What Sort of Kingdom

I've often used to wonder why the term kingdom (king's domain) is used even when the reigning monarch is female; why not adopt the word Queendom? Of course, the answer to that is unsurprising; the term harks back to unenlightened times, throughout our history, of male domination of 'national leadership'! It would, so it seem, to be 'impractical to change the name of a country every time a male monarch is succeeded by a female'… So we've settled, I guess, on the word kingdom as being 'gender neutral'…

But we no longer need to 'debate the issue, as the UK is currently, and literally, a Kingdom, during the reign of (our earthly King) Charles lll.

Which leads me into the theme - what sort of 'kingdom' does the Bible speak of? After all, we can discover that the Old Testament doesn't include the phrase "kingdom of God" as such, but does speak of God's 'reign' as a ruler of all. ` That said, the specific phrase "The Kingdom of the Lord" is found in the Book of Chronicles, and the Hebrew word for "kingdom" (malkuth) appears 91 times, and conveys the idea of rule, dominion, and 'kingship'.

However, the idea of God's Kingdom becomes a major theme in the New Testament:

- The term "kingdom of God" appears 68 times
- the related phrase "kingdom of heaven" (in St Matthew's Gospel) appears 32 times
- And the word "kingdom" is used no less than 162 times in total.

We've come to understand, that "the kingdom of God" is a spiritual 'domain' over which God reigns supreme. And John 18:36, Jesus says this: he tells Pilate "***My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is not from this place***".

In other words, earthly rulers and worldly norms have no authority; nor can they be 'enforced' by earthly forces!

It occurs to me that humankind has to reconcile two things: we do, indeed, live within ‘earthly kingdoms’ ruled by fallible people; but earthly kingdoms ‘reside’ within the whole of God’s (spiritual) Kingdom, whether or not not this is perceived by all!

Thought for the Week: We’re living in a ‘world-full’ off uncertainty and chaos, in which nobody has any real idea what’s going to happen next. Which is why we must turn to what we can discern about God’s Kingdom as part of our Advent reflection. His Kingdom is founded on unconditional love, care and ‘grace’.

Indeed, these themes (for Advent) are clear whenever we choose to celebrate them - when we light the candles in the Advent Ring, for example…

- righteousness
- peace
- hope
- joy.

These can be perceived through belief and faith in the right Person, and submitting to His way of doing things, 24/7…

…extremely challenging in such difficult times.

Father, just as You sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus, help us to clear the path in our hearts, too. Show us the distractions that prevent our worship this Advent. As we celebrate the first coming - help us to live our lives by constantly seeking Your presence. May we offer to You, today, righteous lives, and give us today the strength to not simply ask for forgiveness, but to change our ways.