

12. THE MESSIANIC MONARCHY

The monarchy - those with royal authority

The word 'kingdom' conjures up many meanings, and to the modern reader, it usually means a country led by a monarch. The Greek word, as attested by all the Greek lexicons, really means 'kingship', an abstract word referring to the royal authority of a king and his government, the monarchy. In many contexts, it refers to the kingship in action: the reign where that authority is exercised. There are 140 references to the kingdom in seventeen books of the New Testament, of which:

43 occurrences relate to Jesus as *king*

46 relate to Jesus' disciples, his *monarchy*, God's elect

51 relate to the future Messianic *reign*

When those three meanings are understood, the interpretation of the kingdom of God verses becomes clear. The habit of English Bible translations to consistently translate *basileia* as '*kingdom*' is not helpful and has resulted in confusion and ignorance of this important concept. We need to ask such questions as:

Who is the king? - God the Father or God the Son?

Who is the monarchy? – Who will reign with the king?

Where is the reign? Is it in heaven or on earth?

When does the reign occur? Present or future?

The position taken is that the kingdom is Messianic, earthly, temporal, and future, rather than theocratic, heavenly, eternal, and present.

The amazing visions in the book of Daniel

The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, had a dream which Daniel interpreted for him. It is foundational to the Jewish Messianic hope (Dan 2:31-45). In his dream, the king saw a huge statue, the parts of which represented powerful world empires. The head of gold was the Babylonian empire, the chest and arms of silver, the Medo-Persian empire, the belly and thighs of bronze, the Greek empire, the legs of

iron, the Roman empire, and the feet of iron and clay, a related world empire or coalition of nations that will exist at the end of the age. As the king dreamed, a rock was cut out, not by human hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them, and all the empires ended. Then the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain that filled the whole earth. Daniel explained the dream to Nebuchadnezzar: In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or be left to another people. It'll crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it'll endure forever (Dan 2:44). The rock is the Messiah. The final destruction of world empire will occur when Jesus returns to Earth and strikes down the nations gathered in rebellion against Jerusalem at the battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:12-16). The Messiah will rule over the survivors with an iron sceptre as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Then Daniel had a similar dream about the coming of the conquering Messiah (Dan 7:7-27). He saw four beasts (world empires) and the final one had ten horns, three of which were uprooted by a little horn (the Antichrist), who spoke boastfully and exercised his authority for a time, times and half a time, forty-two months during which the saints will be delivered into his hands (Rev 13:5-7). This little horn is the man of lawlessness that Paul warns us about (2 Thess 2:1-4), the beast whom all the inhabitants of the earth will worship (Rev 13:1-10) and who is eventually slain and thrown into a blazing fire (Rev 19:20).

The following verses reveal the outcome of this difficult time of distress, which Jesus warned us about (Mat 24:15-22):

During my vision at night, I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His dominion is everlasting, it'll never pass away, and his kingdom will never be destroyed (Dan 7:13-14).

But the saints of the high places will receive the kingdom and possess it forever – even for eternity (Dan 7:18).

And the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the saints of the high places.

Their kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all rulers will serve and obey them (Dan 7:27).

In the resulting kingdom, all nations and peoples of every language worship the Messiah, but it is the saints who possess the kingdom as an everlasting dominion.

The Lord will be king over the whole earth ... Then the survivors from all the nations that attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty (Zech 14:9, 16).

The nations will walk by its (the holy city's) light, and the kings of the Earth will bring their splendour into it (Rev 21:24).

In Daniel, the phrase "saints of the Most High" contrasts with the Jews who are consistently referred to in Daniel as "your people," (Dan 9:15-16, 19, 24, 10:14, 11:14, 12:1). Keil says "The saints of the Most High," or briefly "the saints," are neither the Jews, who are accustomed to call themselves "saints" in contrast with the heathen, nor the converted Israel of the millennium, ... they are the congregation of the New Covenant, consisting of Israel and the faithful of all nations; for the kingdom which God gives to the Son of Man will, according to verse 14, comprehend those who are redeemed from among all the nations of the earth" (Commentary on Daniel, p. 239). I have explained in book one why 'saints of the Most High' should be translated as saints of the high places.

Daniel 7 and Revelation 6 - 19 enlighten us with details of the final years of this age when a world coalition under the Antichrist devours the whole earth, and how God gives victory to the Messiah and the saints.

The Messianic monarchy

Every kingdom has its monarch and his monarchy, family, nobility and other elite. The monarchy in the kingdom of God is restricted to family; God's Son and his adopted children. One-third of the kingdom of God/heaven verses have the disciples in focus, representing all the saints. The kingdom of God is theirs. They enter the monarchy through being born again and are presently heirs of the kingdom. They hold the keys of the kingdom; it is through the Church that others will enter the monarchy and one day sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. More

specifically, Jesus confers kingship on them (Lk 22:29-30); they will eat and drink at his royal table and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. They are called into his kingdom and glory (I Thess 2:12), not as subjects but as rulers. God chose those who are poor in the eyes of the world to inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him (Jas 2:5). They will receive a rich welcome into the eternal reign of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet 1:11). The Lamb is praised in heaven because he was slain, purchasing with his blood people from every tribe, language, people, and nation, and making them a kingdom of priests who will reign on Earth (Rev 5:10). That is the divine purpose for redeemed mankind.

The monarchy is not mentioned specifically everywhere where it is in focus. For example:

I'll give the victorious one who does my will to the end authority over the nations, to rule them with an iron sceptre and dash them to pieces like pottery, just as I received authority from my Father (Rev 2:26-27).

I'll give the victorious one the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne (Rev 3:21).

Whenever Jesus spoke about kingship to his disciples, he referred to his future government, the Messianic monarchy. He explained on many occasions, usually via parables, that the Jewish nation had disobeyed God, broken the covenant, and forfeited the kingship that was promised to them. As a result, he would grant kingship to others, to those who believe in him, including faithful Jews of all ages. As children of God, they constitute the royal family and inherit the kingship and rule with the Messiah.

This interpretation avoids the clumsy conclusion that the kingdom is both present and future, that it has been inaugurated but is not yet. It maintains the focus on kingship and avoids the unbiblical and contrary-to-fact teaching that Jesus is ruling the world now. It emphasizes the truth that Jesus' disciples are *heirs* of the kingship, a concept that is generally misunderstood and ignored. As children of God, they are co-heirs with the Messiah and they'll share in his glory (Rom 8:17). The visible church is not, as per Augustine, the kingdom of God, rather, it is

the elect, described as a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language who are the monarchy and will rule the Earth with Christ (Rev 5:9-10). They won't reign until they are resurrected and raptured at the Messiah's return, but they are already heirs, as they have entered the Messianic kingship and monarchy. Flesh and blood, people in their present bodies, cannot inherit the kingdom, only the resurrected. The resurrected monarchy won't live on Earth during the millennium, their home will be in the heavenly New Jerusalem (Rev 21:2 – 2:5). This city is presently in heaven (Heb 12:22-25), but as this age passes at Jesus' return, it'll come down out of heaven from God and rest in the sky above the earthly Jerusalem. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor to it (Rev 21:24).

Jesus is building his Church, the Messianic monarchy

Jesus the Messiah is coming back to reign on Earth for a thousand years. During the Church age, which began at Pentecost and ceases at his return, Jesus has been building his Church community, millions of people from every nation, tribe, and language. The gospel is preached, and people believe it and are saved. They are saved from their sins, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and they'll be glorified at Jesus' return when they're resurrected. Their special role in the new world is to reign with the Messiah as his monarchy. As God's children, believers enter the Messianic monarchy when they are born again (Jn 3:3, 5). They're presently heirs of the kingship; they'll possess it when Jesus returns. The kingdom of God has not been inaugurated because the king has not yet returned (Lk 19:15). This age is characterized by the building up of the Messianic monarchy. Jesus is not reigning over the kingdoms of this world and nor is his monarchy. He sat down at the right hand of God and since that time he *waits* for the day when his enemies will be made his footstool (Hebrews 10:13).

In the following verses, the kingdom of God is translated as the Messianic kingship or monarchy. The visible church cannot be equated with the monarchy, because the redeemed are only a fraction of the visible church. The monarchy consists of God's elect, also known as the righteous, the saints, or the servants of God. They may be poor, meek, and persecuted now, but they will inherit the Earth. They'll not be subjects in the Lord's kingdom, they'll be his government. Most of

Jesus's parables are about the development of this Messianic community. The Father told Jesus to sit at his right hand until he made his enemies a footstool for his feet. The Father will crush kings on the day of his wrath, he'll judge the nations, crushing the rulers of the whole earth (Ps 110:1, 5-6). Then, and only then, will his Messiah begin his reign.

The monarchy consists of believers in Jesus

Mt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Messianic monarchy is theirs.

Mt 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the Messianic monarchy is theirs.

Mt 13:38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the Messianic monarchy (lit. the sons of the kingdom). The weeds are the people of the evil one.

Mt 19:14 Jesus said: Let children come to me, don't hinder them, for the Messianic monarchy belongs to people like them.

Lk 6:20 Looking at his disciples, he said: Blessed are you who are poor, the Messianic monarchy is yours.

Lk 12:32 Don't be afraid, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the ~~kingdom~~ Messianic kingship.

Lk 18:16 Jesus called the children to him and said: Let the children come to me, don't hinder them, for the Messianic monarchy belongs to people like them.

Lk 22:29 I confer on you kingship, just as my Father conferred it on me.

Rev 1:6 (Jesus) made us to be a monarchy and priests to serve his God and Father. To him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

Rev 1:9 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingship and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on Patmos Island because of speaking God's word and bearing witness to Jesus.

Rev 5:10 You made them to be a monarchy and priests to serve our God, and they'll reign over the Earth.

Rev 20:4 I saw thrones and those seated on them. They were given the right to judge. I saw the souls of those who were beheaded because they bore witness to Jesus and spoke God's word. They hadn't worshipped the beast or his image and they hadn't received his mark on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Jesus is currently building his Church from every nation, language, and cultural group, gathering the Messianic community that will be his monarchy during his earthly reign. True believers will show their worth by living good lives in reverence and awe of God. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are God's children. That makes them heirs; heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. When Christ returns to reign, his community will reign with him. Many of them are poor, meek, and persecuted for following Jesus, but in the future, all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to them to possess (Dan 7:27).

The saints enter the monarchy now

Mt 5:20 I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the rabbis, you'll never enter the Messianic monarchy.

Mt 19:23-24 Jesus told his disciples: I tell you the truth, it's hard for the rich to enter the Messianic monarchy. Again I tell you, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the Messianic monarchy (c.f. Mk 10:23-25, Lk 18:24-25).

Mt 21:31 Jesus said to them: I tell you the truth; tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the Messianic monarchy ahead of you.

Mk 9:47 If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It's better to enter the Messianic monarchy with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell.

Mk 10:15 I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Messianic monarchy like a child won't enter it.

Mk 12:34 You're not far from (entering) the Messianic monarchy.

Lk 18:17 Truly I tell you, anyone who doesn't receive the Messianic monarchy like a child won't enter it.

Jn 3:3 Jesus replied: I tell you the truth, a person can't see (experience) the Messianic monarchy unless they're born again.

Jn 3:5 Jesus answered: I tell you the truth, a person can't enter the Messianic monarchy unless they're born of water and the Holy Spirit.

Col 1:12-13 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. For he's rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the monarchy of his beloved Son.

Heb 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving an unshakable kingship, let's thank God and worship him acceptably with reverence and awe.

Entering the kingdom of God means entering the Messianic community that Jesus said he would build. Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish ruling council and may have aspired to rule with the Messiah. Jesus told him he'd have to be born of water, symbolic of cleansing, and the Holy Spirit. Entering the kingdom of God is entering the royal family and becoming an heir to the throne, the Messianic kingship. To the victorious, I'll give the right to sit with me on my throne (Rev 3:21). Believers enter the kingship here and now by being born again of God's Spirit, but they won't begin to reign until they inherit the kingship at Jesus' return. The teacher of the law was "not far from the kingdom of God." This teacher's faith was such that he was not far from entering the monarchy.

These verses list the qualifications for entering the Messianic kingship. Repentance is a prerequisite that enables the worst of sinners to enter. On the other hand, there is a warning to the unbelieving Jewish authorities. It is necessary to have the humility of a child. God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. One must be born again to enter God's family, born from above, born of the Holy Spirit. The sort of people who typically don't qualify are the rich and the hypocritical

religious leaders. Persistent sin is a hindrance, and persistent faith is a necessity.

The saints will enter/inherit/receive the kingship later

Mt 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they'll inherit the Earth.

Mt 7:21 Not everyone who says to me: Lord, Lord, will enter the Messianic reign; only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

Mt 13:41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they'll remove stumbling blocks and evildoers from his reign.

Mt 19:28 Jesus said to them: I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Mt 25:1, 13 At that time the Messianic monarchy will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ... Those who were prepared went into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut.

Acts 14:22 Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith, they said: We must go through many hardships to enter the Messianic reign.

1 Cor 6:9-10 Don't you know that wrongdoers won't inherit the Messianic reign? Don't be deceived: Neither sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor homosexuals or thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the Messianic reign.

1 Cor 15:50 I declare to you, brethren, that flesh and blood can't inherit the Messianic reign; the perishable can't inherit the imperishable.

Gal 5:21 I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this won't inherit the Messianic reign.

Eph 5:5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person – such a person is an idolater - has any inheritance in the Messianic reign established by God.

Israel lost its claim to the monarchy

Mt 8:12 But the original heirs of the monarchy (the sons of the kingdom) will be thrown outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Mt 21:43 Therefore, I tell you that the Messianic monarchy will be taken away from you (Israel) and given to a people who will do justice to it.

Mt 22:2-3 The Messianic monarchy is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to the invitees to tell them to come, but they refused.

Mt 23:13 Woe to you, rabbis and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the Messianic monarchy in people's faces. You don't enter, and you stop those who are trying to enter.

Acts 1:6-7 Then they gathered around him and asked: Lord, are you going to restore the monarchy to Israel at this time? He said to them: It's not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his authority.

Israel forfeited their right to be the Messiah's monarchy that would rule the world with him. The parable of the wedding banquet in Matthew 22 follows the parable of the talents in Matthew 21. When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these parables, they knew Jesus was talking about them. Israel was rejected, and the servants were told to go to the street corners and invite anyone they found. In a similar parable (Lk 14:16-24), the host says that not one of those who were originally invited will get a taste of his banquet.

At the wedding banquet at Jesus' return, Christians from all nations will be there as Christ's bride, Israel having refused the invitation. A man there was ejected for not wearing the right clothes. Jesus warns us to seek God's kingdom and his righteousness, symbolized in Revelation 19 by fine linen, bright and clean.

Israel will be revived as God's chosen nation, but they'll be subjects of the kingdom, not the rulers. God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. All of Israel as a nation will be saved at Jesus' return, and they'll live in their land as God's people, but they won't reign with the Messiah. Jesus will reign from the heavenly Jerusalem with his resurrected monarchy while his earthly people, Israel, will be responsible for ministry at the temple, where all the nations on earth will come to worship.

Service in and for the Messianic monarchy

Mt 19:12 Some eunuchs are born that way, others have been made eunuchs by men, and others choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the Messianic kingdom. (Perhaps metonymy for the Messiah (1 Cor 7:32-35). The one who can accept this should accept it.

Mt 25:14, 19, 21 Again, it (the Messianic kingdom) will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ... After a long time, their master returned and settled accounts with them. ... Well done, good and faithful servant, as you were faithful with a little, I'll entrust you with many things now. Come and enjoy your master's happiness.

Lk 9:62 Jesus said to him: No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the Messianic monarchy.

Lk 18:29-30 I tell you the truth, no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the Messianic monarchy will fail to receive many times more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.

Acts 1:3 After his suffering, he showed himself to them many times so that they knew he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the Messianic monarchy.

Col 4:11 These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the Messianic monarchy.

All Christians are expected to serve God, but not all are involved in evangelism and church planting as Paul's co-workers were. They were

helping Jesus build his Church, the international community of believers who constitute his monarchy, as many parachurch organizations do. If a priest chooses to remain unmarried, or if a missionary leaves his home and country, he is doing this for Jesus' sake, but he also does it to save the lost and bring them into God's family.

The development of the monarchy

Mt 13:24, 30 Jesus told them another parable: The Messianic monarchy is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ... Then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.

Mt 13:31 He told them another parable: The Messianic monarchy is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. (c.f. Ezek 17:23).

Mt 13:33 He told them still another parable: The Messianic kingship (message) is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.

Mt 13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the monarchy established by their Father.

Mt 13:47, 49 Once again, the Messianic monarchy is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ... This is how it'll be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous.

Mt 16:19 I will give you the keys of the Messianic monarchy. Whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth will be loosed in heaven.

Mt 18:23 Therefore, the Messianic monarchy is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. (About forgiveness)

Mt 20:1 For the Messianic monarchy is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. (About grace.)

Mt 25:34 Then the king will say to those on his right: You whom my Father has blessed, come and inherit the kingship prepared for you since the world's creation.

Mk 4:26 He also said: This is what the Messianic monarchy is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. (As in the parable of the sower, believers are compared to productive seed that an evangelist has sown).

Mk 4:30 Again he said: What shall we say the Messianic monarchy is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? (A mustard seed.)

Rom 14:17 The Messianic monarchy is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. (It is spiritually empowered, not by laws about defilement and rituals.)

1 Cor 4:20 The Messianic monarchy is not a matter of talk but of power.

Entering the monarchy is one thing, the growth of the monarchy is another. The Christian community is compared to a mustard seed, starting as a very small group but finally growing into a tree large enough for birds (all nations) to come and nest in the branches. To begin with, there were the twelve disciples and others outside that inner group, like the women who followed along and cooked for them. They weren't born again yet, but they had faith in Jesus. At Pentecost, they received the gift of the Holy Spirit and 3,000 were added to the community. That was the beginning of the Messianic monarchy. Soon the number of men who believed grew to 5,000. With women and children that could mean 20,000 souls.

Jesus liked to compare this growth to that of seed, it was imperceptible. Sometimes the seed represents the word of God which the elect believe, sometimes it represents the elect themselves, and then there are the weeds. They won't be separated until harvest time when the righteous are resurrected at Jesus' return and the wicked are destined for hell. The field is the whole world, as Messiah's message must be heard everywhere. The work of evangelism and instruction is compared to a woman mixing yeast with a very large quantity of dough until it permeates the whole batch.

The Pharisees shut the door on those who wanted to enter the Messianic monarchy, so Jesus gave the keys to Peter as leader of the

disciples. They were responsible for building the Christian community on the basis that Jesus was the Messiah. He would come again one day to fulfil the OT prophecies and the plan that God has for this planet and our glorification. God planned the Messianic monarchy for us since the creation of the world, it was not an afterthought.

Hierarchy and status in the monarchy

Mt 5:19 Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the Messianic monarchy, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the Messianic monarchy.

Mt 11:11 I tell you the truth, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist, yet whoever is least in the Messianic monarchy is greater than he. (Anyone in the monarchy has greater status than one who proclaims it.)

Mt 18:1 At that time, the disciples came to Jesus and asked: Who, is the greatest in the Messianic monarchy?

Mt 18:3-4 And he said: I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like children, you'll never enter the Messianic monarchy. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the Messianic monarchy.

Mt 20:21 What is it you want? he asked. She said: Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right hand and the other at your left in your monarchy.

All who are in Christ are God's children through faith, but not all are equal; there will be a hierarchy. The hierarchy does not depend on race, sex, or social standing (Gal 3:28). The judgment seat of Christ will determine rewards for service and grant status during the millennium. Many who are first here will be last there. Salvation is by grace, but future rewards are given for faithful service.

The parable of the bags of gold is about a man going on a journey and giving his servants work to do until he returns. He said to faithful servants: You have been faithful with a few things; I'll put you in charge of many things. The parallel passage in Lk 19:11-27 is about a nobleman who went to a distant country to be appointed as king. When he returned

to reign, he settled accounts with his servants, giving one charge of five cities, and another, ten. The woman who asked for her sons to sit at Jesus' right and left in his kingdom was probably Salome, Jesus' aunt. Her sons were James and John. But there is no nepotism in the kingdom.

The monarchy will feast at the king's table

Mt 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the East and the West and take their place at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Messianic monarchy.

Mt 26:29 I tell you, I won't drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in the monarchy established by my Father.

Lk 13:28-29 There will be weeping there and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the Messianic reign, and you are thrown outside. People will come from East and West and North and South and take their places at the feast in the Messianic monarchy.

Lk 14:15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus: Blessed is the person who will eat at the feast in the Messianic monarchy.

Lk 22:16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the Messianic monarchy.

Lk 22:18 I'm telling you I won't drink again from the fruit of the vine until the Messianic reign arrives.

Lk 22:29-30 I confer on you kingship as my Father conferred it on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my monarchy and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Messianic feast is based on a prophecy from Isaiah 25:6-8: On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meat, and the finest wine. On this mountain, he'll destroy the shroud that enfolds all people, the sheet that covers all nations. He'll swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, and he'll remove his people's disgrace from all the Earth. The wiping of tears from their

faces and the absence of death describe life in New Jerusalem (Rev 21:4).

All the above verses relate to the Messianic kingship, suggesting that the banquet is a regular meal that the monarchy will share at the king's table. Just how literal or appropriate that will be for the redeemed remains to be seen. King Solomon's daily provisions included thirty head of cattle and a hundred sheep and goats. Royal banquets were lavish affairs. Matthew 19:28 places these events "at the renewal of all things," that is, in the new world during the Messianic reign.

Jesus said he wouldn't eat the Passover meal again until it found fulfilment during the Messianic reign. It'll be a celebration of the saint's salvation arising from Christ's death. The Passover celebrates Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt, while the Lord's Supper celebrates the Christian's salvation from sin, proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes. The Messianic banquet will celebrate the consummation of our salvation wherein death is swallowed up forever, tears are wiped away from all faces, and the disgrace God's people have suffered is removed from all the Earth, for the old order of things will pass away.

This heavenly city with perhaps a billion inhabitants is hard to imagine. Where would food and musical instruments come from? We know the result is eternal joy, but just how earthly joys will be experienced in the heavenly realm has not been revealed. The Jews always thought of the future in relation to the Earth, and we should too. Reigning over the Earth for a thousand years is our destiny.