

The Kingdom of God

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Introduction

If you understand the big picture of a thing then you can understand the details of that thing better. You can place the smaller parts into their proper perspective give them the right level of importance. That is true in academic subjects as well as in the Bible. This is really the same thing as saying you have to know the context of what you are learning for it to really make sense. There are four key concepts that you must know well in order to see the big picture of God's revelation. These concepts are pervasive throughout the Bible:

1. The Fundamentals and the Gospel. These include the existence of the Triune God, His inerrant and authoritative revelation delivered to us in the 66-book Bible, the virgin birth and deity of Jesus Christ, the penal substitutionary atoning death of Christ in place of sinners, Jesus' bodily resurrection, one way of salvation by grace through faith in Christ, and Jesus' second coming. We will be assuming the above truths for the messages that I will present at this year's conference. It is crucial to have them under your belt first, so to speak, otherwise you will have no chance of understanding what comes next.
2. The Biblical Covenants. The primary ones are the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants.
3. The Kingdom of God, the subject of these notes.
4. The Dispensational System of Theology, the subject of our special lecture tomorrow.

There is a danger in missing the forest because of a focus on the trees. But there is also a danger of being overwhelmed by the forest when you attempt to look at the whole thing at once. In these sessions, we will try to avoid this latter error, though we may find some difficulty doing so.

I. Initial Considerations

A. What is a Kingdom? A kingdom in the Bible has three aspects:¹

1. A ruler. This is the king of the kingdom (David, Solomon, Jesus Christ). He must have adequate abilities to rule the kingdom.
2. A realm. This is the people or subjects over whom the king rules, or the domain (e.g., Israel). The realm is often associated with land or territory on the earth. The realm is tangible, literal, always earthly.²

¹ I follow McClain's definition.

3. A reigning function. I understand this to be a function that is active and operational, not potential or in waiting. You cannot have a kingdom in the absence of the king. Just like a church with an absentee pastor really has no pastor, the kingdom with an absent king has no king. Now, we can say that Christ rules in our hearts or is head of the church, but if we are honest with ourselves and look around, we will see basically every man doing that which is right in his own eyes. There is no central authority. There is no governmental structure such as pictured in the OT.

B. Dispensational writings mention many different kingdoms.

1. These include: the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, the mystery kingdom, the Davidic kingdom, the mediatorial kingdom, the messianic kingdom, the millennial kingdom, the universal kingdom of God, and the eternal kingdom.
2. Because of the number of kingdoms, there is generally a lot of confusion about the subject.
3. An example of this confusion has to do with the terms *Kingdom of God* and *Kingdom of Heaven*. Some theologians propose that these terms refer to different things.
 - a. *Kingdom of Heaven* is used exclusively by Matthew, 32 times. *Kingdom of God* is used 70 times in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians.
 - b. These terms are used synonymously in Matthew 19:23-24 and I believe they are totally synonymous.
 - c. They are both nicknames, shortened forms of the phrase *The Kingdom of the God of Heaven* referenced in Daniel 2:44 – “The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.” It is the kingdom which belongs to and comes from the God of Heaven.

C. My understanding of these kingdoms is as follows: God is working out, in accordance with His plan and sovereignty, a *kingdom program*.

1. God’s sovereignty means that God has supreme power and authority by very nature of His being. He is omnipotent, that is, all powerful. He does what He pleases (Psalm 115:3, 135:6).
2. That program has different phases, which have been called by various names such as those listed above.
3. The kingdom program is a unified program that has unfolded throughout history and will culminate on earth in what is called the millennial kingdom (because it revealed in Revelation 20 to last 1000 years). This kingdom will be ruled by Jesus Christ from the capital city of Jerusalem. The millennial

² I am slightly over-simplifying. When we talk about God’s universal kingdom (that is, His sovereignty), the realm is the universe, which includes the earth and heavens.

kingdom itself, however, merges into the eternal state that follows, and is in essence a kingdom that lasts forever.

4. This idea of a unified kingdom program helps me to cut through confusion of all the different kinds of kingdoms and recognize that they are in fact bound together.
5. In this series of messages, it will be my goal to show just how this is the case by showing the kingdom program's past, present, and future aspects.

D. The kingdom program is an earthly manifestation of what can be called the *universal kingdom* of God, which is really nothing more than the sovereignty of God over His creation. This universe-wide rule of God has a number of important characteristics:

1. It is *eternal or timeless*. Ps. 10:16, 29, 74:12, 145:13, Jer. 10:10, Lam. 5:19.
2. It is *inclusive or universal*. 1 Chron. 29:11-12, Ps. 103:19.
3. It has a *providential* aspect. Ps. 135:6-7, 10-12, 148:8, Prov. 16:33, 21:1, Is. 10:5-6.
4. It is *supernatural or miraculous*. Ps. 135:8-9, Dan. 6:27.
5. It is *effective*, whether the subjects are submissive or rebellious. Dan. 4:35, Eph. 1:11.
6. It is *administered* by the Lord Jesus Christ. Col. 1:17, Heb. 1:3. After all, He made everything. Jn. 1:3, Eph. 3:9, Col. 1:16, Heb. 1:2.
7. It is not identical to the kingdom as it works out on earth. Ps. 103:19, Mat. 6:10. A key phrase in the disciples' prayer is "on earth as *it is* in heaven."

E. The kingdom program is manifested on the earth in different ways at different times.

1. The universal kingdom of God is not "out there" in outer space somewhere in such a way that it never touches the earth. Our Lord reveals in the Bible that He is bringing his kingdom to bear upon the earth. He is working this out over history in such a way to glorify Himself. Of course, He could bring everything into perfect subjection to Himself without any historical process, but that is not in accord with His perfect plan.
2. To tie together the idea of the universal kingdom with the kingdom program as God is working it out, I would say that God's sovereignty is applied differently in different eras of history, and this results in different manifestations of the kingdom program on the earth. At one time, God was pleased to work among men using an Israel-centered theocratic kingdom. Then he was pleased for that kingdom to have a human king. Then according to His sovereignty, He dissolved that kingdom and began to prepare the world for another greater one. Presently we are still in the period of preparation. In the future, God will interject Himself sovereignly

into the affairs of the world by establishing a kingdom that will smash all competitors.

3. The concept of the Kingdom of God is pervasive throughout the scriptures. As such it is critical to the understanding of the progress of history throughout the ages. Consider the Scriptural emphasis on the kingdom as it works out in history:

The preparation of it in the books of Genesis and early Exodus.

The establishment of it in Exodus.

The history of it in Exodus through 2 Chronicles.

The decline and ruin of it in the major and minor prophets.

The prophesied re-institution of it by the major and minor prophets.

The offer of it in the gospels.

The rejection of it in the gospels.

The postponement of it and the present church age in Acts through Jude.

The coming of it in the millennium in Revelation.

The merging of it into the eternal state.

The first seven points are the past of the kingdom program; the postponement is the present situation of the kingdom program; and the millennial kingdom and merging of it into the eternal state is the future of the kingdom program.

4. Notes About This Earthly Manifestation of God's Kingdom

- i. The 10 points listed above are all integrally related: namely, they are all related to the outworking of God's kingdom program in history. They are not disconnected one from the other. This is important when we consider the connection, say, between points 5 and 6. The kingdom offered in the gospels is precisely the same one that was prophesied in the Old Testament.
- ii. This historical outworking of God's kingdom throughout history, as a whole, can be wrapped up in the term "mediatorial" kingdom as suggested by McClain (p. 21). This is because there is always a mediator between God and the subjects of the kingdom. This mediator is a human being. Ultimately, of course, the mediator is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. However, before His incarnation, there were other mediators in the sense of kings or rulers (Moses, Samuel, David, etc.).

F. Critical errors regarding kingdom theology

1. Kingdom in Roman Catholicism = kingdom and has strong hand in government over the nations. This was true especially during the middle ages.
2. Kingdom in the social gospel – extending the works of Jesus in terms of healing and helping the poor = attempting to bring about kingdom conditions now.

3. Kingdom in Pentecostalism = “kingdom authority” that is expressed in miracles and casting out demons = the kingdom is present now.
4. Kingdom in Reconstructionism = re-assert kingdom type government over modern society, particularly OT and NT law (called *theonomy*). Reconstructionism takes a postmillennial view of eschatology, saying that the kingdom started at Christ’s first coming, and will continue progressing by Christian conversions until it fills the earth before Christ’s second coming. Leaders in the movement include(d) Rushdoony, Greg Bahnsen, Kenneth Gentry, and Gary DeMar, according to Wikipedia.³
5. Covenant view – kingdom = church. It downplays a physical or tangible form of the kingdom as too “woodenly literal” and “unspiritual.” How the redemption of the world and society will come about is not clear.
6. The view of a spiritual kingdom in a believer’s heart minimizes the world-wide societal, political, economic, moral, and spiritual aspects of God’s full kingdom program.
7. The kingdom in new evangelical and progressive dispensational views gives priority of place to the universal church and expressions of it such as para-church organizations. These can be helps to the local church, but can also be hindrances to it. The local church is God’s ordained instrument in the Scripture for His work in the present age. It will not disappear in this age, but any para-church organization could do so without harming God’s word.

We Christians need to properly understand the kingdom because we desire to understand God’s word. We also want to avoid such errors as we have mentioned.

G. Important Bible Passages Concerning the Kingdom Program

Exodus 19	Romans 14:17
2 Samuel 7	1 Cor. 4:20, 6:9–10, 15:24, 15:50
Psalms 110	Gal. 5:21
Isaiah 11, 35, 65	Eph. 5:5
Jeremiah 31	Col. 1:13, 4:11
Ezekiel 36-37, 40-48	1 Thess. 2:12
Daniel 2, 7	2 Thess. 1:5
Zechariah 12-14	1 Tim. 1:17, 6:15
Matthew 3:1, 4:17, 11:1–15, chapter 13, 21:43	2 Tim. 4:1, 4:18
Luke 17:21, 19:11–27	Hebrews 12:28
John 19:3, 12–15, 19:19–21	James 2:5
Acts 1:1–8, 8:12, 14:22, 17:7, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23, 28:31	2 Peter 1:11
	Revelation 1:9, 11:15, 12:10, 19:11– 20:15

³ Christian reconstructionism is hard to understand. Its major tenets include Calvinism, theonomy and postmillennialism as mentioned above, and presuppositional apologetics.

The remainder of the notes will treat three of these primary kingdom texts in expositional fashion, tying their teaching into the overall Biblical message of God's kingdom program.

II. The Kingdom of God in the Past — 2 Samuel 7:1–29

A. The First Complete Manifestation of the Kingdom Program – The Theocracy of Exodus 19:6

1. The general public may scoff at the idea that there could ever be a “literal” kingdom which has Jesus at its head. One problem with such scoffing is that there already has been such a kingdom, and that was in ancient Israel after the Exodus from Egypt. See 1 Cor. 10:1-5 for evidence that it was Christ, the Son of God, who was leading the people of Israel.
2. Exodus 19:6 is the first use of the term *kingdom* to refer to God's kind of kingdom. (See Gen 10:10, 20:9 for two previous uses that do not refer to the kingdom of God).
3. The agreement of the people initiated the kingdom in 19:8 and 24:3. They were somewhat overconfident, but were at least saying “yes”!
4. Chapters 20-23 give the constitution of the kingdom government. Regulations for offerings and religious apparatus were laid out (25-28, 30) as well as instructions for the priesthood (29).
5. Note that there was no separation of church and state in the Israelite theocracy. Initially there was not even a separation of powers, in the sense that one man, such as judge/prophet Samuel led the nation and offered sacrifices.
6. Eventually when there was a monarch (Saul, David, Solomon), and separation of powers within the state was enforced. Kings, for example, were prohibited from exercising the priestly function. Kings Saul and Uzziah found this out the hard way (1 Samuel 15:22-23, 2 Chron. 26:20).

B. The Davidic Covenant / Promise – 2 Samuel 7:1-29

1. Timing of the Promise, v. 1
 - a. God had designed Israel to be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests to Himself (Exodus 19:6). Things went along, with fits and starts (repeated bursts), you might say. It was never ideal, of course, because the people were sinful. They complained; they committed idolatry; they departed from the covenant requirements that were enjoined upon them and to which they agreed to be bound.
 - b. The people stayed relatively faithful during the lifetimes of Joshua and the elders that outlived him (Joshua 24:31). But during the period of

- the judges, sin was rampant. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Deut. 12:8, Judges 17:6, 21:25, Prov. 12:15, 21:2).⁴
- c. It was not until young Samuel came along that things started to get back on track. Still the people lacked faith in the theocratic setup that was mediated through prophets and priests, and forced the issue of a political arrangement with a king.
 - d. This led to the reign of Saul, which was a disaster on the spiritual ledger. Certainly the nation won some battles against the Philistines, but at what cost? All along God had intended a king for Israel (see Deut. 17:14-20). I do believe David was the first *real* king of Israel, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).
 - e. Note the spiritual aspect of the kingdom of God. It is not a *secular* rule of law, but it has a spiritual nature in which God desires a relationship with his people, not just a rulership over them. They were to be priests and not depart from true religion. God's promises to them were based on their faithfulness to God and the law that He gave. They succeeded and failed at various times in this connection.
 - f. After all that stuff, the text in 2 Samuel 1-6 tells us that David consolidated his kingdom over the nation of Israel (see 5:12). This culminated with the conquest of Jerusalem. 7:1 says that he has rest from his enemies.

2. David's Desire to Build a House, v. 2-3

- a. The tent of which David speaks in 7:2 was the tabernacle. The plan and construction of the initial tabernacle was done over 400 years earlier at the time of the Exodus (25-40). The tabernacle and ark were carried by the people for the years of wandering in the wilderness. After they settled in the land, the ark resided at Bethel (Judges 20:27-28), Shiloh (1 Samuel 4:4-5), Beth Shemesh (1 Sam. 6:12), Kirjath Jearim (1 Sam. 7:1-2), house of Obed-Edom the Gittite (2 Sam 6:1-3, 11), and finally Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:12-17). Needless to say, the Lord's "house" was a quite nomadic over the years.
- b. Upon comparing his own dwelling place with that of the Ark, David saw what he perceived to be a discrepancy. Inasmuch as a solidly built house is more honorable than a tent, the situation seemed out of order— that David was receiving more honor than the Lord's ark. The implication is that he planned build something more suitable for God. Nathan the prophet initially concurred with David.

⁴ Note that the same thing is basically true today. Over a billion people follow Islam. Another billion people follow the syncretistic works-based form of Christianity known as Roman Catholicism. Another huge number adhere to Hindiusm, Buddhism, and other idolatrous and works-based religions and cults. Many just do whatever they want with no concern for spiritual things at all. There is no centralized authority. There is, in many ways, spiritual anarchy.

3. God Speaks to Nathan the Prophet, v. 4-17

- a. God reminds David that He has not said anything about building Himself a house, v. 4-7.

If God has not told you to do something, particularly something so important and high level as this, then why are you planning to do it?

- b. God reminds David of His grace toward David and the Nation, v. 8-11a
- c. God tells David that He (God) will instead build David a house, v. 11b-16
Here is the shocking news. David wanted to build a house for God; but God turns the tables and says He will build a house for David!
 - 1. David desires to build God a dwelling place, a building, for the Ark to dwell in.
 - 2. God is going to build David a house, that is, a kingly dynasty, for His people.
- d. The first part of the house-building promise is that God will set up Solomon after David, v. 12-15. Solomon will build a dwelling place for the Ark, he will be established and he will have God as His Father.
- d. But Solomon is mortal, so in v. 16 God goes on to promise that the house and kingdom and throne of David will be established forever. Implied here is that there would be a king to sit on the throne, who would be of the family of David, to rule over Israel forever. Do you have any idea who that king might be? _____
- f. Nathan conveyed all of this to David, v. 17.

4. David's Response, v. 18-29

- a. We see that David was overwhelmed by God's grace and mercy toward him. David referred to himself as a humble servant (v. 18-20), and to God as the great God (v. 22). We can apply these thoughts to ourselves.
- b. Notice that David understood God's promise through Nathan to establish Israel as God's people, and God as their God, *forever* (v. 24). He appealed to God to establish that word *forever* (v. 25-26 and esp. v. 28-39). There is no question that we are to understand this as it plainly reads—an everlasting promise that will certainly be fulfilled.
- c. That this is a sure promise to be fulfilled in the future is additionally supported by texts such as Psalm 132:10-12, Isaiah 9:6-7, 16:5, Jeremiah 33:15-17, 33:20-21, and Luke 1:32. As such, it becomes an integral part of God's kingdom program as it unfolds throughout the rest of history from David until Christ, from Christ to the present time, and from the present time to the future when Christ returns.

C. The Davidic Kingdom Fell into Ruin and Eventually Vanished

The people of Israel became apostate over time and by 586 B.C., there was no kingdom left; no temple or worship, no functioning capital city. God punished Israel until the time of their captivity was over.

D. The Kingdom Was Predicted to Rise Again

The OT prophets predicted not only the demise of the earlier kingdom, but also a glorious restoration under Messiah's rule.

After this, there were 400 silent years between Malachi and the events recorded in Matthew.

E. Jesus Offered the Kingdom to Israel, but They Rejected It

The offer is represented briefly in the phrase "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" and the kingdom teaching of our Lord such as Matt. 21:43: "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing for the fruits thereof." See also Matt. 12:28, 21:31, Mark 1:15, Luke 4:43, 8:1, 9:2, 10:9, 10:11, 11:20, 17:20-21.

Messianic expectation was running high under Roman rule in the first century, and many expected the kingdom to come immediately. See Acts 1:6 for an example of this.

When the kingdom was rejected, it went into what has been called postponement or an interregnum. Postponement is from the perspective of one who was expecting it immediately. God did not have to go to plan B, obviously. Everything is working out according to His single unified plan for the world.

III. The Kingdom of God in the Present — Luke 19:11–27

A. Introduction

1. Among the most debated questions in theology have to do with the present nature of the kingdom. What is its relationship to the church? Is the kingdom present in some form now, or are we waiting for it in the future? Is it purely spiritual in nature? Is Christ reigning on the Davidic throne now, or is He waiting to be invested with His rule in the Davidic form of the kingdom? Many such related questions can be raised.
2. I believe that the parable in Luke 19 makes a very important contribution toward answering these questions.

B. Historical Background

1. Herod Archelaus (23 BC – c. 18 AD) was the ethnarch of Samaria, Judea, and Edom from 4 BC to 6 AD. He was the son of Herod the Great (Matt. 2:3, 7, 13, 15, 16, 19) and Malthace, the brother of Herod Antipas, and the half-brother of Herod Philip I. Archelaus received the kingdom of Judea by the last will of his father, though a previous will had bequeathed it to his brother Antipas. He was proclaimed king by the army, but declined to assume the title until he had submitted his claims to Caesar Augustus in Rome. [This was what his father had done and was a regular procedure in the Roman empire.] Before setting out, he quelled with the utmost cruelty a sedition of the Pharisees, slaying nearly three thousand of them. In Rome he was opposed by Antipas and by many of the Jews, who feared his

cruelty; but in 4 BC Augustus allotted to him the greater part of the kingdom (Samaria, Judea, and Idumea) with the title of ethnarch until 6 AD when Judaea was brought under direct Roman rule.⁵ The Jewish encyclopedia notes that Augustus decided to divide Herod's somewhat extensive empire into three portions in order to limit the power of any one of the smaller domains. So, Archelaus was appointed ethnarch—not king—of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, and Antipas was made tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and Philip was made tetrarch of the other lands east of the Jordan.⁶ It was this Herod Archelaus that is mentioned in Matt. 2:22 as the reason that Joseph settled in Nazareth in Galilee instead of in Bethlehem. Galilee was under the rule of Herod Antipas, one of Archelaus' brothers. "Upon his return Archelaus rewarded his supporters with certain cities and took vengeance on his enemies. Josephus says that his great palace was built at Jericho, perhaps not far from...where the parable was first spoken."⁷

2. Jesus probably had this event in mind when he told the parable of the minas in Luke 19. It was recent history, happening about 30 years before he spoke and as such would be fresh on the minds of many in his audience. It was a fitting event to transform into a parable to teach some important lessons to the disciples.
3. This is one of the most significant parables that our Lord taught regarding the kingdom of God. It is so because in it He teaches that there would be a delay before the kingdom would be inaugurated. This was totally opposite of what most people were expecting at the time Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. And as it turns out, it is opposite of what many Christians believe today as well! Many believe we are in the kingdom, or that the kingdom is in us. The primary purpose of speaking the parable (a delay in the arrival of the kingdom) drives the lessons from it. We miss the urgency of the teaching if we don't get this fact.

C. Complexities of Interpretation

1. Parables in General

- a. I'm preaching a parable, but not myself using an allegorical hermeneutic to get meaning out of the parable.
- b. There is a purpose of the parable. It is to teach that the kingdom is delayed. In other words, the kingdom of God is not yet.
- c. Then there is a truth taught in the parable that is transferable to us, that of faithfulness to God-given responsibilities while we await the appearance of the kingdom.

⁵ Modified quote from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_Archelaus.

⁶ See <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=1729&letter=A&search=Herod%20Archelaus>.

⁷ See McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom*, p. 340.

d. Some interpreters don't find any points in a parable; some find one main point; some suggest there is one point per main character or group of characters (as Blomberg); and we know others find all kinds of lessons in the parables by assigning a significance to every detail of the story. And then we have to properly figure out how to transfer the principle of the parable to the modern context.

2. This Parable

- a. So many characters—the nobleman, servants, hate-filled citizens, wicked servant.
- b. Two interwoven plots—service to the king in his absence along with an evaluation of that service; and the bad citizens and their ultimate punishment. This parable is one of several that has a story-line with a good king, some good servants who have a happy ending, and some bad people that have a very unhappy ending.
- c. Lots of seemingly obvious parallels to what we know about the second coming, future judgments, etc.
- d. Themes that are common with other parables, like the delay in the parousia, or wholesale similarity with other parables (specifically Matthew 25 and the parable of the talents) that get people mixed up as to which parable you are talking about, if there is even a difference between the two (there is...but some interpreters deny that).
- e. The main part of the story with the idea of money stewardship draws people's attention to that as the central focus of the entire parable. In other words, familiarity may obscure the real point(s) of the parable.

D. Audience and Circumstances from Previous Context

1. The parable was heard by both the disciples (18:31) and the crowd (18:43, 19:3).
2. It sits in a context which teaches a number of very important lessons:
 - a. We are unprofitable servants, 17:10
 - b. Thankfulness, in the story of the 10 lepers, 17:11-19
 - c. The kingdom of God is "among you" in the person of Christ, 17:21
 - d. Prayer, and if the Lord will find faith on the earth, 18:1-8
 - e. Humility, 18:13
 - f. Become like little children and receive the kingdom of God, 18:15-17
 - g. Eternal life and entering the kingdom—the rich young ruler, 18:18-27
 - h. Bartimaeus healed on road into Jericho, 18:35-43. Isaiah 35:5 predicted such healing as one of the blessings of the prophesied kingdom. The blind man had already recognized Jesus as the "son of David," which has kingdom overtones.
 - i. Zacchaeus converted in Jericho, 19:1-10. The Lord also called sinful Zacchaeus to salvation. The tax collector gave good evidence of salvation by promising to make restitution for his sins. He said he would return fourfold to anyone he had stolen from (19:8). This was in

accord with Exodus 22:1. He was also going to help the poor— something he would not have thought to do before his conversion!

3. But I pause at this point to caution against forcing a tie between the previous context and this. Pentecost suggests that the Zacchaeus narrative is sort of determinative in the interpretation of the parable.
4. Luke's purpose statement gives us the answer to "why was this parable given and why does it sit where it does?" We don't have to guess.

E. Purpose of the Parable, v. 11

1. The main point of the parable was to correct the misunderstanding of the crowd and of the disciples to the effect that **the kingdom of God would appear immediately**. This would have been an easy misunderstanding to have, as Jesus was coming close to the end of what had been a long and winding journey toward Jerusalem.

This journey to Jerusalem began in Luke's reckoning at 9:51. His outline can be viewed geographically:

- a. Birth of John Baptist and Jesus, 1:1-2:52
- b. Background, 3:1-4:13
- c. Ministry of Jesus in Galilee, 4:14-9:50
- d. Ministry of Jesus Enroute to Jerusalem, 9:51-19:27 or 19:44
- e. Ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem, 19:28 (or 19:45)-21:38
- f. Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus, 22:1-24:53

Messianic kingdom expectations were certainly running high at this point in Jesus' ministry.

2. To say it another way, **the Lord was teaching that the kingdom of God would NOT appear immediately!** In fact, it would not appear for quite some time (cf. "far country" of v. 12), thus dashing the hopes of Jesus' politically-motivated followers. Have you heard of the idea of "lowering expectations?" Not to compare Jesus too closely with modern-day politicians, of course, but the parable does seem to compare Jesus to another scoundrel, Archelaus!
3. Some interpreters want to work this out another way and suggest that the parable was given to correct people's failure to understand the spiritual nature of the kingdom or their misunderstanding of the fact that the kingdom was ALREADY present in the person of the king. In other words, the kingdom as popularly conceived would NEVER appear, or it had ALREADY appeared. But these seem to run counter to the mood surrounding Jesus' trip to Jerusalem and what we know from elsewhere in the Scripture.
4. The parable seems to form an explanation as to how it could be that the kingdom would not appear immediately, and that is because 1) there was a required time for the king to obtain the investiture; 2) in the meanwhile,

there was a time in which the subjects of the king were being tested for faithfulness to their absent leader.

F. Correspondence of Parable to “Real Life,” v. 12-27

This parable is very rich in the correspondence of its various elements to what the Scriptures teach will happen in the future. Not every parable has so many specifically-identifiable details, but this one does because it speaks of the “second coming” of a nobleman and a bad group of citizens along with a good group of servants, both of whom are judged. The important elements of the story consist of the nobleman, various citizens and servants in his domain, and the responsibility and evaluation with associated reward or retribution. Some details:

	Parable	Point of Correspondence with Biblical Reality
1.	The nobleman	Jesus Christ, though it is pretty obvious that the king, if inspired by Archelaus, is not by virtue of character the best representation of Christ; it is just his rulership that is of interest to Luke.
2.	Far country	We could say this represents Heaven, but the real implication is that there would be some delay between the nobleman’s first and second coming. The duration of it is unspecified, but it seems to be quite a while.
3.	Return from the journey	Second Coming. This shows that the delay is only a delay—it is not a permanent end of the kingdom program as some suggest (2 Peter 3:3-4). The focus of the parable is not on the unknown timing of the return and any urgency that brings about (find that elsewhere).
4.	Citizens who hated him	Anyone who hates Jesus and rejects him as their king (see John 19:15 for the Jewish side of this).
5.	Servants	Professing believers (two real, one fake, seven others).
6.	“Do business”	Responsibility to serve the king during his absence (the church age), until he comes again.
7.	Minas	Resources granted by God to be used in our service to Him as wise stewards.
8.	Evaluation	Final Judgment (Bema or otherwise)
9.	Cities	Rewards for faithful service.

10.	Wicked Servant	A fake, one whose attitude does not represent that of a true believer.
11.	Slaughter of Citizens/Enemies	Judgment on those who hate Jesus at the second coming. This is not a 70 AD event.

G. A Significant Sub-Point—Stewardship, 15-26

1. One dictionary defines stewardship is personal responsibility for taking care of another person's property or financial affairs. For our purposes, I would broaden this definition to include other affairs as well, like “religious” responsibilities. The parable’s emphasis on stewardship is obvious. It is so clear that many believe this is the main point of the parable. In fact, the Zondervan NASB study Bible has this parable entitled “The Parable of Money Usage.” As we already said, the Lord makes clear that this is not the case (19:11). However, there is a point about stewardship that we must not ignore, but one that we must also not misconstrue.
2. Caution – Do not eliminate the idea of stewardship
 - a. Granted, good financial stewardship is an important concept in the parable itself. The money given by the prospective king was “put to work” by most of his servants and so it earned more. Note that a mina is about three months’ salary. Let us suppose a salary of \$4000 a month, so this would correspond to about \$12,000.
 - b. The wicked servant did not even put the money in the bank to earn interest. The Lord, by so saying, points out the need for wise financial management. At least give the money to someone else if you cannot handle it properly!
 - c. Notice that the servants invested the money not for themselves, but on behalf of the king (“your mina” in v. 16, 18, 20; “my money” in 23).
3. Real Point: Not the Money! – But also do not overblow it!
 - a. The secondary truth being conveyed by the parable is **not** about investment banking or even giving finances to the church or missions. The truth being conveyed is the carrying out of general responsibilities that the king gives in his absence. The parable illustrates the truth in terms of economic responsibilities.
 - b. The reality behind the illustration is that God, through His Word, gives us responsibilities upon which we are called to act.
 - c. Each servant is given the same amount of money in the parable, so we should not think that these monetary amounts represent spiritual gifts (which are distributed somewhat unevenly on an individual basis) or some other detailed explanation (as Keach says that these minas represent general grace, and saving grace, and spiritual gifts, and ...). Rather the point is more of general responsibilities.

- d. What the king asked his servants to do, he expected them to do while he was away. What God asks us to do in Christ's absence, he expects us to do as well. How disappointing when you ask something of someone, and they even agree to it, only to not follow through.
- e. Only one part of our duties has to do with money. The accomplishment or non-accomplishment of those duties becomes a basis for judgment.
- f. So, to make it clear: financial stewardship is not the main point of the parable, for two reasons. First, financial stewardship is only a vehicle used in the parable to convey a larger issue of stewardship in our "religious" responsibilities. And second, the real main point is the delay in the kingdom's inauguration.
- g. This delay is key in understanding the parable because it sets our responsibilities in a context—as a test of faithfulness to a king whose direct presence is not with us and in light of the certain return of the king.

H. Some Applications of This Parable

1. To remind us that **earthly leaders are not going to bring in the utopian** society that so many hope for. The kingdom only comes with the coming of the KING of kings. After the next election cycle, we will struggle with the same kinds of problems—moral, economic, political, etc., and in fact things will get worse and worse. We are not post-millennial, meaning that we do not believe Christ will come AFTER the kingdom is established on earth. Nay—rather He must come BEFORE to straighten out the big mess and start the kingdom. We have to be patient as we await the coming of this "utopian" age.
2. To remind us that **God sets the leaders over nations as He pleases**. Daniel indicates that God will set up whomever he desires to rule over a nation. Dan 4:17, in Nebuchadnezzar's second dream, says that God gives the kingdom of men to whoever he wills and sets over it the lowest of men. Historically there have been many bad rulers, e.g. Herod Archaleus and others.
3. To remind us that **not everyone is excited about the direct rule of God** over the affairs of men. The Jewish people rejected Jesus as their king. Many today, Jews and Gentiles alike, do the same thing.
4. To remind us that **laziness or lack of focus, or worse yet scorning of responsibility**, have no place in our service to the king. All of this would be very out of place for a faithful servant. Productivity is called for.
5. To remind us of a **future judgment for rejection of God**. For those who reject Christ now, there is a fearful expectation of judgment in the future (Heb. 10:27).
6. To remind us of a **future judgment for servants of God**. This judgment is one of determination of rewards for faithful stewardship in the responsibilities

God has given us. A wrong attitude about our responsibility might actually demonstrate we belong in the camp of those who reject the Lord.

I. What is Precisely the Relationship of the Church to the Kingdom?

1. The earthly manifestation of the **kingdom has been delayed until the millennium**. The king, i.e. the human mediator, has gone away. The kingdom is not now. Jesus' direct rule is not exercised as if He were a human ruler present on the earth, though He will be. It is clearly delayed and we find ourselves in the interval before it comes.
 - a. This is proven by the preponderance of NT texts that refer to the kingdom as a future inheritance, something that the believer is awaiting and longing for. For instance, consider Matthew 6:9-10, Luke 22:18, 2 Peter 1:11, and 2 Timothy 4:18. Consider also Acts 14:22, 1 Cor. 6:9-10, 15:24, 15:50, Gal. 5:21, Eph. 5:5, 1 Thess. 2:12, 2 Thess. 1:5, 2 Tim. 4:1, Heb. 12:28, James 2:5, Rev. 12:10.
 - b. This reminds us of our **future hope**. The kingdom's arrival in the future is **certain**. It's not yet, but it WILL be. One of our fundamentals is the second coming of Jesus Christ. Our hope is not in this worldly system, even if many of us may live as if it is. Dan 2:44 shows that God will set up a kingdom that will not be destroyed.
 - c. On the other hand, some texts seem to refer to the kingdom as present. Among these are Rom. 14:17, 1 Cor. 4:20, and Col. 1:13. Also, the mysteries of the kingdom revealed in Matthew 13 indicate some kind of relationship of the kingdom to the present age. What shall we do with these? I believe that they indicate that...
2. The **kingdom program has not been postponed**.
 - a. Is this double-speak—that the kingdom is postponed but not the kingdom program? I do not believe so. What I mean is that God is still pursuing his ultimate goal of an earthly kingdom that will be expressed in the 1000-year reign of Christ. But He is not pursuing His plan with a hidden form of the kingdom or a new, differently-defined kingdom.
 - b. Rather, God is pursuing the kingdom program by preparing more citizens and a leadership class for the future rule of Jesus on earth. Those citizens are part of the body of Christ, who will reign with Christ (1 Cor. 4:8, 2 Tim. 2:12, Rev. 20:6).
 - c. Thus the church is an integral part of God's unfolding program. But the church itself is not a kingdom. It is a distributed body of believers in Jesus Christ who are organized in independent churches, carrying out the Great Commission and other commands of our Lord in their locale. There is no central government, and no king present.
 - d. This remind us of our **present responsibility**. The parallels to our existence are almost "scary," because clearly the Lord in this parable is focused on the time period between his two advents. That is where we are at right now! We have been given many responsibilities with

respect to our Christian walk individually and corporately. These are not just character and deportment issues, but also “action items.” Things come to mind like spiritual disciplines of reading the Scripture and prayer; especially the Great Commission; or giving time and resources to the church so that if you cannot engage in the Great Commission, others can.

- e. This also reminds us of the proper **present perspective**. Texts such as Rom. 14:17 about the kingdom “back figure” into our present-day existence. (See 1 Cor. 4:20, Col. 1:13, Col. 4:11, Rev. 1:9, and others such as Acts 19:8, 20:25, 28:23, 31, Heb 1:8). We are *presently* serving the One who will be the king of that kingdom. We will serve him in the *future* as well (Rev. 22:3). We have a present right of citizenship in that kingdom (John 3:3, 5; see Phil. 3:20) and are actually of royal pedigree, with God as Father. Also, at least some of the stewardship responsibilities we have been given relate to preparation for the future kingdom—calling out a people for God’s name, for example. Perhaps the easiest way to express it is that our present manner and direction of walk should be deeply affected by our future destination. Yet we get so entangled in the affairs of this life. Do we remember that we are citizens of heaven...indeed citizens of that future kingdom for which we long?

“Heavenly Father, Thy kingdom come!”

IV. The Kingdom of God in the Future — Revelation 19:11–20:15

A. The Six Defining Features of the Kingdom of God

1. Alva McClain wrote a very helpful book called *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, published about 50 years ago and reprinted many times since. In it, he distills six features or aspects of God’s kingdom program. The six features are outlined below.
2. He then shows these six features are parts of every major phase of the kingdom program throughout history. This allows him to identify, for example, the kingdom offered by Jesus in the gospels with the kingdom prophesied in the OT. In other words because the defining features of the *prophetic* kingdom are the same as the defining features of the *offered* kingdom, Jesus was not offering a new form or different type of kingdom from what was expected from the OT prophets.
3. A brief perusal of the major prophets will show all of these aspects of the kingdom. Some phases will have these features more perfectly than others, but they are present nonetheless.
 - a. Spiritual – Ezekiel 36:24-28 – and connect this with rebirth that believers experience today.
 - b. Political – Isaiah 32:1-8, 16-18
 - c. Ecclesiastical – Isaiah 56:7-8
 - d. Economic/Social – Isaiah 65:21-22

e. Physical – Amos 9:13

f. Moral/Ethical – Psalm 72:4, 7 (the entire chapter is excellent on the future kingdom)

More passages along these lines can be found listed in Appendix 1:

McClain’s Six Features of the Mediatorial Kingdom. The political and social aspects are discussed somewhat further in Appendix 2: Societal Structure of the Millennial Kingdom.

B. Introduction to the Kingdom in the Book of Revelation

1. The problem with trying to learn about the Kingdom of God in the future is that we have not seen the future yet. So, we have to look to prophetic revelation to see what God has told us will occur. A rather lengthy prophetic passage that deals with the kingdom is found in Revelation 19:11-20:15.
2. We must recognize that the weight of our understanding of the kingdom and future events does not rest only on Revelation 19-20. McClain writes, “As already indicated earlier in this volume, the correct view of the Kingdom must represent an eschatology formulated from an examination of the *whole* of Old and New Testament prophecy; and its essential features can be established apart from Revelation 20. If Biblical prophecy in general teaches anything clearly, it is that Messiah will come in great glory at the end of the present age to establish His kingdom over all the earth; and this is the firm core of Premillennialism” (p. 476).
3. With that said, Revelation 19-20 adds greatly to our understanding of the future kingdom. It gives a clear chronology of events that lead up to the establishment of the kingdom, the kingdom itself, and then the closing period of that kingdom.
4. I want to emphasize in your thinking that God has given us an accurate, literal accounting of what He has planned to take place. There is nothing “allegorical” or “spiritualized” about the text before us. We should see both resurrections as having the same type—a physical, bodily resurrection. We should see the time period given (1000 years) as being a literal time period. We should note the characteristics of the predicted kingdom as not prevailing today (such as the binding of Satan, ruling of the saints, etc.).

C. The Chronology of Events

1. The Second Coming of the King, Jesus Christ, 19:11-16
 - a. There was an earlier white-horse rider (Rev. 6:2), but that one was the antichrist.
 - b. There is no question about the identity of *this white horse rider* because of the many descriptive names:
 1. Faithful and True

2. The unknown name
 3. The Word of God (see John 1:1-3, 14).
 4. King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- c. His appearance also makes it clear of whom the text is speaking.
1. Eyes like a flame of fire (Rev. 1:14)
 2. Many crowns
 3. Robe dipped in blood, probably referring to His
- d. There is also no question about who this is because of what he does, 19:11, 14-15
1. Leads the armies from heaven
 2. Judges the nations and makes war in righteousness (Heb. 1:8, Psalm 45:6).
 3. Rules with a rod of iron
 4. Executes God's wrath

What is happening here is that Jesus Christ is returning to the earth in an "invasion" to overpower the Antichrist's world government and establish His own kingdom that will never be destroyed. This is the stone cut out without hands that smashes the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:34, 44-45).

2. The Defeat of the Antichrist and His Forces, 19:17-21

- a. An angel foreshadows the terrible situation by calling for the scavenging birds to come and eat to their fill. This points out that the battle of which we are speaking will be real; it will be physical; and it will be bloody.
- b. The antichrist gathered his armies of the nations to wage war against the incoming King of Kings. This is a foolish decision but one that is predictable from those who hate God. This reminds us of Psalm 2.
- c. Jesus Christ takes up the battle and defeats the armies. He captures the antichrist and his false prophet and consigns them to eternal punishment in the lake of fire. They are the first two residents of the lake of fire, which we call Hell.
- d. The sharp sword that He has is then used to kill the remainder of the men who joined the Antichrist in his rebellion.

3. The Binding of Satan for 1000 Years, 20:1-3

- a. God assigns an angel to bind Satan and throw him into the bottomless pit. He is sealed up so that he cannot get out to do his favorite work. Note that Satan is not omnipotent. He is completely subject to the will of God.
- b. The nations will be free of Satanic deceit for 1000 years.
- c. By the way, Satan is not bound today. The god of this world blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4) and is the father of lies who prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

This is one sure way that we can know we are not in the millennial kingdom right now.

d. Neither do we “bind” Satan or his demons today. That is a job for God and His angels alone (Jude 9).

4. The First Resurrection, of Martyrs of the Tribulation, 20:4-6

a. They had been beheaded as martyrs. They had not worshiped the beast or his image, etc.

b. “They lived” means that they were resurrected.

c. This will happen at the start of the 1000 year period. They lived through that time.

d. They will not die again, nor will they face eternal punishment for their sin. This is what it means that the “second death” has no power over them. See 20:15 (#9 below) for more on the second death.

5. The Reign of Christ with the Saints for 1000 Years, 20:4, 6

a. Millennium and millennial come from the root “mil” which means one thousand. We are thus talking about the millennial kingdom. It is the culmination of God’s kingdom program on earth, as far as world history before eternity. It could be called earth’s golden age. Note the characteristics of it that we have seen so far and will see just now.

b. What will happen during that time period? The text says that these resurrected ones will be priests and reign with Christ. They will be part of the ruling class in the millennial kingdom. To them will be given authority such as promised in 2 Tim 2:12 (and suggested in 1 Cor.6:3). These will be sinless rulers in the world government system of our Lord.

c. Jesus will be reigning over the world, from Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:17).

d. The covenant promises to Abraham, David, and Israel in the New Covenant will be fulfilled during this time.

e. I understand that the saved of all ages will be resurrected as part of the first resurrection and will participate in all this.

6. The Release of Satan to Deceive the Nations after the 1000 Years, 20:7-8

a. The world had been free from Satanic deceit for 1000 years (20:3).

b. Satan was sentenced to 1000 years in prison with no chance of early parole. So, when his sentence is up, what do you expect? He will get out right on time, and return immediately to his life of crime. The devil cannot be reformed.

c. His deceit will work, unfortunately. Its effectiveness is a testimony to the depravity of the human heart. Even in such ideal conditions as a kingdom ruled directly by Christ and resurrected saints, people will still rebel against God.

d. Satan gathers up a huge army from the world to attempt to overthrow the King. Foolishness again, like we saw 1000 years earlier. See Psalm 2.

7. The Defeat of Satan and His Army, 20:9-10

- a. Needless to say, Jesus wins the short-lived battle.
- b. Satan is thrown into the lake of fire, where the Antichrist and false prophet have already been punished during the 1000 years.
- c. The punishment that Satan undergoes is what was designed for him—the word means torment, torture, or severe distress. He deserves eternal punishment for his infinite transgression against God.
- d. This place was prepared for the devil (Matt. 25:41) but will also be experienced eternally by those whose father is the devil, that is, all who do not believe in the Son of God.
- e. You can see that the Lord does not have any patience for rebellion at this point. He quells it with the utmost authority and justice.

8. The Second Resurrection, of Unbelievers, 20:5

- a. This is separated from the first resurrection by 1000 years.
- b. There must therefore be two separate resurrections and not one “general resurrection” as is often taught in generic Christian eschatology.

9. The Final Judgment and Preparation for the Eternal Kingdom to Begin, 20:11-15

- a. This is called the Great White Throne judgment.
- b. Without partiality, all dead will stand before the throne.
- c. These are the dead that have not been resurrected prior to this point. All believers were resurrected at the first resurrection before the 1000 years; therefore these that are left for the second resurrection must be those who were unbelievers. These dead are from everywhere in the universe—the oceans, and even Death and Hades give up their dead. Note that this means that EVERYONE who dies will be resurrected (John 5:25, 28-29).
- d. The Bible says that this judgment is according to works (twice—verses 12 and 13). We ought to know that no one is saved by their works (Eph. 2:8-10); if we are judged by our works, we will be found lacking the necessary perfection to enter into heaven (Rom 3:20, 4:2, Gal. 2:16, Eph. 2:8-10, Titus 3:5). Rather, we should want to be judged on the basis of the finished sacrificial work and righteousness of Christ imputed to us. That is the only hope we have to be saved.
- e. In the final analysis, the names of these unbelievers are not found written in the book of life. Therefore, they are only fit for eternal destruction in the lake of fire. This eternal destruction is called the second death. It is eternal in that it is death that never ends or has a resurrection ending or anything of the sort. It is forever.
- f. Note that death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire. I take this to mean that Hades (the present fiery abode of the unsaved dead) is

different than Hell. Most generic Christian teaching does not make this clear.

g. I want to emphasize that Hell is real, it is awful, and it and lasts a very, very, long time.

10. To summarize what we have seen about the kingdom, we have seen the Lord come to establish the millennial kingdom and bring the kingdom program to its climax. We saw the resurrections associated with the kingdom, and the Lord's ruling with a rod of iron against anyone who would oppose Him.

Conclusion

I hope you are longing and praying for the Lord to return and establish His kingdom.

If you are a born again Christian, then this should be your attitude and great hope.

Furthermore, while we wait for our Lord's return, He desires us to be a certain way and do certain things. We have been regenerated and outfitted for the kingdom by new birth (John 3:3). We are citizens of His kingdom (Col. 1:13) even though we are waiting for it to be established. We ought to behave accordingly (Rom. 14:16-19).

These kingdom truths should also give us a missionary impetus. We do not want anyone to experience the second death; rather we would like for them to be with us in the kingdom of heaven and, ultimately, in the eternal heaven where no sin or sorrow exists. We want them to be worshippers of the great King of kings and Lord of lords, not be rebels against Him.

And that concludes our study for now on the Kingdom of the God of Heaven. Amen.

MAP

Appendix 1: McClain's Six Features of the Mediatorial Kingdom

The Mediatorial Kingdom can be outlined in four major phases: 1) its historical appearance in Exodus to the captivity; 2) the prophetic material bearing on the future re-establishment of the kingdom; 3) the synoptic material on the coming of the king with his offer of the kingdom and eventual rejection by Israel; and 4) the future millennial kingdom. Each is a phase of the mediatorial kingdom program. As such, they form four subdivisions of the earthly manifestation of God's universal or eternal kingdom which never ceases to rule over everything.

McClain carefully has laid out in his book six primary features of these phases of the mediatorial kingdom. Note them in the table below.

Feature	Definition	Historical Kingdom	Prophetic Kingdom	Offered Kingdom	Millennia l Kingdom
Spiritual	Deals with the spiritual relationship between God and Israel, and God and men.	Ex. 4:22-23; Lev. 19:2; 4:20; Ex. 25:22; Deut. 6:5-6; Rom. 7:14	Jer. 31:33-34; Ezek. 36:24-28; Isa. 60:18, 61:10; Joel 2:28	Matt. 3:2; John 3:3	20:6 (holy and priests)
Political	Deals with the internal political structure and external political relationships of Israel.	Deut. 17:18-20; 15:5-6 (cf. Is. 30:1-2)	Jer 23:5; Isa. 32:1a; Isa. 60:3, 5-6, 10-11, 61:5-6	Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 19:11-19; 22:30	Rev. 20:4, 6 (judging and reigning)
Ecclesiastical	Deals with the theocratic state and priesthood; externals of religion	Ex. 19:6; ch. 25-32; much of Leviticus	Isa. 61:6; Zech. 6:12-13; Isa. 56:7-8	Matt. 23:2-3; Mark 11:15-17	Rev. 20:6 (priests)
Economic/ Social	Deals with property ownership, slavery, loans, transactions, war.	Deut. 15:11; Lev. 19:9-10; 25:23	Micah 4:3; Isa. 65:21-22	Mark 10:13-16; Luke 10:29-37	See prophecies.
Physical	Provisions regarding the land, fruitfulness, disease, lifespan, etc.	Deut. 5:16; 7:13-14; 28:1-14; Ex. 23:25	Isa. 32:3-4; Ez. 34:29-30; Amos 9:13; Isa. 11:6-8	Matt. 6:33, 9:35, 11:2-5 (see Isa. 35:5-6)	See prophecies.
Moral/ Ethical	Ethical code inseparable from the ecclesiastical aspect.	Ex. 20:1-17	Isa. 32:5; Mal. 3:18; Psalm 72:4,7	Matt 5:21-22, 27-28, 39-44; 19:18	Rev. 20:3 (no deception)

Because each phase of the kingdom shares these features, it is apparent that the same kingdom program is in view. This is useful in that it shows us, for example, that the offered kingdom is exactly the same as that prophetic kingdom. We can see this in two ways:

- 1) From silence, in that the kingdom is not defined to be otherwise in its offer (Matt. 3:2, 4:17); and
- 2) By specific teachings that show it has the same elements as the previously revealed kingdom. McClain: "...the message and activities of Christ in relation to the Kingdom display all the essential aspects of the Kingdom predicted by the Old Testament...not one of these elements can be omitted without seriously narrowing or distorting Christ's conception of the Kingdom...while our Lord always follows closely the Old Testament prophetic pattern, there is never any mere slavish repetition of words, phrases, and texts. Rather He unfolds and interprets the utterances of the prophets..." (p. 303).

The arrow from columns four and five pointing to column 6 is intended to show that what was predicted by the prophets and offered by Christ will find its fulfillment in the millennial kingdom at the end of the world. All of those texts can be used to show the features of the millennial kingdom itself, since they are fulfilled at that time.

This forms a safeguard for us against views such as Amillennialism and Postmillennialism which would replace the original kingdom with a "spiritual" one. McClain rightly notes that the term "spiritual" has been greatly abused. It generally is used among amillennialists to mean "non-literal" or "non-physical" or even "allegorical." In reality, something can be physical *and* spiritual. (Consider the Lord Jesus Christ!) Something can be literal *and* spiritual. "Spiritual" should be used in the sense of "having to do with the Spirit" and is a property of the mediatorial kingdom rather than a way of interpreting the Bible (e.g., "spiritualizing" the OT promises to refer to the church).

There are other features as well which are not drawn out specifically above but which we have discussed before. For instance, in each case, the kingdom is related to the earth; has a ruler, realm, and reigning function; and is Israel-centric.

Appendix 2: Societal Structure of the Millennial Kingdom

There are four "ruling" classes, three of which happen to be resurrected saints of either the church age, the OT, or the tribulation. Two groups will be present in their natural bodies: the living Jews and the Gentiles who make it to the end of the tribulation still alive and are allowed into the kingdom.

1. The King – Isa. 32:1a; Matt. 25:31; Jer. 23:5; Psalm 2:9; Rev. 12:5, 19:15

The king is the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Church – 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:27, 3:21; 1 Cor. 6:3; Rev. 20:4a

By virtue of its union with Christ brought about by Spirit-baptism, the Church has a special relationship to Christ. It is the bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7-9) and will reign with Him (Rev. 20:4a).

3. Resurrected OT Saints – Isa. 32:1b; Dan. 12:2-3

Note that the resurrection in 12:2 is in two parts: those who awake to life, and those who awake to shame and contempt. This is similar to John 5:29 where both the first resurrection and the second are mentioned right next to each other. This does *not* mean that the two resurrections happen at the same time (Rev. 20:6-7 show that there is 1000 years separating these resurrections).

Included in this group are:

1. Abraham, who will personally receive his promise (Gen. 13:15, Acts 7:5).
2. David, who will rule as a king/prince over the nation (Ez. 37:24-25).
3. Zerubbabel, who will be made a 'signet ring' (Hag. 2:23)

4. Tribulation Saints – Rev. 20:4b

In Rev. 20:4, it is clear that these were martyred saints of the tribulation, since they:

1. Were beheaded.
2. Were Christ's witnesses.
3. Were witnesses to the Word of God.
4. Had not worshiped the beast or his image.
5. Had not received the mark of the beast on their bodies.

These are said explicitly to be resurrected ("lived") and to rule ("reign") with Christ during the 1000 year kingdom.

Rev. 20:6 indicates that this group is the last to be involved in the "first resurrection." All other people in the grave have to wait for the 1000 years to be over and they experience the second resurrection (the resurrection of the unjust) and the second death.

5. Living Israel – Matt. 24:22; Ezek. 20:33-38; Rom. 11:26; Isa. 60; Amos 9:13

First of all, how do they make it into the kingdom?

1. They must survive the tribulation period (Matt. 10:22, 24:22).
2. They must pass the judgment in the "wilderness of the peoples" (Ezek. 20:33-38). The unsaved are purged out of the nation at this point (20:38) and are not allowed to enter the land. These receive the death penalty. Thus, all Israel entering the land and the kingdom will be saved (Rom. 11:26).
3. The basis of the judgment is their response to the gospel of the kingdom proclaimed throughout the tribulation period by the 144,000 witnesses (Matt. 24:14).
4. This judgment occurs during the 75 days after the tribulation. Dan. 12:12 mentions the 1335 days. Subtracting 1260 for the last half of the tribulation, we are left with 75 days.

Second, what is their role in the kingdom? (See the whole of Isa. 60.)

1. They will at long last fulfill their mission as a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6; Isa. 61:6).
2. They will be the most respected nation, "at the top of the heap" if you will (Deut. 15:5-6; 28:13).
3. Other nations will look to them and Jerusalem and support them (Isa. 60:3, 5-6, 10-11, 61:5-6; Zech. 14:16-21). Nations which do not will be destroyed (Isa. 60:12; Zech. 14:18-19).
4. They will physically prosper (Amos 9:13).

6. Living Gentiles – Joel 3:1-2; Matt. 25:31-46; Micah 4; Zech. 8:20-23

First of all, how do they make it into the kingdom?

1. They must also survive the tribulation period.
2. They must pass the judgment outlined in Joel 3:1-2 at the Valley of Jehosphaphat. This is also mentioned in Matt. 25:31-46 as the judgment of the sheep and goat nations.
3. The basis of the judgment is the response to the gospel of the kingdom and the resulting treatment of living Israel during the tribulation. Phrases such as “on account of my people” in Joel and “my brothers” in Matthew indicate this. See Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 420-21 for reasons why this ultimately amounts to judgment of individuals and not nations as blocks *per se*. Saved enter the kingdom and unsaved face the death penalty.
4. This judgment also occurs in the “cleanup period” of 75 days after the tribulation.

Second, what is their role in the kingdom? (See the whole of Micah 4.)

1. They will fulfill their role in blessing Israel (see above).
2. They will learn about God and His laws through Israel (Micah 4:2) and they will worship God in Jerusalem (Zech. 8:20-23).

You might want to know what happens to living saints in the last two categories above when eternity begins—are they “resurrected” or “raptured” or how exactly do they get a spiritual body? I don’t know. The Bible apparently is silent on this—presumably they “merge into” the kingdom (1 Cor. 15:24) and so would at that point get a body suited for heaven (1 Cor. 15:50 and previous context indicates the need for such). They do not face the Great White Throne judgment, as only unbelievers are there (Rev. 20:11-15).

At least some of these saints are mentioned in Rev. 20:9 as being under attack by Satan and the deceived nations who make one last stand against God at the end of the millennium.

For many of the points above, there are scads of other Biblical texts that could support these. Large chunks of prophetic literature are devoted to the re-gathering of Israel and its future prosperity, for example.