

The Second Petition

THY KINGDOM COME

What does this mean?

The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray that it may come to us also.

How does God's kingdom come?

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

THE CENTRAL THOUGHT

God established His reign by overcoming sin, death and the devil through the life, death and resurrection of Christ; and He brought us under His gracious rule by giving us His Holy Spirit.

If Christ's death and resurrection triumphed over sin, death, and the devil, why do we still see their effects in the world today?

As Christians, we believe and confess that even though the effects of sin, death, and the devil remain, Christ will remove them once and for all when he returns. For this we pray.

Read Acts 1:1–11

How did the disciples misunderstand the kingdom of God?

Knowing that Christ will return to bring to an end the devil's present work of unbelief, sin, suffering, and death...how should we then live?

A CLOSER READING OF THE SMALL CATECHISM

212. What is the kingdom of God for which Jesus teaches us to pray?

It is the gracious rule and reign of God that (a) was ushered in by Jesus' incarnation, public ministry, death, and resurrection; (b) comes to us here and now by His Spirit through the Word; and (c) will be brought into its fullness when Christ restores all things upon His return in glory.

- 47 **Mark 1:15** [Jesus said,] "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."
- 48 **Luke 17:20–21** Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."
- 49 **Colossians 1:13–14** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
- 50 **John 3:5** Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot

enter the kingdom of God.”

51 **Dan. 7:13–14** I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

52 **Rom. 14:17** The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Bible narratives: In Revelation 22:1–5 we hear that God is “making all things new.” The throne of God and the Lamb will be in the middle of the heavenly city. The fullness of the kingdom will be perfect righteousness, peace, and joy according to Isaiah 11:1–9.

213. What does it mean that the kingdom of God comes without our prayer?

God’s gracious rule and reign does not depend on our prayers or efforts, yet Jesus teaches us to seek God’s kingdom and pray for it.

53 **Luke 12:31–32** “Seek His kingdom and these things will be added to you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

214. For what do we seek and pray in this petition?

A. We ask God to give us His Spirit so that we may believe His Word and live “under Him in His kingdom and serve

Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness” (Martin Luther’s explanation of the Second Article).

54 **Is 55:11** My word... shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

55 **2 Thess. 3:1** Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you.

56 **1 Peter 2:12** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

B. We ask that God’s Word be proclaimed throughout the world—also by us—that His Spirit might bring others under His gracious reign.

57 **Acts 4:29** And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to Your servants to continue to speak Your word with all boldness.

58 **Matthew 9:38** Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

C. We pray for Jesus’ return with the full manifestation of His rule.

59 **Phil. 3:20** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

60 **Rev. 22:20** He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

215. What are the benefits of living under God's gracious rule?

Christ has risen from the dead and ascended to the Father's right hand "He sanctifies those who believe in Him, by sending the Holy Spirit into their hearts to rule, comfort, and make them alive. He defends them against the devil and the power of sin." (AC 3)

61 **Colossians 1:13-14** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

62 **2 Timothy 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

63 **1 Cor. 15:58** Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

64 **1 Peter 1:18** You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers.

65 **Colossians 3:15** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

66 **Acts 26:18** The Lord Jesus appointed Paul as a servant and witness to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

Bible narratives: In the Beatitudes Jesus encourages us by showing how His kingdom upends all earthly kingdoms and expectations (Matthew 5). In Ephesians 4 St. Paul describes the new life in which we no longer walk “in the futility” of a mind that does not know our Lord and King.

CONNECTIONS AND APPLICATIONS

216. Does God rule over only believers?

No. God’s rule over His believers is a gracious and saving rule (kingdom of grace) that looks forward to the resurrection of the body and the restoration of God’s entire creation when Christ returns (kingdom of glory). Until that day, God continues to rule as the Creator over all people and the entire world in order to maintain and sustain His creation (kingdom of power).

67 **Ps. 103:19** The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.

217. How does God rule over his creation?

God rules over His creation (a) by His goodness in providing for the life and well-being of all within the world and (b) by His power as He restrains evil from overwhelming His creation and holds everyone accountable to him as their Creator.

68 **Acts 14:16–17** In past generations He allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet He did not leave Himself without witness, for He did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.

69 **Heb. 1:3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and

the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.

Read **Romans 13:1-7** which explains the rule of God through earthly authorities, restraining evil and encouraging good.

Dear Father, we pray, give us first Your Word, so that the Gospel may be preached properly throughout the world. Second, may the Gospel be received in faith and work and live in us, so that through the Word and the Holy Spirit's power, Your kingdom may triumph among us. And we pray that the devil's kingdom be put down, so that he may have no right or power over us, until at last his power may be utterly destroyed. So sin, death, and hell shall be exterminated. Then we may live forever in perfect righteousness and blessedness.

(LC III:54).

*Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.*

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