

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD
NOW**

J. C. Hedgecock

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Dedication

This book has been many years in the making. This is not a work that was taken lightly. I know that God's heart is for every one of his children to receive their full inheritance. He grieves every time satan robs from any one of you. The Bible says we perish from a lack of knowledge. This book is dedicated to you who are God's children. Through the knowledge in this book, you will be able to receive much more of your inheritance and stop the thief.

A special thanks to Aaron and Patricia Ross for their tireless work in editing. Also, thanks to the Servants of the Lord Ministry team for their support.

Contents

Descriptions of the Kingdom

Chapter 1	The Kingdom of God	1
Chapter 2	The Kingdom of Heaven	10
Chapter 3	The Kingdom of Christ (The Millennial Reign of Christ)	32
Chapter 4	The Final Recorded Stage of the Kingdom of God	52

Living in the Kingdom Now

Chapter 5	The Kingdom of God Now	59
Chapter 6	Why Do We Need the Kingdom Now?	72
Chapter 7	What Are the Conditions for Living in the Kingdom Now?	78
Chapter 8	What Are Some of the Benefits Now?	89
Chapter 9	What Are Some of the Benefits in the Future?	99
Chapter 10	Why Has the Kingdom of God Been So Hard for Some to Understand?	114
Chapter 11	How Does Our Enemy, Satan, See the Kingdom of God Now?	128
Chapter 12	What Should I Do to See the Kingdom of God Now?	143
Chapter 13	If I Embrace the Kingdom of God Now, How Will That Affect My Life?	150
Chapter 14	If I Reject the Kingdom of God Now, How Will That Affect My Life?	155

<u>God's Plan for You</u>		
Chapter 15	God Has a Plan	161
Chapter 16	God Has a Place for You in His Plan	169
Chapter 17	Jesus is the Author and Finisher of God's Plan in and for You	176
Chapter 18	How Do I Get Started?	184
Chapter 19	Getting in His Kingdom Now and Growing Up	187
 <u>Reigning with Christ</u>		
Chapter 20	Qualifying to Reign with Christ	198
Chapter 21	Enjoying God Manifesting You as His Child	211
Chapter 22	Being Part of the Solution and Not Part of the Problem	218
Chapter 23	Being an Eye-Witness to the Destruction of Satan's Kingdom on This Earth	222
Chapter 24	Being an Eye-Witness to the Establishment of God's Kingdom on This Earth (The Millennial Reign of Christ)	228
 <u>The Kingdom of God Now</u>		
Chapter 25	God's Kingdom: A More Excellent Way	233
Chapter 26	Summary	237
Chapter 27	Conclusion	246

Introduction

Many Christians are confused about God's kingdom. There are different titles throughout the Bible that refer to God's kingdom. It is called the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 3:2), the kingdom of Christ (Ephesians 5:5), the kingdom of our Lord (2 Peter 1:11), and his heavenly kingdom (2 Timothy 4:18), as well as the kingdom of God.

We are told by Jesus in Matthew 6:10 to pray that the Father's kingdom would come and his will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. We are told about Jesus reigning on the earth during the millennium. Many scriptures refer to God's kingdom and his throne, and Revelation 3:21 says the saints will sit with Jesus on his throne just as he sits on his Father's throne. Revelation 11:15 says the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord.

These references can become very confusing and many questions arise that seem to lead to additional questions. Satan is the author of confusion. Jesus is truth and the Holy Spirit was sent to lead us into all truth. (John 16:13) I believe God authorized me to write this book with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to clear up the confusion and stop the lies of the enemy. As you study this book, many questions will be answered truthfully and clearly. Each description and dispensation of the kingdom of God will be clarified with specific attention being given to the kingdom of God now. We need to be prepared for what is coming, but we also need to know what is available to us now as God's children. This book is being presented during a critical time in history. Don't miss God's timing! **Now is the time to get prepared to be part of God's kingdom.** Now is the time to study to show yourself approved unto God. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Chapter 1

The Kingdom of God

In examining the kingdom of God now, we are first going to look at several different descriptions of God's kingdom. The first truth you must understand is that everything begins with our Father, God Almighty. Our Father existed before anything was created. Everything that exists (including creation) was brought about at the direction of our Father even though the actual creation was done by Jesus. (John 1:1-3) The Son came from the Father. Once we realize that everything begins with the Father and ultimately ends with the Father, we can get other truths lined up in the right perspective. The Father placed everything in heaven and earth under Jesus' authority, except for God himself. (1 Corinthians 15:27)

Sometimes when we read the Bible, we take things out of context or forget to harmonize all parts of the Word of God. We can get a distorted view of the different phases of God's kingdom and God's will being fulfilled in the universe. In these first chapters, I will describe each stage of the kingdom of God. However, the purpose of this book is to bring more understanding about the kingdom of God now and what is available in the time in which we are now living.

God's Kingdom

Let's start with some simple basics. God has a kingdom and he is in charge. He rules from his throne in heaven. The location of God's throne is described as being in the new Jerusalem in the third heaven. In 2 Corinthians 12:2, Paul described a time when he was caught up into the third heaven. He said, "*I know a man*

in Christ who fourteen years ago-whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows-was caught up to the third heaven." Paul went on to describe many things that happened to him on that journey. Some of what he saw was so awesome, he could not even speak of it.

In the book of Revelation, John was also caught up to the third heaven and given a vision of what is to come. One of the things he saw was the new Jerusalem, which he described as a bride, beautified and adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2)

God's throne is located in the new Jerusalem within the third heaven, but where is the third heaven? The first heaven is the atmosphere around the earth. The universe, which includes our solar system and galaxy, makes up the second heaven. The third heaven and the city of God are somewhere beyond our universe. Scientists have now realized that our universe is immensely larger than we originally thought. The third heaven is a long way out there!

One day God will destroy the heavens and the earth and create new ones. (Revelation 21:1) We have not been able to comprehend how he could do this. However, with the recent scientific discovery of black holes deep in space, we can at least see the possibility of how it might be done.

We need to realize that there is an awesomeness to God that we do not encounter in our day-to-day Christian walk. As we go to church, in our prayer time and in our encounters with God, we barely get a glimpse of the magnitude of who God is. This is proven by the attitude many Christians have toward him. Their insolence, arrogance and rebellion are clues that they are not walking anywhere close to his kingdom. If they were, all wrong attitudes would be gone in an instant. There would be nothing but awesome reverence and fear of the One who is sitting on the heavenly throne.

God is getting closer all the time, because his city is on the move. (Revelation 3:12b) After Christ's millennial reign, the new Jerusalem will arrive. At that point, everyone will stand before

God to give an account for what they have done in this life. (Romans 14:12) There is a day of judgment coming. It will be initiated from the throne of God in his kingdom in the new Jerusalem. He will judge each one of us and then destroy the heavens and the earth. New heavens and a new earth will be created. All this will be authorized from the kingdom of God and the throne of God in the new Jerusalem. (Revelation 20:7-21:1)

The New Jerusalem

In Revelation 21:10-22:2, John was caught up to heaven and shown this city. *"Then in the Spirit He conveyed me away to a vast and lofty mountain and exhibited to me the holy (hallowed, consecrated) city of Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, Clothed in God's glory [in all its splendor and radiance]. The luster of it resembled a rare and most precious jewel, like jasper, shining clear as crystal. It had a massive and high wall with twelve [large] gates, and at the gates [there were stationed] twelve angels, and [on the gates] the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were written: On the east side three gates, on the north side three gates, on the south side three gates, and on the west side three gates.*

And the wall of the city had twelve foundation [stones], and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he who spoke to me had a golden measuring reed (rod) to measure the city and its gates and its wall. The city lies in a square, its length being the same as its width. And he measured the city with his reed-12,000 stadia (about 1,500 miles); its length and width and height are the same. He measured its wall also-144 cubits (about 72 yards) by a man's measure [of a cubit from his elbow to his third fingertip], which is [the measure] of the angel. The wall was built of jasper, while the city [itself was of] pure gold, clear and transparent like glass.

The foundation [stones] of the wall of the city were ornamented with all of the precious stones. The first foundation [stone] was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony (or

white agate), the fourth emerald, The fifth onyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each separate gate being built of one solid pearl. And the main street (the broadway) of the city was of gold as pure and translucent as glass. I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Omnipotent [Himself] and the Lamb [Himself] are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to give light to it, for the splendor and radiance (glory) of God illuminate it, and the Lamb is its lamp.

The nations shall walk by its light and the rulers and leaders of the earth shall bring into it their glory. And its gates shall never be closed by day, and there shall be no night there. They shall bring the glory (the splendor and majesty) and the honor of the nations into it. But nothing that defiles or profanes or is unwashed shall ever enter it, nor anyone who commits abominations (unclean, detestable, morally repugnant things) or practices falsehood, but only those whose names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Then He showed me the river whose waters give life, sparkling like crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb Through the middle of the Broadway of the city; also, on either side of the river was the tree of life with its twelve varieties of fruit, yielding each month its fresh crop; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing and the restoration of the nations."

This passage gives you a description of the city and its amazing structure. It is so amazing, we might actually doubt if it could be real. This city has a width and breadth equalling 1,500 miles square. The measurement that is the most difficult to comprehend is its height, because it is also 1,500 miles high! So you see, we're talking about a huge city. Its walls are made of pure diamond (jasper). That is a lot of diamonds when you consider that the city's perimeter is 6,000 miles! This city only has three entrances per side and the gates are made of one single pearl each. They must either be very small gates or very large pearls!

The streets are paved with pure gold, so pure it is translucent. That is hard for most of us to imagine.

Revelation 4:1-11, *"After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice which I had heard addressing me like [the calling of] a war trumpet said, Come up here, and I will show you what must take place in the future. At once I came under the [Holy] Spirit's power, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with One seated on the throne! And He Who sat there appeared like [the crystalline brightness of] jasper and [the fiery] sardius, and encircling the throne there was a halo that looked like [a rainbow of] emerald. Twenty-four other thrones surrounded the throne, and seated on these thrones were twenty-four elders (the members of the heavenly Sanhedrin), arrayed in white clothing, with crowns of gold upon their heads. Out from the throne came flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne seven blazing torches burned, which are the seven Spirits of God [the seven-fold Holy Spirit];*

And in front of the throne there was also what looked like a transparent glassy sea, as if of crystal. And around the throne, in the center at each side of the throne, were four living creatures (ones, beings) who were full of eyes in front and behind [with intelligence as to what is before and at the rear of them]. The first living creature (one, being) was like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature [was] like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, individually having six wings, were full of eyes all over and within [underneath their wings]; and day and night they never stop saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty (Omnipotent), Who was and Who is and Who is to come.

And whenever the living creatures offer glory and honor and thanksgiving to Him Who sits on the throne, Who lives forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities), The twenty-four elders (the members of the heavenly Sanhedrin) fall pros-

trate before Him Who is sitting on the throne, and they worship Him Who lives forever and ever; and they throw down their crowns before the throne, crying out, Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and dominion, for You created all things; by Your will they were [brought into being] and were created."

Jesus, the Son of God

Chapter 1 of Hebrews helps us understand the Son's place in his Father's kingdom. There is an order within the Trinity. Reigning within our Father's kingdom is his first born Son. The Son was begotten of the Father. (John 3:16) Even though Jesus is God's Son, he was always with the Father. Jesus created everything except himself. (John 1:1-3) All of creation came into being at the Father's initiative.

Jesus had to meet certain conditions to attain his position in the Father's kingdom. Two thousand years ago, Jesus came to earth and took on the form of man. He took all the sins of the world on himself and paid the price for those sins on the cross. He was made the curse for us. (Galatians 3:13) He did this in order to redeem us to God the Father. By doing this, he earned a place of honor beyond what he already possessed, and he was highly honored from the beginning.

Hebrews 1:1-14, "*In many separate revelations [each of which set forth a portion of the Truth] and in different ways God spoke of old to [our] forefathers in and by the prophets, [But] in the last of these days He has spoken to us in [the person of a] Son, Whom He appointed Heir and lawful Owner of all things, also by and through Whom He created the worlds and the reaches of space and the ages of time [He made, produced, built, operated, and arranged them in order]. He is the sole expression of the glory of God [the Light-being, the out-raying or radiance of the divine], and He is the perfect imprint and very image of [God's] nature, upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power. When He*

had by offering Himself accomplished our cleansing of sins and riddance of guilt, He sat down at the right hand of the divine Majesty on high,

[Taking a place and rank by which] He Himself became as much superior to angels as the glorious Name (title) which He has inherited is different from and more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did [God] ever say, You are My Son, today I have begotten You [established You in an official Sonship relation, with kingly dignity]? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He will be to Me a Son? Moreover, when He brings the firstborn Son again into the habitable world, He says, Let all the angels of God worship Him. Referring to the angels He says, [God] Who makes His angels winds and His ministering servants flames of fire;

But as to the Son, He says to Him, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever (to the ages of the ages), and the scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of absolute righteousness (of justice and straightforwardness). You have loved righteousness [You have delighted in integrity, virtue, and uprightness in purpose, thought, and action] and You have hated lawlessness (injustice and iniquity). Therefore God, [even] Your God (Godhead), has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy and gladness above and beyond Your companions. And [further], You, Lord, did lay the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the works of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain and continue permanently; they will all grow old and wear out like a garment. Like a mantle [thrown about one's self] You will roll them up, and they will be changed and replaced by others. But You remain the same, and Your years will never end nor come to failure. Besides, to which of the angels has He ever said, Sit at My right hand [associated with Me in My royal dignity] till I make your enemies a stool for your feet? Are not the angels all ministering spirits (servants) sent out in the service [of God for the assistance] of those who are to inherit salvation?"

Because Jesus was willing to cleanse our sins, God said, "...sit

at My right hand in My throne till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Acts 7:49a (KJV) says, "*Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool.*" When Jesus returns, the Father is going to make all of Jesus' enemies his footstool and put them under him. He will have sole authority to put down all rebellion, destroy all his enemies and set up his throne on this earth to reign for one thousand years. We have the opportunity to sit with Jesus on his throne and reign with him. This is a place of honor just as he has a place of honor at the right hand of the Father. The Father has turned over all authority to his Son, but God hasn't retired and stepped off his throne of authority.

As I said before, everything begins with the Father. When Jesus' throne is established on this earth and we're sitting with him on that throne, the Father's throne will still be in the new Jerusalem. During the millennium, all authority will come from Jesus and we will do exactly what he wants. Jesus' authority comes from the Father and everything he does will be exactly the way the Father wants it done.

In Matthew 6:10 (KJV) Jesus was teaching the disciples to pray. He said, "*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*" Jesus was telling the disciples to pray that the Father's kingdom would come and his will would be done in this earth as it is in heaven. The Father will never come to the earth as we know it to rule and reign, so why is Jesus telling us to pray this prayer? We are praying to the Father, but he is not coming to this earth. He is going to send his Son instead. The kingdom of Christ will be established, but it is still the kingdom of God. Once again, the Father has put all things in heaven and in earth under his Son with the only exception being the Father himself. (1 Corinthians 15:27) Everything Jesus does is done to fulfill the will of his Father.

In John 14:8 and 9, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus wasn't being arrogant when he told them, "*...Have I been with all of you for so long a time, and do you not recognize and know Me yet, Philip? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the*

Father. How can you say then, Show us the Father?"

Jesus also said in John 5:30, "I am able to do nothing from Myself [independently, of My own accord-but only as I am taught by God and as I get His orders]. Even as I hear, I judge [I decide as I am bidden to decide. As the voice comes to Me, so I give a decision], and My judgment is right (just, righteous), because I do not seek or consult My own will [I have no desire to do what is pleasing to Myself, My own aim, My own purpose] but only the will and pleasure of the Father Who sent Me."

We are told to be imitators of Jesus, just as Jesus is an imitator of the Father. When we seek God for direction and he speaks to us with correction, exhortation and revelation, his goal is to make us like his first born Son. We don't have the capacity in this life to reach the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ. It is an ongoing work, but old things should be passing away and all things should become new so we can be like Christ. (2 Corin-thians 5:17)

It is imperative that you begin to understand the magnitude of who you are in God's kingdom as well as the awesomeness of the kingdom itself. God's kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world. They will pass away, but God's kingdom will endure forever.

Books by Joseph C. Hedgecock

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The third book in the series, WAKE UP! TIME IS RUNNING OUT, explains the instructions you need to obey to become a mature, functioning member in the Body of Christ. If you love God with your whole heart, listen attentively to the Holy Spirit, and consistently submit to the Lord, you will grow up spiritually. If Jesus Christ is your first love and the Lord of your life, He will prepare you to fit in His Body.

WAKE UP! TIME IS RUNNING OUT, VOLUME III focuses on how to be spiritually mature. Your life will produce eternal results as you faithfully obey God. When you step into your callings, you will continue to receive deeper truths from the Holy Spirit.

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