

The Introduction of God's Kingdom in Scripture

Text / Memory Verse

Luke 11:20 *But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

Introduction

What does “Kingdom of God” actually mean?

It is not about a place, it is about rule.

When Jesus started preaching, He kept saying “The Kingdom of God is near” (Mark 1:15).

But what did He mean? It was not about a country with borders. It was about God's rule breaking into earth through Him.

And notice: Matthew says “Kingdom of Heaven”, Luke says “Kingdom of God”. They are one and the same. Let us see why.

Objectives

To understand what “the Kingdom of God / Heaven” means.

To see why the phrase appears in the New Testament, not in the Old.

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To understand the difference between “heaven” and “heavens”.

Presentation

1. What the Phrase Means

(1) Kingdom of Heaven versus Kingdom of God. Matthew wrote for Jewish readers. Jews avoided saying God’s name directly because they felt “unclean lips” were not fit to say it (Matt. 13:33). So Matthew used “Kingdom of Heaven” as a respectful substitute. Luke wrote for Gentiles, therefore he used “Kingdom of God” freely (Luke 13:20-21). It is the same kingdom.

(2) What “Kingdom” actually means.

The Greek word ‘basileia’ means rule, sovereignty, government, dominion.

It is not a location first. It is a king ruling his people. So “Kingdom of God” equates to God’s rule, God’s government in action.

(3) Why the Jews were waiting.

They were under Roman rule and expected God to step in and restore Israel (Acts 1:6-8). They thought “Kingdom” meant political freedom. Jesus showed that it meant spiritual rule first.

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2. When the Phrase Appeared

The first written use is in the Book of Wisdom around 50 BC (Wis. 10:10), before John the Baptist.

Note that the Book of Wisdom is in “the Apocrypha”, which are non-canonical books in Church Tradition. The phrase never appears in the Old Testament.

By Jesus’s time it was a current idea, but not a common everyday phrase.

It became the central theme of Jesus’s preaching in Matthew, Mark, and Luke (Mark 1:15).

3. Heaven vs Heavens

Think of it like Aso Rock Villa and Nigeria:

- * Aso Rock Villa is the seat of power for Nigeria.
- * Heaven is God’s seat of power.

The heavens are the realm where spiritual beings live - the “heavenly places” or “hades” (Eph. 2:6, 3:10).

God, who heads heaven, created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1).

The earth is the visible copy of what is in the invisible heavens (Gen. 2:4-5). Everything in the

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first chapter of Genesis existed in the spiritual realm before it manifested physically, just as plants existed in the heavens before rain made them visible on earth.

Conclusion

The Kingdom of God is God's rule arriving on earth through Jesus. When He casts out demons, heals, and forgives, that is the Kingdom showing up (Luke 11:20). It starts spiritually, in hearts, and then changes the visible world.

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. What influenced the use of "Kingdom of Heaven" in Matthew?
 - * Jewish reverence for God's name. The Jewish people avoided saying "God" directly, so Matthew used "Heaven" as a substitute. Same meaning, different audience.
2. Mention two synonyms for the word 'kingdom'.
 - * 'Rule' and 'Dominion'. Also: sovereignty, government, suzerainty.

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3. After 400 years of no prophecy in Israel, which prophet emerged?
 - * John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2). He announced “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”
4. Using Aso Rock Villa and Nigeria, differentiate between ‘heaven’ and ‘heavens’.
 - * Heaven is like Aso Rock Villa - heaven is the seat of power where God rules.
 - * The heavens are like Nigeria - the larger realm or domain that heaven governs. The heavens include the spiritual realm where angels, spirits, and disembodied souls exist (Eph. 3:10).
5. The Kingdom of Heaven headed by Jehovah created the heavens by means of what?
 - * By His Word. God spoke, and it was done (Gen. 1:3, Ps. 33:6, 9). His Word carries the power to create and sustain both heaven and the heavens.

Prayer

Father, thank You for bringing Your Kingdom near through Jesus. Open my eyes to see where You are ruling right now. Help me submit to Your rule in my heart so that Your Kingdom can show up in my life. Amen.