

**Basileia for the Kingdom of God: Acts & Epistles**  
**John Hepp, Jr., [www.kingdombible.com](http://www.kingdombible.com)**

For explanations of the many references to the kingdom in the Gospels, see my writing “[The Four Gospels: the Kingdom Offered & Postponed.](#)” Here I will refer to the use of the key word in Acts and the Epistles. The relevant Greek word for “kingdom” is *basileia*, which in those books is used for God’s kingdom in the following verses:

Acts 1:3	1 Corinthians 6:10	Hebrews 1:8
Acts 1:6	1 Corinthians 15:24	Hebrews 12:28
Acts 8:12	1 Corinthians 15:50	James 2:5
Acts 14:22	Galatians 5:21	2 Peter 1:11
Acts 19:8	Ephesians 5:5	Revelation 1:6
Acts 20:25	Colossians 1:13	Revelation 1:9
Acts 28:23	Colossians 4:11	Revelation 5:10
Acts 28:31	1 Thessalonians 2:12	Revelation 11:15
Romans 14:17	2 Thessalonians 1:5	Revelation 12:10
1 Corinthians 4:20	2 Timothy 4:1	
1 Corinthians 6:9	2 Timothy 4:18	

The mistaken belief that “the kingdom of God [or, of heaven]” has already begun strips the term of much of its meaning—and misses the point of many passages. For example, first consider the verses just listed from Acts. Most of them summarize the message that was being preached.

***Basileia for God’s Kingdom in Acts***

1:3	During the forty days after His resurrection, the Lord spoke of the things pertaining to the <b>kingdom</b> of God.
1:6	The apostles asked if the Lord was about to restore the <b>kingdom</b> to Israel.
8:12	In Samaria Philip preached the good news of the <b>kingdom</b> of God.
14:22	Paul and Barnabas told new believers to stay true in hardships on the way to the <b>kingdom</b> of God.
19:8	For three months in the synagogue at Ephesus, Paul argued about the <b>kingdom</b> of God.
20:25	Paul summarized his message at Ephesus as “preaching the <b>kingdom.</b> ”
28:23	At Rome to Jewish leaders Paul explained and declared the <b>kingdom</b> of God.
28:31	For two years at Rome Paul preached the <b>kingdom</b> of God.

In two of these passages (1:6 and 14:22) the kingdom had to be future. What about the rest? Luke had often spoken of the “kingdom of God” in his Gospel. Even without analyzing earlier

## ***Basileia* for the Kingdom of God: Acts & Epistles**

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passages, one can easily ascertain that every use of that term in the last chapters (Luke 19:11; 21:31; 22:16; 22:18; 23:51) clearly referred to the Lord's future kingdom. Would it not logically mean the same thing at the beginning of his second book (Acts 1:3).

A Bible student should often study key words, such as *basileia*. Following is a list of all the verses in the Epistles where that word refers to God's kingdom. After each reference is a summary of what it says about the kingdom. In the last column is a code telling whether the kingdom's apparent time in that passage is present (P), future (F), or unclear (U). You will see that only one or two *might* be present. (For that reason they are cited constantly by those who believe the kingdom has started.)

### ***Basileia* for God's Kingdom in the Epistles**

REFERENCE	WHAT THE PASSAGE SAYS ABOUT THE KINGDOM	TIME
Romans 14:17	The kingdom is not eating and drinking but righteousness, peace, and joy. NOTE: Though this could refer to a present kingdom, it could just as well define what is essential to the future kingdom described in Romans 8.	P or U
1 Corinthians 4:20	The kingdom of God is not talk but power. NOTE: Paul had just referred to the kingdom as future in verse 8. Now he challenged those who acted as though it had begun to prove it by their power.	F
1 Corinthians 6:9	The wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God.	F
1 Corinthians 6:10	The wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God.	F
1 Corinthians 15:24	At the end Christ will hand over the kingdom to God, after even death has been defeated (vv. 25-26) NOTE: Though this passage does not say when the kingdom will begin, the previous verse refers to His coming (see 2 Timothy 4:1).	F
1 Corinthians 15:50	Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, which is the reason resurrection is necessary.	F
Galatians 5:21	The wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God.	F
Ephesians 5:5	The wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God.	F

## **Basileia for the Kingdom of God: Acts & Epistles**

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Colossians 1:13	Believers are rescued from darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son God loves. NOTE: The previous verse says they are qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in [the kingdom of, added] light. Since Christian inheritance is always future in the New Testament, the transfer to that light and kingdom is a transfer to the future. Similarly, “All things are yours” in 1 Cor. 3:21-22 includes “the future.”	U
Colossians 4:11	fellow workers for the kingdom of God	U
1 Thessalonians 2:12	God calls you into His kingdom and glory.	F
2 Thessalonians 1:5	Evidence you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.	F
2 Timothy 4:1	in view of His appearance and His kingdom	F
2 Timothy 4:18	The Lord will rescue me and bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom.	F
Hebrews 1:8	Righteousness is the scepter of His kingdom. NOTE: Later in this section the author says “the world to come, about which we are speaking” (2:5).	F
Hebrews 12:28	We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.  NOTE: This will remain after a future world-wide shaking (vv. 26-27).	F
James 2:5	God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He has promised to those who love Him.	F
2 Peter 1:10-11	Those who do these things (grow in godliness) will receive a rich welcome into the Lord’s eternal kingdom.	F
Revelation 1:6	He has made us to be a kingdom and priests. NOTE: See 5:10 for evidence that this identifies believers as what they <b>will be</b> . Similarly, 1:5 says that Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth—though He is not ruling them yet.	U
Revelation 1:9	John, their companion in suffering, in the kingdom, and in endurance. NOTE: The suffering is present; the kingdom is future; the endurance takes us from one to the other.	U
Revelation 5:10	Believers are “a kingdom and priests to...reign on the earth.”	F

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Revelation 11:15	The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ, who will reign for ever and ever. NOTE: As often in Revelation, this is an announcement of what is about to happen.	F
Revelation 12:10	Now have come the salvation and power and kingdom of God and the authority of His Christ. NOTE: This is another announcement like 11:15.	F