

The Keys of the Kingdom

by Paul M. Goulet

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The author has preferred to risk violation of certain grammatical rules, such as the capitalization of select proper names, rather than acknowledge the name of satan. Therefore, except in cases where the scripture had to be quoted exactly as printed in the Bible translation, satan and any related names are intentionally written in all lowercase letters.

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What is the Kingdom of God?

In order for the disciples to understand the level of Christ's authority and the need for His death, they had to have a clear picture of His heavenly Kingdom. The gospel of salvation is completely based on the truths and realities of heaven. This is why, in the first 15 chapters of Matthew, Jesus labored to set such a clear foundation.

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people (Matthew 4:23).

After overcoming satan in the wilderness, Jesus clearly defined His message. It was the truth about heaven. In other words, He started talking about His Daddy's Kingdom.

Have you ever left home for an extended period of time? I have. On every trip, the longer I'm gone, the more I miss home, and the more I talk about my family, my friends, my neighbors, the smells, the food and my church. It's normal to want to talk about home. It was normal for Jesus, too. At first, all He wanted to do was to tell about His home: heaven.

While I was a teenager, my dad received an offer to move to Belgium to lead a large, struggling corporation. Even though it was in the middle of the school year, I had no choice; Europe would be our new home. I'll never forget how much I missed my friends, the food and the lifestyle. Searching for American products and food became a minor obsession. Finding like-minded people also became a huge issue. Even the smell of American peanut butter tremendously alleviated my longing for home.

Jesus must have felt the same way. Home was heaven, perfect in every way. Israel was a mess. The world was a mess. Don't you think He wanted a lot more of heaven on this crazy globe?

The only way that He could make the earth more like His real home was through believers who understood where He was from, and where He wanted to take them. Jesus taught His disciples to pray for the Kingdom of heaven to take over the world order. The primary goal of our existence is to bring heaven to earth and snatch souls away from the devil.

Let's dissect Jesus' prayer one more time to illustrate that His home was the foundation of everything He did.

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen (Matthew 6:9-13).

1. The prayer was directed to *Our Father*.

It makes sense doesn't it? His closest relationship was with the Father. The eternal connection had been the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus didn't say, "My Father who is in heaven." He started with "*Our Father*." If God *the* Father is *our* Father then it opens up so many important revelations. The fact that God is my Father means that I can have an intimate relationship with Him. If He's my Daddy, I must also have His DNA in my body. Aren't we created in the image of God? Wow, this is incredible! Jesus wasn't being exclusive. He was letting us into the most important relationship of all time. We can ask our Daddy anything in Jesus' name:

In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father (John 16:26-28).

2. He asked His Daddy to establish His Kingdom on earth like it is in heaven.

Now remember that heaven is BIG. It's so big that astronomers estimate it contains over 100 billion galaxies and is still expanding. This is not 100 billion planets, but 100 billion galaxies. In

other words, Jesus is saying, “Hey, Dad, You’re so great. You reign over all the galaxies. How about doing something with this rebellious little planet where satan is temporarily in charge? Let’s rock this earth through these disciples.”

Are you getting this yet?

3. The Father’s will is already being done in the heavens.

Jesus underlined the fact that His Daddy’s will is always being done in the 100 billion galaxies and, therefore, should also be done here. But God’s will is not being done on earth right now. There are millions of babies aborted, millions of children being abused, and millions are dying from disease and war. People have often asked, “Why does God allow this?” The answer is so simple: God gives us free will. With this power to choose we can bring life or death, good or evil. We can either love or hate this world of ours. It comes down to a choice. Don’t forget that satan also has a free will; he’s still actively trying to steal, kill and destroy.

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

The first request in the prayer of Jesus dealt with asking His Daddy and our Daddy to bring His will, His truths, His power to this earth, just like in heaven. The prayer that Jesus taught His disciples portrayed the ultimate purpose of our existence—to bring the Kingdom of heaven to this earth.

Jesus did come to destroy the works of the devil. He did come to raise up an army of believers that are called to join Him in this final battle.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8b).

The Radical Message Was Not Well Received

Jesus’ message was challenged by the religious hypocrites. They couldn’t fathom a world that included everyone in God’s love and acceptance. Their world was full of prejudice, legalism and self-righteousness. Jesus threatened their perspective on the Kingdom by demonstrating His incredible grace.

Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the Kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:22-28).

Everywhere Jesus went, He preached about the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. The zealots loved this message because they thought He would be enthroned by military force. The everyday Jew loved it because it gave them hope in the midst of their life of Roman oppression and religious darkness.

The Message About The Heavenly Kingdom Shook The Earthly Kingdoms

We know that His message was being distorted by the religious leaders, but that didn't stop Jesus from sharing it wherever He went. Not only did Christ share about the power of His Daddy's Kingdom, He demonstrated it with healings and miracles. Everyone but the religious hypocrites loved the demonstrations. The multitudes followed Him because He taught with authority and He had compassion on them. Jesus' compassion caused Him to love people and confront legalists:

Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel (Matthew 23:24).

Jesus Confronted Religious Strongholds

Direct confrontation with the religious rulers of His time did not make Christ popular with the establishment. He didn't have an earthly plan to gain the approval of people. Instead, He exercised divine authority over sickness, death and the doctrines of men.

When the Kingdom of heaven invades this earth, it comes into direct opposition with the kingdoms of this world. Paul the Apostle understood this dynamic when he said, *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places”* (Ephesians 6:12).

When Jesus, the King of kings, entered a region of demonic oppression, people and demons reacted. Jesus demonstrated that His Kingdom was greater through miracles, healings and deliverances. It's not a mystery that Jesus could bring heaven's resources to earth because, as He said,

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18).

Our Lord is called the King of kings (Revelation 17:14). Every other king and kingdom must submit to him.

And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father (Luke 9:42).

The demons knew who Jesus was, and they knew that their time was soon approaching. Jesus' Kingdom was greater. He proved it by the authority that His Kingdom had, which ruled over demonic powers.

And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?” (Matthew 8:29).

They knew that their time of final judgment was coming one day. They also knew that Jesus had the ability to torment them.

Wow! Isn't that powerful?

Jesus Delegated Authority

Behold, I give you the authority (exousia) to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power (dunamis) of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luke 10:19-20).

Not only did Jesus have authority, but He could also hand this authority to His followers. Our delegated authority in Christ is far greater than the devil's power. Yes, the devil has power, but we have greater authority.

Jesus demonstrated this and then delegated it to His followers. He couldn't give what He didn't have. He had *all* authority, so He was able to give it away to people like you and me. Jesus even had the power to forgive. No one had ever claimed this type of authority to forgive sins.

When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:5-7).

Jesus claimed to be from a Kingdom where the rulers, laws and principles took precedence over the rulers of this earth. He was bringing a set of Kingdom laws that had more authority than natural laws. Jesus said, *"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill"* (Matthew 5:17).

Jesus' teaching and actions illustrated not only the apparent nature of the Kingdom, but also that it could invade this present world. He didn't like their nice little religious world. His methods drove the religious experts crazy. Why didn't He fit in? Why did people hate the Christ so much? Why did their religious people want to kill Him? The answer is clear—Jesus wasn't from this place. He came from another kingdom.

Do you understand how important this is? You and I have been adopted into a family that is from another place. Its values are very different from the ones where we live now. We're not called to be assimilated into this world. We're called to establish an extension of our new Kingdom into the worldly kingdoms.

My dad was a hero in World War II. As a paratrooper in the 1st Special Forces, he and many other troops invaded the beaches of Anzio to dethrone the kingdom of Mussolini and Hitler. Their mission was clear. It was violent because satanic kingdoms do not give up easily. The allied forces didn't come to be assimilated. They came to liberate people and establish democracy.

Here's another illustration. As I mentioned earlier, Denise and I recently became legal guardians of two foreign exchange students. Joseph and Ferdinand came from Rwanda, a nation that has experienced one of the greatest genocides in recent history.

Our kids were moving out. Our eldest had married; our second daughter was moving into her own home; while our youngest, Samuel, had only two years of high school left. We weren't sure that we were done pouring into kids yet. Should we adopt a child? Should we have another child? We didn't know exactly what God was trying to tell us. All we knew was that we were blessed and had more to give.

Through a series of events, the opportunity to house one foreign exchange student was presented to us, and we jumped at it. It was an incredible blessing for us and this young man. Eventually, we invited another Rwandan to join our happy family. I can assure you, there've been some adjustments for Joseph, Ferdinand and the whole family. I've gotten used to people staring at us. I'm white; they're black; and they're both about one foot taller than me. And while we've all had to adjust, I can also assure you that our two Rwandans did not come to establish Africa here in Las Vegas. They've had to adapt to our culture. They're not on a mission to establish their kingdom in the US. They've come to glean from all the blessings of living in the US.

For a while, my wife prepared breakfast for them and our son Samuel every morning. Four or five eggs each, pancakes and whatever else we could find. We needed to rearrange our grocery runs and refrigerator to accommodate our new friends.

They've had to adjust to the English language, the American lifestyle and so many other mysteries. Although they love their homeland and families, their mission wasn't to bring their kingdom and culture here to America. It was to get a great education and maybe become great basketball players. But as Christians, the purpose of our mission is very different. We do come from a great place. And we do have much authority.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15).

Jesus Was Super Human

Recently at our church, while teaching about the gospel of the Kingdom, I tried to find an illustration that everyone could grasp, and that would demonstrate that Jesus came from another place. Its laws are different; its atmosphere is different; its economy is different; even its source of light is different. Come to think of it, His Kingdom is in another time zone, "*But, beloved, do*

not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8).

These facts made me think about Superman. As a child, he was just a normal kid being raised on a planet called Krypton. His parents sent him to earth moments before their planet was destroyed. When he landed on earth, he was rescued and raised by a kind family. Little did they know that eventually their little alien boy would become a super human. On Krypton, he would've had a normal existence, but on earth, his DNA caused him to have enough power to defy natural laws and make the world a better place.

Jesus wasn't really from this planet, and Joseph wasn't really His daddy. Jesus wasn't really only 33 years old when He was killed. He was eternally existent.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made (John 1:1-3).

Jesus Had A Heavenly DNA

Jesus was there when the earth was created. He was there when Isaiah saw the Lord. Jesus can be found throughout the Old Testament. Theologians call these phenomena "Christophanies." Jesus, the man, demonstrated that He was made more than a man. He had super human abilities.

He could walk on water:

Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea (Matthew 14:25).

He could turn water into wine:

And He said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.” And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!” (John 2:8-10)

He could multiply a few fish and loaves of bread into a feast for thousands:

He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children (Matthew 14:18-21).

He could quiet a storm and calm the sea:

Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm (Mark 4:39).

Like Superman, the fact that He was from another place enabled Him to supersede the laws of nature that limit us. Earth's laws couldn't control Jesus; He was destined to rule and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Are You A Citizen Of The Kingdom Of God?

You see, the Kingdom of heaven is greater than the kingdoms of this world. The principles and the power of the Kingdom of heaven are greater than the worlds'. Every one of us has to decide which master we'll submit to. You have to declare your citizenship—you can't serve two masters.

No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (Luke 16:13).

You have to decide who your daddy is going to be. Whom will you bow down to? Who will be your king? Once you choose God, you'll automatically come under His jurisdiction—His laws and His authority. Bob Dylan wrote a powerful song, "You've Got to Serve Somebody,"

*"You've got to serve somebody. Well you can serve the devil or you can serve the Lord but you got to serve somebody."*¹

Whom will you serve? Isn't that the greatest question of all time? The core of all human problems?

Millennia ago, satan entered the Garden of Eden. He managed to con two unsuspecting humans into compromise and disobedience. Eventually, this serpent convinced humans that his reasoning was greater than God's:

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5).

Satan became the ruler of this world through cunning lies and manipulation. Jesus came to change all of this, and the Father gave Him all authority to get mankind back on the right track:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).

You Have Been Given Great Authority

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luke 10:19).

Authority defined: "exousia"²— privilege, force, capacity, competency, freedom, or mastery (concretely, magistrate, super human, potentate, token of control), delegated influence.

Power defined: "dunamis"³—force, specially, miraculous power.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen (Matthew 28:19-20).

Because Jesus had all authority and delegated it to His followers, we were called to go. The authority is there for us to take back territory that satan has stolen.

As born-again, Spirit-filled believers, we're destined to take back our rightful place as primary influencers and transformers of this society.

We can bring Kingdom laws and powers to a world whose ruler has left it in chaos. Satan is the Saddam Hussein over the government of this world. Our mission is to dethrone the liar who has deceived the entire world. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are still asking from heaven, "*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?*" (Isaiah 6:8)

Exercise:

List 5 attitudes of Jesus that prove that He was from another world.

Question:

As a citizen of heaven, what rights do you have on this earth while you are here?

ENDNOTES

1. Copyright 1979 by Special Rider Music. Quoted with special permission.
2. *Exousia*, NT: Strong's #1849
3. *Dunamis*, NT: Strong's #1411

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