

### 1.3.2 Kingdom of God Prophecies

The concept of the kingdom of heaven (*malkut shamayim*) or kingdom of God is not mentioned in those exact words in the Old Testament. However, the concepts of promise, election, deliverance, covenant, law, land, and ultimately the establishment of the office structure of prophet, priest and king for the Nation of Israel speak directly to this same idea. Ladd adds, “We find, then, in the Old Testament a contrast between the present order of things and the redeemed order of the Kingdom of God. . . . Somewhere in this historical development emerged a new idiom—this age and the Age to Come . . . probably representing the Hebrew *olam haba*—the coming age” (1974:45-6). Also speaking of this concept, Ladd continues, “There is a twofold emphasis on God’s kingship. He is frequently spoken of as the King, both of Israel (Exod 15:18; Num 23:21; Deut 33:5; Isa 43:15) and of all the earth (2 Kgs 19:15; Isa 6:5; Jer 46:18; Pss 29:10; 99:1-4). Although God is now King, other references speak of a day when he shall become King and shall rule over his people (Isa 24:23; 33:22; 52:7; Zeph 3:15; Zech 14:9ff.) – (See G. von Rad, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* I, 567-69; John Bright’s excellent books deal almost exclusively with the Kingdom of God as a future hope). This leads to the conclusion that while God *is* the King, he must also *become* King, i.e., he must manifest his kingship in the world of men and nations” (Ladd 1974:61).

In his essay “On the Jewish Background of the Synoptic Concept ‘The Kingdom of God,’” Michael Lattke addresses the Hebrew concept of “kingdom of the heavens” or *malkut shamayim*. He notes that it appears to be based on the “kingly rule of *Yahweh*,” first of all through Torah in the hearts of men and secondly, physically on the earth through His chosen people (1984:72-3). Although there is an eschatological element in all these descriptions of the kingdom of God, this may be confirmed through the Book of Daniel (traditionally seen as written

during the exilic period—Ryrie 1978:1305; LaSor, Hubbard and Bush 1996:574) and apocalyptic Judaism (written from the post-exilic period through the second century AD—Dumbrell 1994:131-3; Ladd 1974:61; Lattke 1984:78-82), as always being eschatological.

Geisler notes that various Hebrew words are used for kingdom some 146 times in the Old Testament, that most of these refer to earthly kingdoms and that only a few refer to God's kingdom: "Chronicles has one; Isaiah has two; Psalms has five; Daniel has the most Old Testament references to God's kingdom, with seven (Heb: *malkut*)" (2005:459). Geisler then concludes with the following on kingdom senses:

The biblical concept of *kingdom* has at least five different senses.

*First*, there is *God's universal kingdom*, His overall, invisible, and everlasting reign over the entire universe.

*Second*, there is *Christ's messianic kingdom*, a visible, earthly, political kingdom promised to Israel in which Messiah reigns over the whole earth from a throne in Jerusalem.

*Third*, there is *God's spiritual kingdom (in the broad sense)*, including both good and evil, announced by Jesus in Matthew 13 and sometimes called the mystery form of the kingdom.

*Fourth*, there is *God's spiritual kingdom (in the narrow sense)*, God's invisible reign only in the hearts of believers; this began when the first person was saved (John 3:3, 5) and will continue throughout eternity.

*Fifth*, there is *God's spiritual reign in the church*; Peter used "the keys of the kingdom" (cf. Matt 16:19) to open the door of the church to the Jews (Acts 2; cf. 11:15) and to the Gentiles (Acts 10) [emphasis added] (2005:497).

Of these senses of the kingdom of God, the first three apply here. Although the first and third are alluded to in the Old Testament, the second is the one specifically prophesied about and which will now be addressed.

Genesis 49:10 speaks of the kingly rule coming through the tribe of Judah until Shiloh (the one who brings peace—Messiah) comes, and then "And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (speaking of the Messianic Kingdom). In Exodus 19:6, *Yahweh* describes the children of Israel under the Mosaic Covenant as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," thereby

creating a true theocracy with *Yahweh* as their king. In Deuteronomy 17:14-20, *Yahweh* tells Moses that when the Israelites enter the Promised Land of Canaan they will desire a human king to rule them and lays out the rules for choosing that king. This is confirmed to Samuel by *Yahweh* before choosing Saul as the first human king of Israel (1 Sam 8:5-22). In 2 Samuel 7:12-17, *Yahweh* establishes a covenant with David: “I will raise up your descendent after you, who will come forth from you, and *I will establish his kingdom . . . and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. . . And your house and your kingdom shall endure before me forever; your throne shall be established forever*” [emphasis added]. David descended from the tribe of Judah; and *Yahweh* here specifies that the messianic kingdom would also come from the lineage of David.

Isaiah mentions the coming of the Messiah and His reign several times in 9:6; 11:11-12; 24:3; and 32:1. Jeremiah speaks of the messianic covenant *Yahweh* will make with the nation of Israel in 31:31-33. Amos 9:11 talks about repairing and restoring “David’s fallen tent” and to “build it as it used to be;” talking of the future messianic reign. Micah 4:7-8 speaks of the restored messianic kingdom as also being political: “The Lord will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever . . . the former dominion will be restored to you; kingship will come to the Daughter of Jerusalem” (Geisler 2005:465-470). Additionally, Wisdom in his article “The Valley of Decision (Joel 3)” addresses both the kingdom of God and the day of the Lord by stating, “*To the prophet, the ‘valley of decision’ represents the place of the grand finale of the war between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world*” [emphasis added] - (1995:35).

In Daniel, the only Old Testament apocalyptic prophetic book, the eschatological kingdom of God (compared to earthly kingdoms) appears to be the central theme (Dumbrell 1994:136; Geisler 2005:470-2; LaSor, Hubbard and Bush 1996:566). In Daniel 2, God reveals to

Daniel the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream to be a timeline of Gentile kingdoms. This changes in verse 44: "And in the days of those kings *the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever*" [emphasis added]. This timeline of Gentile kingdoms, corresponding to the different metallic parts of the statue in the king's dream, is understood to be the following five Gentile kingdoms: 1) gold – the Babylonian Empire (Dan 2:38); 2) silver – the Medo-Persian Empire (Dan 5:28; 8); 3) bronze – the Grecian Empire (Dan 8; 10:20; 11:2-3); 4) iron – the Roman Empire (Dan 2:40; 7:23); and 5) the ten toes of the iron and clay feet – a "divided; partly strong and partly brittle" ten-nation confederacy to rise out of the confines of the old Roman Empire (Dan 2:41-44; 7:24). This ten-nation confederacy is understood to be either a "revived Roman Empire; i.e., the Common Market, EEC, or EEU" (Biederwolf 1985:202-4, 208) or a ten-nation Arab confederacy per Psalm 83 (Deal 1983; 1995:9-74; Church 1986:225-6). More is then provided concerning these Gentile kingdoms and the revealing of the antichrist in subsequent visions of Daniel 7, 8, 10, and 11.

In Daniel 9, God reveals to Daniel the timeline for His people, the Jews, intertwined with both the First and Second Advents of the Messiah and the coming of the Messianic Kingdom. This is conveyed in the "seventy – sevened" or seventy weeks of years (70 x 7 or 490 years) prophecy. The angel Gabriel explains to Daniel, in verse 24, that the prophecy is "for your people (Jews) and your holy city (Jerusalem), to finish the transgression (seventy-year exile prophecy of Jer 25:11-12; 29:10), to make an end of sin (Messiah's First Coming), to make atonement for iniquity (Messiah's First Coming), to bring in everlasting righteousness

(Messiah's Second Coming), to seal up vision and prophecy (Messiah's Second Coming), and to anoint the most holy place (both Messiah's First and Second Comings).”

In Daniel 9:25, Daniel is told that from a “decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” (which traditionally was issued by Artaxerxes Longimanus and addressed by Nehemiah 2:5-8 in 444-445 BC—Ryrie 1978:1327; Geisler 2005:472; Biederwolf 1985:218) “until Messiah the Prince (First Coming) there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks (69 weeks of years or 483 years) . . . Then (after the sixty-two weeks), the Messiah will be cut off *and have nothing or, but not for himself*” [emphasis added] (*The Interlinear Bible* 1986:691)—speaking of the crucifixion and atonement of Messiah during the First Advent. The question remains: Was this prophecy fulfilled literally and exactly? Taking 444-445 BC as the starting point, and adding 483 years, leaves a chronological date of approximately AD 38-39. Factoring in that the Gregorian Calendar is off by four to six years (due to the miscalculation of the year of the birth of Christ) and that in this system there must be both a 1 BC and an AD 1 (Butt 2006:19; *World Book* 2001, 1:31; 3:29; *About European History* 2007:A.D.; Ernest L. Martin 1980:1, 2, 132-152), leaves a revised chronological date of anywhere from AD 31-35. Since Jesus' age at his death was thirty-three, this falls within this range of dates and, thereby, exactly fulfills this part of the prophecy! (As an additional note: according to Luke 3:1, the start of Jesus' ministry was in the year AD 28—fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar—(House 1981:64), and adding the traditionally accepted three + year ministry of Jesus yields the year AD 31 for His death).

Daniel 9:26 then continues, “. . . and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.” This specific prophecy was fulfilled by the Romans in AD 70. Finally, in verse 27 there remains a “he” who “will make a firm covenant with the many for one week” (remaining 7 years of the 490), and “in the middle of the week (3 ½ years) he will put a

stop to sacrifice and grain offering” (speaking of the future Antichrist, the 7-year Tribulation, and 3 ½-year Great Tribulation; all of which are outlined in Revelation and precede the Second Coming of Messiah—Ryrie 1978:1327; Biederwolf 1985:223-5; Geisler 2005:597-600). This particular prophecy is further refined by Daniel 12. The Second Coming of Messiah and the Millennial or Messianic Kingdom is also described by the vision contained in Daniel 7:13-14. Here, the term “Son of Man” is used, Jesus’ favorite name for Himself (Biederwolf 1985:210; Geisler 2005:471-2, 555).

From all of the above testimony, it may be concluded that the kingdom of heaven (*malkut shamayim*)/God was an eschatological term not only addressed by the Old Testament, but prophesied to come to pass in conjunction with the advent or coming of the Messiah. From the frame of reference of the twenty-first century, this would include both the First Coming and the *Parousia* of Jesus Christ (*Yeshua HaMashiach*). Therefore, there exists a very strong connection between the prophesied eschatological Messianic Kingdom and the Eschatological Gospel.