



Lesson Four

Bible Basics – God’s Kingdom

A Holy Government

A kingdom is defined as a territory or state ruled over by a monarch. Throughout history, there have been some 1000s of kingdoms, some with iron-clad rules, others that rose and fell rather swiftly. Today, there are 44 ruling kingdoms across the globe, consisting of each continent apart from Antarctica. A monarch is a type of government where leadership is assigned to one person, specifically a king or

queen, or occasionally an emperor. The biggest difference between monarchies and dictatorships is that dictators seize rule, most often against popular vote, while monarchs usually are established with the blessing of the people.

Throughout the bible, a common theme regarding God’s Kingdom can be established. In the New Testament alone, phrases

referring to the Kingdom of God appear more than 240 times, with countless others mentioning it in passing. When teaching the disciples to pray, Jesus specifically mentioned the Kingdom in the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
Your Kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven

God's Kingdom is important in the bible, and therefore Christians need to familiarize themselves deeply with the topic. In this lesson, we hope to establish three important details of God's Kingdom that all Christians need to know.

1. What is God's Kingdom?
2. Who is the King of God's Kingdom?
3. How does God's Kingdom directly effect

us today?

To start, let's address the first question. Simply put, God's Kingdom is a *kingdom established by God*. Yahweh placed this Kingdom as a 'holy government' over the heavens and earth (**Read: Psalm 103:19**). Those who reside in either place are under the jurisdiction of God's Kingdom, and live under Yahweh's heavenly rule.

Discussion: What is the territory over which God's Kingdom presides?



Everything in heaven and on earth are under God's Kingdom

Unlike earthly kingdoms, God's Kingdom is more powerful. In what ways? To start with, God's Kingdom is eternal (Daniel 2:44). That means that it will never be destroyed. While human rulership will shift, fade, and in many ways completely dissolve over time, God's Kingdom will reign as it always has.

Another example of the power of God's Kingdom is in its ability to help people. Most human rulers are not working directly in the interests of their people. Even if they do want to help people, human rulers are limited in what they can do. But God's Kingdom is established by Yahweh, with whom nothing is impossible (Luke 18:27). In his love for us, Yahweh God established an eternal king for us to follow, and that king is none other than **Jesus Christ**.

Discussion: In what ways is God's Kingdom like any other kingdom?

Discussion: In what ways is God's Kingdom different from any other kingdom?

King of Kings



Since God's Kingdom is a literal kingdom, it makes sense that God would elect a King to sit upon His throne. When at first the Kingdom was enacted, Yahweh did so to establish His rule over the heavens and the earth. The bible says, "Yahweh has established *His throne* in the heavens, and *His kingdom* rules over all." (Psalm 103:19). Notice how the Psalmist refers to it as *God's throne* and *God's kingdom*? God ruled His kingdom from heaven. This is why it is called the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven.

Discussion: Why did Yahweh establish His kingdom?

While God sits on His heavenly throne, He has

twice in the past established humans to rule over the earthly portion of His kingdom. The first was Adam. When Adam was first created, God gave instructions to Adam that included ruling over the earth and the sea (**Read: Genesis 1:28**). Having dominion over the earth and seas meant that Adam and Eve were selected to be the king and queen of God's earthly Kingdom.

In the rest of the bible, many kings have risen and fallen on the earth, several with the blessing of Yahweh. None of them, however, were rulers of God's Kingdom. No imperfect man could rule God's earthly Kingdom, as we saw with the fall of Adam.

When a new King arose, he would have to be perfect. God knew exactly who to select – His perfect son, Jesus the Christ.

God first alerted us to the coming rulership of Christ through the prophet Isaiah. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and *the government shall be upon his shoulder*, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty One, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6). Later, God clearly identifies Jesus as King (**Read: 1 Timothy 6:15**).

Jesus is the King of
God's Kingdom



Discussion: How does scripture prophesize Jesus as the King of God's Kingdom?

Some people mistakenly take this as evidence that Jesus is God. However, that's not what the bible teaches. Yahweh and Jesus are distinct, separate, individual people. It is true that Jesus has Divine Authority as King of God's Kingdom. Before we can take this as evidence that Jesus is God, we must first look at the whole picture.

Jesus's authority was granted to him by his Father. If Jesus was God, he would have been born with this Divine Authority. Yet he himself tells us that it was given to him by the Father (Matthew 11:27). Furthermore, Jesus will be giving that Authority back to the Father (Read: 1 Corinthians 15:28). Afterwards, Jesus will no

longer be King, but God Himself will rule as King (Revelation 21:3). If we go by the logic that being King means Jesus is God, then he was not always God and will not always be God, which doesn't resonate with the bible's message on God's eternal nature (Isaiah 40:28).

Discussion: If Jesus is King of Kings, then why do we say that Jesus is not God?

The Power of God's Kingdom



God's Kingdom has powers beyond that of limited earthly kingdoms. There are no borders in God's Kingdom; all creatures in heaven and on earth are subject to its authority. After his ascension, Jesus took control of God's Kingdom in his Father's name. All creatures are therefore under the authority of Jesus the Christ, who himself is under the authority of Yahweh God.

While human rulers might mean well, there is a limit to what they can do for their subjects. However, under the authority of Jesus and Yahweh, God's Kingdom has no such limits. What things has God's Kingdom done that proves its divine power?

Human rulers live, and die, and their authority will be replaced. Jesus, however, will not die. He reigns from the heavens as an eternal spirit creature, operating under his Father Yahweh. When the end of days comes, Jesus will reign on earth for 1000 years, and then will pass the Kingdom back to Yahweh God. This shows that the Kingdom's authority will never change. From time incarnate until the end of time, Yahweh's rule remains (Zechariah 14:9)

Like any kingdom, God's Kingdom has laws that, when applied, benefit all people. This is the Law of Christ, and Christians to this day are bound in its authority. The Law is summarized by the

two greatest commands: 1) Love your God, and 2) Love each other. When we follow these commands, we apply the whole law in its most potent form.

Discussion: Read Matthew 22:36-40 and discuss the following:

How do the two greatest commands summarize the Law of Christ?

God's Kingdom has power that human rulers can't possess. For example, through God's Kingdom, we find salvation from sin (Matthew 6:33). By his authority as King, Jesus used his power to heal the sick (Luke 10:9), to feed the hungry (Romans 14:17), and to cast out demons (Matthew 12:28). While human rulers may seek to do these things, they do not address the

fundamental flaws in our world that cause these things.

Jesus, however, has.



Jesus used his power to address the root of our problems, thus helping many people.

When Jesus died on the cross, by the authority of God's Kingdom, he saved us from our sins (Colossians 2:14). In so doing, Jesus deflated the power of Satan, who uses his manipulative tactics to lead us into sin. By accepting the authority of God's Kingdom, our sins are forgiven, no matter how terrible they were! He addressed the root of

mankind's problems directly.

In the future, the bible promises that Jesus will return to defeat Satan once and for all. When he does, the root of all human suffering will be removed from this earth. The bible says "and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4) What a beautiful description of future life! The bible tells us that God's Kingdom will be responsible for ending sickness, pain, suffering, and death. In other words, God's Kingdom will bring us back to Paradise.

The Kingdom and You



While God's Kingdom has had tremendous impact on the past, and will do so again in the future, you might find yourself wondering: What does God's Kingdom have to do with me today?

God's Kingdom actively supports its people to this day. When a person dedicates their life to God, we become part of God's Kingdom. Jesus told his followers that we are "no part of this world" (John 17:14). This does not mean that we don't live on planet earth with everybody else, but rather, that our loyalty goes first to God. Likewise, God distinguishes us from the world – which is full of sin and suffering – and sets us apart for a higher purpose.

As members of God's Kingdom, we are expected to act in accordance with the Law of Christ. We put our loyalty to Yahweh God, and His son Jesus Christ, above loyalty to earthly things.

Jesus told his followers not to store up material treasure, but to store up heavenly treasures (Matthew 6:19-21). Instead of putting value on material possessions, we need to set our hearts firmly on what pleases Yahweh: good virtue, and rejection of what is evil (Romans 12:9).

Discussion: How can we show Yahweh that we are loyal to the Kingdom?

In doing so, we place our trust with Yahweh God and His son, Jesus the Christ. We

can do this through bible study, getting to know the virtues that God values. Once we are familiar with these things, we need to make changes to our behavior to reflect those virtues. For example, once we understand that God values truthfulness, we need to work hard to abstain from lying, even by omission.

The second great command is to love our neighbor. This can be difficult and nuanced in application, but ultimately comes down to this: do we treat our neighbors the way Jesus would?

In his parable of the sheep and goats, Jesus described pharisaical behavior that many modern Christians would display. This included turning away immigrants who are in need, refusing to clothe those inadequately

dressed, and turning away food from the hungry. (**Read: Matthew 25:31-46**). Those who refuse to help the poor and needy will be turned away themselves by Jesus in the final days! We need to treat others with dignity and kindness.

Discussion: What can we learn about God's Kingdom from the parable of the sheep and goats?

Obedience to God's laws isn't just an expectation, it's a **command**. Christians are expected to make these changes, even if it is a challenge to do so, but the reward is worth it. When we display Godly qualities, we become closer to God (2 Corinthians 3:18). We begin to view the world more from His perspective, developing a deep appreciation for the life He has given us.

These changes benefit us, too. The bible asserts that every law is for our benefit (Deuteronomy 10:13) When we apply the Law of Christ to our lives, it makes our lives better. In our next lesson, we will talk more in depth about God's Laws, their history, and their role in our lives. Right now, our aim is to establish the why God gave us the Law.

Think of driving. Before a person can operate a motor vehicle, they must be licensed to do so. When we get are license, we are making a promise to obey the laws of the road. If ever we break a law, we can get into trouble. Imagine how badly traffic would flow if there were no traffic laws! Now imagine if everyone followed the rules of the road at all times, how much safer it would be.



If everyone obeyed traffic laws, it would be a lot safer to drive.

Likewise, Yahweh God gives us the Law of Christ to help us navigate the road of our life. Obeying His laws protects us, and those around us, giving everyone a better life. This is why God's Kingdom exists: to adjudicate those laws and help us know the right way to everlasting life!