



Jesus
Lesson #3, The Kingdom

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Kingdom Thoughts

- *We think the most important thing about His coming was our salvation – Jesus may have a different point of view.*
- *The kingdom of God is as much a reality operating in the world today as the counter-kingdom.*





The Kingdom?

- To a small child who has little autonomy, his kingdom is his thoughts, his imagination, and perhaps his room.*
- To many office workers their kingdom is their workstation or perhaps their office.*
- To some others their kingdom is their home, or perhaps their workshop in the garage.*





Why so confusing?

- *Why is does it seem so confusing? Jesus spent so much time on the subject, yet it remains a little mysterious.*
- *There is a spiritual sense – I can bow to the king and live by his teachings now in this life. (at hand)*
- *There is a literal sense - 2 Timothy 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. NIV*





The Kingdom?

- *Your kingdom is that place or realm where you can exercise control – where your own personal choice determines what happens.*
- *“Our kingdom is simply the range of our effective will. Whatever we generally have the say over is our kingdom. And our having the say over something is precisely what places it within our kingdom. In creating humans, God made them to rule, to reign, to have dominion in a limited sphere. Only so they can be persons.” Dallas Willard*






The Kingdom?

- *God's kingdom then is similar to ours – the range of His effective will is His kingdom. Where what He wants done, is done.*
- *We live in a period of time where it seems His kingdom is optional, but nothing could be further from the truth – it is inevitable.*
- *What a mystery it is that He would allow men to choose for now whether to submit to His rule or not.*





The Kingdom?

- *Matthew's gospel mentions the "kingdom of heaven" some 30 plus times and is the only place in the N.T. where the phrase is used.*
 - *The phrase "kingdom of God" is used extensively throughout the other 3 gospels and the rest of the N.T.*
 - *Why? Best guess is that Matthew was writing to Jewish people who would have been offended to see and hear the word for "God" so he opted for another word that would carry the same weight.*
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Kingdom of Heaven or God?

- *Matthew 11:11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*
- *Luke 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.*



Kingdom of Heaven or God?

- *Matthew 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*
- *Mark 4:11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all [these] things are done in parables:*





Kingdom of Heaven or God?

- *Matthew 13:33*
Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.
- *Luke 13:20-21* And again he said, *Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*





Kingdom of Heaven or God?

- *Conclusion – they are different phrases that identify the same concept.*
- *In other words, any discussion of a fundamental difference between the two is to invest time in a difference without a distinction.*






Matthew 11:12


“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” NKJV

“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.” NIV





A Difficult Section

- *The whole idea of Heaven being assaulted and entered by force seems at odds with what we would naturally assume.*
 - *The idea of Heaven being taken by force has been explained in a number of ways and some of them seem like words a drift in search of coherence.*
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A Difficult Section

- *One plausible explanation is that in the O.T. economy the approach to Heaven, though always by faith in Messiah, was routed through Jewish institutions and rituals (the law and prophets).*
- *Now that Jesus has arrived there is a new and dramatic way to enter the kingdom that has no set method other than Jesus himself – be as aggressive as you want and pursue entrance.*
- *The kingdom, though once approached through ritual and practice, is now open to new approaches.*





A Difficult Section

- *Another plausible explanation is rooted in the kind of people who followed Jesus – publicans, harlots, and the openly sinful.*
- *This crowd was not refined at all and upon hearing that they too could be made right with God could have “stormed the gates” so to speak.*
- *This explanation fits the language and is in harmony with his followers.*





A Difficult Section

- *Micah 2:12 "I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people. 13 One who breaks open the way will go up before them; they will break through the gate and go out. Their king will pass through before them, the Lord at their head." NIV*
- *What if John the Baptist is the one Micah spoke of who would break through the old sheep pen and set them free?*





A Difficult Section

- *In this view no one is breaking into the kingdom of Heaven – they are breaking out of the old approaches and rushing the open spot in the fence to do so.*
- *Even the very next verse reads like this - “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.” NKJV*
- *Something dramatic had changed – no longer would the approach to God go through Israel exclusively, but now are all invited to come through a new and living way.*





The Kingdom is “at hand”?

- *Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." NKJV*
- *Matthew 10:7 And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. NKJV*





The Kingdom is “at hand”?

- *You would have to be looking for some hidden meaning to understand Jesus’ “at hand” statements as anything other than “the kingdom of Heaven is available now”.*
- *Remember – God’s kingdom is the range of His effective will.*
- *When Jesus said “the kingdom of God is at hand” he meant it is available now.*






The Kingdom is “at hand”?

- *In Dallas Willard’s book “The Divine Conspiracy” he uses an example from his childhood when electric lines first reached his home on the farm.*
- *As soon as the lines were strung, electricity was “at hand” (available) and everything changed.*
- *It was no longer on it’s way to his house – it had arrived with such force there was no denying it – think in the same terms (times 100) with the kingdom of Heaven.*






The Kingdom is “at hand” in today’s context?

- *So what does it mean to us that the kingdom of Heaven (kingdom of God) is available to us now?*
- *First of all, it means we can enter now - there is no waiting and wondering if it will be open to us; it is.*
- *Secondly, when I enter the realm of God’s effective will I come under his jurisdiction and control – this is the Spirit –filled life.*





The Kingdom is “at hand” in today’s context?

- *Just like the example Dallas Willard used with electricity reaching his family’s farm – when the power arrived, everything changed.*
- *From that day forth his family had a constant source of power to help them sow and reap on the farm.*
- *Do I need to say it? We too have available to us a constant source of power to help us sow and reap.*



What if the Jews had believed?

- *Acts 3:17 "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. 18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christa would suffer. 19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, 20 and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you — even Jesus. NIV*
- *Sounds like the kingdom could have been setup earlier?*



The Kingdom is within you?

- ***Luke 17:21 “nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you.” NIV***
- ***Luke 17:21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst." NASU***
- ***Luke 17:21 For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." NKJV***
- ***Luke 17:21 For the Kingdom of God is already among you." NLT***






The Kingdom is within you?

- ***Some have used this verse and the “within you” translation to teach that if only man would behave properly that all would be well and the kingdom of God would come.***
- ***It is a modified humanist position – that God exists, but man has the power to change his destiny.***
- ***Man’s behavioral problems can be improved from within himself, but not his sin problem.***






When are we “in”?

- *Colossians 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. NIV*
 - *Sounds like we are not in yet. (inheritance)*
 - *Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, NIV*
 - *Sounds like we are already in.*
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Who is 'in' and 'out'?

- *1 Corinthians 6:9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. NIV*
 - *The disqualified were qualified.*
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Kingdom Thoughts

- *The first messages of both Jesus and John the Baptist were “repent for the kingdom of heaven is near”.*
- *Both the first and the last beatitudes are rewarded with “theirs is the kingdom of Heaven”.*
- *“your kingdom come” in the Lord’s prayer suggests that while the kingdom is available now, there is a fullness of it that is still future as far as the Earth is concerned.*






Your Kingdom Come

- *Matthew 6:10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. NIV*
- *The prayer request is to have the kingdom be as prevalent on Earth as it already is in Heaven.*
- *Given our new understanding of his kingdom, do you suppose it is possible for God's kingdom to come and not have his will be done?*





A High Standard

- *Matthew 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. NIV*
 - *Those whom were thought most qualified for Heaven were still not good enough to enter.*
 - *This debunks the “works” argument - if even those who seem to be righteous are disqualified, then all are disqualified.*
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The Kingdom and Humility.

- *Matthew 18:4 Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. NIV*
- *The greatest? Isn't God the greatest in his kingdom?*
- *In the Kingdom of God pride is eschewed – remember the sin of Lucifer?*
- *Matthew 18:4 Whoever becomes simple and elemental again, like this child, will rank high in God's kingdom. (The Message)*





The Kingdom of Heaven is Like

- *A sower who went out sowing seed. (needs fertile soil)*
- *A mustard seed. (small, but as huge potential)*
- *Yeast. (infectious)*
- *Hidden treasure. (mysterious, but valuable)*
- *A merchant looking for pearls. (requires searching)*
- *A net. (captivating)*





Authenticating the Message

- *The power of Jesus shown through his miracles and teachings authenticated his claim that God's kingdom had arrived.*
- *What evidence is there in my life to authenticate my claims that his kingdom is available?*
- *Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. NKJV*





Questions

