

Intro to the Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is God's character in the heart of saved people.

Please see [Luke 17:21](#) for this basic definition.

One of the things shown in this Study is that we only get the seed of God's character while we are in this life and it is not fully fulfilled in us until we get to Heaven ([1Corinthians 13:10-12](#)). What we do receive now is the fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22](#); [Ephesians 5:9](#)) the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance...(and) is in all goodness and righteousness and truth). The word "fruit" means 'new small similar life' and "of" means 'belongs to'. Therefore, "the fruit of the Spirit" is 'new Godly life that God's Holy Spirit grows in us', which gives us the character of God and produces the "kingdom of God" in us.

This Study is Doctrinal Study because of the volume of Biblical references and because this phrase is often confused with the phrase: kingdom of Heaven. The two phrases have totally different meanings within the Bible.

It should be obvious that a "kingdom" belongs to a "king". Therefore, the Study on the word "king" is also related to this Study. Please also see the [Summary](#) on the name / role of king and the [Verses in the New Testament that use the word king](#) for that Study.

A lot of people have trouble separating the "kingdom of God" from the kingdom of Heaven. However, the distinction is clear once we consider the true meaning of the words within each phrase. The word "of" is defined as: 'belongs to'. Thus, "the kingdom of Heaven" is the kingdom that belongs to Heaven. It is all of the beings and things which are in the 'third Heaven', which is 'the home of God'. Meanwhile, the "kingdom of God" is the kingdom that belongs to God. Since God is the King, and a King imposes His character upon His Kingdom, the kingdom that belongs to God is seen in His character within the lives of His people, especially since the Bible tells us that the "kingdom of God" is seen here on Earth and is in the heart of God's people while they are still alive in this physical reality. (That truth was covered in the note for [Luke 17:21](#), which we started with).

In addition, [Luke 16:16](#) says "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it". This is the announcement of the change from the 'Old Testament Age' to the 'Church Age'.)

Once people understand the basic definition of this phrase, and the distinction from the phrase kingdom of Heaven, the rest of this Study is simply showing every place where the phrase the "kingdom of God" is used and show how this basic definition fits within each place where it is used. Contextual considerations, and some minor applications, may also be presented in this Study but, to the large extent, the reader will need to use the link provided to get the the related note in the book Study in order to get those details along with links to other related studies and word definitions.

In [Luke 18:29-30](#) we read: And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. This is one of the clearest promises about our rewards for serving God and accepting God's character as the kingdom of God controls our life here in this physical world. When God commands us to do something, He also promises rewards for our obedience.

One source of possible confusion comes from comparing the three '*parallel Gospels*' of Matthew Mark and Luke. In certain accounts, Matthew uses the phrase "kingdom of heaven" while Mark and / or Luke use the phrase "kingdom of God". However, the confusion is cleared up when we consider the basic purpose that each Gospel writer had for writing their Gospel. Matthew, as a former tax collector, wrote about government and how Jesus fulfilled the Law. As such, his main concern would be our eternal rewards which we receive as a result of our judgment as servants of God. Those rewards are kept in Heaven and, therefore, are part of the kingdom of Heaven. However, Mark, who presents Jesus as the example servant; and Luke, who presents Jesus as a literal physical man; were both more concerned with our following the example of Jesus while we are here in this life. Thus, they both wrote about the "kingdom of God" which we receive in this life. The parallel accounts, where we see the same incident or teaching with Mark and Luke attaching it to the "kingdom of God" and Matthew attaching it to the kingdom of heaven, shows us that we actually receive two different blessings for doing what we are told to do in those places within the Bible. We receive God's character here in this life, with the related blessings, and we also receive rewards in eternity. In addition, our eternal rewards are proportional to the amount of the character of God which we receive in this life. Thus, there is no conflict, only different perspectives.

In [Mark 4:11](#) we have both '*Instructions and Warnings about the kingdom of God*'. This reference is part of '*the parable of the sower*'. In that parable we are told about four (4) types of ground, which symbolically represent four (4) different classes of people's hearts. As far as I can remember, every message that I have heard on this section concentrated on the four (4) different classes of people's hearts. However, this Study is dealing with the kingdom of God and Jesus speaks about it between the parable and His explanation of the parable. There Jesus specifically said that the saved were given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God but the lost were denied that knowledge and understanding.

In the parable, only those who were represented by good ground produced fruit. In the '*Parable of the Pounds*' and the '*Parable of the Talents*', we learn that saved people, who do not produce fruit, lose even the spiritual gift that they had and end up being '*eternal paupers*'. In Matthew's account of '*the parable of the sower*', we read the phrase kingdom of heaven instead of kingdom of God. This is not a mistake but is letting us know that we get two different blessings for producing spiritual fruit. It also lets us know that people who claim to be saved but do not produce spiritual fruit can expect to receive NO eternal reward in Heaven.

The fruit of a saved person is new and mature spiritual life, which means leading others to salvation or helping saved people to spiritually mature. Now people argue if two of the types of ground / heart are saved or not but there is no argument about only one type of ground / heart producing fruit. That group is the only one called good and, in other places of the Bible, that is the only group which receives rewards in Heaven. So, if we wish to receive eternal rewards in Heaven then we must be in this group. That is: we must be a soul winner and a teacher causing the saved to mature spiritually so that they will also be soul winners.

People can not be a soul winner unless they have some spiritual maturity and are maintaining their personal relationship with God because it is actually God, working through the life of the saved person, Who wins souls to salvation. In addition, it is almost impossible for someone to teach someone else how to be a soul winner unless they are one first. Therefore, our eternal rewards are directly tied to our receiving the character of God and maturing spiritually while we are in this physical life.

With that said, we can not look at the detailed of the references in the Bible for the phrase kingdom of God.

Doctrines about the kingdom of God.

The phrase "kingdom of God" is used 70 times in 69 verses. All are in the New Testament. These references are broken into 5 categories which are listed below. The basic definition of this phrase was

already given. It should be obvious that only saved people can receive the kingdom of God. The Bible gives us further requirements for receiving the "kingdom of God" and warnings about rejecting it. We are also given instructions for allowing it to control our life here in this physical reality and told that the complete fulfillment of the "kingdom of God" will not be received until we get to Heaven. That is: we only receive a small portion of it here but only what we receive here will be fulfilled when we get to Heaven. Any part of God's character in us that we refuse or fail to obtain in this life will not be ours in eternity and our eternal rewards are proportional to how much of God's character that we received while we are still in this life.

The "fruit of the Spirit" was already mentioned and it was also mentioned that receiving the "fruit of the Spirit" increases God's character in us. How many saved people have very little peace? How many could use stronger faith? How many complain when God puts them in circumstances which are intended to grow their faith? Such complaints limit how much of the "kingdom of God" that we receive in this life and also limits our eternal rewards which come from the complete fulfillment when we get to Heaven.

Thus, our main conclusion is that God wants all of His people to receive His character while they are in this life. The amount of His character that we receive in this life determines the amount of His character that we have for eternity and our position and rewards in His kingdom in eternity. Those saved people who are most like God will have the greatest positions in His eternal kingdom and those saved people who are least like God will have the lowest positions in eternity.

- '*Definitions / requirements of the kingdom of God*': [Matthew 6:33](#); [Matthew 19:24](#); [Matthew 21:31](#); [Mark 4:30](#); [Mark 10:14-15](#); [Mark 10:23-25](#); [Mark 12:34](#); [Luke 8:10](#); [Luke 12:31](#); [Luke 13:18](#); [Luke 14:13-15](#); [Luke 17:21](#); [Luke 18:16-17](#); [Luke 19:11](#); [John 3:3](#); [John 3:5](#); [Romans 14:17](#); [1Corinthians 4:20](#);
- '*Time of the kingdom of God*': [Matthew 12:28](#); [Mark 1:14](#); [Mark 15:43](#); [Luke 10:11](#); [Luke 11:20](#); [Luke 16:16](#); [Luke 23:25](#)
- '*Instructions about the kingdom of God*': [Mark 4:11](#); [Mark 4:26](#); [Mark 9:47](#); [Luke 4:43](#); [Luke 6:20](#); [Luke 7:28](#); [Luke 8:1](#); [Luke 9:2](#); [Luke 9:11](#); [Luke 9:60](#); [Luke 9:62](#); [Luke 18:29](#); [Acts 1:3](#); [Acts 8:12](#); [Acts 14:22](#); [Acts 19:8](#); [Acts 20:25](#); [Acts 28:23](#); [Acts .;](#) [1Corinthians 15:50](#); [Colossians 4:11](#); [2Thessalonians 1:5](#)
- '*Warnings about the kingdom of God*': [Matthew 21:43](#); [Mark 4:11](#); [Mark 9:47](#); [Luke 9:26](#); [Luke 13:28-29](#); [Luke 18:24-25](#); [1Corinthians 4:20](#); [1Corinthians 6:9-10](#); [Galatians 5:21](#);
- '*Complete fulfillment of the kingdom of God*': [Mark 9:1](#); [Mark 14:25](#); [Mark 15:43](#); [Luke 9:27](#); [Luke 21:31](#); [Luke 22:16](#); [Luke 23:25](#); [Revelation 12:10](#);

[Luke 17:20-21](#): 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: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the **kingdom of God** is within you.

This reference is in the general note under the title: '*Definitions / requirements of the kingdom of God*'.

The most critical phrase, within this sentence and in consideration of this Study, is: behold, the kingdom of God is within you. The functional definition for the word "behold" is: 'Pay close attention'. The word "is" is 'a word of ongoing existence'. Therefore, the "kingdom of God" is to be within the saved while they are still in this world and it is to remain in an ongoing basis.

Since the "kingdom of God" is 'God's character in you', it is only for the saved. since it is to be in the saved right now, it can not be the same as "the kingdom of Heaven". That reason is in addition to the fact that these are different words and no two words have the same definition in the Bible. God and Heaven definitely have different meanings. Therefore, the "kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of Heaven" definitely have different meanings.

Another important consideration of this sentence is the context where it is found. In the prior two chapters we have Jesus teaching His disciples and exposing the sins of the religious leaders in parables and accounts such as the rich man and Lazarus. Then, at the start of this chapter, Jesus teaches the importance of having strong faith. After that we read about His healing 10 lepers but only the Samaritan gave thanks and glorified God. He was the only one of the ten who also received salvation. After that we have our current reference. Then the chapter ends with prophecies from Jesus about future events and the doctrinal errors which will be preached by many religious leaders. Thus, we see that the entire surrounding context is making a distinction between people who have true salvation and religious people who claim to be saved but are probably lost because they are trusting in their own religious deeds instead of trusting in an ongoing personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Thus, we see that the entire context supports what was said about the “[kingdom of God](#)” in this sentence. It is within you, if you are truly saved because the truly saved have God's life in them and they are supposed to be learning how to become a son of God as [John 1:12](#) tells us (“[But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name](#)”). After we get saved we are to receive '[the character of God](#)' and it is to be in us as part of our personal character.
