

The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God

- What is the “Kingdom of Heaven” (KOH), and how does it relate to the phrase “Kingdom of God (KOG)?” Various views have been expressed, of which the four most prominent are listed here:
 - A. View One
 - 1. KOH = sphere of profession, limited in time.
 - 2. KOG = sphere of possession, not bound by time.
 - B. View Two - reverses View One
 - 1. KOG = all creation. It is the greater or broader term. Universal Kingdom.
 - 2. KOH = Limited to earth and man.
 - C. View Three
 - Both refer to the same kingdom.
 - D. View Four
 - There is a “mystery form” of the Kingdom (Matthew 13) in which they they overlap. There are true believers in both. Certain things are true of both.
- The KOG and KOH are generally viewed in traditional premillennial circles in the following way:
 - A. KOH = God’s kingdom on earth and relates to the Messianic Kingdom. Usually 3 aspects of this kingdom are taught.
 - 1. The Kingdom as offered to Jews by Christ was rejected.
 - 2. The Mystery form, found in the parables in Matt. 13, is professing Christendom.
 - 3. A future realization of the KOH will take the place of the one rejected by the Jews and will be established on earth at the second coming.
 - B. KOG is sometimes called the universal or eternal kingdom. However, some premillennialists strangely refer the KOG to the state of salvation.
 - C. The essential differences between the KOG and KOH are:
 - 1. In KOG - no mixture of good and evil (that is no unsaved), whereas in KOH both saved and unsaved.
 - 2. KOG all who are willing to be subject to God are included, not excepting angels. KOH limited to mankind.
 - 3. KOG entered by new birth (John 3). KOH entered by profession, either true or false. Includes the visible church, even including unbelievers.
 - 4. KOG mainly inward and spiritual, KOH outward and visible.
 - 5. E. Schyler English’s view is that one day the KOH will merge into the KOG. They will become identical with only believers.
- The use of the terms KOH and KOG in the Gospels.
 - A. KOH
 - 1. Matt. = 32 times
 - 2. Mark = 0 times
 - 3. Luke = 0 times
 - B. KOG
 - 1. Matt. = 4 times
 - 2. Mark = 14 times
 - 3. Luke = 32 times
- The biblical evidence seems overwhelming concerning the nature of these phrases:
 - A. The term *kingdom* not new with Jesus. It’s used throughout the Old Testament. The Jews understood the meaning from its use by the prophets (1 Samuel 24:20, 2 Samuel 5:12; 7:16, Isaiah 9:7, Daniel 7:14, 18, 22).

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- B. Daniel associated the Kingdom of God with Heaven - Dan 2:24; Dan. 7:27.
- C. The terms are used interchangeably by the Gospel writers.
 1. Matt. 4:17 & Mark 1:15 - Christ's message expressed with both terms.
 2. These statements are made at the same point in Christ's earthly ministry, as seen by the contexts of both passages, i. e. the baptism of Jesus, the temptation of Christ, the calling of Peter and Andrew, etc.
 3. Matt. 19:23, 24 & Mark 10:23-27 - The difficulty of entering the Kingdom.
 4. Matt. 10:7 & Luke 9:2 - The sending of the disciples.
 5. Matt. 11:11 & Luke 7:28 - John the Baptist in the Kingdom.
 6. Matt. 13:11 & Mk 4:11 - Use in the parables.
 7. Matt. 12:28 & Luke 16:16
 8. Matt. 18:2-3 & Luke 18:17
 9. Matt. 5:3 & Luke 6:20
 10. Matt. 15:43 & Luke 23:51
 11. And on and on and on and on.
- Matthew uses KOG only when Christ's authority is being challenged.
 - A. Matt. 12:28
 - B. Matt. 21:31
 - C. Matt. 21:43
 - D. Matt. 12:23 & 24, where the two terms are used together in one passage!
- Conclusion: Both terms relate to the same kingdom, just as the terms Son of God and Son of Man both refer to Christ. When Christ used the terms He expected His listeners to understand what He meant. While He explained the Kingdom more fully than in the Old Testament prophecies, He did not explain the meaning of the terms at all. The kingdom in view in the gospels is the kingdom promised in the Old Testament through the prophets to Israel. That is, it is the future Kingdom of God on the earth.
- Why then two terms? It is because of the emphasis of the books and the writers involved. KOH is used only to the Jews by Matthew. The phrase expressed the source of the Kingdom, as being from heaven as opposed to earth. "The emphasis is that the Kingdom is patterned after heaven and not earth." (Charles A. Hauser) See Matt 21:25 and Luke 15:21 for other places where Heaven means "God".
- KOG is used by Matthew only when Christ's authority is being challenged. When used by the other writers who were writing to Gentiles, the term KOG emphasized the power and authority of God over the earth. The word *heaven* would have been misleading to a non-Jew of a Greek pagan background with its idea of lesser deities and spirit beings.