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The Theology in Community series assembles teams of scholars to explore key theological themes and apply them to contemporary concerns. Each volume approaches a topic from the vantage points of the Old and New Testaments, and historical, systematic, and practical theology. The books draw upon a variety of contributors to craft a unified and accessible message. They aim to help pastors, church leaders, and laypersons alike.

Part of the Theology in Community series.

## Kingdom of God Details

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# From Reader Review Kingdom of God for online ebook

## Tim Chaney says

### Strong and engaging look at a difficult concept

I loved the weight and clarity in balance in this volume. It was a joy to wade through the complexity and then be drawn into Dr Bradley's fantastic conclusion.

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## Mathew says

Kingdom of God is one of the hot theological buzz words today (see missional, gospel-centered, attractional as other examples). More than that it's an important concept that often is either pigeon-holed or made so broad that it loses meaning. The collective authors of these essays are seeking to correct and define kingdom of God in a way which does justice to Scripture and is practical.

Stephen Nichols starts off by exploring usage of the term in historical and contemporary theology. At this point, he's exploring not at how it's used in Scripture but how theologians have used the term. He's setting the table. Bruce Watke begins the biblical exploration of the term in the Old Testament. He does this in the framework of the unfolding salvation history. Robert Yarbrough provides a similar analysis for the kingdom of God in Matthew and Revelation and then in the next chapter for Mark and the other epistles. Clinton Arnold compares/contrasts the kingdom of God with miracles, Satan, and demons.

The final three chapters were my favorite and most helpful in the book. These chapters take all the biblical theology, history, and data unearthed and make application for the church, eschatology, and Christian living. Gregg Allison, first, explores the connection between the kingdom of God and the church. Says Allison, Thus, the church, as the community of the kingdom, provides entrance into the kingdom through its untiring preaching of the gospel, and its newly born citizens live as kingdom people under the sovereignty of the king. (p. 190)

Allison also takes an indepth look at the relationship between the church and Israel (dispensational theology vs. covenant theology).

In chapter 8, Gerald Bray unpacks the relationship between the kingdom of God and eschatology. His is a non-millennial position. He argues for the development of a spiritual reality to the kingdom (see especially p. 210) due to "the coming of Jesus." He also aptly warns against over-realized eschatologies by pointing out the dangers of C. H. Dodd's realized eschatology,

In its more modern forms, realized eschatology suffers from essentially the same defect. The kingdom of God becomes a moral code that may be life--transforming, particularly in the case of people who have lived notoriously sinful lives, but it is all too likely to be assimilated to middle-class niceness. (p. 216)

Finally, Anthony Bradley hits a walk off homer in the final chapter "The Kingdom Today." He compiles the full truth exposed through all of the essays and asks a simple question How should orthodoxy (particularly as it relates the theme of the kingdom of God) impact our orthopraxy (right living)? Or How should the kingdom of God impact our Christian living? He wraps the entire answer in God's love. Love God and love your neighbor are the meat and potatoes. But what does that look like in our culture today? It's one the best unfoldings of Neo-Calvinistic concepts of human dignity/image of God and sphere sovereignty I've read. In addition, he makes important points about the current movement towards racial reconciliation (Bradley

counters with human solidarity). Bradley says,

[S]olidarity, from a kingdom perspective, reminds us that the truly disadvantaged are the disadvantaged for whom we are actually responsible because we long to see them liberated to be the women and men God created all human persons to be. (p. 239 see pp. 236-239)

and he closes by urging, “Our goal in the kingdom is to respond to God’s grace by putting his glory on display so that we may invite others to taste and see how good it is to be in covenant with the triune God” (p. 255).

I could go on and on about this chapter. Almost every page is riddle with marginalia of some kind. You should buy and read *The Kingdom of God* for this chapter alone. It’s on the more theological side but you won’t need any special training to get the main thrust of what’s being argued. It will require thoughtful reading but nothing you cannot handle with patience.

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### **James says**

This is a very good discussion on what the Kingdom of God is drawing together biblical scholarship, historical theology and systematics. I published a full review on my blog at:  
<http://thoughtsprayersandsongs.com/20...>

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### **Chris Woznicki says**

Seek first the Kingdom of God....” Jesus was a man who practiced what he preached. He lived, ate, breathed the kingdom. He advanced it through his ministry and he opened the doors to it through his death on the cross on our behalf. In other words Jesus was all about the Kingdom of God.

The “Kingdom of God” has been the central focus of theology for many protestants over the last several decades and for good reason. Jesus emphasizes the Kingdom throughout the Gospels, theologians have widely speculated about the nature of the kingdom, and have given even wider speculations about how the kingdom relates to eschatology. (I’m looking at you my dispensationalist friends). Along comes this book by Morgan and Peterson, they seek to give some clarity about the Kingdom of God. To do so they have collected essays by some well noted scholar to treat five different areas: 1) Historical, 2) Biblical, 3) Theological, and 4) Ethical. By adopting these perspectives they attempt to “move closer to a comprehensive exposition of the kingdom (Loc 217).

### **Overview**

This book has 9 Chapters: One on history, two on the Old Testament, three on the New Testament, 2 on systematic theology, and one on Ethics.

**Chapter 1** - Stephen Nichols writes a chapter on historical perspectives on the Kingdom of God.

**Chapters 2-3** – Bruce Waltke takes on the task of articulating an OT theology of the Kingdom. True to his reformed theology he pays special attention to the role of covenants in the Kingdom.

**Chapters 4-5** – Robert Yarbrough takes us through Matthew and Mark as a way to lay out the basic themes of the Kingdom in the NT. Then he gives us a brief overview of the Kingdom by reading Mark-The Epistles.

Think of this as a survey of the NT.

**Chapter 6** – Still focused on biblical theology, Clinton Arnold tackles The Kingdom and Satan. He presents an excellent overview of what role miracles play in the kingdom, and what place satan and his demons have in it as well.

**Chapter 7**– Ecclesiology meets Kingdom theology in this essay by Greg Allison. People often conflate the Kingdom with the Church. Allison gives us good reasons why that is a terrible mistake to make.

**Chapter 8** – Gerald Bray takes on Eschatology and the Kingdom. This isn't your typical "speculate about world events" kind of eschatology. This is Systematic eschatology, focused on the nature of time, eternity, and the ascension.

**Chapter 9** – Anthony Bradley shows us what justice has to do with the Kingdom.

## **Pro's**

**Clinton Arnold's Essay** – This was my highlight in reading this book. Unlike some people who see Jesus's miracles as merely authenticating his divinity (as though nobody else ever performed a miracle...) he shows that miracles are a foretaste of the kingdom. He also give a thorough evangelical treatment of demonology.

**The NT Survey Chapters** – If I ever make my way out of teaching Pauline studies and teach the Gospels or an NT Survey I could see myself making use of this book. I would certainly make use of Yarbrough's chapter on the Kingdom in Mark through the Epistles.

**The Book's Price/Value** – If you get the paperback it will set you back about \$14. That isn't too bad, but if you get it on the kindle (which I did) its only \$0.99! For \$0.99 a collection of essays by first rate evangelical scholars is a hard deal to pass up. With this book you get a lot of bang for your buck.

## **Con's**

**Anthony Bradley's Essay** – I don't know how else to say this, but this essay just doesn't fit this volume. I know its about "Kingdom Ethics" but He never really makes the connection between why his ethical injunctions are the necessary overflow of Kingdom theology.

**An Undefined Audience** – I am not exactly sure whom this book is for. Its fairly academic (if that means dry and full of footnotes) so I assume its for academia. However its so basic that it doesn't add anything to the pool of scholarly resources. It also seems too basic for even seminary students. Is the target audience college undergraduates? I'm not sure. This book would certainly work as a textbook for a college bible class. But that isn't the way this book was promoted.

## **Conclusion**

At \$0.99 I don't regret buying this book. I didn't really learn much though (except for Clinton Arnold's essay). So personally I wouldn't shell out the \$14 for the paperback. However I would make this book required reading in a biblical theology class for undergraduates.

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## **Eric Molicki says**

This was a very helpful look at the doctrine of the Kingdom of God from both an exegetical and a practical ministry perspective. Both were refreshing and helpful as I prepare to spend some extended time preaching through Matthew.

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## David Thommen says

There are some essays in this book that are good and insightful, but for the most part I thought this particular volume was not particularly engaging.

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## Dave Jenkins says

The Kingdom of God is the rule of a eternal sovereign God over all creatures and things (Psalm 103:19; Daniel 4:3). The Kingdom of God is also the designation for the sphere of salvation entered into at the new birth (John 3:5-7), and is synonymous with the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of God embraces all created intelligence, both in heaven and earth that are willingly subject to the Lord and are in fellowship with Him. The Kingdom of God is, therefore, universal in that it includes created angels and men. It is eternal, as God is eternal, and it is spiritual—found within all born-again believers. We enter the Kingdom of God when we are born again, and we are then part of that Kingdom for eternity. It is a relationship "born of the spirit" (John 3:5), and we have confident assurance that it is so because the Spirit bears witness with our spirits (Romans 8:16). God is sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient and the ruler over all of His creation. However, the designation "the Kingdom of God" encompasses that realm which is subject to God and will be for eternity. The rest of creation will be destroyed. Only that which is part of the "Kingdom of God" will remain. Today God mediates His Kingdom through believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit and obedient to the Word of God (1st Peter 2:9).

In the helpful new book in the Theology in Community series *The Kingdom of God* edited by Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, the contributors seeks to set forth what the Kingdom of God is from the Old and New Testament, and apply the teaching of the Kingdom of God to miracles, Satan, demons, the Church, end times, as well as what it means today.

While all of the chapters are helpful, I particularly thought Dr. Anthony Bradley's chapters "The Kingdom today" was helpful. In this chapter Dr. Bradley argues for the connection between orthodoxy (what Christians believe) and orthopraxis (how Christians live). He notes that, "The Bible is clear that we are to be people of faith and practice" (229). He explains that "Even with the best intentions and commitments we do not always know what is best, and, if we are honest, we must recognize that what is best is not always clear. Our orthopraxis and pursuit of justice means that, in our frailty and imperfections, the best we can do is rely on prudential judgments guided by clear principles. Is there a framework to help us get started? This chapter suggests that "God has provided such a framework in His Word and creation so that the scaffolding of the kingdom of God presented in the previous chapters can move God's people into mission" (229-230).

The focus of Dr. Bradley's chapter is on the question, "What are God's people to do in the kingdom to press the claims of Christ everywhere in creation? The answer has much to do with how we understand the nature of love, human dignity, our neighbors, and civil society as well as what we believe about what humans deserve, how we are to live in equality, how we reciprocate with others, and what people need" (230). The goal of Christians in the Kingdom is to respond to God's grace by putting His glory on display so that we may invite others to taste and see how good it is to be in covenant with God.

*The Kingdom of God* in the Theology in Community series is a very helpful exploration on what the Kingdom of God means from Scripture, as well as what the Church has taught on the Kingdom. Throughout the book various scholars tackle thorny issues related to the meaning of the Kingdom of God. I recommend

this book to Pastors, seminary, Bible college students, and serious Bible students interested in exploring the Kingdom of God from Scripture, church history and its meaning for Christians today.

Title: The Kingdom of God (Theology in Community)

Authors: Edited by Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson

Publisher: Crossway (2012)

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from the publisher through the Crossway book review bloggers program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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### **Elaine says**

This was a very informative book. It was very interesting, and was backed up with scripture references. It gave me a better understanding of the kingdom of god from a natural and spiritual aspect.

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### **Charles R. Biggs says**

#### **Good Biblical Teaching on Kingdom**

A very good book on the Kingdom of God. Particularly good were the essays by Nichols and Bray. I very much appreciated the way the essays defined precisely the distinction between the Church and the Kingdom, updated me on recent scholarship (especially since late 90s when I was at seminary), and the fine overview of kingdom and eschatological thinking in church history. I recommend this to pastors, seminarians, and Christians interested in digging deeper on this topic. I purchased this book to help me with introductory matters for my next sermon series on the Gospel of Mark.

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### **Daniel says**

Some interesting essays on the concept of the kingdom of God, though I was not in agreement with a fair lot of what was said. I have noticed that many people, especially the hard-core Biblical Theology types, have only two categories concerning the saving kingdom of God: the inauguration of the kingdom at Christ's first coming, and the consummation of the kingdom at his return. They are missing a third-category: the expansion of the kingdom. By not paying enough attention to the expansion of the kingdom, they end up interpreting passages (such as Psalms 22, 72, and Isaiah 65) that obviously refer to the New Testament age as actually referring to heaven. It is a shame that there was no postmillennial contributor to this volume, as (mild) premillennialism was advocated by Gregg R. Allison and a-millennialism was supported by Gerard Bray. Anthony Bradley's essay on "The Kingdom Today" was pretty good, though it was more Kuyperian than I expected. Bruce Waltke's essays on the kingdom of God in the Old Testament were also interesting,

but contained various oddities that we could have done without.

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## Jeffrey says

In *The Kingdom of God*, essays by a range of theologians provides insight into the historical, biblical and theological understandings of the kingdom of God (of heaven) with attention to the history of interpretation and ethical implications of these understandings.

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## Emmanuel Boston says

Morgan and Peterson's newest installment in the Theology in Community series is a comprehensive look at one of the most prominent themes in the Bible—much of the Old Testament is in the context of kings and kingdoms, but God is the King of kings, and when God the Son comes into the 'domain of Satan,' his chief message is the proclamation of the Kingdom of God (heaven). This book is highly accessible: technical language is kept to a minimum and explained whenever used. The perspectives of the authors are varying in context (OT, NT, Ethics, etc.) but unified in overall vision of what the Kingdom of God is and how it necessarily impacts the daily lives of all people (not just believers).

(Series Thesis: Theology in community aims to promote clear thinking on and godly responses to historic and contemporary theological issues....Theology in community also seeks to demonstrate that theology should be done in teams.)

Book thesis: *It seeks to capture a fuller understanding of the kingdom of God than any one of the five conceptions above [classic liberal, social gospel, liberation theology, reconstructionist, postmodernist]. How? By adopting historical, biblical, theological, and ethical perspectives, it attempts to move closer to a comprehensive exposition of the kingdom.*

Does the book fit in with the series thesis? Undoubtedly. Does it accomplish its own thesis? Most certainly. After reading this book, I have a foundational understanding of the kingdom of God and its vast-reaching implications. I can look at each of the five views surveyed in the introduction (named briefly above) , and explain to you what I think they have right and why as well as what I think they have wrong and why. This book is more than just a critique of other views of the kingdom, however—in fact, criticism is nearly absent. The authors are much more focused on constructive argumentation—building from the ground of Scripture to a theology for the church today. This demeanor is encouraging for learning theology as well as living out the kingdom ethic espoused by the book. As with all books in this series, there is an historical overview of the issue at hand, a great deal of writing given to Scripture itself in both Old and New Testament, discussion of related theological issues (herein miracles and eschatology), and how this informs our life in the church.

Compared to other books in the Theology in Community series, a bit more practical  
Compared to other books on "Kingdom," more comprehensive, less polemic

The possible improvements are few:

1. There are some moments that are a bit redundant, but the little that was present is remarkable for the number of contributors; on the other hand, if there was no repetition, one might wonder if the contributors were even aware of the full presentation given by the book as a whole. The amount in this volume then is

easily forgivable.

2. Each of the authors uses a different way of outlining/heading each section. This would probably not matter at all to many, but as I outline books as I read them, it gave me pause as I considered how to outline each chapter.

If formatting and slight repetition are the only areas for improvement, it is needless to say that I can recommend this book without reserved to any thoughtful Christian, and more specifically to Pastors, Parachurch Leaders, Government leaders, and anyone given to a particular eschatological or cultural position. However, allow me to end my review with particular examples of things I have learned or developed because of this book:

The Kingdom of God is a robust theme throughout all of Scripture, but it is not only an esoteric theological topic, but it has great implications on my life today. First, Jesus is King and will bring his kingdom fully upon the earth in the end; I can trust and rest assured in his loving and wise rule. Second, I have great responsibility as a member in God's kingdom: I must behave with kingdom ethic toward others, seeking to foster the image of God in them by the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom and by creating contexts in which they flourish as humans in the image of God; the external kingdom of God (peace on earth and recognition of God's reign) expands everywhere the internal kingdom of God grows (in righteousness, justice, faith, love). Third, although the Kingdom is both already, and not yet, Christ the King exists in eternity and is to him that I pray and ask even for proleptic blessings of the kingdom—he is mighty and able to answer my requests, though he may not for the sake of his Kingdom (for he will not forsake his kingdom).

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### **Jesse Jost says**

Excellent and thorough overview of the doctrine of, and the issues related to, the Kingdom of God. Very stirring and thought provoking. Recommended.

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