

The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God

BASIC PROBLEM

The first mistake is that throughout history various groups have mistakenly divided the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of God. All the prophets, up to and including John, divided the kingdom territorially. They thought it would be a physical kingdom on the earth that we live in now. In the 1800's this same error became a common fault of that generation. At some point in the evolution of the Watchtower's theology, they came up with two classes of people and fitted them into two physical kingdoms: one an earthly kingdom which they called the "other sheep" and the other a heavenly kingdom which they called the "little flock" or the 144,000. A popular book among Fundamentalists, *Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics* by J. Edwin Hartill, also records the dividing of the kingdoms. On page 36, Hartill divided the kingdoms as heavenly and universal. He presented the kingdom of Heaven as earthly, national, limited, and temporal and the kingdom of God as universal, unlimited, and eternal.

The term *kingdom of Heaven* is used 32 times exclusively in the gospel of Matthew. The *kingdom of God* is used 62 times in the other gospels in parallel passages to those in Matthew. Because both of these terms are used to identify the same thing, it is hermeneutically incorrect to divide them into two different groups representing two different kingdoms. Also there are six references in the epistles that refer to the kingdom as Christ's kingdom.

The second mistake is that this kingdom would be on this present earth. The kingdom which Jesus was speaking of will be a kingdom of righteousness in a newly created heaven (atmospheric heaven) and on a newly created earth where God will never be separated from His people.

Rev 21:1-5 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Colossians 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

2 Peter 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURAL SOLUTION

Jesus introduced His new kingdom to Nicodemus in John 3:1-21, but Jesus told him that he did not understand (vs. 10), he did not accept (vs. 11), and asked him how he would believe (vs. 12). **The “who” aspect of Christ’s kingdom is found in vs. 15-21.**

The reason for the errors comes from a misunderstanding of the nature of the kingdom. The kingdom that Jesus was speaking about was not on this present earth. The Jews and many others were looking for the power and glory once given to the Nation of Israel. That's why Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this world.

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world [is not this physical world] : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence [It will begin in Rev 21].

Heb 1:8 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.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost [the kingdom of righteousness begins in Rev 21].

The Watchtower's false division of two classes of believers is corrected in part by accepting the truth in the above scriptures. It is further corrected by accepting the truth in the following verses that clearly show there is ONE BODY, ONE HOPE, and ONE FAITH for ALL true born-again Believers in Christ.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body (not two bodies, one earthly and one heavenly) , and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope (not two hopes, one earthly and one heavenly) of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith (for all Believers), one baptism, 6 One God (yes, one God, Who is Triune, not three as the Watchtower suggests) and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

In the Eternal State (Rev 21) there will be an earthly, spiritual kingdom where God will be all in all.

1Cor 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.