



the Kingdom of God

Manual

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Welcome to The Kingdom of God

A Foundational Course Emphasizing the Revelation of God & His Kingdom

Course Overview: This course is a foundational course with a special emphasis – Who is God and What is His Kingdom. Within the course you will learn:

- The Foundational understanding of God’s Kingdom in heaven and earth
- What the Kingdom is and what it is not
- When and Where the Kingdom manifests
- Key Characteristics and Principles of the Kingdom
- How to enter and live in the Kingdom

Course Goals: By the end of this course, we would like you to:

- Develop a deep hunger for His Kingdom to come and make a total commitment to seeking first and living to advance the Kingdom of God
- Become a preacher of the Good News of the Kingdom of God
- Transition from a traditional Christian mindset to a Kingdom mindset

Follow-up Study: To obtain full credit and benefit from this course, we ask you to:

- a. Finish all Personal Study sections of the course manual.
- b. Read the follow-up reading: *The Kingdom in All Its Glory* by Alan Vincent on the Prepare International Website – www.prepareinternational.org - under this course title. This reading is broken down into four or five short articles.
- c. Write a 3-5 page essay, typed answering the following questions:
 - Describe the three greatest things you learned in the course in detail.
 - How will you apply these things to your life and ministry in the future. Think of a specific situation that you would apply these truths and explain how you might use this new learning.
 - **On the last page of your paper:** What was the most important thing you learned from the reading assignment from the Website?

Sources: The following sources were used to develop this training manual...

1. *The Kingdom in All of Its Glory* by Alan Vincent
2. *The Gospel of the Kingdom* by George Eldon Ladd
3. *The Unshakeable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person* by E. Stanley Jones
4. *Spirit Filled Life Study Bible, notes on the Kingdom of God* by Jack hayford

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Lesson 1: Jesus Introduces the Kingdom

When Jesus began His ministry, His great passion was to bring forth the Kingdom of God. In the four Gospels, it is recorded that He spoke of the Kingdom 108 times.

As we read the story, we are confronted with this fact - Jesus did not just teach about the Kingdom, He demonstrated it. In His humanity, we see lived out perfectly the Kingdom of God. So what were some things He said, and how did He demonstrate God's Kingdom to us?

Repent and Believe the Gospel – Mark 1.15

“The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the Good News.”



Reflection: These are the first recorded words of Jesus as He begins His ministry. What does He say? What is He telling us about the Kingdom?

- **The time is fulfilled** – the time that God and man have been waiting for has come. Now is the time. You don't have to wait any longer.
- **The Kingdom of God is at hand** – this term, “at hand,” means *has drawn near, is here, is currently present*. Jesus wasn't pointing to a someday thing in heaven. His message was clear: the Kingdom is here, it is now, it is available to men.
- **Repent** – the word repent means to change your thinking about something that will result in a total new way of living. This message and this Kingdom was so very radical, that it would take a total revolution in their thinking and a complete 180 degree change of living.
- **Believe the Good News** – His last statement was that the Kingdom coming is GOOD NEWS. It is God's total solution to Man's total need. We must receive from God by believing the message of the Kingdom. He called this message – Good News! Whatever the Kingdom was all about, it would be Good News to those who can hear it, respond to it and receive it.

The Central Story of the Bible

The Law

The law, the first five books of the Old Testament teach us that God always desired a Kingdom and a Kingdom people. Exodus 19.6

The Psalms

As we read the Psalms, over and over, there are clear references to God's Kingdom. Psalm 103.19, Psalm 145.11-13

The Prophets

All through the Prophets' letters, we see clear teaching about God and His Kingdom. Daniel 2.31-end, Daniel 7.9-10 & 13-14

Gabriel's Announcement

When Gabriel made the announcement of the conception and birth of Jesus to young Mary, he clearly declared that this child who would be born would bring forth the Kingdom of God in His birth and life. Luke 1.26-33

Jesus' Life and Teaching

In Jesus life and teaching, He both spoke and demonstrated the Kingdom of God in our midst. He spoke of the Kingdom at least 108 recorded times in the four gospel accounts alone and as He healed, delivered people, served, loved and laid down His life only to take it up again, He perfectly demonstrated the Kingdom of God in His humanity!

Acts

The Book of Acts is the record of ordinary people living with Jesus in His Kingdom program and Kingdom order through the Holy Spirit and His word. The Book begins with the Kingdom and ends with it. Acts 1.3; 28.30-31

From Heaven to Earth

So where do we begin when wanting to learn about God and His Kingdom? What is a good starting point?

Jesus' Prayer

When Jesus taught us to pray, He said to say, "***Thy Kingdom come*** (right here, right now), ***Thy will be done*** (right here, right now) ***on earth as it is in heaven.***"

It appears quite clear that Jesus' understanding of the Kingdom of God is that all that was true, real and happening in heaven would break into earth and change and influence life on earth. Men would be saved, families would be healed, and people would live in peace with God and one-another. Bodies would be healed, bondages would be broken and people would order and arrange their lives to live under God's authority in God's way. God's order and program for life would come to man and man would live it out through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the Heavens

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1.1 In the beginning God created two worlds, two realms – the heavens and the earth. We know and understand the earth realm, for we live here. It is the time, space, matter realm that was created for our everyday life.

But we do not understand the realm of the heavens, the spiritual realm. It is as real as this, and in fact it was created first. It is a real, tangible world, but it was created for spirits not flesh and blood life. ***"For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things have been created through Him and for Him."*** Colossians 1.16 Paul gives us more insight into this realm called the heavens – it is an invisible realm (only to us while in this life, but not to the Lord or spiritual beings) that is real and is filled with many beings and many things.

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” Matthew 25.34 In this statement Jesus tells us that the Kingdom is a real realm, a total reality that God created for us. In fact, Jesus said that the Father created it before the foundations of the world. If that is so, then ***Where is the Kingdom?***

"The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, And His [Kingdom] rules over all."
Psalm 103.19

Scripture teaches us that God is a spirit and He dwells in the heavenly realm, the invisible world of the spirit. That world is as real as this one and was created by the Father before He created this one (Genesis 1.1). He has established His throne there and that is the seat of His Kingdom. His Kingdom is in the invisible world. We must understand that the invisible world, that realm, is real. It is very, very real. God dwells there and rules over all!

The Coming of Jesus

When Jesus was born a great miracle transpired. God, through His Son, stepped out of the realm of the unseen, heaven, and into this realm. In doing so, His Kingdom entered our world in a very real and visible way! He had come to love, save, rule and put things, as they should be again in people's lives.

Jesus was the door between that realm and the world we live in. He was also the first Kingdom Man, the first Man who lived with the Father in perfect love and obedience. His coming created a permanent doorway, a permanent opening, between heaven and earth and through Him, all that God had there began to filter into life here. It was the Kingdom.

Our Response

As men and women who are born again enter the Kingdom of God through Jesus and His blood, they have the right and responsibility to be more than nice Christian people until they go to heaven. They have the responsibility to bring heaven to earth (wasn't that the prayer?). By our faith, our obedience, our growing understanding of His ways and His will, we too become a doorway, an opening, for His reign to enter the earth and change people around us. That's why He said that one of the primary mindsets we are to have is to ***"Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness!"***



Reflection:

- Have you seen the Kingdom of God in the heavenly realm?
 - Are you seeking Him, His Kingdom and His righteousness daily?
 - Are you becoming an entry point for God to enter the world to touch people all around you?
-

Lesson 2: What is the Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God is being rediscovered all over the world. Christian leaders are in a major theological and lifestyle shift as we discover the central message and mission of Jesus Christ.



Discussion: When you think of the Kingdom of God, what do you think of?

What is the Kingdom of God?

What the Kingdom of God is NOT: Although, the Kingdom includes these things, the Kingdom of God is NOT necessarily...

- Heaven
- The Church

We must understand that Jesus never defined the kingdom; rather He was constantly describing it in terms the people of His day could understand. He would constantly say, “*The kingdom of God is like...*”

The Kingdom of God is a description, the reality of...

1. The Presence of Jesus Christ – The Bible describes the coming of the Kingdom when Jesus comes onto the scene. When Jesus comes and is present, THEN the kingdom has come. We will discover that at His birth, the Bible teaches us that the Kingdom came, but it is also written clearly that the Kingdom WILL come when He comes again. Therefore, the first aspect of the Kingdom is the living presence of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is both the King of this great Kingdom AND the full demonstration of the Kingdom. He not only taught about it, He fully demonstrated it. Jesus became a man and gave us the clear pattern of what a Kingdom man might look like. Where He is, the Kingdom is.

His Presence is the central issue of our lives. **To the degree that you cultivate, guard, and live in His Presence, you will experience the Kingdom of God.**

Our Response - the life of prayer

2. Jesus' reign and reordering of life – Secondly, the scripture clearly teaches us that the Kingdom of God is His rule and reign. That which Jesus has complete control over and rules, is IN the Kingdom – the Kingdom has come! The Kingdom of God is His reign.

The Bible words for Kingdom: Both the Old Testament word chosen for the Kingdom of God and the New Testament word do NOT refer primarily to the realm or the people when they

speak of the Kingdom. These words chosen describe the power and authority of a king reigning! A king exerting his power to bring everything under his control and rule.

OT - Hebrew - malkuw (Daniel 2.44)

NT – Greek – basileia (Matthew 13.47, Revelation 11.15-17)

The central issue of the Kingdom is Christ reigning in lives and families. That which He reigns over is in the Kingdom. Complete and utter surrender and complete and utter authority. The Kingdom is all about authority, who is in control. The Kingdom of God is NOT a democracy; it is a King exerting complete rights and authority to rule every area of His subjects lives.

Self-surrender is the first and only heart response to Christ as we are confronted with the Kingdom of God. Until a person surrenders to Christ, they do not enter the Kingdom. (Matthew 13.44-45, Mark 1.15)



Reflection:

- Who makes the decisions in your life?
- How do you decide what to do every day?
- Why did you choose the career you are now in?
- What do you do with your time? Who is in charge?
- What do you do with your money? Not with your tithe but with the 90% leftover? You might say, "It's my money, I can do with my money whatever I want." No you can't, it's His money.

As He begins to reign within us, **he reorders our lives to be like Him and live like Him** – The Kingdom of God is **Christlikeness!** When Jesus enters the human heart and begins to reign, He rearranges every priority, every attitude, and every desire to be just like His. He brings His Kingdom order to every area of our lives.

The Kingdom of God is God's total program and total order for life. It is life lived as it should be. As Jesus lived and taught, He both demonstrated this life and described it. It is God's program for life. It is relating to God and everything else as we should.

Many have only taken the step of salvation into the Kingdom, but have never gone any further. This divine reordering has NOT occurred in their lives.

"...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14.17

As we look at this defining statement of the Apostle Paul, we discover that the Kingdom of God begins within our own hearts as a whole new inward reality by the Holy Spirit. The very inner workings of who we are on the inside are recreated...

- Righteousness – Our very inner values become aligned with His. What He considers to be valuable, we consider valuable; what He loves, we love; what He hates, we hate; and what He values very little, we value very little.

- Peace – When the Kingdom enters your heart, you are transformed from a person driven and tossed on the inside to a person who is at peace through trusting God.
- Joy – Our inner man takes on the very joy of the Lord, which gives us great strength.
- In the Holy Spirit – This new inner reality comes to us through the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit.



Reflection:

- Have you surrendered to the Lord Jesus or merely committed a part of your life to Him?
- How is Jesus Christ reordering your life?
- Have you begun to implement His program for living into every area of life?
- How is the Holy Spirit actively producing righteousness, peace and joy in you?

Our Response - seeking, surrendering and changing our lives to live in His ways and His program for life.

3. Men fully embracing the promises of God leading to His blessings, salvation, and benefits – the Bible teaches that when His Kingdom comes, He brings salvation, power, blessing, love, and the wonderful gifts of His generous Father. **Isaiah 9.6-7** speaks of the coming of the Kingdom of God when Christ is born. It then goes on to say that when He comes, there will be NO stopping the increase of His rule and His peace. His rule brings His shalom.

That Hebrew word *peace* is the word *shalom*. This word became the one of the most important words in the Jewish world. It meant God's complete care and blessing over our lives. Where Jesus comes and rules, He blesses! He cannot be any other way because He is GOOD! He is LOVE! He is RICH! He is GENEROUS! The Kingdom of God is the doorway into life as it was meant to be lived.

We must discover and passionately pursue God and His promises. These promises clearly describe all that He wants to be, do and give to His children. This is the Kingdom life; a life lived through the power of the promises of God! (See 2 Corinthians 1.20; 2 Peter 1.4)

Our Response - A Life of Faith

4. Men living on mission with Him for the world - As Jesus lived, taught and enlisted followers, one of the clearest ideas about the Kingdom of God is that God is on a mission for people and He desires us to be His co-workers with Him.

Jesus said over and over that He had come for a purpose:

- To seek and to save the lost
- To serve and to give His life as a ransom for many
- To destroy sin
- To destroy every work of the devil

In Matthew 28.18-20, He gives one of the defining marks of His follower - living out His mission with Him! We are to be a people who go and make disciples, a people who bring His word and His way to every area and every realm of life. Jesus doesn't want His reign to stay in the church

or a home alone, He desires His people to carry Him and His reign into the business world, the educational world, the financial world, and everyday life! The Kingdom is God's total program for all of life and Jesus is on a mission for the world!

Our Response - changing our life purpose to His and daily bringing the Kingdom of God to men!

5. The Kingdom is life lived in the fullness of the Holy Spirit - The Kingdom of God is not people trying hard to live for God, but rather it is men and women living fully in the Holy Spirit! Paul said...

Romans 14.17 **" for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."**

1 Corinthians 4.20 **" For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power "**

As we develop an intimate relationship with the Spirit, allowing Him to become our source of life and power, the teachings of Jesus come alive and we literally find ourselves living just as Jesus did!



Application: Write out four or five practical, livable, applicable principles you learned and what you can begin to do from these five realities of the Kingdom of God.

Alexander the Great: Alexander the Great in about 333 BC was considered one of the greatest military conquerors of all time. He entirely conquered the known world. As you study his life, military conquest was NOT his chief desire. Aristotle had tutored him many years and this mighty Greek philosopher had infected Alexander with a world vision. He had become consumed with the Hellenist philosophy of life and he totally believed that the order of Hellenism would solve all of man's problems. He conquered **not** to just take territory. He conquered to bring a new order to the world – Hellenism. Every territory he took, he would then completely inject a new world order into them through education, religion, the arts and entertainment, and politics.

The Kingdom of God is a new world order. Alexander the Great was mistaken. Hellenism was NOT the answer to all of man's needs, the Kingdom of God was. Jesus came to conquer the hearts of men and establish a complete new order, a completely new culture that would be the answer to man's every need.

Lesson 3: When is the Kingdom



Bible Study: Matthew 12.32, Ephesians 1.21, Mark 10.29-30, Matthew 24.3, Luke 20.34-36; Matthew 13.24-30 & 36-43; Matthew 13.47-50; Matthew 25.1-13; Matthew 25.31-46; Matthew 8.11; Matthew 3.2; 4.17; Matthew 12.28; Matthew 13.1-11; Matthew 13.44-46; Hebrews 6.5; Philippians 3.10; Ephesians 2.5; 1 Corinthians 15.23-25

The Two Ages

Matthew 12.32, Ephesians 1.21, Mark 10.29-30, Matthew 24.3, Luke 20.34-36

- The Scripture speaks of two ages – this present age and the age to come
- They are separated by Christ's return & the resurrection (Matthew 24.3; Luke 20.34-36)

This Present Evil Age

- This age is called the present evil age – Galatians 1.4
- The Marks of this age – Ephesians 2.1-3
- Satan is called the god of this age – 2 Corinthians 4.3,4
- This age is controlled by demonic darkness and blindness. This Age is completely antagonistic to God's Kingdom for it is controlled by the god of this age, Satan and it bears His marks and nature upon it.

The Age to Come!

- See Matthew 13.38-42; 13.47-50; 25.1-13; 25.34, 46
- The Kingdom of God is God's complete reign in all of its perfection destroying every work of darkness and Satan's entire rule over men.
- The Kingdom brings in the redemptive blessing of God to men. The powers of this present evil age are completely shattered.

When did the Kingdom Begin? The Kingdom in this Age?

- 1) **Dispensational Theology** teaches that the Kingdom of God will only come in the age to come and that there is NO Kingdom experience now on this side of heaven. It declares that Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom points to the age to come in every way and much of it must be spiritualized away. This thinking produces a mindset that things are going to only get worse for the church, and we have no power to stop the devil as he continues to try to control the earth. It limits people to thinking only in terms of God at work in the church and it points to someday in the future, but totally robs us of power for today. Jesus will return and take us all out of this hellish mess.
- 2) **Kingdom NOW Theology** teaches just the opposite in varying degrees. It teaches that the Kingdom has FULLY come already, the devil has been bound by Jesus and the church is going to grow to greater and greater glory until all evil is eradicated. Often, this theology

does not even believe in a second coming of Christ because they point to the coming of the Holy Spirit and Christ indwelling believers as the second coming.

Both of these theologies are in error. They both take extreme views and are not clearly founded on Scriptural revelation. The Kingdom of God is both NOW and SOMEDAY. It belongs to the AGE TO COME, but is manifest NOW in our PRESENT EVIL AGE, as sons of the Kingdom, enter it and demonstrate the power and authority of Christ.

The Bible Teaches that the Kingdom was introduced at Christ's Coming

- Daniel 2.44-45 *In the days of those kings (the Roman kings), God will set up a kingdom...*
- Isaiah 9.6-7 *When the Child is given, the government (reign, kingdom) of God comes clearly to earth and He sits upon the throne of David again*
- Luke 1.31-33 *Jesus will sit on the throne of David and rule over his Kingdom*

Jesus Teaches the Kingdom Has Come NOW!



Bible Study: Mark 1.14-15, Luke 17.20-21, Luke 11.20, Matthew 13.1-23, 31-33, 44-46

- The Time is **fulfilled**, the Kingdom is at hand = has drawn near, arrived
- The Kingdom of God is among you...
- The Kingdom of God is in your midst
- The Kingdom of God is within you



Bible Study: Matthew 13.24-30, 13.47-50, 25.31-46

- The Kingdom of God will come in the harvest at the end of the age.
- People enter the Kingdom after the great resurrection and judgment.

Jesus Teaches the Kingdom WILL COME SOMEDAY!

The Bible clearly teaches that **the Kingdom of God is NOW and NOT YET!** We are living in an age where the Kingdom of God has broken in and we are experiencing a partial reality, but the Kingdom of God climaxes and comes in all of its fullness at the second coming of Christ when He once and for all extinguishes all enemies of God.

CONCLUSION: When Jesus Christ came, Scripture clearly teaches that the Kingdom of God was inaugurated upon the earth. It is very true that it will be fully demonstrated at His second coming, but the power and blessing of the Kingdom has broken into men's lives now! As we submit to His Lordship, relinquish our independence, and believe His glorious promises we are caught up in the mighty blessing of His Kingdom now. Until the second coming, the kingdom life will always be a life of warfare, for we are in a battle zone between the kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of God.

From John the Baptist Christianity to the Kingdom

For several hundred years the church has believed that nothing can be done about the Kingdom of God until Jesus physically comes. The devil was going to get stronger and stronger. The church was going to get weaker and weaker. The devil was going to take over the whole earth. And just before he conquered and destroyed everything, Jesus would come in a rescue operation to save the church that was just 'hanging on.' The church has been looking for some special time when Christ would come again and end the misery and suffering and take them home. There is some truth in this, but it is NOT a Kingdom view.

Christianity without a true Kingdom experience and revelation can be termed "*John the Baptist Christianity*." This is not a clearly Biblical term, but it describes a Biblical truth just as the term *Trinity* is not a Biblical term but indeed describes a Biblical truth. When Paul came to Ephesus, he found a group of disciples of the Lord who had been taught about Jesus, but had been baptized by Apollos only in the Baptism of John. There was a problem in their lives – they had a sincere desire and faith in the Lord, but they lacked reality and power. They were "*John the Baptist Christians*."

John the Baptist Christianity is forever proclaiming and looking toward the kingdom but never entering in...

- **Only a future reality** - It is Christianity looking for the "someday in the future" of God & His Kingdom when Christ comes again.
- **Words with no power** - It is Christianity with preaching only and no power or authority (John 10.41) John accurately taught about Jesus, but he in no way demonstrated the Kingdom of God in operation.
- **"You are the light"** - It describes men and women who speak of the "light", but do NOT demonstrate or live out the "light". The Bible says that in Jesus was **life** and this life was the **light** of all men. It goes on to say that John was NOT the light, he could only talk about it, but once Jesus begins to teach on the Kingdom, He tells His followers that **they are the light!** That is, they are not just to talk about Him and His life, they are to receive His life and demonstrate it! (John 1.3,4; John 1.8; Matthew 4.16)
- **"You and them" in the kingdom** – Jesus clearly teaches that not everyone is treated the same in the Kingdom of God. In Matthew 13.10-17, He even refers to His disciples as *you* and speaks of the others as *them*. It is very clear that He treats the **YOU** differently from the **THEM**.
 - YOU – those who walk in a Kingdom reality having eyes that can see and ears that can hear and see into the mysteries of the Kingdom. These have come as true followers of Jesus!
 - THEM – those who cannot see, cannot hear, have dull hearts to the Lord and His Kingdom and only see the outer things of the Lord. These are those who have only come to Him to receive the benefits of the Kingdom – healing, forgiveness, deliverance, and teaching.

This so summarizes what we have been taught and demonstrated for many years. We have had a Christian tradition way of thinking and believing and not a Kingdom mentality.



Discussion: Discuss this idea of living as John the Baptist type of Christians instead of fully entering in and living in the reality of His Kingdom. Why do many live this way? How do we need the reality of the Kingdom of God to break into our lives on this side of heaven?

Lesson 4: The Kingdom Revealed in the Old Testament

Introduction

The Kingdom of God is spoken directly about many times in the Old Testament, and there are some clear types and pictures of it as you study closely. Let's look at several glimpses of the Kingdom in the pages of the Old Testament.

In The Garden

"Now in the beginning when God created Adam and Eve, we are told in Genesis 1.26-27 that He created them to rule over all the things that He had created. But in order for that to function properly Adam and Eve needed to be under authority. Their authority was not absolute, but it was dependent authority. **For them to be God's rulers they needed to be under His rule.** They needed to do God's will perfectly, and do it without deciding for themselves morally what was right or wrong, they just needed to do His will... What we see here is the kingdom of God. God is the total supreme ruler and these two just obeyed everything He told them and without any disobedience; they lived in the eternal life of God. So all of creation was in right order and the kingdom of God covered all of creation. While this perfect order of the kingdom continued, all of creation was protected from the evil one and he had no point of access anywhere. As a result, there was no sin, no sickness, no diseases, no corruption, no evil, and there was nothing that offended God in all of His creation. It was all under the kingdom of God. So if you ask, 'I wonder what the kingdom of God will be like when it fully comes?' Just go back to the beginning and see!"

Man was created to be a dependent being. There is NO other option for him if he desires to live with the Lord. When a man is dependent upon the Lord, God gives life to that man. He empowers that man. When a man chooses to live in independence (making his own decisions and his own choices) he is choosing to live by his own resources, wisdom, and abilities. If he is to be empowered, there is only one source outside of himself, Satan.

Authority - The key issue of the Kingdom is authority. God invited Adam and Eve to live under His authority through simple surrender and obedience and then He would give them His own authority to rule on the earth (See Genesis 1.28).

What was the goal of Satan's deception in the fall of Man? It was NOT just to get men to sin, it was to cause them to leave life under God's authority and thus forfeit to him, Satan, the authority God had given them. When the first couple sinned by throwing off God's rule and choosing independence, Satan gained authority over the earth and another kingdom was established, the kingdom of Darkness. (See Luke 4.5-8, 1 John 5.19, Colossians 1.13)

The Kingdom of God is about authority! God invites men to voluntarily surrender, live dependently upon Him and then He eagerly gives them authority in His name to rule and reign upon the earth!

In The Law (Exodus 19.6)

When we give a careful reading of the Law, we discover clear hints that it was God's desire to see that the children of Israel would be a demonstration of God's Kingdom upon the earth.

- You shall be to Me a **Kingdom** – a people under My authority, demonstrating My rule, My authority and My blessing.
- **Of Priests** - those who can each come to Me, minister to Me and minister on My behalf

The children of Israel never realized this reality. A chapter later, (Exodus 20.19) we see them declaring to Moses that they want no part of a relationship with God, they only want commands to obey.

David's Kingdom – A Prophetic Picture

All through the Scriptures, Jesus' rule and Kingdom is referred back to David's throne. It is David, his rule, his throne, and his reign that Christ would take up some day in an eternal Kingdom. Solomon, Josiah, or any other earlier King is never mentioned – only David.

Why is that? Why was David the precursor of the Messiah, and his Kingdom and his throne the one that Messiah would sit upon?

David's kingdom is the OT picture and type of Christ's Kingdom today. Within it we see several key ideas that are foundational in the Kingdom of God. He was in no way perfect, but God saw things within him and his rule that would foreshadow the coming of the eternal rule under His Son, Jesus.

1. A man after God's own heart that would do all His will: In David, we see a ruler who is not motivated by greed, ambition, or a lust for power. We see a man motivated by an amazing desire to be close to God, to know Him, to walk with Him and to fulfill all of God's desires for the people. David was inflamed with the presence of God and a consuming passion to do His will.

This is a picture of Jesus Christ although a poor one. It is also a type of what the New Covenant Kingdom believers would look like at the core of their lives. This is the race of people God would raise up through His Son.

2. The tabernacle of David instead of the tabernacle of Moses or temple of Solomon: For just over thirty years, we see a phenomenon in the Kingdom of David. There is a tent set up where God's presence dwells via the Ark of the Covenant and **all men** can come and experience God without a veil or priests to go for them. Men could experience the living presence of God.

- There were no sacrifices here – David had seen the Cross (See Psalm 22) and knew that sin had been atoned for
- There were no man-made barriers between God and man
- There were no rituals
- The tent was not the focus, God was and His relationship to individual people and the kingdom as a whole
- There was 24-7 prayer and worship here before Him
- This was the power generation station of the kingdom

3. A time of perfect peace & prosperity (shalom) within the kingdom: Because of David's rule, peace reigned supreme in the land. NO Enemies made any inroads upon the people of God. They were always defeated. It was a place impenetrable to the attacks of the Enemy. The Kingdom of Israel also went from being small, very poorly organized tribes with a great deal of internal and external problems to a well managed kingdom where there was blessing and prosperity for all. The people prospered greatly under David's rule.

This is to be true in Christ's Kingdom today. The Shalom of God is to rule in our hearts and lives. He will bring us into lives of great peace and prosperity as we live in proper faith and obedience to Him.

4. A time of unstoppable kingdom expansion warfare: David's men were constantly advancing the borders of the Kingdom through warfare. They never ceased to be a warring people and *all* of their attempts to expand the Kingdom were successful. They had the full backing of their king behind them in this pursuit.

In Christ's Kingdom, He forms us into a people of war with constant Kingdom expansion in our hearts. This is a huge difference in the traditional Christian and the Kingdom man or woman.

5. Massive kingdom employment under David: As you read the pages of David's account, you begin to come upon list after list of all of the people who were employed within the Kingdom. There were many areas of service and David employed hundreds and thousands for the good of the people and the glory of God. The people were happy under David because they had a place of productivity and purpose.

Today in the Kingdom of God there is full employment in the cause. There are not a few who work and then most sit on the sidelines, living their lives for themselves, merely enjoying the benefits of Jesus.

6. A king with a sincere heart to love and bless the people: As you study the histories of men, you find a common thread of truth – Kings rule men for their and their realms growth and men serve Kings to make them rich and powerful. This is the nature of earthly kingdoms and rule. Occasionally you will find an exception to this generalization, but it is an exception. This is not so as David takes the throne. 2 Samuel 6.18-19

How much more our heavenly King? When we come into the Kingdom, Jesus requires us to give our all, but we can because we come to a King who deeply loves us and desires to **bless us**, and give us **cakes of bread and dates and raisins**. Jesus so desires to share all of His goodness and blessing with us that we can fully trust Him.

7. New covenant revelation grew under David: Most of the Psalms were written in the Tabernacle of David, by David, or one of the worship leaders there. It is unbelievable to read the theology of these Psalms. Most of the theology of the OT is very Old Covenant with man bound under the law to perform and serve God in the power of his own fleshly strength, but within the Psalms there is massive revelation of the New Covenant. The keynote thought of *for the Lord is good and His mercy endures forever* is clearly centered in New Covenant thought revealed in Jesus Christ.

Isaiah & the Coming King (Isaiah 9.6-7 & Luke 1.31-33)



Bible Study: Read the above passages and list everything you can see that Isaiah prophesies about the coming of the Kingdom in this messianic passage. Then read the words of the angel Gabriel and discuss what he reveals of the Kingdom in the birth of Jesus.

Gleanings from Isaiah:

- Upon Jesus would rest the government (the reigning power of God)
- He will re-establish the rule and Kingdom of David
- It will be ever increasing in nature
- The Shalom (peace) of God would come as His rule extends – this word Shalom means the entire blessing of God into every aspect of human life.

Gabriel's Announcement of the Kingdom to Mary (Luke 1.31-33)

- Your son will be the Son of God
 - God will give Him the ***Throne of David***
 - He will reign forever & His Kingdom will be eternal
-



Discuss the following with a partner:

Have you ever noticed or seen God's Kingdom in the Old Testament? How will you read the Old Testament differently now? What is the essence of the Kingdom of God? What does it really mean for us today? Can a person be a Christian, but be missing out on the Kingdom and its life and power?

Lesson 5: The Gospel of the Kingdom

As Jesus came on the scene, He preached a central message to all...

“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’” Mark 1.15

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” Matthew 4.23



Discussion: What does the word ‘gospel’ mean? What made the message of God’s Kingdom good news? What is the gospel of the Kingdom of God?

The Kingdom Has Arrived

Jesus and His followers over and over preached the gospel of the Kingdom. The word Gospel simply means **good news**. Jesus message was **GOOD NEWS** then, and it is just as good news to a broken world today, but it is critical that we understand the good news that He preached and demonstrated to the world.

The time is fulfilled; the Kingdom of God is at hand... Satan had controlled earth for thousands of years and had established a despotic tyranny over men’s lives. He had brought them into bondage to sin, sickness, disease, demonic torment, depression, poverty, and above all, to enmity with God thereby ensuring an eternal damnation for man.

Jesus said, “The time has finally arrived, another Kingdom has come. It is here, it is at hand. You can now reach out and touch it, receive it, live in it and experience something totally new. This Kingdom is God’s own Kingdom and it is a taste of heaven today.” That is why He called it both the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven.

But what made this new reign of God so much better than the old one that they had lived under for so many years?

Jesus Announces the Kingdom Agenda

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; To proclaim liberty to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Luke 4.18-19

When Jesus walked into His hometown synagogue, He announced the foundations of this good news. He outlined it clearly out of Isaiah 61 the wide sweeping parameters of all God would bring to man in Jesus.

Why is it such good news?



Bible Study: Read the passage above and write down the five major applications or benefits of His Kingdom Agenda.

It is Good News Because...

It is a Kingdom founded upon love, forgiveness, mercy and great grace, and all men who enter can experience this for themselves. Satan's rule over men's lives is characterized by selfishness, anger, hate, and separation from God and one another, but God has come through His Son to become our Father and bring us into the reign of love and grace. The entire atmosphere we live under has changed. ***“For He rescued us from the domain [kingdom] of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son”***. Colossians 1.13

A. Good news to the poor – The Agenda of God's Kingdom begins with good news to the poor. The poor will have their poverty broken! It is very important to note that Jesus did not say the 'poor in spirit' here but simply the poor. Does this include the poor in spirit? Of course, but it has to include the economically poor also.

1) To the poor in spirit there is forgiveness from sin and reconciliation with God.

- There is complete forgiveness for our sins in Jesus Christ and the terrible curse of guilt is broken (Ephesians 1.7) for God is no longer counting men's sins against them in Christ (2 Corinthians 5.19)
- All enmity has been removed between God and us and we now live under a 'smiling and friendly heaven' (Colossians 1.20)

2) The curse of chronic lack and poverty has been destroyed at the cross and the Kingdom outlines a whole new program for economically viable lives

- Poverty is a curse that began at the fall of man just like sin and sickness - Genesis 3.17-19
- Jesus bore our curse of poverty in life and death so that we might know God's provision and blessing - 2 Corinthians 8.9
- All through the Old Testament, God also promised to care for and bless His people with a good supply of things for the daily lives. - Deuteronomy 7.13-14
- His Kingdom Agenda is not just spiritual – it is all of life, therefore, it includes transformation of the economically disinherited. He has come to abolish ALL poverty.

- This economic agenda of the Kingdom includes: a release of resources supernaturally; a re-education of peoples' hearts and minds as to how to obtain finances; a re-alignment of priorities on how to use resources; a release of generosity so that those who have plenty help those who do not; a new way of apportioning that which we receive.

B. Freedom to the captive – the word captive used in the passage is the term for those who have been taken prisoner by an invading foreign force against their will and due to no evil or breaking of the law on their part. An evil foreign power has come to rule and has captured the innocent. This speaks of the socially and relationally disinherited due to man's fear, desire to control, and the evil unnatural cultural systems that have been developed.

1) Those who have been held captive due to race, social status, religion, class, education, age or even gender are set free in the Kingdom to live as wholly new people in a community that completely accepts, loves, and creates opportunities to all without respect to distinction.

- Jesus constantly reached out to the captives of His society... He touched the leper restoring him from physical, emotional, economic and social captivity... He called a tax collector, Matthew, to be one of His closest companions, and disciples... He included women in His traveling band as disciples...
- Paul said, *"...a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all."* (Colossians 3.11) and then, *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* (Galatians 3.28)
- About children being full participants in the Kingdom, Jesus revealed, *"Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."* (Matthew 19.13-14)

2) The Power of sin, selfishness, and bondage to this world has been broken and we can live in glorious freedom as sons of God serving our Father and His will.

- Sin and selfishness are some of the most miserable curses of living under Satan's rule
- In the Kingdom of God, Jesus Christ has fully dealt with these enemies of God and man and we can know glorious freedom.
- **Scripture:** John 8.36; Romans 6.14; 2 Corinthians 5.15

C. Recovery of sight to the blind – in the Kingdom, there is deliverance for those oppressed physically, the physically disinherited. Everywhere Jesus went He did three things – He preached, He healed, and He set men free. This is the essence of His good news. The healing of sicknesses and diseases is an integral part of the Kingdom agenda.

- *"Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people."* (Matthew 4.23)

- **“You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”** (Acts 10.38)
- E. Stanley Jones says, “God will heal the disease or give you power, not merely to bear the disease, but to use it, until the final cure in the resurrection. Cure it, or give you power to use it; in both cases it is an answer.”¹
- We must rediscover this ministry and this realm of good news again, for **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”** Hebrews 13.8

D. Freedom to the oppressed – This word oppressed means to break into pieces, to tear apart, to crush the strength of someone. Many have been broken and oppressed by life. Life itself has dealt them tremendous blows that have broken their wills, their emotions, their ways of thinking and relating to others, to the world around them and to life in general.

1) Jesus has come to free and heal the emotionally and relationally broken. Listen to the original text from Isaiah 61.1-3 that Jesus was reading from in the synagogue at Nazareth: **“... He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted... To comfort all who mourn, To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”**

2) We need no longer live under the oppression of living like slaves or beggars, we are His sons and have our home in Him. (Galatians 4.4-7)

- Under the world system and the religious system God was seen as one who could never be pleased or appeased. A terrible task-master to be feared.
- In the Kingdom of God, He is revealed as a Father who longs to love and bless His children. We are therefore, children of this great Kingly Father (1 John 3.1)

Forgiveness, adoption, and the healing of our wounded past give us a glorious future but above all, it gives us a sense of being home. Home with Him, home in this life, and even home with ourselves. This is the freedom of the broken!

E. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord – This appears to be a direct reference to the Year of Jubilee as outlined in Leviticus 25.11-17. In this year, all debts were cancelled, all poverty erased, all slaves set free, all land redistributed and every person in the nation was given the chance to begin life again, on a near equal footing.

- The good news of the Kingdom of God is that all men, everywhere, if they truly desire it, can have a completely new beginning, a complete chance to begin again in every area of life. This does not mean it is like a magic wand performing a miracle all at once, but it does mean there is a cataclysmic spiritual change that has occurred with a whole new set of possibilities!
- It also implies that men, in the Kingdom, are to be placed on an equal ground, equal footing in life.

¹ Jones, E. Stanley, *The Unshakeable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person*, McNett Press, P. 118.

This Jubilee is not just in this life alone, it offers eternal life with Him in the Age to Come. As believers in Jesus Christ, we have a glorious assurance that this Kingdom is an eternal Kingdom and when this life is over, we have our greatest inheritance with our Father and the Son in the heavens for eternity! John 14.2-3

Our Response to the Good News of the Kingdom

As Jesus began preaching the good news, He said...

We must repent... to repent means to change our minds about, to do an about face and go a completely different direction.

And Believe the Good News... the second response we must make is to believe the Good News.

We must believe that Jesus Christ is truly as good as He said, and that His Kingdom really has come. We must believe that the cross has accomplished what He said it did, and we must believe so strongly that we are willing to repent, give up our independent, self-serving life and come completely under His Lordship. Only under His complete control is the fullness of His Kingdom ours.



Application: Have you understood the Good News of the Kingdom of God? Have you genuinely believed and repented? Have you given up your independence and come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ? Have you believed and received all of these glorious promises of the Kingdom? Why not do so now!

Do you preach the Good News of the Kingdom to others who need Jesus? Why not thoroughly apply yourself to this Good News and learn to share with others bringing them into the saving grace of Jesus?

Lesson 6: The Father – Son Paradigm

The God of Judaism

When Jesus came on the scene in Israel, He came to a people who were oppressed in many ways. One of the sources of their oppression was their view of God. The Religious leaders had developed and taught a view of God, which brought bondage and life-less religion. Here were some aspects of the view of God they taught:

- God was very distant and difficult to approach
- He was portrayed as a task-master that could not be pleased
- You came to Him through a complex set of rules and traditions
- He was so fearsome if you violated His commands that most people lived under a deep oppression

As a result of this view of God, the people of God developed a wrong perception of themselves also:

- They saw themselves as beggars who only could receive pennies from the Master.
- They saw themselves as slaves who could never please or appease a difficult task-master.
- They saw themselves as peasants who were the servants of a great King.



Discussion: List many ways that this way of thinking about God and ourselves will influence our life. Look at the following verses and describe the picture that Jesus paints of God. Is this the way most people see Him today? Is this the way YOU see Him? Matthew 5.43-45; Matthew 6.1-9; Matthew 7.11; Luke 15; James 1.17

The God of the Kingdom – Father!!!

When Jesus began His ministry, He painted a very different picture of God – a picture that would liberate people and draw them near instead of driving them away.

Jesus came and began to paint on the canvas of men's hearts a different view of God. It was so different, that the religious leaders were often enraged at His teaching about God. Jesus revealed the FATHER. In the Gospels alone, God is spoken of as Father about 200 times. He revealed a Father who was...

- Compassionate
- Approachable
- Accessible
- Reaching out to man with an inviting smile, not a judgmental frown
- Generous and ready to share His great love and wealth with people

While Jesus lived on the earth, He perfectly demonstrated the Kingdom of God, and one of the things He most clearly demonstrates is the love shared between a Father and His Son. As has been stated throughout this course, the heart of the Kingdom is men surrendering to the reign of God in their lives, but when we see the Father, the surrender is of a different nature.

Because of this Father/Son relationship, Jesus passionately surrendered, obeyed and served the Father, perfectly living under His authority. You need to ponder these things in order to learn how to live in relationship to God.

“If we preach the kingdom without the Fatherhood of God, the kingdom can seem very severe and harsh.” - Alan Vincent

But when we see the kingdom in terms of a loving Son lovingly obeying a loving Father, it makes it a much more wonderful relationship. Jesus did not find it hard to live in the Kingdom; it was His absolute joy. It was joy because of the love relationship between the Father and the Son. And so it is with those who truly enter the Kingdom of God.

Genuine Sonship – the Expression of a Kingdom Heart

One of the truest tests of a person discovering, entering, and experiencing the Kingdom is sonship – are they living as sons or slaves. Many may have heard and even quote verses about being sons of God, but when we look at their lives, faith, and hearts, we see nothing but beggar slaves. It is the goal of the religious spirit to always drag us back into a slave’s thinking and life.

The Apostle Paul planted a church in Galatia, but others came in with a different view and teaching about God and very quickly the people began to again reduce themselves to slavery toward God. Paul finally shouted through his letter, **“therefore, you are no longer slaves, but sons...”**

John lived longer with the Lord and perhaps experienced more of the Kingdom than any man. All of his writings took place from 90-100 AD after he had walked with God for 60-70 years. What can we learn from His writings? He knew the Father. In his Gospel alone, he refers to God as the Father over 100 times and when you read his epistles you discover he knew God deeply as Father and he had laid hold of his sonship in the Kingdom. In 1 John 3.1, it is as if his spirit is exploding with this truth when he writes,

“Behold what love the Father has poured out upon us that we should be called the children of God; and that is what we are!



Discussion: List Ten ways this Father – Son Paradigm will change your life:

Practical Implications of this Father – Son Paradigm:

1. Access: Ephesians 2.18; John 8.35

- Access is one of the great changes this paradigm gives you.
- A room in the house forever versus access when you are needed
- The idea of HOME
- By the Spirit – the role of the Holy Spirit... The Spirit of your Father... the Spirit of the Son

2. Security: Luke 3.22

- These words are one of the foundations of life in the Kingdom
- You... it is personal
- Are Mine... security
- Beloved... before the foundation of the world, after all has ended, in the good, the bad, the ugly
- Son...
- In you I have placed My favor...

3. Resources: Luke 15.31; Romans 8.15-17; Romans 8.32

- How many resources does a slave get? A Servant?

- Discuss these words
- What are their implications upon us?
- David and Jonathan...

4. Purpose: Luke 2.49

- Just read, mention and discuss a bit...

5. Ministry Paradigm: Malachi 4.5-6; Matthew 1; Mark 3.13-15; 2 Timothy 2.1

- If this is one of the foundation stones of the kingdom spiritually, it must also be functionally
- There must be the foundation of father/son, mother/daughter relationships. This is the foundation of daily life and daily ministry
- If the kingdom was supposed to be something other than a family, God would have never taught us to pray, 'Our Father...'
- It is so easy to turn off "ministry" it is much, much more difficult to turn off family.
- Inheritance – Spiritual, emotional, social, financial



Application: How will this Father/son relationship change your life?

What three things will you practically begin to do today based upon what you have learned:

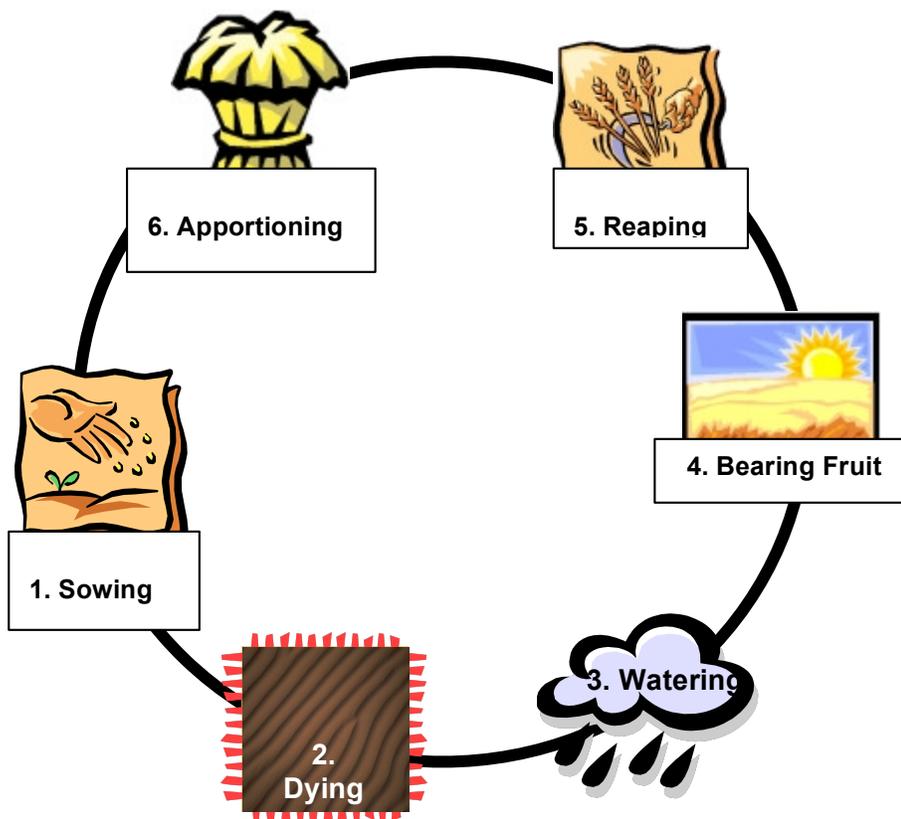
Lesson 7: The Laws of the Kingdom

If you were to visit a country, you would not need to know very much about the laws or customs of the land. You would probably have a guide on your visit. It would be a very different story if you were to move there and take up residence. You would have to learn, adjust to, and adopt the ways, laws, and cultural norms of that new country to fully function.

It is the same in the Kingdom of God. Some of the teaching of Jesus described the Kingdom while other teaching helped us understand the effects of His rule and blessing on people, cities, and nations. But a vast amount of Jesus' word teaches us how to enter in and live well as citizens in His heavenly realm. As we learn to live in the Kingdom, there is a cycle of life that Jesus teaches. If we allow this cycle to fully operate in our lives and in the life of the church, we will see the kingdom advanced through our lives. Many Christians treat these laws as optional and fail to realize how crucial this cycle is.

1. The Law of Process

Jesus taught over and over that the Kingdom of God was like a seed that must be planted, cultivated, watered, etc. and then over time, it would grow and bring forth its full life, fruit and power. It is NOT an event, it is a process!



Sowing and Reaping - Galatians 6.6; 2 Corinthians 9.6

This is perhaps the most fundamental law of the kingdom. “You reap what you sow” is a well-known axiom, but it is not a philosophical opinion. It is as ingrained in the order of the universe as is physics. We cannot say that *sometimes* we reap what we sow, or even that one *should* reap what is sown. These statements are wholly naïve. There is only one circumstance in which we may avoid reaping what has been sown. That circumstance is the reaping of death for our sins. Jesus has taken the consequence of our sin upon himself.

A principle that is closely connected is the law of increase. What is reaped will be a greater portion than what was sown. (Luke 6.37,38) The Kingdom of God begins small and grows until it completely dominates.

- Matthew 13.31-32 – the mustard seed
- Matthew 13.33 – the leaven
- Mark 4.26-29-the growing seed

Dying - John 12.24,25

In order for kingdom purposes to manifest, there must be a death to self, to the things of this world (things in opposition to the kingdom), even to good things that may be hindering kingdom purposes. Sometimes this means the death of a dream for your life or the death of relationships that have been important to you. Three principles that allow the law of dying to accomplish its work are:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Surrender | Luke 9.23-25, Philippians 3.7-11 |
| 2. Humility | Luke 9.48, Matthew 19.30, James 4.10 |
| 3. Sacrificial Love | John 15.13, Philippians 2.1-8 |

Two specific “heart issues” that Jesus applies the death principle to are personal ambition and fairness. (Matthew 20.1-16; Matthew 20.20-28)

Watering

Romans 8.25	1 Corinthians 3.6	Psalms 42
Psalms 37.9	Isaiah 40.31	Isaiah 51.16

This may be the most subtle and undeveloped teaching of the kingdom, yet it is absolutely essential to understanding how the kingdom advances in the world and how it advances in our lives. Once a seed has been planted (assuming that the seed is planted in good soil) there are two things that are non-negotiable factors in that seed’s transformation from a seed to a plant: 1) Proper nourishment and 2) Time. For us, this stage of the kingdom process is usually a confounding experience of darkness (being in the ground), being flooded with “nurturing” circumstances that strip away the old “seed” to make room for the new “plant” to emerge, and the ever popular period of waiting.

Growth and Fruit Bearing - 1 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 5:22-23

The law of bearing fruit is completely dependent upon the action, grace and favor of God. We may sow seed, we may even participate in the watering of the seed, but we have no direct behavioral participation in the bearing of fruit. It either grows or it doesn’t. It is 10 fold or 100 fold, etc. or it isn’t. This work is completely out of our grasp and any attempt on our part to

participate only subverts God's purposes and sets our own growth back. Our action is faith that the kingdom process will not fail. If we have sown, then a harvest will result.

2. The Law of Faith

Luke 17.6 Acts 3.16 Acts 27.25 Romans 1.17 Romans 3.27

Jesus at the very onset of His ministry taught over and over, "**Be it done in your life as you believe.**"

You won't find this law in the illustrated model of the kingdom process because it doesn't fit *inside* the process. Faith is the catalyst and the locomotion of the kingdom of God. This faith is the tenacious behavior that illuminates a deep trust that the kingdom is and will continue to advance with marked signs of its presence regardless of the kingdom's hidden condition. Circumstances, when seeming to be in contradiction with God's word, are regarded as unreliable indicators. Faith demands that circumstances bow to the truth of the kingdom even if it cannot be presently seen in the natural.

Lack of faith, or unbelief, subverts the kingdom process. It renders the kingdom innocuous and impotent. The kingdom literally rises or falls on the faith of believers.

3. The Law of Seeing and Entering

In John 3.3-6, Jesus speaks of seeing the Kingdom and then He goes on to say that what we see, we can enter. This is one of the great laws of the Kingdom of God... what we see we can enter.

The Holy Spirit has come to reveal all things concerning the Lord and His reign, but revelation is not meant just to instruct or teach us. All revelation is an invitation into entering into His reign and realm in new and deeper ways.

We must become passionate seekers, clear seers, and when we see, a door is presented to us with a whole new possibility on the other side. We must then 'knock' until the door is opened.

4. The Law of Love

The law of God's realm is love. Not human or manmade love, but a whole new kind and quality of love Bible writers called Agape. It is the atmosphere; the very air of the heavenly realm for it is our Father's nature.

When asked what is the most important commandment, Jesus replied, "***You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.***" Matthew 22.37-38

When Mark records this incident, the young man who asked the question replied that Jesus was right in saying that love was the essence of all of God's desire for man. Jesus' response gives us great insight into the nature of His world... "*Young man, you are not far from the Kingdom!*" Perhaps the highest law in the Kingdom is Agape. When you live in this kind of love, all of the universe is working with you because you are literally dancing to the tune of creation. When

you break this law and live under the power of self-centered love, you break yourself for you are out of touch with God and His world. Notice this...

- It begins with a completely unrivaled, unchallenged love of God. This is the beginning of knowing real life and getting in touch with His realm
- It goes on to speak of a love for your fellow man. This is self-giving, self-sacrificing love that Jesus demonstrated so well. It is serving, sharing, giving, and laying down your life, your rights, your time, and your reputation for others.
- But it does not end there. There is also to be a healthy self love and self respect in every persons' heart. Many have a religious view that says we must destroy and despise ourselves, but this is ridiculous religion. Any man who despises himself will despise others. To have a healthy acceptance of self and a healthy love of life is central to the gospel!

5. The Law of Warfare – Forcefully Advancing the Kingdom

Jesus taught that if we are going to live with Him in the Kingdom of God, we must live lives of warfare, committing our lives to defeating darkness and expanding His reign. We have had a peaceful religion of weakness far too long!



Bible Study: Read the following verses and describe what they teach you about warfare and the Kingdom.

- 1) Matthew 11.11-12 2) Luke 11.21-23 3) Luke 12.49-53 4) 1 Timothy 1.6-12
5) 2 Timothy 2.3-4 6) 1 John 3.5,8 7) Revelation 12.10-12

One of the great aspects of David's kingdom as a prophetic picture of the Kingdom of God is that he forcefully advanced the outer boundaries of his kingdom through warfare. David was both a lover of God and a mighty kingdom warrior. In fact, the one time in his life when he decided he would NOT go out to expand the kingdom, he was seduced by his own flesh, had an affair with Bathsheba, one of his warrior's wives, and then had his friend killed. (2 Samuel 11.1-5) Could it be that the church has been seduced so much by the world, because we have lost this aspect of the Kingdom of God?

Jesus calls us to a to live a very odd life: in one way, we are to be the most tenderhearted people of love and in another way to be aggressive against the powers of darkness to gather and set men free. He says...

- Matthew 11.11 – Matthew 11.12 ***“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.***
- Luke 11.21 – Luke 11.23 ***“When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a man stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils. He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”***

The final record of these first Kingdom men's lives was... Mark 16.20 ***“And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.”***

When we begin to forcefully advance His Kingdom, He grants us His authority. In Matthew 9.9, there is a wonderful statement, ***“...and they were amazed that God had given such authority to men.”*** Notice that it does NOT say to A MAN, but to MEN. Matthew wrote this because later he experienced that authority being entrusted to him. On the last evening Jesus was with His men, He said that all authority was in His hands and that He would share it with them! We go out and fight for our world in His authority, not our own.



Discussion: Describe how you and your community have been forcefully advancing the Kingdom. What are you doing in prayer and spiritual warfare? What are you doing with people themselves?

Lesson 8: Heaven's Culture

In the Sermon on the Mount, **Matthew 5-7 & Luke 6.20-49**, Jesus outlines the very nature of the Kingdom of God and what the heart attitudes, motivations, lifestyles, holiness, and love of the sons of the Kingdom will be like.

Blessed = to be happy, to be envied, one upon whom God has placed His ability for abundance, success, and satisfaction.



Discussion: Every nation and Kingdom has its own culture. A culture is first seen on how people live outwardly, but the heart of the culture is the underlying values and beliefs that drive people's lives. How do you know when God's Kingdom is beginning to find its way into your heart and His own eternal life begins to live in You? What are the marks? Have you begun to live out the culture of the Kingdom of God?

A. Poor in spirit - To be poor is to have nothing, to be broke, bankrupt. To be poor in spirit is to come to the understanding that you have nothing in yourself, even in your most valiant efforts. It is the attitude of the man who has come to the end of himself and found that he has nothing. This leads us to utter dependence and utter reliance upon the Lord.

The result? All of the Kingdom of God is now at this man's fingertips to inherit. He has become one in whom the kingdom can truly come.

As you become poor in spirit, people either give up and quit because of the deep emptiness and despair they see in themselves, but others go on beyond this point into truly finding the riches of Christ and His Kingdom.

B. Those who mourn – This does not speak of a sad person, but rather of a broken hearted person. The truth of this heart attitude is describing a person who has so identified with the Lord that he/she has become broken hearted and moved by what moves God. This speaks of two areas...

- Moved with hatred and the disdaining of sin, sickness and all works of darkness and a deep desire to see it eradicated to the glory of God and good of people.
- Moved with compassion to see people saved, healed and set free.

This is the mourning Jesus describes here. This is the beginning of true spiritual ministry, receiving of the love and hate of God. It puts an end to self-fulfillment, selfish ambition, and self-love.

And to these people, **the promise is...** comfort, God's own comfort. When you join the Lord Jesus in His great burden for the world, in some indescribable way, He releases His comfort into your heart.

C. The meek – Meekness is not weakness, it is strength brought willingly under the control of another to bring about good. This is *blessed is the man who has seen my great authority and brought his life completely under Me*. Some of the primary signs of this is obedience to Christ, humility, and gentleness with others. It is a very opposite spirit of the world.

The reward... you shall inherit the earth. Wow! The world tells us to get ahead in life we must fight, scratch, look out for self, run over people, and be selfish. Jesus says to win the world you must submit, give up your rights, live and serve in humility, put Him and others ahead of yourself. Moses is the supreme example of a man who *was the meekest man on the earth* but was filled with authority and power from heaven.

D. The hungry – A deep, passionate desire for Christ and His Kingdom is the next heart attitude of the KOG. There are so many things that we are hungry for, but the real question is how hungry are we for God? How desperate are we for His kingdom to come upon the earth?

Our hunger will determine our life pursuit. Most are not hungry enough to change and to seek and go after Him fully. Our hunger level must exceed our comfort level or nothing will happen. What you are hungry for is what you pursue. Most believers are hungry for a good, safe Christian life with just enough of God and His kingdom's work to make them happy.

The promise... you shall be satisfied. There is a deep inward satisfaction that comes with finding Him, His love, the goodness of His house, and your place in His service. Nothing else can satisfy like Him. Psalms 90.14, 17.15

E. The merciful – This is one of the most neglected heart traits in Kingdom living today. Mercy is the very nature of the kingdom. Our lives entered the Kingdom through forgiveness. It is His mercy through forgiveness that daily maintains my fellowship with Him. I must have His mercy everyday. And yet, we don't live in mercy. We judge, we criticize; we form opinions about people in our hearts. We are like Olympic judges passing out ratings on people's lives and performances saying who are the good & the bad, who are the winners and losers.

The reward... we will be shown mercy. So many sons and daughters have cut themselves off from the mercy of God because of their attitudes. We must deal with the attitudes of criticism, judgmentalism, and unforgiveness to live well in this kingdom or we will forfeit our lives under the mercy of God. This may well be one of the most neglected attitudes of the kingdom heart and life. Mercy or judgment becomes the funnel everything passes through, in and out of our lives.

F. The pure in heart – The attitude of One Thing living – Jesus is All! I exist for one purpose – to know Him and make Him known. Pure orange juice has only one thing in it, orange juice. A pure heart has only one thing in it – Jesus. In this attitude, Jesus says that the happy man is the one who all the other options have fallen away and he has settled only upon Jesus. A man with true simplicity of heart called simple and pure devotion to Him (2 Corinthians 11.3)

Mary of Bethany in the Gospels is a great example of the ONE THING LIFE.

The Promise... they shall see God! Wow! This is the greatest reward of all. We shall know Him, see Him, and have continually deeper more intimate revelation of Him in our lives and

ministry. We shall also see what He's doing and be able to join Him in that rather than always flailing around looking for His will and most of the time just doing our own good works in the ministry. We shall see God!

G. The peacemakers – those who seek to bring His peace into every situation and circumstance of life. Those who seek to bring the peace of being under His rule and His reign into others. This does not mean that everything around you is always peaceful. Sometimes there is a peace that comes only on the other side of war, on the other side of confrontation, on the other side of repentance, on the other side of hardship. True peace is only found in those who have fully yielded to His will and way.

This could also mean the shalom peace of God – that blessing, harmony, prosperity, total life blessing and success that only God can bring to a man. How blessed is that man who seeks to bring this into men's lives.

The reward... they shall be called the sons of God. We will truly be seen by the world and heaven as sons of God for we are living upon the earth like God is in heaven... trying to bring His great shalom peace into men's hearts and lives.

H. The persecuted – This is the final attribute listed by Jesus in these great heart attitudes of the Kingdom. This describes the men and women who...

- Love Him more than man's opinion
- Have chosen to live differently and go against the stream of life
- Have become warriors with Him against wickedness and for life
- Love not their lives unto death
- Are making a significant difference in life

The reward... It began with the inheritance of possessing the kingdom and it ends there also. These will truly move into and enjoy deeply the blessing of kingdom experience and life.

Lesson 9: Acts – Forcefully Advancing the Kingdom

In the book of Acts, we enter the story of the church, but there is a greater story that we must understand if we are to have a full life in Christ now. Acts is the story of the Kingdom of God in operation and demonstration in the lives of normal people living out Christ in the Church.

Jesus spoke many times about the Kingdom but only a few times about the Church. His consuming passion was the Kingdom. Here are some truths about the Church in regard to the Kingdom of God...

- 1) **The Church is NOT the Kingdom.** The Church is IN the Kingdom if it operates in cooperation with Kingdom principles and laws. Unfortunately, the Church can choose not to receive the Kingdom in faith. This leaves the church with a pharisaical existence. Religious activity with no power.
- 2) **The Kingdom is greater than the Church, but the Church is part of the Kingdom.** Kingdom citizens are members of the Church, but the Kingdom of God is defined by the rule and reign of the King (Jesus), not by its citizens and not by any geographical boundaries. In other words, everyone and everything that comes under the rule and reign of Christ is a part of the Kingdom of God.
- 3) **The Church is called to manifest and advance the Kingdom.** The church is the bride of the King. When the church receives the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised, things begin to happen. The Kingdom of God is preached, and then signs and wonders follow.



Bible Study: Read: Acts 1.3 & Acts 28.23, 31

What can you learn about the Book of Acts from these verses?

The book of Acts is the story of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in full operation and demonstration in His followers. He was in the midst of them demonstrating the divine rule and blessing of God among men. The book of Acts begins with Jesus giving last minute instructions about His Kingdom and it ends with Paul teaching the same things. God is trying to tell us a great truth- ***this book is the revelation of what the Kingdom looks like in this age!***

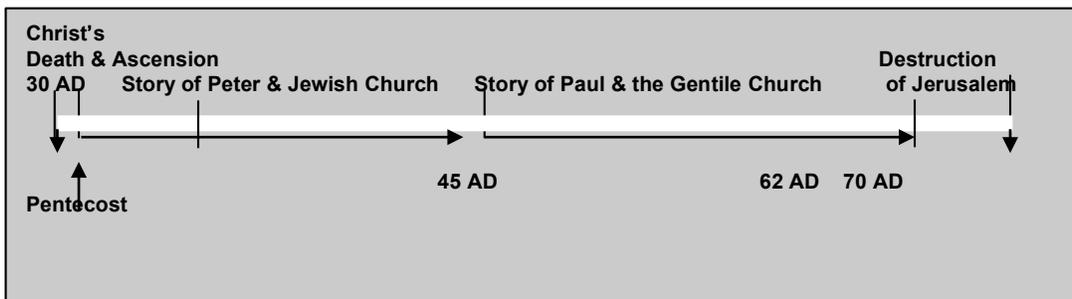
Acts is the only book in the New Testament written specifically as a history. It takes up the narrative where Luke's Gospel ends, and gives the history of God's Kingdom life in the early church. Luke had ample time and access to the actual people involved in the life of Christ, and the events of the early church in Jerusalem. Luke tells nothing of Jerusalem's fall in AD 70 or of Nero's persecution of the believers which began in AD 64. He also concludes Acts near the end of Paul's imprisonment in Rome around AD 62; therefore, we conclude that it was around this time that Acts was penned.

The Story of Acts

Acts is the story of two men, their ministries, and the very different churches that arose under their leadership. It shows how this Kingdom might look in various cultures with different values and cultural norms.

Peter – Chapter 1-12 is the story of the Jewish church and Peter's apostolic leadership and ministry in the Jewish context.

Paul – Chapter 13-28 is the story of the Gentile church and Paul's apostolic leadership and ministry in a Gentile world.



What about the other 12 Apostles? How did they end?

In the AD 40s, they divided up the world systematically and dispersed themselves to preach the Gospel and establish the Kingdom. All were martyred but John, who was the last Apostle of the 12 to die.

Matthew – Martyred in Ethiopia- AD 54

Peter – Martyred in Rome by Nero, crucified upside down

Andrew – in Asia He was crucified. Oh I love the cross!

John – Boiled in oil but did not harm him, was banished to Patmos and finally returned to Ephesus in AD 95. Died at around 100

Paul – spent two years in prison, released and he then traveled and preached in Greece, Rome, France, and Spain. Returned to Rome, captured by Nero and beheaded around AD 67-72.



Reflection: When you think of the Kingdom of God as revealed in the book of Acts, what traits come to your mind?

What made their lives different from yours and mine?

Demonstrations of the Kingdom of God in Acts

A careful study of Acts reveals many Kingdom characteristics of what God's good rule should be like in the lives and communities of men.

1. A people and church of power demonstration

Matthew 12.28 tells us that works of power are signs that the Kingdom of God has come among or upon us. Signs and wonders are the cutting edge of the Kingdom of God. There are 42 demonstrations of supernatural power recorded in Acts. How was the power of Christ demonstrated:

- Powerful preaching, conviction, and conversion
- Healing & deliverance
- Raising the dead
- Supernatural transportation
- Divine protection

Jesus promises that power will be a defining mark of His followers in the preaching of the Kingdom of God. Mark 16.15-18 ***"And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation... "And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly {poison,} it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."***

2. Supernatural communication

God still speaks clearly today. In fact, the promise of Joel 2 and Acts 2 is that when the Holy Spirit comes upon the people, the primary trait will be that they will be very prophetic- hearing what God is saying and following Him. Jesus promised that His people would be able to follow Him because they would hear and know His voice clearly. John 10.3-4

The Lord speaks 27 times in Acts in 28 chapters. How does He speak:

- The voice of the Holy Spirit - 7 times
- Angelic visitation – 6 times
- A vision or trance – 6 times
- Prophecy – 5 times
- Tongues – 3 times

Many times it was in a combination of these, but the underlying fact was that God led, directed, and spoke to His people.

IS THIS THE REALITY OF OUR EXPERIENCE? IT IS THE REALITY OF LIFE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

3. A movement led by apostles and prophets

Today, pastors lead all of our churches and movements. Pastors are shepherds and will only produce sheep! At the movement level, we usually have bureaucracy or organizational leaders instead of apostles and prophets.

In Acts, elder led churches, apostles, and prophets were the leader builders beside the local elders.

The Bible Says: Ephesians 2.20, 4.11-12 ***"having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner {stone}... And He gave some {as} apostles, and some {as} prophets, and some {as} evangelists, and some {as}***

pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ”

Apostles = People given great authority by Christ to establish and build the church.

There are many beside the twelve in the NT listed and named

- Powerful teachers - they often moved in miracles
- Fathers to local elders and fathers of movements
- Builders of local churches

Engaged in: Pioneer evangelism, church planting, teaching and laying doctrinal foundations in the local churches, establishing and appointing local elders, writing instructions, correcting problems, sending other ministers in to lead or build.

Prophets = Moved in teams under the Apostles lead. Often revealed the mind of the Lord about what was currently happening (Forthtelling) or what was coming (Foretelling). Strategy for ministry often occurred after prophetic words.

Key: These two offices were not lone rangers. They were totally based in local churches and sent out into wider ministry from their local expressions. They always worked in teams together with the local elders.

4. A radical, vibrant church life

Great Pictures of this life in Acts 2.44-47, Acts 4.32-37 & Antioch

- High community, sharing of life, laughter, love
- Share money and possessions according to the needs (4.32)
- Culturally diverse (13)
- A sending & giving church (4.32-37 & 11.27-30)

5. Increase and addition – constant kingdom expansion

Everything alive grows and multiplies or it is either not alive or it is dying. The Kingdom grows and increases.

It speaks of ***increase, multiplication, addition, or numbers*** 22 times

Bible Study: Acts 2.47, 4.4, 5.14, 6.1, 6.7, 11.21

The Kingdom of God should never be static, it must be ever growing, expanding, and reaching out. It is the nature of Christ's life, His Kingdom, and His rule. Numbers ARE important to God! They are people! The very essence of life in the early church was increase. They were full of Christ and constantly thinking about increase, more people, and souls. It was at the core of the church and what the church did.

Any church that does not have this operating within them has lost their Kingdom dynamic. There may be seasons when we don't grow as much outwardly or as fast, but those should only be seasons. (See Genesis 1.28; Deuteronomy 7.13)

6. Centrality of the Word

The Kingdom of God is built upon the Word. These early followers were devoted to growing in the Word (Acts 2.42, 13.1, 17.11)

- Speaking the Word - 35 x's
- Teaching - 15 x's,
- Preaching – 11 x's,
- Speaking – 25 x's

In 1 John 2.14 it says that the young men in the Kingdom of God will have the Word of God abiding in them. They will be full of it and it will pour out of their lives.



Application: What about you? Does this describe your life?

What are the differences from your church and personal life and theirs?

Does your desire for the Kingdom of God exceed your level of comfort?

What do you personally need to do to experience God and His Kingdom like these early believers?

How would you build a ministry upon Kingdom Life?

Lesson 10: The Kingdom and the World

One of the great problems in Christianity has been a Church viewpoint instead of a Kingdom viewpoint. They are very, very different.



Reflection: Describe as many differences as you can of a Kingdom mindset and a church only mindset.

Church Mindset

Kingdom Mindset

God's goal was never to reign in the Church only; His goal was to reign in the world. In Revelation 11.15 we hear a mighty angel proclaim...

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign."

This has always been the will and desire of God. Even the devil knew it for he took Jesus up on a very high mountain and showed Him all of the kingdoms of the world and their glory in a moment of time. Then he said, "All of this has been handed over to me and I give it to whomever I wish..." Notice that Jesus did NOT debate him about this. From this passage we conclude:

- Jesus Christ came to make ALL of the kingdoms of the world God's!
- Satan has had almost unlimited control of these since Adam
- Satan knew that Jesus wanted to reign over all of these kingdoms

Jesus taught His men to pray, "***Thy reign come and Thy will be done one earth as it is in heaven.***" He did NOT say in the church, He said on earth, in every area, every kingdom. We must change our minds about the kingdom and the world. Jesus is a passionate, aggressive King who desires to reign over ***every kingdom*** in this world, not just the church.

Salt and Light

In the book of Matthew (5.13-16), Jesus teaches two principles of the Kingdom moving out of the religious environment (the church) into the world. He teaches the principles of salt and light. These two principles teach that we must NOT stay contained in the church, but be spilled out into the world in varying degrees.

Salt

Jesus principle of salt speaks of sons of the Kingdom bringing His flavor and healing virtue into all of their relationships and environment. Salt does not completely change its environment, but it does provide...

- A definite change of the flavor
- A preserving of the food beyond its normal lifespan
- A healing to wounds

When a person becomes salt to his world, he carries Christ's light, life and power into the situation around him and influences people on a relational, person to person, basis. It will affect his family, his co-workers, and everything around him bringing a change of taste to the situations, a healing virtue, and a preserving of people's lives. At the salt level, the man does NOT totally change or bring forth the Kingdom to everything though.

Light

Light is very different than salt. Salt has an effect on a much smaller scale than light. When light is turned on, it drives out much if not all darkness. This speaks of the kingdom coming on a much larger scale. This would speak of people in situations bringing their...

- Entire family under the reign and blessing of Jesus
- A business being given over to the Lord for His purposes and glory
- Government officials bringing all of their authority to glorify Christ and serve men
- A media or publishing company coming under the reign of Christ

When men and women become light, they begin to have powerful and major influence in the world and Christ and His Kingdom come to have first place in everything pertaining to that person.

The Kingdoms of this World

Sociologists have determined that there are seven fundamental kingdoms that rule the affairs of men. Each of them exerts power over people's thinking, values, culture, and lifestyle. Until Jesus Christ rules in these, the Church really has very little power to make a major difference in the world itself. We can see people saved, but the world is not changing.

The Kingdom of Religion

This is the single area we have focused in on – religion and the church. It is very true that this IS one of the great kingdoms that rule in the hearts of men, but it is only one!

The Kingdom of Politics

For years, Christians have stayed out of politics and yet God desires to reign in the political arena. Many say it does NOT matter what happens in this realm, but that is a great deception of the Enemy.

In The Babylonian Captivity of Israel, God and His people prayed and worked hard toward influencing a king (a politician) who would favor God's people and the Kingdom. Cyrus was raised up by the Lord who worked with God's people for the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple. When he died, an evil politician took his place and for about 15 years, he forced the rebuilding of the Temple to cease and created a difficult environment for the people of God. The people prayed and worked in this political arena and God raised up another king much more generous and favorable to them.

We must see the Kingdom of Politics become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

The Kingdom of Education

All through history, it has been very clear that whoever controlled the educational world, controlled the thinking of the children. In many nations we know that there has been definite attempts to take control of these educational institutions by the powers and workers of darkness. Here are some things that have taken place in America:

- In the mid 1900s, a group led by John Dewey brought secular humanism as a basis for public education and pushed that the Christian basis for schools be secularized.
- In the 1960s-70s, prayer and the reading of the Scriptures were removed from schools.
- Text books were altered to take God's place in American history out
- Many liberal professors were introduced to the University system bringing liberal theology and philosophy.

The Kingdom of Business and Industry

This area of life determines the work and production life of people. It also controls much of the generation and distribution of wealth as it is created. For many years, the powers of darkness have controlled this arena and the church has had too little finances.

The Muslims certainly know about the power of this area. They are funding the radical expansion of Islam with oil industry money throughout the world. When will we wake up and take up our authority in this realm?

The Kingdom of Finance

The financial kingdom controls the flow and distribution of money. It is a system built upon corruption and greed and has been under the powers of darkness for many years. The banking system and other monetary institutions favor the rich and the powerful and the common man is often a pawn in their hands. Money has to flow into the hands of God's people for the creation of new businesses to generate Kingdom finances. Christ must come to have first place in the Kingdom of Finance.

The Kingdom of Arts and Entertainment

When Alexander the Great conquered peoples, he knew that one of the ways to their hearts was through entertainment. There is something in people that loves to laugh, cry, and cheer for another. He would establish a theatre, amphitheater or coliseum in most of the larger cities. He knew that you could rule the human heart if you could rule this area of their lives. The world system has controlled this area for centuries. Theatre, music, sports, etc. has been controlled by greed, sex, and violence for too long. The Kingdom must come!

The Kingdom of Media and Communications

This is one of the most powerful kingdoms on the earth. It is absolutely controlled by the secular, godless powers. The problem is, people believe (even God's people) what they see and read and hear through the media. Television, radio, newspapers, and magazines fill our world with godless philosophy and even God's own children are under its control. He who controls the printed page and the airwaves, controls the minds of the people. We must have Kingdom men and women invade this area to bring righteousness and justice again. Thy Kingdom Come!



Discussion: What would it look like when Christ's Kingdom comes into these other areas of life? How will His reign come there? Will He or His people forcefully impose it?

Examples from the World Today

- 1) Nigeria – there is a growing church in Nigeria that has had a clear revelation of the Kingdom of God coming into the kingdoms of this world. The church has grown to almost 1 million but it has leaders in almost every sector of society. The legal counsel to the government, medical, telecommunications, etc. They have saved over \$250 million in tithes and offerings in order to build a complete Christian University to train doctors, lawyers, politicians, media people, etc. so that the Kingdom of God can fully come to Nigeria.
- 2) S. Korea – in the 1950s a man named Yongi Cho began a church in Seoul, Korea. Over the years, the Kingdom of God has begun to come. The church is over 750,000 and has planted many more churches. But beyond that, the followers of Jesus have much influence in business, education, politics, finance, etc. Pastor Cho himself is one of the most influential men in the nation.

God's Total Answer to Man's Total Need

The Kingdom of God is the only answer to man's needs and to the needs of the world. We live in a time when there seems to be no answers and the world is looking for answers that NO ONE IS GIVING. We are looking to our governments, to business, to world leaders, to the United Nations but they are bankrupt; they have no answers.

Look at the following examples:

- 1) **World Hunger and Poverty** – The world is in the most desperate times it has ever seen as millions, if not billions are crying out for the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. The world is trying to respond, but they have no answer. There is plenty of money to meet the daily needs of the world but it is held in greed and corruption. There is only one answer – THE KINGDOM OF GOD. If God begins to reign in men's hearts, they will release the necessary provision for those who have need. We see this clearly in Acts 2 & 4. When the Kingdom comes men give and share!
- 2) **Wars and Rumors of War** – In many places of the world today, governments and the United Nations are being called upon to solve major conflicts that are leading to war. Nation against nation and faction against faction within countries are ripping our world apart. We have been able to end the outer conflict in some areas, but the underlying tensions are still there. Remove the UN troops and the conflict will surface again. Governments cannot solve these problems, they are only getting worse. The solution – THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Only Christ can bring peace to men and unity in the midst of diversity. When Christ comes to hearts and begins to reign and rule, love becomes the deciding factor. Love wins.

- 3) **Totalitarian Dictatorships** – There are so many peoples ruled over by harsh totalitarian regimes today. The United Nations is powerless to solve this travesty. Diplomacy, sanctions, and threats of invasion have done nothing. Only the Kingdom of God can change the human heart and cause men to rule with love and be ruled over with love.
- 4) **Domestic Violence** – As we move throughout, investigating the home-life in every culture, we discover that domestic violence and neglect are ripping lives apart. Governments are passing laws and trying to place children in better situations, but the devastation goes on. Man's laws cannot solve the problems of men's hearts. There is only one solution – THE KINGDOM OF GOD!
- 5) **Depression & Suicide** – One last example is the deep, inward darkness invading people's hearts called depression, which often leads to suicide. This is a malady that is on the rise today in every nation of the earth. The hopelessness and despair is growing. Our suicide prevention plans and psychiatrists best efforts are helping little. There is only one solution to man's inward problems – God's reign in and blessing the human heart – THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

The Kingdom of God is God's total answer to the world's total need!



Application: In what areas are you called to bring Christ's Kingdom rule and blessing to? Are you being salt? Are you moving into the power of light? What would it look like if Christ genuinely came to have first place in these areas? How would it change the world?

Imagine a world in which Christ ruled all and blessed all, what would it look and be like? This is the Kingdom of God!

Appendix 1: Scriptures for Further Study

Study the passages below and make some notes in the margin to the right on what Jesus is teaching us about the Kingdom.

1. Matthew 4.23
2. Matthew 5.3-10
3. The seven parables of the Kingdom in Matthew 13.
4. Mark 4.26
5. Mark 9.1
6. Luke 17.20-21
7. Luke 12.31-32
8. Luke 18.16
9. Luke 19.11-27
10. Luke 11.17-23
11. John 3.3-8
12. Acts 8.12, 28.23, 31
13. Acts 14.22
14. Romans 14.17-18
15. 1 Corinthians 4.20
16. Colossians 1.13
17. Hebrews 12.28

Major Ideas and Concepts:

1)

2)

3)

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7)

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10)

Steps of Action:

1)

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10)

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