

19. WHEN KINGDOM OF GOD MEANS THE MESSIANIC REIGN

The verses in this section are all in a future context as they relate to the Messianic reign of Jesus and his monarchy after his return to Earth. Some verses deal with the inauguration and consummation of the thousand-year reign while others deal with the character of the reign. Some verses relate to the monarchy; their qualification for entering the reign, the hierarchy within the reign, and their feasting at the king's table. As most amillennialists don't believe in a future, earthly, Messianic reign, they must interpret these passages differently. The present interpretation is natural, literal, and harmonious with all the kingdom of God/kingdom of Heaven verses. The Messianic reign describes the kingship in action whether by the king or his monarchy.

The future chronology of the reign

Mk 11:10 Blessed is our ancestor David's descendant who is coming to reign! Let our welcome reach the sky!

Lk 1:32-33 He'll be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will install him on his ancestor David's throne, and he'll be king of Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom (reign) will never end.

Lk 19:11 While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable because he was near Jerusalem and they thought that the kingdom of God (Messianic reign) would appear at once.

Acts 1:3 After his death, he showed himself to them so they knew without doubt that he was alive. He appeared to them for forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God (Messianic reign).

Acts 1:6 When they had gathered together, they asked him, saying: Lord, is it at this time that you are going to restore Israel's kingdom?

1 Cor 15:24-25 After that the end will come, and the Messiah will hand over the kingdom (kingship) to God the Father after having destroyed all dominion, authority, and power, for he must reign until God has put all his enemies under his feet.

Col 4:11 Those are my only Jewish co-workers (in proclaiming) the kingdom of God (Messianic reign).

2 Tim 4:1 In the sight of God and of Jesus the Messiah who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom (subsequent reign), I give you this charge:

An earthly reign by the Messiah was the fervent hope of first-century Israel. Gabriel confirmed this hope to Mary when he told her that her son would rule over Israel forever on David's throne. God had promised David on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne (2 Sam 17:12-13, Acts 2:30). According to Psalm 2, God will install his king on Zion, his holy mountain, and make the nations his inheritance and the ends of the Earth his possession.

During the forty days before Jesus ascended to heaven, his message to his disciples was about the kingdom, so his disciples enquired about whether he would now revive Israel's kingdom. He didn't deny it would happen, but indicated that it would not be soon because they had a commission to be his witnesses to the ends of the Earth and that would take a long time. Paul charged Timothy in the sight of God and the Messiah Jesus, and in view of Jesus' appearance on Earth and subsequent reign, to preach the word. He was expecting Jesus to return to Earth to judge the living and the dead and to reign.

The apostle John informs us that the kingdom will last for a thousand years, after which the Earth and the heavens will pass away, the wicked will be judged, and death will be annihilated. Having subdued all enemies, Jesus will hand his kingship back to the Father who gave it to him. However, he and his bride, the Church, will continue to reign forever in the heavenly realm. The Bible does not say that there will be a new creation.

The Character of the Reign

John 18:36 Jesus said: My kingdom (kingship) is not from this world. If my kingship was from this world, my servants would have fought to prevent me being handed over to the Jewish leaders. As a matter of fact, my kingdom (kingship) is not from here.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God (Messianic reign) is not about eating and drinking, it's about righteousness, peace, and the joy the Holy Spirit gives.

1 Cor 4:20 For the kingdom of God (Messianic reign) is not established by talk but by power.

Heb 1:8 But concerning the Son, he says: Your throne (reign), O God, will last forever and ever, and the scepter of your kingdom (reign) is a scepter of justice.

Rev 11:15 The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and loud voices in heaven, saying: The kingdom of the world (world's kingship) now belongs to our Lord and his Messiah, and he'll reign forever and ever.

Rev 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying: Our God has saved us now. His power and his kingdom (reign) and the authority of his Messiah have been revealed, for the accuser who accuses our brethren before God day and night has been cast down.

Jesus told Pilate that his kingdom was not from this world, it was from another place. He was saying that he was not a part of world politics, his kingship had its source in God. God will give him sovereignty over the world and all nations will worship him and his glory will fill the temple during his millennial rule (Isa 9:6-7, Eze 43:2-5, Zech 9:10b).

The blowing of the seventh trumpet is the climax of the final tribulation period (Rev 6-18). It announces the Messiah's arrival and the beginning of his earthly reign. You have taken up your great power and begun to reign (Rev 11:17). The celebration is repeated in Revelation 19:6 and in both announcements, the verb 'reign' is in the aorist. It happens at a point in time, best translated as 'has begun to reign' or 'has become king.' The celebration is in heaven, but the

context is the Messiah's defeat of the nations on Earth and the inauguration of his kingdom on Earth. The world's kingship now belongs to our Lord and his Messiah. This is a future event that occurs at Jesus' return to Earth and should not be confused with his ascension to heaven. It is at this time that the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven are given to the saints of the high places (Dan 7:27).

There will be a total change in the character of world rule caused by a change in government from Satan to the Messiah. Since the fall of man, Satan has led the whole world astray (Rev 12:9) and the world is still under his control (1 John 5:19). Jesus is not yet reigning on Earth! But John saw a vision of the Messiah's birth (Rev 12:5), a man who would rule the nations with an iron rod. Jesus gave his life on the cross to redeem lost mankind, and the tribulation martyrs will also surrender their lives, triumphing over Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. There is no pretribulation rapture! It is the overcomers from the churches who lay down their lives and win the victory, conquering Satan so that he can no longer accuse them before God. He is thrown down from heaven and during the last 3 ½ years, he, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet will do their best to destroy God's plan, by exterminating Israel and the Church, but they will not succeed.

Qualifications for Entering the Reign

We have seen above that one must be born again to enter the Messianic monarchy. That occurs in the present time and we are still only heirs. The following verses are about a future time when we will enter the Messianic reign.

Mt 5:5 Blessed are the humble, for they'll inherit the Earth.

Mt 7:21 Not everyone who says to me: Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy), but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Mt 13:41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they'll remove from his kingdom (reign) everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

Mt 25:1-2 At that time the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy) will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were *wise*.

Lk 9:62 Jesus said to him: No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is suitable for the kingdom of God (Messianic reign).

1 Cor 6:9-10 Don't you know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchie) ? Do not deceive yourselves: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor homosexuals nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchie) (Dan 7:18)

1 Cor 15:50 This is what I'm saying, brethren, we cannot inherit the kingdom of God (Messianic reign) in flesh and blood bodies. We cannot inherit an imperishable place with perishable bodies.

Gal 5:21b I warn you, as I did before, that those do such things as these will not inherit the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy).

Eph 5:5 Be sure of this: No immoral, impure or greedy person will inherit the kingdom of Christ and of God (Messianic monarchie which is established by God). Such a person is an idolater.

Only those who are saved, sanctified, and resurrected can enter the Messianic reign (1 Cor 15:50). The five foolish virgins were unbelievers; they were not born again of the Holy Spirit and marked with his seal (Eph 1:13). The Messiah will rule from the heavenly realm, New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from God and his bride will rule him. This confirms other passages that indicate that the Messianic reign does not begin until Jesus returns. The monarchy must be resurrected or raptured and so become immortal first.

The Righteous will be Glorified.

Mt 13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (monarchie established by their Father).

Mt 25:34 After that the king will say to those on his right: You whom my Father has blessed, come and inherit the kingdom (monarchie) prepared for you since the creation of the world.

Lk 23:42-43 And he said: Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom (to reign). Jesus answered him, saying: I'm telling you the truth, today you'll be with me in paradise.

Acts 14:22 They were strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to persevere in the faith, saying: We must go through many hardships before entering the kingdom of God (Messianic reign).

1 Thess 2:12 We encouraged and comforted you, and we urged you to live lives worthy of God, who called you into his own kingdom and glory (glorious monarchy).

2 Thess 1:5 This is evidence that God's judgment is right. The suffering you bear for the kingdom of God (the Messianic monarchy) shows that you are worthy to inherit it.

2 Tim 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom (monarchy).

Heb 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom (monarchie) that cannot be shaken, let us thank God and worship him acceptably with reverence and awe.

Jas 2:5 Listen, my dear brethren: God has chosen those who are weak in the eyes of the world to be strong in faith and to inherit the kingdom monarchie that he promised those who love him?

2 Pet 1:11 In this way you'll be warmly welcomed into the eternal kingdom monarchie of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Messiah.

Rev 5:10 You have made them to be a kingdom (monarchy) and priests to serve our God, and they'll reign on Earth.

Rev 20:4 I saw thrones and those seated on them. They were given authority to judge people. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for testifying about Jesus and speaking God's word. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and they had not received his

mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came back to life and *reigned* with the Messiah a thousand years.

The monarchy is the royal family who were born again as God's children at their conversion, and they'll inherit the reign at the resurrection. Whether dead or alive at Jesus coming, they'll be transformed and rise to meet the Lord in the air and be installed in New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven from God. The holy city is the Messiah's bride and he'll glorify them there where the throne of God and the Lamb are, and they'll serve him there. Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the saints of the high places (Dan 7:27).

After the enormous destruction and judgment of the nations at the second coming, the authority and kingship of the nations will be exercised by the saints. Their physical presence will be necessary for the Messiah's reign to be effective, as his presence on Earth seems to be restricted to the millennial temple (Eze 43:1-7). The elect monarchy is predestined, called, justified, and glorified, and Jesus confers kingship on them. They'll eat and drink with him at his table as his royal family and monarchy. The apostles will judge Israel, which suggests that the redeemed from other tribes, nations, peoples, and languages may rule over their peoples from where they came. Flesh and blood people cannot inherit the kingdom because the rulers are no ordinary humans, they are supernatural beings who live and rule with the Messiah from New Jerusalem (Rev 21:2-3, 9-10, 23-26). They'll shine like the sun in their celestial paradise (Dan 12:2-3). Jesus will give them authority to rule the nations with an iron rod (Rev 2:26).

Hierarchy and Status in the Monarchy

Mt 5:19 Therefore anyone sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do likewise will be called least in the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy), and whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy).

Mt 11:11 Truly I'm telling 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 (Messianic monarchy) is greater than he.

Mt 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked: Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy)?

Mt 18:3-4 And he said: I'm telling you the truth, unless you change and become like children, you'll never enter the ~~kingdom of heaven~~ Messianic monarchy. It is the person who humbles himself and like this child who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy).

Mt 20:21 Then Jesus asked her: What is it you want? She said: Let these two sons of mine sit in your kingdom (monarchy), one at your right hand and the other at your left.

Mt 25:14 Again, it (the Messianic monarchy) is like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them.

Lk 7:28 I'm telling you, among those born of women, no one is greater than John, yet he who is least in the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) is greater than he.

All who are in Christ are God's children through faith, but not all will be equal in the monarchy, there will be a hierarchy. The hierarchy does not depend on race, sex, or social standing (Gal 3:28). The judgment seat of the Messiah will determine rewards for service and grant status during the millennium. Many who are first here will be last there. Salvation is by grace, but future rewards are given for faithful service.

The parable of the bags of gold is about a man going on a journey and giving his servants work to do until he returns. He said to the faithful servant: As you were faithful with a few things, I'll put you in charge of many things. The parallel passage in Lk 19:11-27 is about a nobleman who went to a distant country to have himself appointed as king. When he returned to reign, he settled accounts with his servants, giving one charge of five cities, and another, ten. The woman who asked for her sons to sit at Jesus' right and left in his kingdom was probably Salome, Jesus' aunt, and the sons James and John, Jesus' cousins. But there is no nepotism in the kingdom.

The monarchy will feast at the king's table

Mt 8:11 I'm telling you that many will come from the East and the West and feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (Messianic monarchy).

Mt 26:29 I'm telling you, I'll not drink from the fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom (the monarchy established by my Father).

Mk 14:25 I'm telling you the truth, I'll not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy).

Lk 13:28-29 When you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy) and you are thrown outside, you'll weep and grind your teeth there. People will come from East and West and North and South and feast in the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy).

Lk 14:15 When one of those feasting with him heard this, he said to Jesus: Blessed is he who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy).

Lk 22:16 For I'm telling you, I'll not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God (Messianic monarchy).

Lk 22:18 For I'm telling you, I'll not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God (Messianic reign) comes.

Lk 22:30 So that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom (monarchy) and sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Messianic feast is based on a prophecy from Isaiah 25:6-8: On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats, and the finest of wines. On this mountain, he'll destroy the shroud that enfolds all people, the sheet that covers all nations. He'll swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces and remove his people's disgrace from all the Earth. This wiping of tears from all faces and the absence of death are characteristic of life in New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:4).

The above verses relate to the Messianic kingship, suggesting that the banquet is a regular meal that the monarchy shares at the king's table. Just how literal or appropriate that will be for the redeemed remains to be seen. King Solomon's daily provisions included thirty head of cattle

and a hundred sheep and goats. Royal banquets were lavish affairs. Matthew 19:28 places these events at the renewal of all things, in the new world during the Messianic reign.

Jesus said that he wouldn't eat the Passover meal again until it found fulfillment in the kingdom of God. It'll be a celebration of the saint's salvation arising from Christ's death. The Passover celebrates Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt, while the Lord's Supper celebrates the Christian's salvation from sin, proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes. The Messianic banquet will celebrate the consummation of our salvation wherein death is swallowed up forever, tears are wiped away from all faces, and the disgrace God's people have suffered is removed from all the Earth, for the old order of things will have passed away.

The heavenly city, New Jerusalem, with perhaps a billion inhabitants is hard to imagine. Where will food and musical instruments come from? We know the result is eternal joy, but just how earthly joys will be experienced in the heavenly realm is not revealed. The Jews always thought of the future in relation to the Earth and we should too. Ruling the Earth for a thousand years is our destiny.