

✠ **WHAT is the Kingdom of God?**

What does it really mean? ✠

In the context of Judaism...

The kingdom of God referred to God's future display of power and judgement and establishment of God's rule over all creation. Then all people will recognize and acknowledge God of Israel as the only God and Lord

- **Thy kingdom come = Coming of God's kingdom in all its fullness** -> God's will on earth as in heaven
- God's kingship dates back to OT, eg psalms: King over all creation, Lord is king etc
- God's kingly rule revealed most especially in Israel's exodus from Egypt (Ex 15: song of Moses and Miriam), and later on the debate about anointing an earthly king saul (1Sam8:7) that rejects the kingship of God
- **God's promise to David (2Sam7).**
- **BUT** the Davidic kingdom was divided shortly after Solomon's reign and was destroyed....Northern kingdom destroyed by Assyria and Babylon overran the southern kingdom of Judah and Benjamin. Even after exile, centuries passed without any sign of the great Davidic king promised by God, but during this time prophets foretold God raising up a new David-like king to lead the people out of exile and restore the kingdom and unite the people as children of God

The kingdom of God is at the heart and centre of Jesus' preaching.

Repent for the kingdom of God has come near

(John the Baptist in Mt3:2, and Jesus in Mt4:17).

In fact that was His **main mission to promote and manifest the kingdom**. He proclaimed the kingdom was close at hand, called us to conversion and repentance, urged us to be watchful and ready for the kingdom (Mt25:1-13).

But Jesus also said it was not a kingdom of this world (Jn18:36). **How to talk about something beyond human comprehension and control?**

- **Jesus used parables** (paraballo = place one thing beside another) to give them glimpses about the kingdom and how to prepare for it, using ordinary experiences from their lives they could relate to. He never defined it but he taught in a way through images that related to them and engaged them in thought about the various aspects of kingdom.
- **Mt13: The kingdom of God is like... A farmer who sows seeds, a tiny mustard seed, a small amount of yeast, wheat and weeds grown together, buried treasure, precious pearl and fishermen casting their nets.** (see diagram below)



The kingdom of God while it looks to the future, therefore also has a present dimension, in a small way, in the mustard seed, yeast, treasure, pearl etc. Going on now: the growth of the seed, yeast expanding the flour, treasure waiting to be found and enjoyed etc. **Jesus wanted to alert the presence of God's kingdom among them.**

- **God's kingdom is present in the ministry and person of Jesus** in a powerful way through his **healing and forgiving**, most esp. in liberation from demonic possession (Mt12:28).

He is the incarnation or embodiment of God's kingdom. Kingdom emphasized in the synoptic gospels, while the person of Jesus is emphasized in John's gospel, as the revealer and revelation of God. **Therefore Kingdom is not concept or doctrine but the person of Jesus!**



Purpose of revelation? It offers the goal and horizon of Christian life.

Who am i? What is my goal in life? How do I get there? For followers of Jesus, the goal is the kingdom of God, and those who aspire to fullness of life in God's kingdom follow the teachings and example of Jesus to enter the kingdom of God.

- Reflected in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt5-7) – directives and guidelines to reach the kingdom of God.
Beatitudes offer a sketch of character traits, attitudes and virtues fitting for those who seek the kingdom. These lead us to be salt and light. Go to the roots of individual commandments and avoid breaking the spirit of the law
- In matters of religious observance, Jesus challenges his followers to examine their motivations** – honouring God not seeking public reputation for holiness.

Seek the treasure in heaven, serve God as the only master, avoid fruitless anxieties and harsh negative judgements about others, persist in prayer and observe the golden rule – a good tree will bear good fruit -> Not all who cry 'Lord Lord' will enter the kingdom but one who does the will of my Father in heaven! **Kingdom aims to transform human rel to one of communion!**



How to enter the kingdom? God's greatest challenge to us was Jesus Christ, cos he was the first person to accept fully and completely as a man, the kingdom of God.

Look to Jesus and in him you will see what the Kingdom of God is. Listen to Him and he will tell you what it means to enter into the kingdom.

- **Some clues: Most important preparation is repentance.** Turn our lives away from sin and back toward God (Mt3:2, 4:17)
- **Be like little children (Mt11:25-27, Lk18:17)** have a child-like attitude cos in order to know the kingdom is something we can grasp with our intellect. Remove the pride of thinking we know everything. The kingdom is not just to be known but to be lived and enjoyed here and now.
- **Our response to the neighbour in need (Mt25: 31-46)**



Our mission? The mission of church is to proclaim the kingdom of God has already come, most definitively in Jesus Christ who came to serve and give His life as a ransom for many..

The church proclaims this through the Word and sacrament which commemorates and celebrates God's intervention in our human history through Jesus.

- The church is called to fulfill the present dimension of the kingdom as well, ie to be assign of the reality of the kingdom of God so people today inside and outside the community of faith might look at this model and know that God still lives and the presence of God is a presence for healing, for recon, for justice, for peace, for freedom etc. It becomes on earth the initial budding forth of that kingdom and a sacrament by virtue of its relationship with Christ. Help the world be free of oppression, promote human dev etc.
- The church shows us the future dimension of kingdom too. It focuses the eyes, mind and heart of the world on what lies ahead, upon the promised kingdom where God will.... (see Rev21:4), by fulfilling its role in the continuous unfolding of the kingdom.
- Kingdom is larger than the church, Parable of the good Samaritan. God's presence was not reflected in the priest or Levite (rep of the institutional religion) who ignored the wounded traveler, but in the Samaritan an outsider who was a good neighbour to the person in need. Good Samaritan was part of the kingdom even though he was not considered part of the one true religion. Everyone is called to the kingdom! But not all who call 'Lord Lord' will enter.
- This kingdom and this salvation, which are the key words of Jesus evangelization, are available to every human being as grace and mercy. At the same time each individual must gain them by force – they belong to the violent says the Lord (mt11:12) through toil and suffering, through a life lived according to the gospel, through self-denial and the cross, through the spirit of the beatitudes. But above all each individual gains them thru a total interior renewal which the gospel calls metanoia – a radical conversion, a profound change of mind and heart – Pope Paul VI, Evang in modern world
- This call to holiness translates to call to mission (Jn20:21, Jn17:3). We are called to cooperate in the mission of Christ not based on human abilities but on power of risen Lord!



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Before	After	Significance
Wheat	Weed among Wheat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chance to repent - Time to develop our potential - Final Judgement - To show that we have both strengths & weaknesses - I change to develop the wheat not the weeds - The Field is like our hearts - Shows that the kingdom of God has a future dimension (time to repent & choose life) - Present dimensions: To live and choose life (& grow)
Mustard Seed	Big Shrub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growth from Baptism to mature Christian - Multiplication of people / members - Faith – growth as you journey - Drawing more people to you as you grow - Personal experience of Change - Seeing God’s mighty hand in action
Yeast	Rising Dough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similar to Mustard Seed except that Yeast is ‘added’ to the flour - We are ‘added’ to the world to make it ‘grow’
Treasure in the Field	Buys field and sells everything	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desire not to lose the love of God - Wanting to start on a new fresh slate of ‘land’ (life) after finding God - Speaks of the value of a God experience (treasure) - Hunger only for God’s treasure - Nothing else satisfies - Everything becomes nothing & Nothing becomes everything – like St. Paul - Buy field – the action shows commitment to securing the treasure of God (instead of just having both old and new fields, just focus on one) - 1 Cor 1:18 – the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. It seems stupid to invest everything in one plot of land. - Where your treasure is, there your heart will be as well. Indicates the person wants to put his/her heart on God