

The Mystery Phase of God's Kingdom

"It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"

1. **What is the Kingdom of God?** *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,"* Matt. 6:10. The kingdom of God is when God's Messiah-Christ is directly ruling the nations from Jerusalem, Israel. His will is done, not a majority vote or a dictating oppressor's whim. His righteous law will be the constitutional order and employed with equity for the meek, removal of the wicked and justice for all, Isa. 2:2-4 / 11:4-9. Isaiah says: *"For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us,"* 33:22. He is the judicial, legislative and executive branch all in one. Then will be peace on earth, good will toward man as the wolf lies down with the lamb.

2. **How does the Kingdom come to earth?** *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed...but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever,"* Dan. 2:44. The heavenly kingdom comes to planet earth not by religious revival, social refinement or political renewal but with a destroying cataclysmic judgment: a wrecking ball. Then the sinner and the serpent are violently removed and the Son and His saints now peacefully rule. The new replaces the old.

We see this truth in imagery form in Daniel 2. Here a glorious human statue crafted by man's hands represents worldwide kingdoms. Then a stone cut without human hands (the kingdom of God) smashes the statue image at the feet. The whole image comes crashing down and breaks into "a million pieces". Then the wind comes and blows it away. Here today, gone tomorrow. The stone cut without hands then begins to grow into a huge mountain and covers the whole earth. Good replaced the evil. No coexisting.

3. **What is a Mystery?** *"the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven...things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world,"* Matt. 13:11, 35. A biblical mystery is a truth that God did not fully reveal in the Old Testament. But He did reveal it in the New Testament for us to understand His plan and ways. As Eph. 3:4-5 says: *"(...the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."* Therefore, there will be something about the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven that will be new and different, Matt. 13:52.

4. **What is the Mystery Kingdom?** – *"Let both [wheat, children of the kingdom – tares, children of the wicked one] grow together until the harvest... As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world,"* Matt. 13:30, 38, 40. In the kingdom's mystery phase, the enemy Satan will still be active, Matt. 13:19, 25, 39. As the Lord sows His gospel seed in the world, the devil plants tares (weeds) among the true wheat. And rather than root out the tares now, thereby damaging the wheat, the Lord said to let *"both grow together"* – until – the end. Here evil is not smashed first. Evil and good being permitted to coexist is a new kingdom truth. It's only at the King's coming His angels remove the evil.

5. **How does the Body of Christ (church) fit in?** *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body / And He is the head of the body, the church,"* 1Cor. 12:13, Col. 1:18. Since the unrighteous don't inherit the kingdom, Christ's body is sinners who have been declared righteous and indwelt with His Spirit by faith in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ, 1Cor. 6:9-11.

The church is not the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus is not king of the church but its Head. Kings can fire their servants and don't share their riches and glory with them. But a head and body are one and thus go together and share the blessings. What a relationship! The church is not to rule this world now or to fight holy wars to banish evil, John 18:36. The church is not Israel, a political nation, but a spiritual body, 1Pet. 2:5. The church alone is the body of Christ of which He is the Head (its authority, source of life and wisdom).

“Christ and the church” is also a great mystery, Eph. 5:32. In between Israel's rejection of their king-Messiah and His coming back to earth as King, the Lord is forming a spiritual holy nation: the church, 1Pet. 2:9. The church is called out from *all* nations to uniquely glorify the Name of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in a world that doesn't, Acts 15:14. Christ's body is peoples of all nationalities who have been baptized with His Spirit and equally share His eternal life. The body alone has the life of its Head, and is under His direct rule, Eph. 1:19-23. In the body of Christ there are no tares. The Lord knows His own.

But the present body lives in Satan's domain where there are tares. At times there will be a physical mixture of the body (wheat) and the tares (fake). Mixtures can take place at a local “church” level or a ministry organization. Tares will profess to be under God's rule but don't possess His Spirit. Tares claim to follow Christ Jesus but work against God's plan and will – in the Name of Christ. Christendom is its name (kingdom of all who name Christ). It coexists in the mystery phase where evil is not yet smashed. Christendom has tares and bears evil. The body of Christ does not have tares and bears Spirit-fruit.

6. Do local churches have to deal with the coexistence of evil? *“the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them,”* Acts. 20, 28-30. Because the churches of God exist on earth at the same time of the mystery kingdom phase, there will be evil to guard against that coexists. Titus 1:16 reminds of those who profess God but deny Him in works. Timothy was told that demons would seduce some with wrong teaching. Also some would turn their ears from the truth in desiring their needs satisfied, 1Tim 4:1-6, 2Tim, 4:1-5. So don't let the presence of evil discourage you. It is predicted and will exist until the end. Don't share in the evil but overcome with good. Be prepared to endure afflictions.

7. The churches will be replaced on earth by the Kingdom of God. *“I also will keep thee [a church] from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world... The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ... thy wrath is come,”* Rev. 3:10, 11:15,18. Revelation, the prophecy to the churches, shows this age ending in cataclysmic judgment. The wrath of God falls: the wrecking ball. It's not for environmental pollution but moral pollution (not failure to recycle but failure to repent), Rev. 9:18-21. The greatest earthquake happens. Islands disappear as mountains crumble with 100-lb ice chunks, Rev. 16. Space stars fall like fruit from a tree during a hurricane, 6:13. A river of human blood flows.

The church is taken to heaven before this wrath of God, 1Thess. 5:9. In Revelation, 6-19, we don't see the church mentioned on earth during these judgments. Then the Lord Jesus returns as King. Believers come back with Christ as His wife to reign in glory, Rev. 5:10. The mystery phase is over. *“Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus,”* Rev. 22:20.