

## KINGDOM IDENTIFIED

[In this lesson we will identify the characteristics of the Lord's Kingdom.]

A. The words “church” & “kingdom” are sometimes used synonymously, but the words have different meanings.

1. They stress different aspects of God's relationship to His people.

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### “Church”

**Vine** – A compound Greek word: ekklesia: **ek**, “out of,” & **klesis**, “a calling” (**kaleo**, “to call”),

**Thayer** –

1. An **assembly of the people** convened at the public place of council for the purpose of deliberating: Acts 19:39
2. The **assembly of the Israelites** in the wilderness: Acts 7:38; Heb 2:12
3. Any **gathering or throng of men** assembled by chance or tumultuously: Acts 19:32, 41

4. In the Christian sense:

- a. An **assembly of Christians** gathered for worship: 1 Cor 14:19, 35
- b. A company of Christians,
  - 1) Those who anywhere, in city or village, constitute such a company & are united into one body: Acts 5:11
  - 2) The **whole body of Christians** scattered throughout the earth: Matt 16:18
  - 3) The name is transferred to the **assembly of faithful Christians already dead & received into heaven**: Heb 12:23

### “Kingdom”

**Vine** – basileia: Denoting “sovereignty, royal power, kingship dominion,” e. g., Rev 17:18, a concrete noun, denoting the territory or people over whom a king rules, e. g., Matt 4:8; Mark 3:24; Luke 1:33; Matt 12:25

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[This lesson will help us understand more about the nature of the Kingdom of Christ & our place in it.]

## I. JESUS IDENTIFIED THE KINGDOM

A. **The Kingdom** was the main theme of the Lord's teaching while He was on the earth.

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**Mark 1:15** (Jesus & John) – The time is fulfilled, & ***the kingdom of God is at hand***. Repent, & believe in the gospel.

**Matt 6:33** (Conquering worry in the S. on M.)– But seek ***first the kingdom of God*** & His righteousness, & all these things shall be added to you.

**Matt 18:3-4** (The debate over who is greatest) – Assuredly, I say to you, ***unless you are converted & become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven***. 4 Therefore ***whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven***.

**Matt 19:23** (The sad commentary on the RYR)– Assuredly, I say to you that ***it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven***.

**John 18:36** (Before Pilate) – ***My kingdom is not of this world***. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now ***My kingdom is not from here***.

**Acts 1:3** (After resurrection) – to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, ***being seen by them during forty days & speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God***.

**Matt 13** (Parables describing the Kingdom) – ***“The Kingdom...is like”***:  
Sower – there would be different responses to the message that Jesus is King

Wheat & Tares – Satan would deceive many by copying the Lord’s Kingdom

Mustard Seed – the Kingdom would start small & become large

Leaven – the Kingdom would have great influence in the world

Hidden Treasure & Pearl Of Great Price – the Kingdom would be priceless & it would cost one everything he owns to possess it.

Dragnet – At the end, God will separate the evil out of the Kingdom & gather together the good

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B. **Jesus stated** in His prayer that the Kingdom has the single most important ***function*** on this earth.

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**Matt 6:10** – ***Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth*** as it is in heaven.

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1. Here Jesus used Hebrew parallelism (as in the Proverbs) to explain the Kingdom.
  - a. The first line has the same meaning as the second, but different words are used.
2. The Kingdom **IS** the will of God being done on the earth as it is in heaven.
  - a. In general, the Kingdom is God’s rule over all things through Jesus Christ the King.
  - b. But the observable aspect of the Kingdom is the will of God being carried out in our lives & also in our collective work (local church).

C. **The Kingdom**, in that specific sense, represents those who have met certain conditions.

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**John 3:3-5** – Jesus answered & said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, ***unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.***” 4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb & be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, ***unless one is born of water & the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.***”

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1. Every birth requires three things: living seed, nourishing environment, & a delivery – we know how that plays out in human birth, but how does that process work in the “new birth”?

a. **Seed**: the word of God, which is the gospel of Christ (**Lk 8:11; 1 Pet 1:23, 25**).

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**1 Pet 1:23-25** – ***having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives & abides forever,*** 24 because “All flesh is as grass, & all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, & its flower falls away, 25 But ***the word of the Lord endures forever.***” ***Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.***”

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b. **Nourishing environment**: a believing & obedient heart (**Lk 8:15; Jn 1:12**).

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**John 1:12** (The apostle John referred to the effect of gospel preaching) – But ***as many as received Him***, to them He gave the right to become children of God, ***to those who believe in His name***:

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c. **Delivery, to be set free**: water baptism (**Rom 6:1-4, 16-18**).

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**Rom 6:1-4** – What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore ***we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life...16-18*** – Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, ***yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.*** 18 And ***having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*** {“If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (**John 8:36**)}

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[No one will enter the Kingdom apart from this spiritual birthing process—a process that also makes them a member of the church (**Acts 2:41, 47**). Therefore...

D. **The Kingdom** & the church are words that can sometimes be used interchangeably.

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**Matt 16:18-19** – And I also say to you that you are Peter, & on this rock *I will build My church*, & the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of *the Kingdom of heaven*, & whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, & whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

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1. The church is a body people “called out” of the world who submit to Christ as Head.
2. The Kingdom is a citizenry of people who have submitted to the Reign of Christ.

[So wherever you see evidence of the true Kingdom, you will find the church ([Isa 2:2-4](#); [Mic 4:1-3](#)).

Now Jesus spoke of the Kingdom in prospect, but His apostles spoke of the Kingdom in presence.]

## II. PAUL IDENTIFIED THE KINGDOM

[When the Kingdom was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, **HOW** was a person to know for certain that this Kingdom did exist & that there was a King on His throne in Heaven?

The answer to that question is “power”.]

A. **The Kingdom** was identified through the power of the Holy Spirit working through the apostles.

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**1 Cor 4:20** – For *the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power*.

**1 Thess 1:5** – For *our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power*, & in the Holy Spirit & in much assurance....

**1 Cor 2:4** – And *my speech & my preaching were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but *in demonstration of the Spirit & of power*,

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1. What kind of “power” was Paul referring to?
  - a. The power to usher in the Kingdom ([Mark 9:1](#)).
  - b. The power from on high – the Promise of the Father given to apostles in Jer. ([Lk 24:49](#)).

- c. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, which enabled the apostles to preach the gospel to a multinational audience of Jews (*Acts 2*).

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**2 Cor 12:12** – Truly the *signs of an apostle* were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in *signs & wonders & mighty deeds*.

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2. The apostles didn't just talk about the Kingdom; they were given power to perform miracles to validate the truth of what they spoke.
3. That's one reason why we should not believe in a future earthly reign of Christ; there is no power displayed to back up that hypothesis.
4. For us, the power of the Kingdom is in the gospel (*Rom 1:16*); it is our acceptance of the rule of Christ, & our obedience to Him that places us in the Kingdom.

[Finally, the Kingdom of Christ stands out as different from all other kingdoms by something Paul wrote in Romans.]

## B. *The Kingdom* is righteousness, peace & joy.

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**Rom 14:14-17** – I know & am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself [*foods*]; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; 17 for *the kingdom of God is* not eating & drinking, but *righteousness & peace & joy* in the Holy Spirit.

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[Remember Jesus saying, “My kingdom is NOT of this world.”?

The Holy Spirit added that “the kingdom...is NOT eating & drinking.”

So the kingdom is not about world dominance, & it is not about feeding the physical body (& the choices we make in that regard).]

1. The Kingdom is about *righteousness*: living in a way that pleases God; being right with Him.

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To be right with God we must live for righteousness, yield our bodies as instruments of righteousness & become slaves of righteousness (*1 Pet 2:24; Rom 6:13, 18*)

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2. It is only when you are right with God that you may have peace with Him, otherwise your life is hostile or antagonistic to God's purpose.

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When we are at peace with God we can pray to Him & know that He will respond to us, & His peace will rule in our hearts ([Phil 4:7](#); [Col 3:15](#)).

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3. Finally, when you have peace with God, then you may have true & lasting joy.

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**1 Pet 1:8-9** – [Jesus] whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, *yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible & full of glory*, 9 receiving the end of your faith — *the salvation of your souls. 4:13* – but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that *when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy*.

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[This is what the existence of the Kingdom means, & we need to relate this to those who are lost.

The sacrifice of Jesus made it possible for us to attain a state of righteousness ([2 Cor 5:21](#)), to be at peace with God ([Rom 5:1](#)) & to live with joy in hope ([Rom 5:2](#)).

#### GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION:

**Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ; read it in your Bible:** Acts 2; 3; 13; Rom 10:17

**Believe Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Son of God and Savior:** Acts 2:36; John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:4

**Repent of your sins:** Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

**Confess your faith in Jesus Christ:** Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

**Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins:** Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21

**Be obedient to the Lord, He will be your Judge:** Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48