What The Bible Says About The Kingdom Of God

A Message For Jehovah's Witnesses

Mark 1:14 – Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God

What is the "gospel of the kingdom"?

If we are to preach the "gospel of the kingdom" we need to know what God is referring to when He speaks of **His kingdom**. Are Jehovah's Witnesses and others right about a group of 144,000 people ruling and reigning in heaven someday over those whose are not "saved"?

Perhaps they have not considered that true believers become kings and priests in **the spiritual kingdom of God** the moment God puts His Spirit in them and saves them:

> Revelation 1:6 – "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
>
> Revelation 5:10 – "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

What or who do true believers reign over?

One way to clarify what the Gospel of the kingdom is, is to take a look at who or what the believer rules and reigns over. The Jehovah's Witnesses and others believe they will be reigning over other less righteous people than themselves in some future paradise. But is it not possible that true believers start ruling and reigning the moment God saves them? and that they rule and reign **over the sin in their lives** that they were in bondage to before God put His Spirit in them?

> Romans 6:12 – "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

We see this idea of reigning over sin, restated many times and various ways in scripture, especially in the letters of Paul to the churches…

> Galatians 5:16 – "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that

ye cannot do the things that ye would."

Keep in mind that ONLY A BELIEVER can walk in the spirit, because he has God's spirit dwelling in himself…

> Romans 8:9 – "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

God's kingdom is a kingdom that is at war (spiritually):

Paul uses words like **servant, obey, war** and similar terms that are descriptive of a kingdom, rulership and the battle the believer has between his old sin nature and his new nature in Christ, as we see here:

> Romans 6:16 – "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"
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> Romans 7:23-24 – "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
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> Psalms 19:13 – "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."
>
> Psalms 119:133 – "Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."
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> 2 Corinthians 4:11 – "For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."
>
> Romans 6:16 – "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"
>
> James 4:1 – "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? 2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."

1 Peter 2:11 – “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;”

1 Peter 4:2 – “That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries”

We see by all the above scriptures that we are not to focus on ruling over anyone but rather that when God saves a person He gives them **power over sin –** unto salvation – and so believers are to focus on having dominion over sin in themselves rather than letting sin rule over them as it did when they were yet unsaved.
Matthew chapter 7 contains a vivid reminder that we are not to focus on the sin in others but rather to focus on purging out the sin in our own lives:

Matthew 7:3 – “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

And regarding others, we are to strive to be their servants, not their masters:

Luke 22:24 – “And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. 25 And he said unto them, The kings of **the Gentiles** exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. 26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.”

Do believers rule over people in this world?

Luke 10:17 – “And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”

In Luke 10:20 above, what does it mean that “the spirits are subject unto you”? Could it mean that believers have some kind of advantage over non-believers, primarily that they are not subject to the bondage to sin to the degree that someone without the Spirit of God is subject.

> Romans 6:16 – “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

The unsaved are not free from sin, they are slaves to it. They yield to their sinful lusts and are controlled by them. But a believer has power over sin and by the grace of God and power of God is able to control their lusts rather than be controlled by their lusts.

So, where is the Kingdom of God?

A true believer does not have to wait for some future point in time to experience the kingdom of God. God’s kingdom becomes a present reality the moment a true believer becomes saved. They experience the joy of their salvation, power over sin and its shame and other consequences. They experience and appreciate the great love and mercy of God towards them and they become aware of the extreme righteousness, holiness and terrible wrath of God. They experience the fellowship of other believers in the local church and elsewhere. They still experience struggles with sin while in their current sin-cursed bodies, but they look forward to the new world, wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Peter 3:13) and where no unclean thing will be allowed in (Revelation 21:27)

> Luke 17:20 – “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”
>
> Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory“

John 6:56 – “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”

John 14:17 – “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

John 14:20 – “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

John 14:23 – “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

So what do all these verses mean. Simply that wherever God’s Spirit is, that is where His kingdom is. Some members of God’s kingdom are already in heaven: “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8) and the rest of the members of God’s kingdom are still here on this sin-cursed earth. God’s kingdom spans this current sinful physical world and spills over into the eternal sinless kingdom of heaven.

Is God’s kingdom an earthly organization?

In spite of what many religious institutions would have you believe, God’s kingdom, His one true church, is not identifiable by some physical building or some earthly organization like the Watchtower Society or the Catholic church. God’s kingdom is actually impossible for blind lost sinners to see. It is the worldwide body of true believers in Christ whom He has put His eternal Spirit in. You can see a building and you can easily identify an earthly organization by its local buildings and its headquarters but you can’t see the Holy Spirit so you can’t visibly identify God’s kingdom on earth. Even true Bible-believing churches are have their share of unsaved people along with the saved – the weeds growing up with the wheat as Jesus mentioned Matthew 13.

Who is the King of God’s Kingdom?

Is Christ the King or is God the Father (i.e. Jehovah) the King? Or are they one and the same?

Both Jehovah and Jesus are called King:

Jehovah is described as King:

Isaiah 33:22 – “For the LORD <03068> *is* our judge, the LORD *<03068> is* our lawgiver, **the LORD <03068> *is* our king**; he will save us.”

Isaiah 44:6 – “Thus saith **the LORD <03068> the King of Israel**, and his redeemer the LORD <03068> <03068> of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God.”

Zephaniah 3:15 – “The LORD <03068> hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: **the king of Israel**, even the LORD <03068> , is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.”

> **03068 Yahovah** {yeh-ho-vaw’} from 01961; TWOT – 484a; n pr dei
> AV – LORD 6510, GOD 4, JEHOVAH 4, variant 1; 6519
> Jehovah = “the existing One”
> 1) the proper name of the one true God

Jeremiah 23:5 – “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and **a King shall reign** and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby **he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS** <03072>”

> **03072 Yahovah** tsidqenuw {ye-ho-vaw’ tsid-kay’-noo}

Jesus is described as King:

Matthew 21:5 – “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, **thy King cometh unto thee**, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.”

Revelation 17:14 – “These shall make war with the Lamb, and **the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings**: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.”

We see in the above verse that the unsaved are at war with Christ and His church (the called, chosen, and faithful). Christ’s kingdom is His church. They – and only they – recognize him as King. In other words, they recognize Him as eternal God. John speaks of this in John 14:

John 14:7 – “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father**; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father,

and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that **I am in the Father, and the Father in me**: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

Isaiah prophetically speaks of Christ's coming kingdom and goverment and throne:

Isaiah 9:6 – "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, **The Prince of Peace**. 7 Of the increase of **his government** and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon **his kingdom**, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

Parallel passages:

Psalms 45:6 – "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Hebrews 1:6 – "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. 7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. 8 **But unto the Son he saith**, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Looking at the various parables of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13:

Matthew 13:24 – "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye

together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

Matthew 13:31 – "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

Matthew 13:33 – "Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid <1470> in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

1470 ekgrupto {eng-kroop'-to} from 1722 and 2928;; v
AV – hide in 2; 2
1) to conceal in something
2) to mingle one thing with another

Luke 13:21 – "It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid <1470> in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Matthew 13:44 – "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid <2928> in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth <2928>, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

2344 thesauros {thay-sow-ros'} from 5087; TDNT – 3:136,333; n m
AV – treasure 18; 18
1) the place in which good and precious things are collected and laid up
1a) a casket, coffer, or other receptacle, in which valuables are kept
1b) a treasury
1c) storehouse, repository, magazine
2) the things laid up in a treasury, collected treasures

2928 krupto {kroop'-to} a primary verb; TDNT – 3:957,476; v
AV – hide 11, hide (one's) self 2, keep secret 1, secretly 1, hidden 1; 16
1) to hide, conceal, to be hid
2) escape notice
3) metaph. to conceal (that it may not become known)

Matthew 5:14 – "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid <2928>."

Matthew 13:35 – “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret <2928> from the foundation of the world.”

Luke 18:34 – “And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid <2928> from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”

Luke 19:42 – “Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid <2928> from thine eyes.”

Revelation 2:17 – “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden <2928> manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”

Matthew 13:38 – “**The field is the world**; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;”

Matthew 11:25 – “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid <613> these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

613 apokrupto {ap-ok-roop’-to} from 575 and 2928; TDNT – 3:957,476; v
AV – hide 6; 6
1) to hide
2) concealing, keeping secret

Matthew 13:45 – “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant <1713> man, seeking goodly pearls <3135>: 46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

1713 emporos {em’-por-os} from 1722 and the base of 4198;; n m
AV – merchant 5; 5
1) one on a journey, whether by sea or by land, esp. for trade
2) a merchant as opposed to a retailer or petty tradesman

Matthew 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

3135 margarites {mar-gar-ee'-tace}from margaros (a pearl-oyster); TDNT – 4:472,564; n m
AV – pearl 9; 9
1) a pearl
2) a proverb, i.e. a word of great value

Revelation 18:3- " For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants <1713> of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."

Revelation 18:11 – "And the merchants <1713> of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more"

Revelation 18:15 – "The merchants <1713> of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing"

Revelation 18:23 – "And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants <1713> were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

Matthew 13:47 – "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net <4522>, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. 49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

4522 sagene {sag-ay'-nay} from a derivative of satto (to equip) meaning furniture, especially a pack-saddle (which in the East is merely a bag of netted rope);; n f
AV – net 1; 1
1) a large fishing net, a drag net
For Synonyms see entry 5808

Is there a pattern in the parables of the kingdom of God in Matthew 13?

1. sowing

Matthew 13:24 – “Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field“

Matthew 13:31 – “Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field“

2. reaping

Matthew 13:33 – “Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid <1470> in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”

Matthew 13:44 – “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid <2928> in a field; the which when a man hath **found**, he hideth <2928>, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

Matthew 13:45 – “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant <1713> man, **seeking** goodly pearls <3135>: 46 Who, when he had **found** one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

3. the end of the harvest

Matthew 13:47 – “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net <4522>, that was cast into the sea, and **gathered** of every kind: 48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. 49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Notice how the setting all of this activity of the kingdom of God is this current world. All the sowing and harvesting of the kingdom of God is taking place right now. These are all activities involving work, hard labor. There is no true sabbath (day of rest) yet. The work of the kingdom is in progress now. After the harvest, comes the day of rest.

Deuteronomy 12:10 – “But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you **rest** from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;”

> Revelation 14:13 – “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may **rest** from their **labours**; and their works do follow them.”

Are you a member of God’s kingdom? How do you know?
Are you a among the weeds or the wheat? A goat or a sheep?
Are you preaching the true gospel of God’s kingdom?

— RM Kane

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