

The Kingdom of Heaven

Introduction

- A. Use of word "kingdom" is extremely common in the Bible.
- B. Yet it is seriously misunderstood in our time. It merits diligent study.

I. Concept of the Kingdom

- A. Democracy vs Monarchy
 - 1. Democracy - "Government by the people; government in which the supreme power is retained by the people and exercised either directly or indirectly through a system of representation." - Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.
 - 2. Monarchy - "Government in which a single person is sovereign." Ibid
- B. "The kingdom of God is: a) the sphere of God's rule, ... b) the sphere in which at any given time, His rule is acknowledged." - W.E. Vine Can include:
 - 1. God's rule in nature - Ps 145:10-13
 - 2. God's moral and providential rule in human affairs - Dan 4:25
 - 3. The Rule of God in the hearts of those who voluntarily and willingly submit to Him
- C. Our familiarity with and preference for political democracy may make it difficult for us to accept the idea of a monarchy
 - 1. Politically, democracy is preferable because there is no ideal king.
 - 2. Spiritually, monarchy is our only hope with the infallible king whom God has provided. "The way of man is not in himself..." (Jer 10:23)
- D. Political scientists observe that there are four necessary elements in a kingdom:
 - 1. A King
 - 2. Citizens
 - 3. A Law
 - 4. A Territory

II. Early Theocratic Kingdom of Israel

- A. Constituted at Sinai - Exodus 19:6
- B. God was supreme commander of Joshua's army - Josh 5:13-15
- C. God was reigning as King in the time of Judges.
 - 1. Gideon rejected crown on this basis (Judges 8:22,23)
 - 2. Demand for a human king was a rejection of God (I Sam 8:7)
- D. God had made plans for Israel to have a human king eventually and had given instructions regarding him. Read Deut 17:14-20
 - 1. Who was to choose the king?
 - 2. What was the king to read all of his life?
 - 3. Why was he to do this reading?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

III. Later Kingdom of Israel

- A. Saul chosen to be king.
 - 1. Who selected Saul? (I Sam 9:17) How was he made king? (10:1)
 - 2. Why was Saul later rejected as king? (I Sam 13:13,14)
- B. David chosen as king.
 - 1. Who selected David? (I Sam 16:12) How was he designated? (Ps 89:20)
 - 2. Why was David selected? (I Sam 13:14)
- C. Solomon chosen as king.
 - 1. Who chose Solomon? (I Chron 28:5) How was he designated? (I Kings 1:39)
- D. Days of David and Solomon were golden age of Political kingdom of Israel.

IV. Imperfections of Israel as kingdom of God

- A. Kings were poor representatives of God even the best of them; Many were bad.
- B. Nation included many who did not know God and others who were in rebellion.
- C. They broke God's covenant. (Jer 31:32)
- D. They were driven from their territory.

Conclusion: The Old Testament kingdom was a shadow of the heavenly kingdom -- like other Old Testament Shadows.

The Kingdom of Heaven - Old Testament Promises

Introduction

- A. God had a kingdom on the Old Testament Period. It was imperfect as seen in Lesson 1.
- B. The Old Testament kingdom prepared men for a superior kingdom which was promised.

I. Promises

- A. To the Patriarchs
 - 1. Who were to come from Abraham? (Gen 17:6)
 - 2. How long would the sceptre remain with Judah? (Gen 49:10)
- B. To David
 - 1. II Sam 7:12-16) - These words applied in part to Solomon, David's successor. What part could not refer to him? (see I Kings 9:4-7; 11:41-43 about conditions for Solomon)
 - 2. To whom does Psalm 45:1-7 apply?
 - 3. Psalm 110 tells of other offices the king would fill. What are they?
- C. Through Daniel
 - 1. What four political kingdoms are prophesied in Daniel 2:36-43?
 - 2. What does Daniel predict would happen in the days of the fourth kings (Dan 2:44-45)
 - 3. Name two outstanding characteristics of this kingdom.
 - 4. Read Daniel 7:13,14
 - a. Where does the event of the vision take place?
 - b. What was given to the one "like unto a son of man"?
 - c. What was the extent of it?
 - d. How permanent was it to be?
- D. Other Prophecies
 - 1. Isaiah 9:6,7
 - 2. Isaiah 32:1 (Note 3 major characteristics: *Eternity, Universality, Righteousness*)
 - 3. Jeremiah 23:5
 - 4. Micah 5:2-4
 - 5. Zechariah 9:9,10

Note: It is little wonder that the Jews, oppressed by Rome, gained great hope from these promises that a Messiah (Anointed one - "Christ") would come and establish God's kingdom among men.

II. Varying Expectations Regarding the Nature of the Kingdom to be Established.

- A. Some expected an economic kingdom, the major feature of which would be material prosperity. Such passages as Amos 9:13 were looked to as support.
- B. Some expected an "Eschatological Kingdom" - one involving great signs in heaven and dramatic heavenly involvement in human affairs. They expected the Messiah to appear miraculously in the temple, depending, perhaps, on Malachi 3:1.
- C. Some expected a political kingdom to be advanced by military might which would overpower the Roman armies and establish Jewish rule over all the world. This was the most popular expectation, based on such passages as Psalm 2:6-9.
- D. All anticipated a "kingdom of righteousness," though this was always secondary and incidental, involving a peculiarly Jewish brand of righteousness.

Conclusion. These expectations must be understood to appreciate much of the teaching and action of Jesus and the reactions of those to whom he came. With this in mind we will begin a study of the Gospels (Matthew in particular) noting the development of the ideal of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of Heaven - Birth of a King

Introduction

- A. Matthew is, in a special way, the "Gospel of the Kingdom". The words, "kingdom of heaven" appear 33 times and "kingdom of God" four times. Jesus is called the "Son of David" nine times compared to six in all the other gospels combined.
- B. Matthew will serve as the basis of our study, with frequent reference to other books of the New Testament.

I. Genealogy of the King - Matt 1:1-17

1. What two ancestors of Jesus are featured in verse 1?
2. What promise to David, referred to in Lesson 2, is fulfilled in Jesus?
3. What do all the ancestors of Jesus from verses 6-11 have in common?
4. Why would the lineage of Jesus be traced through Joseph?
5. Does Matthew call Joseph the father of Jesus?

II. The Annunciations

- A. To Mary (Luke 1:26-38)
 1. Who was to be the Father of Mary's Son? (vs 32)
 2. What was promised to Him? (vs 32)
 3. Describe His kingdom.
- B. To Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25)
 1. How did the angel address Joseph? (vs 20)
 2. What is the meaning of the word "Immanuel"?
 3. What is the significance of this in establishment of the Kingdom of God among men?

III. Birth of the King (Luke 2:1-39)

1. How did Jesus come to be born in Bethlehem?
2. What did the angels call Bethlehem in vs 10?
3. Who did they say the baby was? (vs 10)
4. What was revealed to Simeon? (vs 26)

IV. Visitors to the King (Matthew 2:1-23)

1. What question did the wise men ask in Jerusalem?
2. Why was Herod troubled?
3. How did the chief priests and scribes know where to send the wise men?
4. What degree of honor did the wise men give to Jesus?
5. What gifts did they give to Him?
6. Why did Herod attempt to kill Jesus?

Thought Questions

1. Which was more important if Jesus were to be King of the "Kingdom of God": that he be the son of David or the Son of God? Which did the Jews consider more important? (See Matt 22:41-46.) Why is so much emphasis put on the fact that He was the Son of David?
2. From the angel's announcement to Mary, it is clear that Jesus was born to be King. Yet, what were the economic, social and material conditions surrounding His birth?

Could God have caused it to be otherwise?

What do these facts suggest about the Kingdom of Heaven?

3. What likenesses are evident between Jesus and David at this point in our study?

The Kingdom of Heaven - Early Preparation

Introduction. We have seen that different Jews expected different features to dominate in the expected Kingdom of God. Following are some of the types expected:

1. A Kingdom of great material prosperity, especially for the Jews.
2. A Kingdom of dramatic Heavenly intrusion into affairs of men, characterized by a sudden miraculous appearance of the Messiah and signs in Heaven.
3. A Political Kingdom, spread by marching armies and establishing the reign of the Jews over the whole world.

The people were ready and eager for such a kingdom as this.

I. John the Baptist - Matthew 3:1-12

1. What was the message of John?
What kind of kingdom does this suggest?
2. What rite was joined with repentance to prepare men for the kingdom?
3. Luke 7:30 says that the Pharisees and Lawyers were not baptized by John. What argument did John expect them to make to justify their disobedience?
4. What did John predict for unfruitful trees (even those claiming descent from Abraham)?
5. What does this suggest about the make-up of the new kingdom?

II. Baptism of Jesus - Matthew 3:13-17

1. Why was John reluctant to baptize Jesus?
2. What reason did Jesus give for proceeding?
If Jesus was to be King of God's perfect Kingdom, what was absolutely essential for Him?
3. What two evidences of divine favor were granted Jesus at His baptism?
 - a.
 - b.

III. Temptations of Jesus - Matthew 4:1-11

1. Who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted?
2. What was his condition at the end of His 40 day fast?
3. What fears and anxieties with reference to the Kingdom might such a condition arouse in Him?
4. If the Kingdom were to be one of prosperity, what would turning stones into bread prove about His suitability to be king?
5. As He sought scriptural light for such a problem He remembered Israel's hunger and the lesson God taught them in the wilderness. What was the lesson? (Deut 8:3)
6. In the first temptation Jesus conquered by trusting in God. What did the second effort of Satan tempt Him to do?
7. What might have been accomplished in impressing those who expected the kingdom to be inaugurated by a sudden appearance of the Messiah "on the roof of the temple"?
8. On what ground did Jesus refuse this temptation?
10. Have men in the past obtained such things by submission to Satan?
11. If Jesus had bowed to Satan and obtained a kingdom, would it have been the Kingdom of God?

Thought Questions. Some today reason that "the end justifies the means". What end was Jesus to achieve in the world? (Remember Luke 1:32,33.)

What route did God intend for Him to take in accomplishing this?

If Jesus had compromised God's method anywhere along the way, would it not have constituted bowing to Satan?

If we adopt any other methods in our own efforts to advance the kingdom of God, what are we doing?

If the "Kingdom of God" is the "Rule of God," how did Jesus prove His right to be King?

The Kingdom of Heaven - Early Preaching of the Kingdom

Introduction. Between the temptations and this lesson, Jesus gained several disciples, travelled to Cana in Galilee where he performed His first miracle, then to Jerusalem for the Passover. In Jerusalem He cleansed the temple and worked miracles.

I. Interview with Nicodemus - John 3:1-15

1. On what basis did the Pharisees who came to John expect to be citizens of the Kingdom? (see Matt 3:9)
2. Assuming that this was the view of Nicodemus, why would Jesus make the seemingly abrupt statement of verse 3?
3. What kind of birth still dominated the thinking of Nicodemus in vs 4?
4. What kind of birth did Jesus say was necessary to enter the Kingdom of God?
5. What part of man is most affected by this new birth?
Could one be born into the old kingdom of Israel without any conversion of his spirit?
What does this tell us about the new Kingdom?
6. Who did Jesus say had descended from heaven? If Nicodemus remembered Daniel 7:13-14, what would he conclude from Jesus' use of this expression?

II. Rejection in Nazareth - Luke 4:14-30

1. Where did Jesus go from Judea? (Matt 4:12)
2. What did Jesus customarily do on the Sabbath? (Luke 4:16)
3. When he returned to His hometown on this occasion, what did He do in the service?
4. Using Isaiah 61 as a text, to whom did He say the Lord had sent Him?

Were these the kind of people who would normally attract the attention of a prospective king? (Note: This passage was considered Messianic by the Jews.)

5. What did Jesus' townspeople try to do to Him?
6. How well was Jesus succeeding at this point in gaining support as a King?

III. Galilean Ministry - Matthew 4:13-25

1. Where did Jesus go to live after leaving Nazareth?
What advantages would this city give Him?
2. Whom did Isaiah prophesy would see a great light?

Locate this area on a map. Is this where you would normally expect one to go to obtain David's throne? In a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia, learn what you can about Galilee.

Why do you think Jesus would spend so much time in Galilee?
3. What was Jesus preaching?
4. Name four men who were called to a closer association with Jesus
5. What was Jesus doing as He was going about Galilee?
6. Why would His message be called "the gospel of the kingdom"?
7. From what places were people coming to follow Him?

The Kingdom of Heaven - Citizens of the Kingdom

Introduction.

- According to Matt 4:23 and 9:35, how did Jesus spend His time in Galilee?
- The Sermon on the Mount seems to be a sample. It begins (Matt 5:3) and ends (Matt 7:21) with references to the kingdom and they intersperse it.
- Perhaps nowhere are better definitions of the kingdom than in 6:10 and 7:21.

I. Profile of the Kingdom Citizen - Matt 5:3-16

- What is the promise of the first and last beatitude?
Note: The beatitudes do not describe 8 different types of character, but they are different facets of one character-- in fact, they describe the King.
- If an individual lacks these qualities will he be interested in the Kingdom of Heaven as we have defined it? If he possess these, will he be disillusioned upon learning that "the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking" (Rom 14:17) and "is not of this world" (Jno 18:36)
- Whom does the kingdom citizen glorify with his good works?

II. Righteousness of the Kingdom Citizen - Matt 5:17-48

- Which does earthly government demand, right thinking or right action?
- Which did the scribes and Pharisees demand?
- How must the kingdom citizen compare with them in righteousness?
- Contrast Jesus' teaching with the current interpretations of the law:

<u>Scribes & Pharisees taught</u>	<u>Jesus taught:</u>
Avoid murder (5:21)	Avoid ...
Avoid adultery (5:27)	Avoid ...
Avoid perjury (5:33)	Avoid ...
Avoid excessive retaliation (5:38)	Avoid ...
Love only neighbor (5:43)	Love ...
- Summarizing, what was Jesus saying?
- Was Jesus saying that if the heart is right one does not need to be concerned about commandments? Which verse proves this?
- What is the kingdom's evaluation of one who breaks and teaches others to break even the least of the commandments?

III. Orientation of the Kingdom Citizen - Matt 6:1 - 7:12

- To whom does the kingdom citizen look for approval of his alms, prayers and fasting?
- Where does he lay up his treasures?
- What kind of eye must he have? How many kings does he recognize?
- With what is he concerned rather than with food, clothing and shelter (6:33)
- Are citizens to judge (condemn) one another? Does this mean they cannot help one another in overcoming faults?
- What benefits can the kingdom citizen expect (7:7-11)
What will he be seeking (Remember 6:33? Compare Luke 11:13)?
If his primary concern is temporal and material is he a true citizen?

IV. Threats to Kingdom Citizens - Matt 7:13 - 27

- Difficulty of the Way (7:13-14) Describe it:
- False Teachers (7:15-19)
 - What do false teachers appear to be?
 - How may they be identified? What is this?
- Misconceptions of Citizenship (7:20-27)
 - Who "shall enter the kingdom of heaven"?
 - On what two grounds will some expect to enter, only to be disappointed?
 - What word in vs 23 is the opposite of the "will of the Father"?
- What is essential for those who hear if they are to profit?

Conclusion: *What impression did Jesus make on those who heard Him?*

The Kingdom of Heaven - Correcting Misconceptions

Introduction.

1. Review the popular conceptions of the kingdom from Lessons 2 and 4.
2. Jesus met reflections of them in the temptations and later in His ministry.

I. The Question of John the Baptist - Matt 11:1-15

A. Three explanations of John's question:

1. Possibly John had come to doubt. He was languishing in prison and Jesus was helping others but doing nothing for him. Moses, David, Peter and all other great servants doubted on occasion. Difficult in view of Jno 1:32-33.
2. Possibly the disciples were sent for their sake: to bolster their faith. Yet, Jesus directed His message to John.
3. More likely John was impatient. He had raised excitement to peak. Jesus could have moved in and established His kingdom; yet, He did not. He did not even make a claim! John may have thought the question would force Jesus to declare His kingship.

B. The Answer of Jesus

1. What message did Jesus send John?
2. What high praise did He give him?
3. Was John in the Kingdom? Was anyone in it at this time?
4. How is it that the "least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John?"

C. Taking the Kingdom by Violence & Force - Matt 11:12,13

1. The kind of kingdom expected by the Jews could have been established quickly by using external force.
2. The true kingdom ("the rule of God") is only possible by convincing men - slowly.
3. Jesus considered any other method violent. It was true then, and is true now!

D. Sequel - Matt 12:14-28

1. How did Jesus differ from John?
2. Whom did the people think He might be?
3. What connection did Jesus make between His casting out demons and the kingdom?

II. Attempt to make Jesus King - John 6:1-66 (This was at the peak of His popularity.)

A. The Background and Effort

1. How many did Jesus feed? With what?
2. What conclusion did the people reach?
3. What did they try to do (vs 15)?
4. What was the reaction of Jesus?
5. If Jesus had cooperated, would the 5,000 have been following because they were ready to submit their lives to the rule of heaven?

B. Sequel - John 6:22-66

1. Why did Jesus say they were seeking Him?
2. What did He say they must do to work the works of God?
3. What was the result of this conversation (vs 66)?
4. What does this reveal about their attempt to make Him king the day before?

III. Question about the Kingdom - Luke 17:20,21

A. The Question - vs 20

1. What was their question?
2. Why do you think it was asked?
3. What kind of kingdom do you think they had in mind?

B. The Answer

1. What did Jesus say was not to be expected?
2. Where did Jesus say the kingdom is?
3. How does this fit our definition: "the Rule of God"?

C. An Unusual Pharisee (see Mark 12:28-34)

1. What did Jesus say to him in vs 34?
2. What do you see in his attitude that would cause Jesus to say this?

The Kingdom of Heaven - Parables of Growth

Introduction.

1. In Lesson 7 we say efforts of some to advance the kingdom by "violence".
2. Jesus spoke parables which depict proper growth of the kingdom.

I. Varying Reception - Parable of the Sower and Tares - Matt 13:1-30

A. Parable of Sower

1. In this parable the seed was _____; the soil was _____.
2. List four different results experienced by the sower:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
3. What determined the results?

B. Explanation of teaching in parables.

Note: By this time Jesus had revealed the nature of His kingdom. Some were hostile toward Him, closed-minded and seeking grounds to indict Him.. Others, while still not understanding fully, were eager to know more.

1. What was given to the disciples to know?
2. How did they come to know them?
3. What was in the parables that His enemies could use against Him?

C. Parable of the Tares - Matt 13:24-30; Explanation - Matt 13:36-40

1. What does the field represent?
2. Who are the good seeds?
3. According to this parable, with whom must they exist until the end of the world?
4. Which is gathered first, the wheat or the tares? Who gathers?
Does this fit the "rapture" concept?
5. Some say, "The kingdom cannot now be in existence because there is so much evil in the world." What light does this parable shed on this idea?

II. The Kingdom Will Grow - Parables of Mustard Seed and Leaven - Matt 13:31-33

- A. How does the mustard seed illustrate the growth of the kingdom?
- B. How does leaven spread its influence?
Does this better describe the work of John the Baptist or of Jesus?

III. Candidates for Kingdom Growth

- A. Parable of Hidden Treasure - Matt 13:44
 1. Was the buyer seeking treasure?
 2. What does this suggest about some who find the kingdom?
- B. Pearl of Great Price - Matt 13:45-46
 1. Was the buyer seeking what he found?
 2. What kind of person does this describe?
- C. In both, what had to be given up to obtain the kingdom?

IV. Make-up of Visible Kingdom - Matt 13:45-46

- A. How is the kingdom like a dragnet or fish net?
- B. Should we be surprised to find unfaithful and disloyal people among those who claim to be citizens? May we expect hypocrites?

V. Source of Power in kingdom Growth - Mark 4:26-29

- A. Sower
 1. Who does the sower here represent?
 2. What does he know about how the seed grows?
 3. What is his responsibility?
- B. The Plant
 1. Where does the life of the plant originate?
 2. What is the order of plant development?
- C. What are some practical lessons you see in the parable?

The Kingdom of Heaven - Greatness in the Kingdom

Introduction.

1. Previous lessons have shown difficulty Jesus had in correcting misconceptions.
2. No difficulty was greater than retraining the ambitions of the disciples.
3. The problem still remains. When one comes to understand and desire true greatness, his place in the kingdom is assured.

I. Mere citizenship Assures Greatness Compared with the World - Matt 11:11

- A. Comparison with John the Baptist.
 1. What is said of John?
 2. Who is greater than he?
- B. Application: Least in the kingdom is greater than anyone outside the kingdom.
 1. How did this affect the apostles before their judges (Acts 4:13)?
 2. How will this affect our attitude toward fellow-citizens? (see Ps 15:4)

II. Matthew 18:1-5 Greatness Depends:

- A. Not on Assertiveness
 1. What question did the disciples ask?
 2. What do you think they had in mind?
- B. But on *Humility!*
 1. Whom did Jesus use as an object lesson?
 2. What quality did He emphasize?
 3. How would this relate to the "rule of God"?

III. Matthew 19:13-22 Greatness Depends:

- A. Not on Assets,
 1. From disciples viewpoint, what could children do for the kingdom?
 2. What assets did the young man of verses 16-22 have?
 3. Which did Jesus cite as possessing the qualities of a kingdom citizen?
- B. But on *Total Commitment!*
 1. What did Jesus demand of the young man? Why?
 2. What other verses already studied suggest the same necessity?
 3. At what point would you consider kingdom citizenship too costly?

IV. Matthew 20:1-16 Greatness Depends:

- A. Not on length of service,
- B. But on *Readiness* to accept the call when heard.

V. Matthew 20:20-28 Greatness Depends:

- A. Not on appointment to a position,
 1. What did the mother of James and John request?
 2. How did the other apostles react?
 3. Whom do the Gentiles consider greatest?
- B. But on *Service!*
 1. Is a man greater in the kingdom the day after he is appointed an elder than he was the day before?
 2. From Matthew 23:6-12, what titles are permissible in the kingdom?
How do we sometimes violate this, even among churches of Christ?
 3. Are there any positions of authority over others in the kingdom?
Does this make one greater?

Conclusion:

- A. Greatness depends on one's relationship to the King.
 1. True in earthly kingdoms: closest relatives, friends, and those who think like the King.
 2. Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven is the one most like the King in character.
- B. Summarizing: Greatness in the Kingdom requires: 1) Humility, 2) Commitment, 3) Readiness when called, and 4) Service.
- C. What does Matthew 5:19 add?

The Kingdom of Heaven - Later Parables of the Kingdom

I. Parable of the Two Sons - Matthew 21:23-32

1. With whom was Jesus conversing when He spoke this parable?
2. How would these fit the description of the son who said he would do his father's will but did not?
3. From the context, who would be represented by the son who rejected the Father's instruction but later obeyed?
4. What is the message here concerning the make-up of the kingdom?

II. Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (Vine-growers) - Matthew 21:33-46

1. What does the vineyard represent?
2. Considering the whole context, who are the husbandmen (vine-growers)?
3. Who would be the servants who were sent for the fruit? (See Acts 7:52)
4. Who would the Son be?
5. What did Jesus say would happen to the kingdom of God (vs 43)?

III. Parable of the Wedding Feast - Matthew 22:1-14

1. In what way were the Jews like those first invited to the feast?
2. What did Jesus say would happen to them?
When did this actually occur?
3. Who were invited when those originally invited refused to come?
Whom would this represent?
4. Compare this with a statement Jesus made concerning a Gentile centurion in Matthew 8:10-12.
What does this tell us about the claim of some that the Jews still have some special claim to the kingdom?
5. What message do you see for us in the experience of the man without a wedding garment?

Note: Many scholars state that wedding garments were actually provided by the host at such a feast. What is the garment which we must have? (See Gal 3:27 and Rev 19:8-9.)

IV. Parable of the Ten Virgins - Matthew 25:1-13

1. When will the kingdom be like ten virgins (See preceding verses)?
2. According to verse 5, what did the bridegroom do?
3. What was the fault of the foolish virgins?
4. With whom would they be compared in the previous parable?
5. What was the fate of the foolish virgins?
6. What is the message for us?

V. Parable of the Talents - Matthew 25:14-30

1. What was a talent?
What does a talent represent in this parable (Do not overlook verse 15)?
2. How did the reward of the man who doubled his two talents compare with that of the man who doubled his five?
3. What was the fault of the one-talent man?
4. What are some lessons for us in this parable?

Note: In three of these parables, the hero is gone or goes away. In a similar parable in Luke 19:12, for what purpose does He go away? Compare with Daniel 7:13,14. These parables were spoken the last week of Christ's life.

The Kingdom of Heaven - The Kingdom Established

Introduction

1. From the time of Eve's sin until Christ's death, preparation was being made for establishment of the kingdom of heaven among men.
2. Until that time, God's will had not been perfectly done on earth. For example, the sacrifices of the old law were but shadows of what God intended (See Heb 10:1-4), but when Jesus died for the redemption of man, God's eternal purpose was being accomplished (Heb 10:5-10) and the way was clear for the kingdom.

I. Time References

1. When did Daniel say the Kingdom would be established (Daniel 2:44)?
2. What did John say about the nearness of the kingdom? (Matt 3:2)?
3. What prediction did Jesus make regarding the kingdom in Mark 9:1?
4. In Mark 9:1, what did Jesus say the kingdom would come with?
According to Acts 1:8 when did He say the power would come?
5. In Luke 19:12 Jesus is pictured as a nobleman going into a far country for what purpose?
6. When Jesus ascended what received Him (Acts 1:9)?
7. What had Daniel seen centuries before in a vision of a heavenly scene (Dan 7:13,14)?

II. Elements of the Kingdom

A. King

1. What did Jesus say had been given to Him (Matt 28:18)?
2. In Acts 2:32, Peter announced that God had raised Jesus up. For what purpose was He "raised up" (vs 30)?
3. What did Peter say God had made Jesus to be (vs 36)?
4. Whose authority did the 3,000 acknowledge by being baptized as directed?

B. Citizens

1. If 3,000 acknowledged the authority of Jesus as king, what would they be?
2. When Gentiles were converted, what did they become (Ephesians 2:19)?

C. Law

1. In what did the 3,000 continue steadfastly (Acts 2:42)?
2. How does Christ's promise to them, made before His death, explain this (See John 16:12-14 and Acts 1:8)?
3. What did Paul say of the things he wrote (I Cor 14:37)?
4. Whose commandments were the Christians to remember (II Peter 3:2)?

D. Territory

1. What did Jesus say of His kingdom (John 18:36)?
2. Where is the throne and where is the King?
3. Where is our citizenship ("conversation" - KJV) (Phil 3:20)?

III. The Kingdom and the Church

1. What did Jesus call the church in Matthew 16:19?
2. Who make up the church?
Who make up the kingdom?
3. What does the word *church* mean in the original?
Into what were they called (I Thes. 2:12)?
4. Into what were we translated (Col 1:13)?
5. What have we received (Heb 12:28)?
6. What has God made us to be (Rev 1:6)?
7. What was John a companion in (Rev 1:9a)?

Thought Question: Sometimes it is said that the church is divided. Is the kingdom divided? When apparent division takes place, some (usually the majority) claim to be the "mainstream churches". What determines who is in the mainstream of the kingdom?

The Kingdom of Heaven - In Time and Eternity

Introduction

1. We saw in Lesson 12 that Christ is now reigning at God's right hand.
2. Christians on earth are citizens of the kingdom.
3. When individuals are doing the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven, the kingdom is on earth. It is still a heavenly kingdom with citizens here.

I. Christians are Now Reigning with Christ.

1. What has God made us to be (Rev 1:6)?
2. What kind of priesthood are we (I Pet. 2:9)?
3. Over what do we reign (Rom 5:17)?
4. (II Tim 2:11-12) When do we live with Christ after dying with Him?
What is promised if we endure? When?

II. Duration of the Kingdom on Earth.

1. Jesus was raised from the dead to sit on David's throne at God's right hand (Acts 2:29-32).
How long is He to sit there (Acts 2:34-35)?
2. Where did Jesus sit down after He had purged our sins (Heb 1:3)?
How long was He to sit there (vs 13)?
3. How long is He to wait at God's right hand (Heb 10:12-13)?
4. How long must He reign (I Cor 15:25)?
Does this indicated that He is now reigning?
5. What is the last enemy to be destroyed? (I Cor 15:26) When will it be destroyed?
6. What will happen immediately after the resurrection (I Cor 15:21-24)?

Note The passage cannot be reconciled with the premillennial view of the kingdom. According to that theory, when Jesus comes again He will raise the dead saints and begin His earthly kingdom. According to this passage, He will raise all the dead and end the kingdom on earth. (I Cor 15:24).

III. The Kingdom in Eternity

1. To whom will the kingdom be delivered after the resurrection of the dead and the end of the kingdom on earth (I Cor 15:24)?
2. What will happen to the earth (II Pet 3:3-10)?
3. What invitation will be issued to those found faithful during their lives on the earth (Matt 25:34)?
4. What must we expect on earth if we are to enter that kingdom in heaven (Acts 14:22)?
5. If we add the qualities expected of a Christian, what may we hope for (II Pet 1:5-11)?

Conclusion.

The Kingdom of God is not an earthly kingdom that will extend into a heavenly and eternal phase. Rather, it is an eternal heavenly kingdom which God has permitted to be extended into time and space. This was made possible by the advent of Jesus Christ into the world "to do thy will, O God" (Gen 10:7). Those who wish to be in this heavenly kingdom must be born again. Their physical birth makes them citizens of an earthly kingdom; their birth of water and the Spirit makes them citizens of the kingdom of heaven. In following Jesus as King, and in becoming like Him, they are "doing the will of the Father in heaven," and in so doing they enter the kingdom. They must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, for "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 12:28-29