

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## What is the kingdom?

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**T**he Greek word in the New Testament translated kingdom is “*Basileia*” and denotes “rule,” “dominion,” “sovereignty,” or “power.” Therefore, when the Bible speaks of the “kingdom of God” or the “kingdom of Christ”, we are looking at the “rule, sovereignty, or “power” of God and Christ. When the “kingdom of heaven” is under consideration, we should think of the “dominion” or “rule” of heaven.

In the New Testament, we find the word “kingdom” with it’s meaning of “rule” used in different contexts. We should recognize that “kingdom” denotes distinguishable aspects of the rule of God, Christ and heaven.

The “church” is “the kingdom” in the New Testament. The “called out” people of God have submitted themselves to Christ’s rule. This spiritual kingdom is the one of Daniel’s prophecy that would be established in the days of the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44). The spiritual nature of this kingdom was emphasized when Jesus replied to Pilate’s concern over Jesus’ kingship with, “my kingdom is not of this world” (John

18:36). The spiritual territory of this kingdom was staked out when Jesus said, “...the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). When baptized believers received the word of the gospel in their hearts and were baptized for the remission of their sins, they were added to the church (Acts 2:38-47). At the same time they were being “translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Colossians 1:13).

If the church is not the kingdom, then some passages do not make sense. In speaking about John the Baptist, Jesus said, “Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist...” But then he adds, “...yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (Matthew 11:11). If “kingdom of heaven” is just the “rule” or “dominion of heaven” in just a general sense, then how could one who is least in God’s kingdom be “greater” than John the Baptist, who gave his life in defense of the rule of heaven? If we understand Jesus referring to the kingdom which was “at hand” as being the church (Matt. 4:17), then Jesus’ comparison has import. John lived and died without being a member of the church. Jesus is

emphasizing the surpassing blessing of being able to be a member of the church of Christ which would soon be established, but not in John’s life time.

Sometimes in the New Testament the word “kingdom” is emphasizing the “power” or “rule” of the Lord coming in judgment. When speaking of the approaching judgment coming upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Jesus warned that when Jerusalem found herself compassed with armies she was to know that “her desolation is at hand” (Luke 22:20). This judgment at the hands of the Roman army was how Jesus was “coming in a cloud of power and great glory” (Luke 22:27). Then he adds, “...when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh” (Luke 22:31). The Lord’s “power” in judgment is here denoted by the word “kingdom”.

The “kingdom” in the sense of the future inheritance of heaven is also emphasized in Scripture (I Cor. 15:50, Eph. 5:5, etc.). Grow spiritually, “for such shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance in the eternal kingdom...(I Pet. 1:11).