggest The **Kingdom of God** won’t happen till Jesus returns. So, is it here now, is it coming in the future, is it part of a process where we join the Kingdom now but won’t fully experience it till the second coming? Maybe the kingdom is where ever Jesus is and if he is in your heart then you are a part of the kingdom but the kingdom will not be complete till the second coming.

**And then there is this:**

Matthew 13:41-42 **The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.** They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (So is there sin and evil in the kingdom??)

# Luke 16:16 “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. (how can people force their way in??? see comments at the bottom)

**The Invitation**

Matthew 22 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: “**The kingdom of heaven** is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ “But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ **So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.**

“But when the king came in to see the guests, **he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes**. He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless. “Then the king told the attendants, ‘**Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness,** where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ **“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”**

We see here the reluctant wedding guests are the Jews. God’s Chosen people to inherit His Kingdom. He sent prophets to turn the hearts of His people back to Him after they had fallen away. But the Israelites had turned away from Him to worship other gods. God continued to warn them but still they refused to repent.

God did not give up on mankind. He desired to find someone to follow Him so He sent His servants to the Gentiles and invited them in to the kingdom.

But not everyone invited will accepts Jesus (they will refuse the garment) and be thrown into the darkness. (Here it sounds like they made it into the Kingdom of Heaven but then were cast out)

“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

**🡪The invitation is for everyone, but only some will respond**.

**Will You?**

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**Forcing their way in**

Luke 16:16 “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it.

The last phrase of 16:16 is hard to interpret. It appears in both Matthew and Luke:

Luke 16:16 "Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way (Greek biazo,) into it."

Matthew 11:12 "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing (Greek biazo,), and forceful men (biastes) lay hold (harpazo) of it."

These are the only two verses in the New Testament where the Greek verb biazo is used, which makes it difficult to have certainty about how the word is being used. "In Greek literature **biazo is most often used in the unfavorable sense of attack or forcible restraint**."

The most recent Greek-English Lexicon gives four possible definitions of biazo in these two verses: (1) "to inflict violence on, 'dominate, constrain,' (2) to gain an objective by force, 'use force,' (3) to go after something with enthusiasm, 'seek fervently, try hard,' or (4) 'constrain (warmly).'

The noun used in Matthew, Greek biastes, is used in other literature in a negative sense, "violent, impetuous person."

Maybe Jesus is saying that people must actively, aggressively, forcibly seek entrance into the Kingdom. You don't enter the Kingdom of God by just reading the bible or following family tradition. A number of Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom indicate an active taking hold of the Kingdom.

* Giving up everything for the treasure hidden in the field and for the pearl of great price (Matthew 13:44-46).
* Radical action was required of the rich young ruler (Mark 10:21).
* Luke 9:23 Take up your cross and follow me