



## What are the kingdoms of heaven and God?

These were familiar terms to the Jews. Their whole lives were **bound** up by laws **forbidding** them to do certain things, as well as **loosing** or **permitting** them, to do others, regarding their ceremonies and customs. A modern day example, would be car drivers being **bound** by a certain **speed limit** law.

Now, unlike some Christians today who feel they have some "god" given authority to determine heaven's policies here on earth, with loud and impressive prayers that command God to 'do this' or 'do that, the scriptures say the opposite.

When Christ addresses Peter saying "...*whatsoever thou shalt **bind on earth shall be bound in heaven...***" ([Matt 16:19](#)), he is saying "Peter, you shall forbid (**bind**) and permit (**loose**) only what is **already** forbidden and permitted in heaven." In other words, "Peter, what you bind or loose here on earth, shall **already have been** bound or loosed in heaven." Indeed, the Lord was only confirming what he had already said a few chapters earlier in the Lord's Prayer "...*Thy will be done, **as it is** in heaven.*" ([Matt 6:10](#)).

Peter was to carry out heaven's instructions and **not** the other way around, declaring what was lawful, or not, as determined by God. Furthermore, **all** the disciples, not just Peter, were given the privilege to bind and loose ([Matt 18:18](#)).

Peter had the privilege, to be given **the keys of the kingdom of heaven**, which allowed him to **bind** and **loose**, as he was the first to correctly answer Christ's question "...*But whom say ye that I am?*" ([Matt 16:15](#)).

### The keys of the kingdom of heaven

Now there is nothing mysterious about keys as they simply open doors. The key was a sign, not of a priestly office, but the office of the gatekeeper, with Christ saying "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away **the key of knowledge**:..." ([Lk 11:52](#)). As the Lord's doorman, Peter was **not** given 'the keys of heaven' or the keys of the church', but the keys to the knowledge about the kingdom of heaven.

Indeed, **John the Baptist** was the first to preach "...the kingdom of heaven is at hand." ([Matt 3:20](#)), followed by the **Lord** himself ([Matt 4:17](#)), to be followed by **Peter** and the **disciples**, who were to be the official custodians regarding the purity of the '**Matthew 5-7 manifesto**', about the **rules** governing the kingdom of heaven.

### **Why was this necessary?**

Like many churches today "Making the word of God of none effect through ... tradition..." ([Mark 7:13](#)), Christ condemns the Pharisees saying "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for **ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men**: for ye neither go in yourselves, **neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.**" ([Matt 23:13](#)) and again "Woe unto you, lawyers! for **ye have taken away the key of knowledge**: ..." ([Luke 11:52](#)) for you "... **bind heavy burdens** and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; ..." ([Matt 23:4](#)). Although not entering into heaven themselves, their real crime was stopping others.

### **What is the kingdom of heaven?**

Many people assume that the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are the same, but this couldn't be further from the truth.

Because "**God is a Spirit**..." ([John 4:24](#)) this means the **kingdom of God** is a **spiritual kingdom**. Conversely, as **heaven** is God's **physical** creation ([Gen 1:1](#)), the **kingdom of heaven** is a physical kingdom.

The first example of the kingdom of heaven on earth is the Garden of Eden, where Adam has God's instructions ([Gen 1:28-31](#)) to run it "**as it is in heaven**" ([Matt 6:10](#)).

Since Eden, God has appointed different men over this earthly kingdom (Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon) until [Jeremiah 22:30](#) when God calls a halt, sending Israel into captivity in Babylon, and ushering in the "**times of the**

**Gentiles”** ([Lk 21:24](#)).

Then 400 hundred years after the book of Malachi is closed, God sends the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to be king of the Jews, for they knew that God had promised them an earthly kingdom ([Is 2:1-5](#); [Jer 23:5-6](#); [Luke 1:31-32](#)), and so, this was another chance for the Jews to usher back in, their promised kingdom of heaven on earth.

But with the Jews saying “...*We have no king but Caesar.*” ([John 19:15](#)), they rejected Jesus and his promised kingdom of heaven he would set up on earth, and so it was not restored to Israel at that time.

After the resurrection when they asked “...*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*” ([Acts 1:6-7](#)), they were **not** asking him to restore **the spiritual kingdom of God** ([Rom 14:17](#)), which they’d never had, as they were **never** born again by the Holy Ghost. Repeatedly praying “...**thy kingdom come** ...” ([Matt 6:10](#)), they just wanted their kingdom of heaven to be returned on earth.

### **What is the kingdom of God?**

Jesus states that “...*the kingdom of God is **within** you.*” ([Lk 17:21](#)) and Paul says “*For the kingdom of God is **not** meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*” ([Rom 14:17](#)). It is a spiritual kingdom presently within the hearts of Christians. Those who “...*believe on the Lord Jesus Christ...*” ([Acts 16:31](#)), are **already** in the kingdom of God, having been **spiritually** “...**translated** ...*into the kingdom of his dear Son:*” ([Col 1:13](#)), being made to “...*sit together in heavenly places **in** Christ Jesus:*” ([Eph 2:6](#)).

### **How is the kingdom of God superior?**

In two words – **eternal security**. Once Jesus died, and “...*the veil ... was rent in twain ...*” ([Matt 27:51](#)), the kingdom of heaven was **replaced** by the kingdom of God. You see, prior to the shed blood of Jesus, a Jew, at best, could only get a **temporary salvation** of a **remittance of sins** with animal blood, which could only **cover** his **past** sins ([Ps 32:1](#); [Rom 3:25](#)) on a daily basis.

(A practical explanation of **remittance** is the example of a person with a **cancer in remission** - it runs the risk of returning.) Hence **ongoing** animal blood sacrifices were needed to keep **covering over past sins**.

Because the Jew could **never** have his sins **washed away** ([Rev 1:5](#)) with **animal blood**, the best he could hope for was a **temporary forgiveness**, a remittance for past sins, resulting only in **temporary salvation**.

But with the **shed blood** of Jesus, **Paul's gospel** of **the kingdom of God redemption** plan, meant **not only past** sins, but **present** and **future** sins, would not only be covered, but completely washed away. Paul clearly states "*In whom we have **redemption** (not just remission) **through his blood**, even the **forgiveness of sins**:" ([Col 1:14](#)). The only rule for entry into kingdom of God is by "...**my** (Paul's) **gospel**..." of "...**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**..." ([Acts 16:31](#))*

So **Peter** and the other disciples, were the official **gatekeepers** to the knowledge of the operations of **the kingdom of heaven**, a righteousness of works, summed up by Christ saying "... *That except **your** righteousness shall **exceed** the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in **no case enter** into the **kingdom of heaven**."* ([Matt 5:20](#)).

The Jew had to be meek, pure of heart, a peacemaker and merciful to name a few ([Matt 5:5](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#)) and of course, with the inevitable failure and sin, **forgiveness** was **temporarily** obtained as their sins were **covered** by the **imperfect blood** of animals.

Now Christians fail to realize, that **perfect** works is **still** the only entry requirement into the kingdom of God, but in their case, **Christ's perfect works** have been **imputed** to their accounts and all sins have **already** been paid for by Christ's perfect blood.

### **The kingdom of heaven prayer**

Did you know that the kingdom of heaven Lord's prayer has the condition attached "...if ye forgive not men their trespasses, **neither** will your Father forgive your trespasses." ([Matt 6:15](#)).

This is not a Christian's prayer, as our sins have been forgiven even if we don't forgive others.

### **But doesn't the Bible say the disciples could forgive sins?**

No, because even the Jews knew "...*who can **forgive sins**, but **God only**."* ([Mark 2:7](#)). No, Jesus says to the assembled disciples "*Whose soever sins ye **remit**, they are **remitted** unto them; and whose soever sins ye **retain**, they are **retained**."* ([John 20:23](#)).

Should a Jew believe, and act upon, the Sermon on the Mount, **only** their **past sins** would be forgiven, if not, their sins would remain. As Peter says

"...whosoever **believeth** in him shall receive **remission** of sins." ([Acts 10:43](#)), with the 'believing' coming **first**, followed by 'remission'.

Similarly, Paul, with his kingdom of God gospel, could declare with certainty "...*thou shalt be saved...*" if you "...**Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ ...." ([Acts 16:31](#)). Indeed, **all** Christians can affirm to anyone that redemption, not just remission, is available to those that will believe.

### **Paul replaces Peter**

When Christ died, Peter's kingdom of heaven gospel to the circumcised Jew, was **replaced** by Paul's gospel of the kingdom of God to **all**.

As the Pope considers himself to be a direct descendant of Peter, mistakenly clutching Peter's keys of the kingdom of heaven, the best he can produce, is to **bind, loose** and inform people of the laws concerning **the kingdom of heaven** according to the **Sermon on the Mount**.

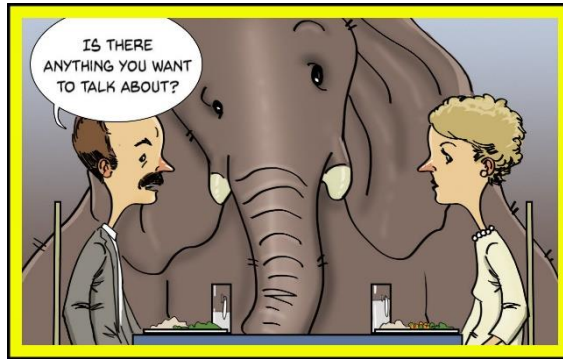
**"With its doctrine firmly cemented in Matthew Chapters 5 to 7, Rome's gospel of salvation is as useful as an ash tray on a motor bike."**

**Harley Hitchcock**

**www.  
AustralianBibleMinistries  
.com**



**Kingdom of God**



Australian Bible Ministries, PO Box 5058  
Mt Gravatt East 4122 Qld, Australia

[www.AustralianBibleMinistries.com](http://www.AustralianBibleMinistries.com)