

The Kingdom of God and The Kingdom of Heaven...the same or not?

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There are four Gospels in the New Testament; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Without going into elaborate details, I believe most Christians will agree that these are writings which are purposed by God to provide witness to the life and purpose of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Man. These writings, while differing in a variety of ways, are parallel written accounts of His life, written by four different witnesses.

Two of these witnesses are counted in the original twelve of Jesus' followers which He had hand picked (Matthew and John). The other two of these witnesses were not of the twelve, but had close association and were contemporary to the twelve and or other of Jesus' close followers (Mark and Luke).

This is consistent with the Biblical principal that; *"in the mouth's of two or three witnesses, a thing shall be established."*

Mat 18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

2Co 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

Of the four new testament Gospel writers, only the writer of the gospel of Matthew uses the term "Kingdom of Heaven".

To cut to the bottom line without fully developing a thesis at this point, I will simply say that: "The Kingdom of Heaven" is a term used only by Matthew to describe something that the other Gospel writers mostly called "The Kingdom of God". Why Matthew used a different term than the other three witnesses to describe the same thing can be discussed and arguments protracted, but the simple fact remains that Matthew is the only one of the four witness that uses the term; "Kingdom of Heaven".

According to biblical interpretation principals if the two terms, "**Kingdom of God**" and "**Kingdom of Heaven**" are not synonymous then we do not have two or three witnesses to establish the "**Kingdom of Heaven**" as being different from "**the Kingdom of God**". This fact alone might not be totally persuasive, but when reading the entire Bible, a solid persuasive difference is not apparent either.

John uses the term "**Kingdom of God**" only two times in His gospel writings and never uses the term; "**Kingdom of Heaven**". The other two gospel writers (Luke and Mark) use the term "**Kingdom of God**" liberally, but like John, never use the term "**Kingdom of Heaven**".

The fact that only Matthew was a Jew writing specifically to Jews is significant. While John and probably John Mark were both Jews, John was apparently not writing specifically to Jews, but rather to the universal reader. Mark (John Mark) was probably a Jew and apparently was writing specifically to Gentiles. Luke was a Greek writing to Gentiles as well.

For an old covenant Jew to write the word "**God**" or its Jewish equivalent was a very sacred thing and apparently was done sparingly. For a scribe to write down the Jewish word for "**God**" required significant ritual under Jewish law when it was done. This information can be studied in more detail, as Jewish history. However, for Matthew who was a Jew writing to Jews it is not hard to conclude that He might be more careful as he writes specifically to Jewish readers by using the term "**Heaven**", when appropriate, to substitute for the word "**God**".

Many Christian scholars have insisted the two terms describe different subjects. I will not berate people who hold this believe, but no matter what we believe, the truth is the truth and to state what we believe to be the truth is not to belittle another person whose opinion differs unless it is presented in arrogance or with an inappropriate attitude.

The way I see it; to follow the line of thought that suggests "**the Kingdom of God**" and "**the Kingdom of Heaven**" are not synonymous terms has taken many Christians down a path of subtle error which has led to a leavened

misunderstanding of "Heaven", "the government of God" and the true "good news of the Gospel". This conclusion came after much of my early teachings and my early doctrine has been rooted out and then rebuilt in increments over many years, by the Holy Spirit.

I believe; to separate and try to differentiate "the Kingdom of Heaven" from "the Kingdom of God" is arguably one of the main reasons why Christians can not agree on much of the basic "milk" of the word. Without the basic foundation of the truth of the "Kingdom of God" being established, I believe it is impossible to come to the maturity God intended for His "church".

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

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.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Matthew 5:20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

See more on this subject in the e-book; "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" on this web site.