

Gospel and the Kingdom of God — 4

(Plan of the Ages)

Outline

1. Meaning of the Kingdom of God
2. Different terms used for the Kingdom of God
3. The two ages—this age and the age to come
4. The Gospel and the Kingdom of God

1. Meaning of the Kingdom of God: In English, “kingdom” means an action (to rule) and, secondarily, a place where a king rules. God rules in Heaven but not on Earth because our first parents listened to Satan and turned away from God. **Since then, Satan has ruled the world through humanity—and it has caused human misery, sin and death.** Therefore, Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father in heaven, holy be Your Name, Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.” And the kingdom (rule) of God must begin in our hearts. Therefore, Jesus tells us, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well: (Matt 6:33).

2. Different terms used for the Kingdom of God: Now, let us examine *Mark 10:17-30*. As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit **eternal life**?” . . . ²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” ²² At this, the man’s face fell. He went away sad because he had great wealth. ²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the **kingdom of God**!” ²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can **be saved**?” ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, “With man, this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” ²⁸ Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!” ²⁹ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields — along with persecutions -- and in the **age to come**, eternal life.

In the scripture above, I have marked four terms in bold: **eternal life**, **the kingdom of God**, **be saved** (or salvation), and **age to come**. We can see that the rich young man, Jesus, and His disciples all referred to the same thing but used different terms. The **kingdom of God** is fully realised only in **the age to come**. It is **eternal**. To enter it, God must save one from this present age: [Note: this present age (v30) is also known as the kingdom of the world that Satan rules. The **age to come** is the kingdom of God, ruled by God. These two kingdoms conflict with each other]

3. The two ages — this age and the age to come: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (*Gen 1:1*), and He created man and woman in His image and likeness (*Gen 1:27, 5:1*). He blessed them, told them to multiply, rule and subdue the earth (*Gen 1:28-30*). Being in God’s image and likeness, humans were in a perfect relationship with God. But Satan (a rebellious angel) tempted them to rebel against God, which they did and **fell out of the relationship with God** — known as the Fall of Man. God warned Adam that if they disobeyed Him, they would die. Since then, generations that followed were born in Adam’s likeness and image — a fractured image of God because of sin (*Gen 5:3*).

Gen 5:1-3 When God created mankind, he made them in **the likeness of God**.² He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them mankind when they were created.³ When Adam had lived 130 years, **he had a son in his own likeness**, in his own image, and he named him Seth.

Henceforth, humans were born sinners and kept sinning, resulting in disorder, misery, and death. Humanity now has three giant enemies- sin, Satan and death. The Fall of Man was the beginning of “**this age**” (also called “*the present evil age*” in Gal 1:4). The God of this age is the devil who has blinded the eyes of people so that they cannot see the glory of God (2 Cor 4:4). **Creation is now perishing. No religious leader can stop it. Only the Creator Himself must intervene.**”

Cor 4:4 The God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light that displays **the gospel** of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

4. The Gospel and the Kingdom of God: The good news (known as the **gospel**) is that God sent His Son, Jesus, to destroy the works of the devil, rescue us from the present evil age and transform us, give us a new heart and new spirit that we willingly love God and follow His ways and be in the kingdom of God (His rule).

1 John 3:8 The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Ezk 36:25-27 I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Heb 8:10-12 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 11 No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

When we receive the solution God provides for our rescue, we become children born of God and not children of man. We are transformed into a new creation; we will not be a part of the perishing world — “this age”. We are no more in the kingdom of darkness, but God places us in the kingdom of God, i.e. the age to come.

Though Christians live in this world, we are already in the age to come and live by its power now.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! Col 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

Luke 18:29-30 “I tell you the truth,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God³⁰ will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life.”

Every born-again Christian is a new creation of God. And God will use His new creation to transform the world. Never underestimate the power of God to do so. For the zeal of God will accomplish it.

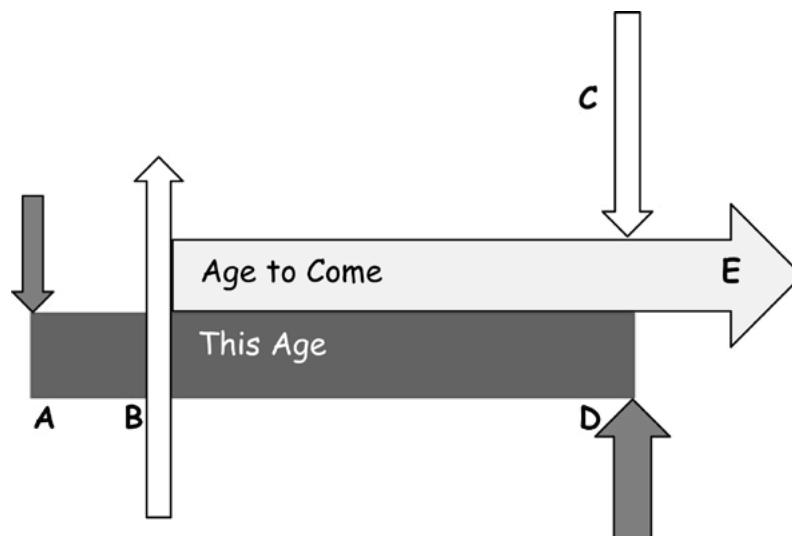
Isa 9:7 Of the greatness of his government and peace, there will be no end. Hewill reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

I have given the next page a simplified diagram of God's Plan of the Ages. Notice the Second Coming of Christ, the general resurrection of the dead and the last judgment that follows. Then God will defeat His three enemies (sin, Satan, and death) and throw them in hell along with the wicked (Rev 20:10-15). This present evil age will pass away. Those who belong to Christ will be with Him for eternity in a new creation—a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21:1-4).

Rev 20: 10-15 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Rev 21:1-4 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Cor 2:9-10 However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”— but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.



A	Fall of Man
B	The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
C	Second Coming of Christ
D	General Resurrection of the Dead & Last Judgment
E	Eternity in a new heaven and new earth

Note: This is only a simplified diagram. It doesn't show details of the Millennium, Great Tribulation, Rapture etc.