

Understand the Kingdom of Heaven in a Way You Never Dreamed

Bible scholar N.T Wright says many of today's believers misunderstand Jesus when he speaks about inheriting the kingdom of heaven in the Gospels. Wright wants to set the record straight from a first-century point of view.

"In the modern world, many people think that when Jesus talks about the kingdom of heaven, it is a simple way of going to heaven when you die. It really isn't," Wright told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "That's not what the phrase meant at the time or what it means in the Bible.

"Other people have thought that the kingdom of God is basically the church; the church is a kingdom, and that's where God is King. And that's simply not what Jesus meant by it, either. And then, in recent years, some scholars and some simple folk have been taught that the kingdom of God meant that the world is going to come to an end, and we're all going to be in a totally different dimension entirely. And that's wrong as well.

"When we study the New Testament in its world, which is its Jewish world, as well as its Greek and Roman world, we discover the kingdom of God is a way of talking about God becoming King. And that means that God is going to take charge of the world in a whole new way. When Jesus is saying the kingdom of God is at hand, that's what He means. This is the time for those prophecies to be fulfilled, and for God to come in person and take over running the world in a whole new way.

"The problem comes if you think God is a big, angry bully in the sky who just wants to beat everybody up. No, God is the

God we see revealed in Jesus, who is gentle and humble of heart, and who is going to judge the world, to call the world to account. His way of doing that is the way we see in his life and in particular his death on the cross."

For more of N.T. Wright's insights, listen to this podcast.