

Thy Kingdom Come:

An Evangelical Eschatological prayer of Sanctity

SAJU

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The term 'Kingdom of God', is an expression misunderstood by many. The fanatics in India protest the Christians' proclamation of the 'Kingdom of God' accusing it of being for political gains. Christians have a 'hidden agenda', they argue, to turn India into a Christian nation. Is there an iota of truth in it? God forbid! A political kingdom is neither Christians' nor Christ's agenda. Remember, Christ died not to make you the Prime Minister of India, but to redeem you from your spiritual bondage.

The Jewish people contemplated the Kingdom of God to be a political one. They were looking for a Messiah who would come and destroy the Heathen kingdoms and establish a kingdom of Jewish rule all over the world. Even when they encountered Jesus, they expected Him to fulfill their political dreams, but Jesus disappointed them.

When Pilate, the Roman governor, asked Jesus if He was a king, Jesus answered: "My Kingship is not of this world; if my Kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my Kingship is not from the world." (John 18:36 RSV)

Why did then Jesus ask us to pray ‘Thy Kingdom come?!’ What kind of a King is Jesus? What is the meaning of the ‘Kingdom of God?’

The Greek word translated ‘Kingdom’ (*basileia*) does not primarily refer to a geographical territory or a country, but to sovereignty and dominion. Jesus refused to be identified as a political king... He did not deny the fact that He was a King, though! He only asserted that His Kingship was not of this world! His rule is ‘non terrestrial.’

First of all let us look at the concept of the ‘Kingdom of God’ in the Jewish mind. In the beginning, Israelites believed God to be their only King. When all Israel came to Gideon and pleaded with him to become their king, he said he would not! “And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: ***Jehovah shall rule over you***” (Judges 8:23 ASV).

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See what Samuel had to say about the plea of the people for a king: “And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, ‘No, but a king shall reign over us,’ ***when the Lord your God was your king***” (1 Samuel 12:12 RSV). When Israel insisted on having a king for them, Samuel cried to the Lord... “And Jehovah said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but ***they have rejected me, that I should not be King over them.***” Remember, when you insist on human rule, you reject the rule of God.

God is the only King who rules. The Psalmist proclaims that our God reigns (Psalms 93:1; 97:1; 99:1). True, He reigns over the whole

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universe. It is He who controls the orbits of the sun and stars. It is He who controls the movements of the sea and its waters... The trees, the animals, the birds and everything in heaven and earth obey God. They were given no option! However, man who is created in the image of God was given an option- either to accept or to reject the rule of God in his life. Sadly, man rejected God as his king, and decided to place himself on the throne, instead!

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He never sat on the golden throne in Jerusalem. He was always ruling the minds and hearts of people! Wherever there are people, God is there to rule... However, people need to accept His rule! In worldly kingdoms, kings forcefully wield authority over their subjects! Here, on the contrary, the subjects choose their king, the ruler! God says, ***"They have rejected me, that I should not be King over them."*** How sad!

When one kneels before God and accepts the Lordship of Jesus, he is, instantly, in the Kingdom of God. When you are inside the Kingdom, you start enjoying the Kingdom. God is Light! Wherever God rules, there is light. God is Love! Wherever God reigns, there is love... Jesus is the Prince of peace... So, wherever He rules, there is peace...In God's Kingdom, there is singing, celebration, rest, fellowship... everything! "...for the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17)

Being a resident of this world, we are all part of some political system/country. I am an Indian. I obey the rules of the Indian government. I know, however, that the world system is controlled by Satan. It is not a problem specific to my country. Even the moral system of the so called 'Christian' countries, is afflicted with the

value system of Satan and 'his kingdom.' Therefore, I need to find a standard for my ethics, morality and value system that is not from this world. I look for a heavenly standard in all my walks of life. I enjoy 'living heavenly' by living under the sovereign rule of my Jesus! The Bible says, we are no longer of this world (John 17:14). Our citizenship is now in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

When you start enjoying the Kingdom, you seek more of it - in your life and in the life of others! So, naturally, you start praying that the rule of God may become a reality in all their lives! That is what is meant when you pray: 'Thy Kingdom come!'

The Kingdom - the rule of God needs to become a reality:

1. in my personal life
2. in my family life
3. in my church
4. in my society
5. in my world!

When I accept Jesus as my King, Jesus takes control of my life. He is King over my thoughts, my words and my deeds... He is King over my emotions and will... I was once ruled by the passions of my flesh... Now I need to see that it is cleansed and used by Jesus, my Lord and my King! When I pray: 'Thy Kingdom come,' I pray that the rule of God may become a reality in all walks of my life. Therefore, when we pray 'Thy Kingdom come,' first of all it is a *sanctity prayer*.

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The Kingdom should not be limited to my personal life. Because I realized real bliss in God's rule, I love to see the rule of God extended to my family too! I know that to be the only way I can make my family life a blessing. When a family is ruled by God, they can experience heaven on earth! So, I pray: 'Lord, may Thy Kingdom come to my family... I love to see my parents, my wife, my children, my in-laws and all who are related to me enjoy the rule of God.'

Other than the family, the closest community in the world is the church! In fact, church is like a consulate of heaven on earth. God has appointed the church to become a place of Godly authority.

When we say the church has 'Godly authority,' it doesn't mean that the church can rule the world politically as if it is a human kingdom. The real ruler is God and God alone. We see God appointing Saul to be king over a rebellious Israel. What does it mean? Did God accept the rule of a king? No! God did not appoint Saul to 'rule' over Israel; rather God wanted him to execute the rule of God in Israel. God did not want him to take decisions by himself, but to do just what God commanded. See what Samuel says when he anoints Saul as 'king!'

"Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be *captain over his inheritance?*" (1 Samuel 10:1 KJV)

God wanted Saul to become a *captain, not a king*. 'Nagiyd' (naw-gheed'), the Hebrew word 'Captain', used here, is more appropriate for a prince or a governor than a king.

When Saul failed to execute God's rule in Israel, God

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rejected Saul and dethroned him. “And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; *thou hast not kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God*, which He commanded thee: for now would Jehovah have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: Jehovah hath sought him a man after his own heart, and Jehovah hath appointed him to be *prince* over his people, because thou hast not kept that which Jehovah commanded thee.” (1Sa 13:13, 14 ASV)

God has appointed the church to execute the rule of God... There should be no human rule in the church... God does not appoint ‘kings’ in the church who take their own decisions, but ‘governors’ who execute God’s decisions! The church is an executive body that carries out God’s desire in this world. No human thought or worldly passion should enter the church... So this is my prayer: “Lord, Thy Kingdome come into my church in all its perfection!”

So when I pray “Thy Kingdom come,” it is a *sanctity prayer* for my personal life, my family and for my church!

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The next phase is the world outside the church! May be I can divide the people outside the church into two: People socially related to me and people beyond my reach! My neighbors, those working with me in my office or workplace, those of my community, are all people related to me in one way or another. When I look at them, I feel sad because most of them have given

their lives to the powers of darkness. They follow a world-value system, designed and controlled by Satan. I know they are headed towards hell. They live in ignorance. The ‘god of this world’ has blinded their eyes to the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The only way out for them is to accept the rule of Jesus in their lives. When I

pray “Thy Kingdom come,” I place my wish before God for the salvation of those who are socially related to me.

However, it is not just those who are related to me who live in darkness. Those I do not know have also embraced darkness and this really hurts me. So, when I pray “Thy Kingdom come,” I pray that the Kingdom may become a reality for the whole of mankind! So this prayer is an *evangelistic prayer* as well!

Nevertheless, when we pray “Thy Kingdom come,” it is not just a plea for the establishment of God’s Kingdom in my present day life... We need to know that the Kingdom of God has a past, a present and a future state! In the *past*, God ruled Israel through judges, prophets and kings. In the *present*, God rules me, my family and church... The world is ignorant about God’s Kingdom. For now, the rule of God is an unseen reality. However, something is happening... The Kingdom of God is about to become a visible reality in the near future. “For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God.”(Rom 14:11)

The ‘KING’ is coming. That is the *future* aspect of the Kingdom of God! When Jesus ascended to heaven, His disciples watched him crossing the clouds! “And while they looked steadfastly into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven. (Act 1:10-11)

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embraced Jesus enter in to the eternal Kingdom where they can enjoy His physical presence. It would be a Kingdom of light where there will be no trace of the old! So, when we pray “Thy Kingdom Come,” it is also an *‘eschatological prayer!’*

‘Kingdom of God’ is the key theme of the New Testament. When we are born again we are entered in to the Kingdom, and we enjoy living in the Kingdom in obedience to the voice of our King Jesus. The world outside is ruled by Satan and it is in enmity with the Kingdom rule of Jesus. However, there is an end to the rule of darkness, while the rule of God will never end!

“And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” Daniel 2:44

We live in this world, eagerly looking forward to the coming heavenly Kingdom that will sweep the whole universe with its serenity, sanctity and the might of God!

**Together, let us bow down in prayer:
“Lord, Thy Kingdom come!”**

Christ is coming back to establish the ‘Kingdom’ in all its perfection... while everyone who embraced darkness go to the eternal fire; everyone who embraced Jesus enter in to the eternal Kingdom where they can enjoy His physical presence. It would be a Kingdom of light where there will be no trace of the old! So, when we pray “Thy Kingdom Come,” it is also an ‘eschatological prayer!’