

SABBATH THOUGHT 2026-06-27—IS THE KINGDOM WITHIN YOU?

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The Gospel is a message about a Kingdom under the rulership of The Great King¹. But that is all it is in the minds of some—an eternal kingdom ruled by God that will include the earth at a future time. If the Kingdom is simply a territory that is yet to come, then what did Jesus mean when He said:

[NET2.1+] LUKE 17:20-24 Now at one point **the Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was coming**, so he answered, **“The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed,** 21 nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ **For indeed, the kingdom of God is in your midst.**” 22 Then he said to the disciples, “The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. 23 Then people will say to you, ‘Look, there he is!’ or ‘Look, here he is!’ Do not go out or chase after them. 24 For just like the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day.

Jesus acknowledged that the Kingdom is coming but it will not be preceded by observable signs. In what appears to be a complete contradiction, He then told the Pharisees that the Kingdom is already “in your midst.” How can it be a future event and also among them? Some rationalize that the Kingdom was there because of the presence of Jesus Christ. But He was referring to times before His return² as is clear when He described His coming as lightning flashing across the sky.

So how is the Kingdom “in your midst?” The Greek word for *midst* refers to an internal location or intimate closeness so it is also translated “**the Kingdom of God is within you**” in the KJV and other Bibles. Regardless, what does it mean that the Kingdom is “in your midst” or “within you” if it is yet to come? The same question arises when Jesus sent the disciples out to preach the Gospel and He said³:

LUKE 10:9-11 “And heal the sick there, and **say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near /or upon/ to you.’** 10 “But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that **the kingdom of God has come near /or upon/ [to] you.**’

Jesus said that the Kingdom is “near” to those who hear the Gospel preached to them. This only makes sense if “the Kingdom” refers to more than a territory. When Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, He said:

LUKE 11:2a So He [*Jesus Christ*] said to them, “When you pray, say: our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. **Your kingdom come.**

The fact that the Kingdom has not yet come means Jesus was focused on the here and now. So, is this a prayer for the Kingdom of God to finally overtake the earth

¹ Matt. 5:35.

² Also Matt. 24:42-43; Luke 12:39; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3, 11; 16:15;

³ Also Matt. 12:28.

or is it referring to something else? His next statement was also for the present time and not the future:

LUKE 11:2b ... **Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

Praying for the Kingdom to come indicates it is not present, at least as a territory. Likewise, praying for God's will to be done on earth means it is not currently happening, at least in some regard. However, God's will is not dependent upon people praying for it. The fact is God brings to pass all He has determined to do⁴:

ISAIAH 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old, for **I am God**, and *there is no other; I am God*, and *there is none like Me*, 10 declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done, saying, '**My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,**'

So the Matthew 6 prayer is not praying for God's purpose to prevail on earth; that is a given. Instead, it is more likely a petition for PEOPLE of the earth to submit to His will, just as angels carry out His will in heaven⁵. Why is this important? Because it reveals that the Gospel message is about more than a future territory—it is a realm where the citizens do according to God's will:

MATTHEW 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me [*Jesus Christ*], 'Lord, Lord,' shall **enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father** in heaven.

So, what does "the Kingdom" refer to aside from a territory?

ROMANS 14:17 for **the kingdom of God is ... righteousness** and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The Kingdom of God also refers to a way of life for all its citizens. As a territory, all wicked and rebellious people will be barred from citizenship. Only those who are perfect in righteousness will be allowed to enter into it. But those who will be in that future Kingdom must live according to God's will NOW, in this physical life and that is the prerequisite to becoming an eternal citizen⁶:

MATTHEW 18:3-5 and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, **unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.**

4 "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me."

Those who are not becoming "little children" of God now—in this life—will NOT be in the coming Kingdom. The Kingdom is a territory in which its citizens possess perfect love and righteousness. So, the Gospel refers to both a territory AND the character of its citizens. That Way of Life begins NOW, not after the Kingdom arrives, so the Kingdom describes those whose minds are being transformed:

⁴ Also Isa. 40:6-8; 55:11; 45:23; Matt. 24:35.

⁵ Luke 11:2b.

⁶ Matt. 19:14.

ROMANS 12: And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

Jesus Christ is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) because *how* He lived in the flesh was exactly *how* He lived in heaven. If He had lived any differently in the flesh, it would have brought sin and death. He has always lived The Way and The Truth⁷ so He is The Life through whom any will have eternity. Every single future citizen of the Kingdom must be doing the will of God the Father NOW just as Jesus did⁸ when He was flesh and blood! That is why the children of God are begotten with the Holy Spirit⁹ that reveals the will of God.¹⁰ What is the will of God?

MARK 12:29-33 Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments *is*: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 ‘And **you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.**’ This *is* the first commandment. 31 “And the second, like *it, is* this: ‘**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” 32 So the scribe said to Him, “Well *said*, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. 33 “And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

This one Scripture summarizes the complete will of God—to love Him with every fiber of our being and have sacrificial love for all others. Jesus said those who do the will of God are His Family:

MARK 3:35 “For **whoever does the will of God is My [Jesus Christ’s] brother and My sister and mother.**”

Agape love for God and neighbors and doing Good Works are things that cannot be perfected at the resurrection if someone lacks them in this life. When the Kingdom arrives, it will be too late to suddenly decide to *begin* to carry out the will of God. The Gospel message of the Kingdom refers to more than a future territory—it is a Way of Life “within” the hearts and minds of its future inhabitants. Only they will inherit the Kingdom when it finally comes:

MATTHEW 25:34-40 “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 ‘for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 ‘I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ 37 “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? 38 ‘When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? 39 ‘Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to

⁷ Heb. 13:8.

⁸ John 6:38.

⁹ Rom. 8:16; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 5:1.

¹⁰ John 14:26; 16:13.

You?’ 40 “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘**Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.**’

Preaching the Gospel to the world is a core mandate of Jesus Christ because it is an invitation to become part of the Kingdom of God. It is also something to be lived in this life! Perhaps that was the issue with the Ephesians. The letter dictated to John by Jesus Christ to the township of Ephesus begins by praising them:

REVELATION 2:1-3 “To the angel of the [*ekklesia*] of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 “**I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil.** And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 “and **you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.**

But then Jesus gave them a warning:

REVELATION 2:4-5 “Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that **you have left your first love.** 5 “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and **do the first works,** or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Before the warning, Jesus commended the Ephesians for their patience, Good Works, and not putting up with evildoers. They persevered in labors and never grew weary. These are noteworthy characteristics of those who strive and endure for the Kingdom. Even Paul never rebuked or corrected the Ephesians. Clearly the Ephesians did many things that pleased Jesus Christ.

So, why did Jesus say the Ephesians left their “first love?” Most people I know experienced an insatiable zeal for the Gospel when they first heard it, so much so that they enthusiastically went about spreading the Gospel to family, friends, and anyone else who would listen. When someone hears the Gospel the first time, they want to proclaim it to the world!¹¹ So, perhaps the Ephesians left their “first love” of the Gospel and stopped doing the “first works” of spreading it.

The “Kingdom is within you” because those who are doing the will of God are zealously living the Way of Life now while enduring afflictions and persecutions until the day that Jesus Christ returns. The Gospel is our “first love” but it is also why we pray to God, “Thy Kingdom come!”

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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¹¹ Mark 16:20.