

GROWING IN GOD PODCAST



GIG29 The Kingdom of Heaven

I've had such a burden from the Lord to speak about the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God. We see in the Scriptures that Christ first came, in Matthew 4:17, "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" This idea of the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven—sometimes people get confused. Really the terminology is the same. We do see this wording being different; yet there's one Kingdom of Heaven. There's one Kingdom of God. It has different aspects. And I think that's what really becomes confusing to people. And hopefully through some of the podcasting that I'm going to be doing, there's going to be clarity in many levels of how the Kingdom of God manifests itself.

What I want to do with this podcast is talk specifically about the Kingdom of Heaven. There is a Kingdom of Heaven. There is a heaven, a heavenly realm. And in this realm of heaven, as the Scripture refers to it, is the throne of God, is the Kingdom of God, and it initiates from the nexus of the heavenly world or the heavenly realm. So this is the beginning and the flash point; there is a Kingdom of Heaven. There is a Kingdom of God. God the Almighty, the Creator of the universe, and His throne exists in heaven. And from this place of His throne, He rules the worlds forever. Not just the earth, but the worlds, the created universe. The universe does not revolve around this earth, neither naturally nor spiritually. For a long time, people thought that everything revolved around this earth. And I think sometimes people spiritually still get that feeling that everything revolves around what happens here on earth. And that's part of what brings the confusion as we look for everything to kind of spring from here. But it does not. Christ was clear about that and we're going to discuss that aspect of it. But for right now, what I want to do is emphasize this idea and give us some scriptural background for the fact that the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven does exist in what we call heaven, the heavenly realm, the heavenly world. And that is the throne of God and from that place, He rules forever.

In Psalm 103:19, it says, "The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all." So His throne is established in the heavens. And from there His sovereignty rules over all things.

Bless the LORD, you His angels,
Mighty in strength, who perform His word,
Obeying the voice of His word!
Bless the LORD, all you His hosts,
You who serve Him, doing His will.
Bless the LORD, all you works of His,
In all places of His dominion;
Bless the LORD, O my soul! (Psalm 103:20–23)

So we see there's many places of His dominion, but His throne is in the heavens. And from there, His sovereignty rules over all created things. Psalm 11 verse 4 says, "The LORD is in His Holy temple; the LORD's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men." So again we see in the Word of God that His holy temple and His throne are in heaven.

Isaiah 66, starting at verse 1 says,

Thus says the LORD,
“Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool.
Where then is a house you could build for Me?
And where is a place that I may rest?
For My hand made all these things,
Thus all these things came into being,” declares the LORD.
“But to this one I will look,
To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.” (Psalm 66:1–2)

So as great as God is, as much as He fills the heavens, His throne room is there. The earth is a footstool. It's a realm that He rules over. It's interesting how He is always talking about this focus He has on man and how He's looking for that contrite spirit, the one who trembles at His Word. So He's very much focused on man. And yet that does not take away from the fact and the reality that His throne is in the heavens.

Matthew 5:34, this is Christ saying, "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING." I love this verse for several reasons. One is because it's Yeshua Himself speaking. He says, "Don't make an oath by heaven because that is God's throne." So here we have out of the mouth of Christ, the confirmation to these other verses of Scripture saying that heaven is the throne of God; in heaven is the throne of God. And don't swear by the earth because that is His footstool. He is very much in contact and has a plan for the earth. And don't swear by Jerusalem because it's the city of the great King, which foreshadows what will happen as the Kingdom of Heaven comes into the earth that the throne of the great King will reside in Jerusalem.

So we see this very specific, detailed confirmation through the Word of God that His throne is in heaven. Also what we have in the Scriptures, the Scriptures give us pictures of the Kingdom of Heaven. Now I know it's impossible to really know what exactly it looks like and what is transpiring. It's beyond our grasp; it's beyond our ability. One thing we do know is that Christ, when He came, John the Baptist, when he came, said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; repent, "the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:15). And one thing we need to understand about the Kingdom of Heaven, about the throne room of God is that it is filled with His presence and He is righteous and He is holy. And the reason we're told to repent is because we need to enter into that same righteousness and holiness in order to be able to come into His presence, to enter in before Him at His throne. And because we are to do that through Christ, He said, "Where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3).

And we are to come into His presence. This requires a level of repentance. It's not required just to be dwelling here on the earth and going to church. That's why I think sometimes when we speak about repentance, some people don't really get and grasp the concept of it. That's why I think Christ and John the Baptist were very clear. They didn't say, "Repent because the Church is going to happen." They said, "Repent because the Kingdom of God is coming near." That's what's entering into our presence. And we're to enter into that Presence of the Kingdom of Heaven. And that is a place of holiness. It is a place of righteousness. It is a place of His glory, of His dominion, of His presence. And for us to ever be a part of that requires a great deal of repentance because we must be holy as He is holy. We must be holy as are the other beings of heaven that dwell in the heavenly realm. And so this is why the admonition comes to us to repent, especially in these days because in these days we are talking about the transition

from just the earthly realm and the earthly kingdoms into His Kingdom manifesting in this earth. But first we start at heaven. That's where it is. That's the nexus; that's the beginning point of all of His Kingdom.

But I want to read out of Daniel. And I know there's quite a few verses here, but I want again for us to see the Scripture makes an effort to paint for us pictures and concepts so that we can grasp what it is about the Kingdom. I know in the book of Isaiah it does the same thing. Isaiah was taken into heaven, and he was shattered because of what he saw. He beheld the Lord. He beheld Him on His throne and His train filling the temple and the cry of "holy, holy, holy is the LORD our God, the Almighty" (see Isaiah 6:3). So he had that, and it broke his spirit. It crushed him. It brought about that repentance to him. And through that repentance, they brought the coal from the altar and his lips were purified that he might be the prophet of God, to speak the Word of God. And I think these are the kind of experiences that the Lord's looking for us to have. And one of the ways we have this is by getting in touch with the reality of the Kingdom of God. That's why Christ preached it. And that's why the Scriptures paint these pictures for us that we might at least have some concept and something that we can believe to move into by faith.

Daniel 7, starting at verse 8 says,

"While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts. And I kept looking until thrones were set up." (Daniel 7:8–9)

I start with this verse 8 because we're going to see the Kingdom of Heaven being manifest. But it's important to realize that there's these manifestations that we have of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven that are tied to the great turmoil of the earth and the kings of the earth that are trying to restrain and hold back the Kingdom of Heaven. So one of the things that concerns me is that so often we're fearful about the days of tribulation and we have these pictures of it. Don't worry about the beasts and the horns and all those things right now. Let's see if we can focus on the Kingdom of God. Let's see if we can be so amazed with what is existing now in this great Kingdom of Heaven that it de-emphasizes the tribulations and the difficulties that we exist in right now. It's a matter of our focus. And we want to be focused on this great Kingdom of Heaven.

In verse 9, it says,

"I kept looking
Until thrones were set up,
And the Ancient of Days took His seat [God takes His seat];
His vesture was like white snow
And the hair of His head like pure wool.
His throne was ablaze with flames,
Its wheels were a burning fire.
A river of fire was flowing
And coming out from before Him;
Thousands upon thousands were attending Him." (Daniel 7:9–10)

In case you thought we were the only ones in the Kingdom. No, there's thousands upon thousands in this heavenly realm that are attending to Him, that are focused on Him.

“And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him;
The court sat,
And the books were opened.
Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.” (Daniel 7:10–11)

Again we see this amazing blend of the fact that the earth is in turmoil. The kings of the earth are battling and warring against the Kingdom of God coming and manifesting itself in the earth or the establishment even of the Kingdom fully within the heavenly realms. And so all of this conflict seems to be taking place, but we keep our eyes upon Him who is seated upon the throne and the fires that are coming out of the throne. And those who are attending Him, being thousands upon thousands and myriads upon myriads. If you feel that sometimes we're overwhelmed by the battle, don't worry. Heaven has an army. That is why He is called the Lord of hosts. It's a beautiful picture. And when He comes, He comes as the Lord of hosts, bringing the hosts of heaven with Him. We are not outnumbered. We are surrounded by the heavenly hosts who are with us.

“I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.” (Daniel 7:13)

What a beautiful picture of Christ ascending from the earth into the presence of the Father before the Ancient of Days. One like the Son of Man was coming up, coming up to the Ancient of Days. And He was presented before Him.

“And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and men of every language
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:14)

So we know that Christ is given a kingdom. He is the Son of God given a Kingdom and a dominion that will never pass away. That is the Kingdom of God as it will manifest on earth at His return. But at this time we see Him being presented before the Ancient of Days and the Kingdom being established there and given in heaven and manifesting in heaven first.

Revelation 4, beginning with verse 1. And again I know there's several verses here, but I want you to see this picture. I want it to be alive to you. I want it to be more real. I want the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, to be more real to you than the natural realm that surrounds us on a daily basis. Because in truth, it is more real. And in truth, it will swallow up this world that we live in, and this earth will also become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. In verse 1, it says, "After these things, I looked," this is John speaking from the isle of Patmos.

And behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind." (Revelation 4:1–6)

You have to try to close your eyes and picture this. John's trying with the best of his ability to describe that which is indescribable to present to us the glory of God as it exists in the throne in the heavenly places. In verse 7,

The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME." And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne. (Revelation 4:7–10)

We will follow this example. Some day we will stand before this throne that we're reading of, that we're trying to picture right now, making it real to us. And we, likewise, will fall down. We will throw down whatever crowns that we have, whatever gifts that we have been given, whatever resides in us of an anointing, and we will cast it down and we, likewise, will cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD GOD, the Almighty, who is and was and is to come." Verse 11,

"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. (Revelation 4:11—5:1)

So God's sitting on His throne with all this going on, all this worship around Him, all this glory surrounding Him. And He's holding in His hand this book that is written, this scroll that is written. It said,

I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping [which I wish I could]; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." (Revelation 5:2–8)

Don't think your prayers aren't going anywhere. They're being presented before the throne, before the Lamb.

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." (Revelation 5:9–10)

So we see this amazing picture that's being painted for us by John and showing us the throne room in heaven and what it is like to the best of his ability. And I pray God open the creative eyes of our heart and spirit and understanding to likewise see and behold the picture that he's painting for us. And then we see the Lamb of God, the Lamb who was slain standing there at the throne of God, presenting these people from every tribe, every kindred, every tongue, every nation. And He makes them to be a Kingdom and priests to our God. And they will rule upon the earth. Yes, the Kingdom of God will come upon the earth, but it will always and forever be established in the heavenly places. It will be colonized to this place. And we see this process taking place and transpiring before the Father and with the Son. We see this is a very clear picture that Yeshua declared that His Kingdom was not derived from this earth.

In John 18:33 it says,

Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." (John 18:33–36)

We must always remember this. The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of God is in heaven. It is in that realm and wherever it manifests, it manifests from that realm. And it will manifest from that realm into this realm. And it will establish itself in this realm as it is in heaven. That's what we're taught to pray.

Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (John 18:37)

So we see Christ Himself confessing that His Kingdom when it comes to the earth, when it is established on the earth, is still not a kingdom from this earth. It is not derived, as He says, "From this realm." It doesn't come from this place. It is not an earthly kingdom. It is a Kingdom that overtakes this earthly realm. It is one realm taking authority over another. We've seen this before in the natural realm. We've seen kingdoms like Britain, for instance. How many places did they colonize the kingdom to, of England, and take over those other realms? And so this was the concept that we see happening here, but we never want to lose the fact that the Kingdom of Heaven is a Kingdom of Heaven. And yet we also do not want to lose the fact that it is coming here to earth.

So I want you to remember some key points from this today. God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, has an eternal throne in heaven. And it is God the Father who sent His son into the earth as Messiah to reconcile to Himself mankind. We see that in John 3:16. The Messiah returns to heaven, as we know from the Gospels, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father and given a name above

every name and crowned King over all the earth. We see this very clearly in Psalm 2, starting at verse 7, it says,

“I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, ‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.” (Psalm 2:7–8)

Also in Revelation 12:5, we see the war that was transpiring in heaven, and it talks about the woman who gives birth. And it says, "She gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne." So Christ came to the earth, but he returned to heaven to be with the Father, seated there in heavenly places for the purpose of receiving the anointing and the commission and the authority, the name above every name and to take charge over the earth. So the last point I want us to remember very carefully: Messiah returns to earth, colonizing the Kingdom of God onto this earth, and He rules on the throne of David forever and ever. Amen.