

## LESSON SEVEN

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD

### **A. DEFINITION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD:**

Jesus taught a great deal about the Kingdom of God. This was the uppermost thought in the minds of all the Jews. The hope of Israel was for their Messiah to come and overthrow their enemies. We see the importance of this when we consider just how anxious His disciples were concerning the kingdom (Acts 1:6).

The Kingdom of God is mentioned four times in the Gospel of St. Matthew, fourteen times in the Gospel of St. Mark, thirty two times in the Gospel of St. Luke, two times in the Gospel of St. John, six times in the Acts, and eight times in Paul's Epistles.

The "Kingdom of God" means primarily the rule of God, the divinely kingly authority. There is no difference between the "Kingdom of God" and the "Kingdom of Heaven." These terms are linguistic variations of the same idea. There is a hostile kingdom, which is the "Kingdom of this world" which is under satanic control. The purpose of Christ's reign is to destroy all hostile forces and to subject all to the rule of the Divine Sovereign. The last enemy to be destroyed will be death.

There are two requirements for any kingdom: (1) There must be a King, a reigning monarch; (2) There must be a realm with subjects over whom He reigns.

In the Kingdom of God, Jesus is the reigning King and anyone who is a member of the Kingdom has crowned Him King of his or her lives.

### **B. JESUS TAUGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD:**

Scriptural Reference:

*"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).*

Here Jesus taught the importance of the Kingdom of God. In this verse of Scripture Jesus told His disciples:

1. The Kingdom of God is of first importance in life;
2. It should be sought before material things;
3. If one sought first the Kingdom of God, the material necessities of life would be added;
4. The Kingdom of God was a righteous kingdom and this righteousness should also be sought.

### **C. JESUS TAUGHT THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM:**

Scriptural References:

*"The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-21).*

*"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36).*

When the Pharisees enquired concerning the Kingdom, Jesus told them that the Kingdom would not come with outward display. They were looking for a display of pomp and splendor. This Jesus said would not be. He also said that Kingdom was within them (in their hearts). He did not mean the hearts of the Pharisees but rather the hearts of the disciples standing within their midst. Also Jesus was standing within their midst and where the King is, there is also the Kingdom.

Jesus told Pilate that His Kingdom was not of this world.

Upon both of the above occasions Jesus taught that the Kingdom was a spiritual kingdom.

The Apostle Paul also taught this truth in his epistles: *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (I Corinthians 4:20).*

The Kingdom of God would not be seen through physical evidence such as meat and drink, but through the fruit of the Holy Ghost, righteousness, peace and joy.

Actually the Kingdom of God is Jesus reigning in the hearts and lives of His Spirit filled saints.

#### **D. JESUS TAUGHT THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD BEGAN WITH THE CLOSE OF JOHN'S MINISTRY:**

Scriptural References:

*"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" (Matthew 11:11).*

*"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16).*

These two Scriptures teach the following facts:

1. The Old Testament closed with the ministry of John the Baptist;
2. Since the least in the Kingdom is greater than John, John the Baptist was not in the Kingdom of God.

#### **E. JESUS TAUGHT THAT IT WAS NOT EASY TO ENTER THE KINGDOM:**

Scriptural References:

*"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12).*

*"... Since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16).*

*"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:25).*

These Scriptures state that Jesus taught that it was not easy to enter the Kingdom of God. There was a price to be paid and few men were willing to pay the required price.

As we shall see in the next paragraph, Jesus said it was necessary to be converted and become as a little child. The act of true repentance is involved here and it is not easy to repent. Repentance calls for death to self, sin, the flesh and the world. This is far from easy. This is where a man must press into it and take it by force.

#### **F. THE NEW BIRTH IS NECESSARY FOR ENTRANCE TO THE KINGDOM:**

Scriptural References:

*"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).*

*"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).*

Jesus spoke the first of the above statements to his disciples; He spoke the second to Nicodemus, a religious leader among the Jews. In both instances these words were not spoken to wicked men but to religious men. However, this fact placed even greater emphasis upon the importance of the new birth. Our Lord states the requirements for entrance to the Kingdom very clearly:

1. One must be converted and become as a child;
2. One must be born of water;
3. One must be born of the Spirit.

In fact Jesus stated that a man would not even see the Kingdom let alone enter the Kingdom, if he were not born again.

To clearly understand just what Jesus meant by being born of the water and the Spirit, we must study the book of the Acts where the message of salvation is preached by the Apostles.

#### **G. JESUS GAVE THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM TO PETER:**

Scriptural Reference:

*"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:19).*

Here Jesus gave to the Apostle Peter the power and authority to preach the gospel of the kingdom. Peter was given the keys to open the door of the kingdom. Peter used these keys and opened the door to the Jews (Acts 2), Samaritans (Acts 8), and Gentiles (Acts 10).

The message that Peter preached was:

1. Repentance;
2. Water baptism in the Name of Jesus; 3.
- Baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

This is the message that opens the door of the Kingdom to the person who desires to enter.

## LESSON SEVEN

### **SELF HELP TEST**

A. Write out a paragraph to show clearly what Jesus meant by giving "the keys of the kingdom" to Peter.

B. Write out TWO Scriptures with references to prove that the Kingdom of God began after the ministry of John the Baptist.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

C. By using Scripture show that the Kingdom of God was a Spiritual Kingdom.

D. By referring to Matthew 18:3 and John 3:5 name THREE essential requirements for entrance to the Kingdom:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_