

Chapter 5

KINGDOM OF GOD 1 ***JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD***

SECTION 1: THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

- I. What is the Kingdom of God?
 - A. The Kingdom of God is both an authority (reign) and a place (realm). It is the kingly rule of God over all persons, places, and things. The scriptures tell us that God is the King of Kings and that He rules over everything in heaven and in earth. A kingdom must have a King, subjects and an area of rule. (1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 145:11-13)
 - B. The Kingdom of God is the extension of God's eternal, immortal, and invisible rule in the heart and life of every true believer in the church. Because God is spirit, it is many times harder to see and to explain the Kingdom of God because it is not visible with natural eye. (1 Timothy 1:17)
 - C. The Kingdom of God always has been and always will be in existence. It is an everlasting Kingdom. (Daniel 4:3)
 - D. The Kingdom of God is sovereign and has rule over all nations and kingdoms. Because God is King of Kings He has the authority to rule. (Psalm 103:19)
 - E. The Kingdom of God is progressive and in each age there is a further revelation of its existence, power, and rule. It is regarded as both a present possession and a future inheritance. The Kingdom of God is something that believers should be experiencing now as well as something to look forward to in the future. (Hebrews 11:13)
 - F. Additional scriptures: Daniel 7:27, Psalm 45:6, Hebrews 1:8-9, Hebrews 12:28
- II. Is there a difference between the Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven, Kingdom of the Lord, etc.? There is one Kingdom, but different terms may be used for that Kingdom.
 - A. Matthew uses the terms Kingdom of God and Kingdom of heaven in one statement showing that he saw them as interchangeable. He most often uses the term Kingdom of Heaven because he is writing to the Jews. "Heaven" in these instances is a circumlocution a way of referring to God without using his name, which Jews and Jewish Christians believed too holy to pronounce or even write. Thus, "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Kingdom of God" are identical in meaning. (From Harper Bible Dictionary) (Matthew 19:23-24)
 - B. The Kingdom of God, The Kingdom of Heaven, The Kingdom of the Lord, as well as other New Testament designations denote one and the same reign. It is the dynamic reign of the Almighty God in and through His people in history. (Matthew 4:23; Matthew 13:41; Matthew 13:43; 2 Timothy 4:18; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 1:13)

III. Any Kingdom will have a King, but it must also have subjects; those that the King will have the rule over. Who can be the subjects of the Kingdom of God?

A. In the Old Testament we find that it was those who choose to obey the Lord.

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Exodus 19:5-6a)

1. Although God was a faithful King to the nation of Israel, there came a time when that nation rejected God as their King and asked for a king like all the other nations. (1 Samuel 8:6-9)
2. God had even foretold that the people of Israel would ask for a king like all the other nations and so God had given careful instructions and cautions to the Nation of Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 1 Samuel 8:10-22)
 - a. The instructions that were given by God to govern the choosing of a king were that the king was to be chosen by God himself. The king must be an Israelite. The king chosen must be careful not to follow the world in taking many wives or in accumulating large amounts money. Finally the King was to make a copy of the law for himself and then to read it all the days of his life.
 - b. The cautions God gave to the Nation of Israel of what would happen when they chose a king other than God was that the king would take or require from the people those things that should be given to God. They would take their allegiance. Their service and their time would be required of the king. And the king would even take their tithe. In other words, he would take their best for himself. More than that the king would take from or require of the people those things that belong to God.
3. The nation of Israel had reasons for their rejection of God as King. They saw the corruption of Samuel's sons and knew that they would not lead them as a nation to follow in the ways of God. They looked on the world and then had the desire to conform to the pattern of others; the world system. They also felt that they needed a military commander to fight their battles for them.
4. Many of those same reasons might be why we reject God as King in our lives today. We see corruption and weakness in the leadership of the church and feel we cannot always trust their strength in leading us in God's ways. And, of course, there always seems to be the desire to be like the world. There is a battle between two kingdoms going on and those of the Kingdom of God need help and direction to learn how to fight against Satan's kingdom.

B. In the New Testament we see that those that have experienced the new birth through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can enter or be part of the Kingdom of God. In the teaching from the Sermon on the Mount, we understand that those that are "poor in spirit" have

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access to the Kingdom of God. To be “poor in spirit” means to be empty of any sense of spiritual pride or self-sufficiency. It is the opposite of self-righteousness. Kingdom relationships are built on the basis of authority and submission, command and obedience.

Those that submit to God’s authority and obey His word have the privilege of being part of the Kingdom of God. God says that as we move with God’s purpose for our lives we are fit to be part of the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 5:3; Matthew 7:21; Luke 9:62; John 3:1-8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

C. Additional scriptures: Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 15:50; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-5

IV. How are we to view the Kingdom of God in the present age? In both the Old and New Testament the concept behind “the kingdom” is divine reign. The Kingdom of God is now. There is sometimes a tendency to put the Kingdom of God off to some future time. As we relate to the Kingdom now we can also anticipate and have a guarantee of the future. (Revelation 1:6)

A. We are sometimes constrained in our view of the Kingdom of God by our limited thinking of church and our view of church. We may think only about our local church with its buildings and programs. The Kingdom of God is so much bigger than we normally think. The Kingdom of God in our individual lives is all that we will allow God to rule over. It is all that He is King and Lord of in our lives. (Matthew 7:21)

B. We are admonished by Jesus in Matthew 6 to seek first the Kingdom of God; to put it first in our lives. The scriptures tell us that what we put first in our lives is really what rules our lives. For us to truly experience the Kingdom of God, we must put God first and let Him rule in our lives. (Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:22-34)

SECTION 2: JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I. How was the Kingdom of God first announced in the New Testament?

A. John the Baptist was the first to announce the Kingdom of God in the New Testament. He did not tell when the events of the Kingdom of God would take place. His message was simple: *“The Kingdom of God is at hand”* - God is preparing to visit His people. (Matthew 3:1-2)

B. The people had an understanding of the meaning of that announcement because of the prophecies and foretelling of the Old Testament. It was part of the history of the Jewish people. John the Baptist knew about it and certainly his cousin, Jesus knew what the Kingdom of God was about.

II. How did Jesus Himself begin to introduce the Kingdom of God?

A. Like John the Baptist He began His earthly ministry by preaching the Kingdom of God. But there was an important difference between the ministry of John and the ministry of Jesus. John did not know when the “visitation” of God in His Kingdom would begin. Jesus said, “The time has come.” It has already started. (Matthew 4:17, 23; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43)

Additional scriptures: Matthew 13:16; Luke 4:17-21, Luke 10:23

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1. The Jews had an expectation of what the Kingdom of God would be like and how it would be established. They expected that the Messiah would set up an earthly kingdom and destroy evil. In that way they expected the expulsion of the Romans and their rule in their lives. They fully expected a Jewish king and court. And they certainly expected world-wide dominion.
2. Paul presented his concept of the Kingdom of God in his letter to the Romans. Perhaps one of the reasons he shared the thoughts of "righteousness, peace, and joy" was because the term Kingdom of God (Heaven) was a Jewish expression and perhaps unfamiliar and perhaps even misleading to the Gentiles.

After all the kingdom of God is not a matter of getting the food and drink one likes, but instead it is righteousness (that state which makes a person acceptable to God) and heart peace and joy in the Holy spirit. He who serves Christ in this way is acceptable and pleasing to God and is approved by men. (Romans 14:17-18 Amplified)

- a. Righteousness, which is right standing with God, involves confession of sin, repentance, and then living God's ways.
 - b. Peace concerns our relationships with those around us and with God. To have peace we must be willing to forgive others (and ourselves), to not gossip, to not be judgmental and to be humble in our attitude to others.
 - c. The secret of joy is to have the presence of God in our lives. (*Psalm 16:11*)
3. John the Baptist questioned Jesus by asking; "*Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else.*" Jesus sent his answer back to John the Baptist saying, "*What have you seen heard...?' The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.*" Jesus also reaffirmed to the Pharisees that the kingdom had indeed come unexpectedly in His person. (Luke 4:14-17, Luke 7:18-19; Luke 7:22-23; Luke 17:20-21)

III. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy about the coming King of Israel when He made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Jesus is truly the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:13-15; John 12:15)

IV. How does the ministry of Jesus in the New Testament relate to the Kingdom of God?

- A. Because Jesus is the King, His ministry is Kingdom ministry. The ministry of Jesus is clearly described in scripture. In Nazareth, He read the prophecy of Isaiah about the Messiah-King, and claimed this ministry as His own. To the messengers sent by John the Baptist, Jesus described His ministry in powerful terms of physical and spiritual deliverance. (Luke 4:17-21; Matthew 11:4-5)
- B. When the Kingdom of God came the Jewish people expected it to bring the evil age to an end, but it in fact invaded rather than bringing the evil age to an end. When Jesus was casting out demons, He was doing the work of the Kingdom. It is important to deal with demons because when they are in control, they work against God's authority. The ability

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to cast them out demonstrates the power of the Kingdom of God over the kingdom of Satan. (Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:2-22)

- V. What are the three areas in the life of Jesus that reveal his deep concern for the Kingdom of God?
- A. One of His greatest sermons, the Sermon on the Mount, was directed to the citizens of the Kingdom of God.
 - B. Jesus told his parables to give us pictures of the Kingdom of God that we can begin to understand.
 - C. The miracles Jesus performed were done to show the nature and to demonstrate the power of the Kingdom of God.

- VI. Why is the Sermon on the Mount important in the study of the Kingdom of God?

The purpose of the Sermon on the Mount was to declare the Laws of the Kingdom of God. The Sermon on the Mount is the same thing to the New Testament as the Ten Commandments and the Law are to the Old Testament. The word "Kingdom" is used eight times by Matthew as he records the words of Jesus in this sermon. Jesus showed His Kingly authority at least six times in the Sermon on the Mount by declaring: *"You have heard that it was said; But I tell you..."* (Matthew 5:21-22; Matthew 5:27-28; Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 5: 33-34; Matthew 5: 38-39; Matthew 5: 43-44)

- VII. Why are the parables of Jesus so important in the study of the Kingdom of God?

Parables are earthly stories that have heavenly meaning. Almost all of the parables of Jesus were told to reveal some truth about the Kingdom of God.

Additional Scriptures: Matthew 13, Matthew 21:33-45, Matthew 22:1-14, Mark 12:1-12, Luke 14:15-24, Luke 20:9-18

- VIII. Why are the miracles of Jesus important in the study of the Kingdom of God?

The miracles performed by Jesus show us the nature of His Kingdom. By His miracles, Jesus revealed His power over nature, demonstrated His ability to supply man's need, and openly defeated Satan's Kingdom. (John 10:37-38)

Additional scriptures: Matthew 8:23-27, Matthew 14:15-21, 22-33; Mark 6:34-44, 45-52, Mark 8:23-27, Luke 5:1-11, Luke 8:22-25, Luke 9:12-17, John 2:1-11, John 5:1-11, John 6:5-14, 15-21, John 21:1-23

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

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1. Discuss some of the ways you can see the Kingdom of God being worked out in individual lives. What are some of the difficulties we might face?

2. Like the Jews in Jesus' day we sometimes may have a hard time recognizing the Kingdom of God. How could Paul's concept as stated in Romans 14:17-18 help us with our understanding?