

## What is the Kingdom Like: Part 1

When we started our study of the Kingdom of God, we discussed some basic differences between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of this world. We learned that there is no cross over, not connection, and no comingling. They are completely separate and divided kingdoms that are at war. We also studied the two Kings, Jesus and Lucifer, and what makes them so different and completely opposed to one another. The kingship of Jesus looks nothing like the kingship of Lucifer. Jesus has a natural kingship whereas Lucifer has a permitted rule; and ironically, Jesus is the one who permitted his rule.

Then we spent 46 weeks studying the building blocks of the Kingdom of God: faith, hope, and love. These three building blocks will remain throughout all eternity; yet, the greatest of these is love. Next we are going to comprehensively study what else the Bible has to say about the Kingdom of God. Our outline over the next number of months will be:

- What is the Kingdom Like?
- The Kingdom Belongs To...
- The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.
- Living in the Kingdom.
- Enemies of the Kingdom.
- The Mysteries of the Kingdom.
- The Culmination of the Kingdom.

Let's start with "What is the Kingdom Like?" One day, a couple of thousands of

years ago, Gabriel, the messenger from God, said to Mary: “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and **His kingdom will have no end**” (*Luke 1:31-34*). The Kingdom of God has different seasons in terms of its manifestation to mankind, but it has no end; it is truly an eternal kingdom. For instance, the Lord spoke to David about his Son Solomon while at the same time prophetically referencing Jesus’ eternal kingdom.

### ***2 Samuel 7:12-14, 16***

When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me... Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.

In a similar fashion, God spoke to King Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient king of Babylon, who was renowned as the greatest king that has ever lived. Through Daniel, God told Nebuchadnezzar that He [God] will establish a kingdom and it will destroy all others (including Babylon); and it will be the kingdom that will endure forever.

***Daniel 2:44-45***

In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

Daniel even saw the coming of this kingdom in a vision.

***Daniel 7:13-14***

I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

And why is this significant? Well, in the same way that the kingdom endures forever, **so do the citizens of the kingdom**. In *Psalm 89* the Lord reiterated His prophetic promise regarding King David's "throne," and in so doing spoke of Jesus, you, and me.

***Psalm 89:24-29, 35-36***

And in My name his horn will be exalted. [This reference to a horn speaks of

power and authority and ties to **Psalm 132:17** where God said He would cause the horn of David to spring forth. This is a reference to Jesus' and His ultimate power and authority. Accordingly, Jesus declared, "All power and authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (**Matthew 28:18**).] I shall also set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. He will cry to Me, 'You are my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation.' I also shall make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall be confirmed to him. **So I will establish his descendants forever** and his throne as the days of heaven...Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. **His descendants shall endure forever** and his throne as the sun before Me.

Once again, we can turn to the book of **Daniel** and understand more completely that this reference to "descendants" is not speaking of "Jews" from the tribe of Judah, but of the saints of the most high—David's offspring of faith.

### ***Daniel 7:18***

But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.

### ***Daniel 7:26-27***

But the court will sit for judgment [**this is the Assembly**], and his dominion [**specifically referring to the Antichrist**] will be taken away, annihilated and

destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven **will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One**; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.

Can you imagine? The Kingdom will be given to us; it belongs to the true citizens of the Kingdom of God—those who are born again of the Spirit of God. The sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will forever be given to us. The kingdom is an eternal kingdom and our rule and reign in this kingdom is forever. This is quite a promise and something that should make both the drudgery and the joys of this life seem as nothing to you. Our future, our destiny, is one of power, majesty, and glory; and nothing in the kingdom of this world can compare. I believe Jesus has revealed these things to us so we can look forward and keep our eyes forward and not let them get stuck in this malaise of the world. Yes, there are things we may not get in this life and there are things we may not experience; oh well. Only the fool would place a high value on something that is dead, dying, and soon will be wiped out of existence and choose death over what is eternal, filled with glory, and greatness.

I mentioned before that the Kingdom of God has different seasons in terms of its manifestation to mankind. In the end, our assumption of the Kingdom will be very physical. The Kingdom of this world will become the Kingdom of our God and then be given to us to rule, but as for now, it is an unseen kingdom.

**Luke 17:20-21**

Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst [literally, "within you"]."

At this time, the Kingdom of God exists in the souls of its citizens. Its conquest of nations and kingdoms is not by powerful weapons and force, but by the conquests of the souls of men through the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the battles we face as sons of the Kingdom are not battles of flesh and blood, but we war against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (***Ephesians 6:12-13***). And if you have the Spirit of God living in you, then you are a citizen of the Kingdom and other people's access to the Kingdom is found through you. In fact, you might be their only glimpse ever into the Kingdom of God for the Kingdom of God is literally within you.

And since the Kingdom of God **is not of this world** (***John 18:36***), it **cannot be shaken or moved**. It is strong and firmly established. Whereas God has assured us that He will shake up, move, and eventually destroy the kingdom of this world. This is one of the reasons why the contrast of these two kingdoms is so powerful. We belong to the winning side. Those who love this world and what this world promises will face nothing but instability in this life and destruction in the life to come.

***Hebrews 12:25-29***

See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth [**speaking of Moses**], much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.

Not only is our Kingdom eternal, it cannot be disrupted or upset. The kingdom of this world was created and therefore it can be destroyed and it will be destroyed. It will not go on and on and on. And before its destruction, the Lord will shake it up over and over again. He will raise up nations, displace nations, raise up leaders and throw down leaders, bring about destructions, wars, famines, plagues, pestilence, and so much more. But we have received a Kingdom which cannot be shaken. If we were to really grasp this truth and the reality of the temporary nature of all the things we desire in this world, our attitude would be one of praise and thanksgiving and it would be demonstrated in how we give ourselves to God for His purposes and His purposes alone. We would easily shuck and toss away the things of this world that seem to grip our souls so tightly.

Again, in contrasting the two kingdoms, I want you to consider the company

amongst which we fellowship in this Kingdom. I truly believe that there is nothing that can compare to what we have been given. And shame on us if it does not move us so desperately to offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.

***Hebrews 12:22-24***

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

Our fellowship, even now, is beyond anything our minds can fully grasp; just the thought of it is awesome. God, Jesus, angels, the Assembly, spirits of the righteous made perfect, and so much more. This speaks to our eternal home and it speaks to the access we have, even now, to carry out the things God desires of us on this earth. We have come to a Kingdom **of ultimate power** and this power enables us to live naturally supernatural lives so others may see the Kingdom of God within us. In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes the believers to deal with some trouble makers in the church who had become arrogant and apparently believed they should be the voice of authority over that gathering. Paul is clearly annoyed and he writes:



**1 Corinthians 4:18-21**

Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power. **For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.** What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?

This notion that the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power builds on what he previously expressed in **2:1-5**.

**1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in **demonstration of the Spirit and of power**, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

The power of God is shown in signs and wonders and in the demonstration of the Spirit of God (which Paul also mentions in **Romans 15:19**). There are times we have experienced the supernatural in terms of healing and the casting out of demonic spirits; and I believe as the time gets closer to the end we will see even

more of this (just like we will see even more false so called miracles). But even though signs and wonders have been less prevalent, where this power has been more than significant and undeniable is in the demonstration of the Spirit of God as He has transformed the way we live. He has transformed our desires, our expectations, our hopes, our dreams, how we think, how we speak, how we feel, how we function with one another, all demonstrated in how we have chosen to live as aliens and strangers separated from the kingdom of this world. We have learned (and are still learning) such things as forgiveness, mercy, compassion, patience, endurance, and longsuffering. And the fruit of this transformative power has been relationship, community, and love. These are not things we have set out to manufacture, but they have naturally been expressed as we have let God transform us into the image of His Son. This is true power: the power to live separate from the demands of our *flesh* and from the demands of this world. I know we are not all the way there, but the journey God has taken us on in terms of teaching us what is possible through the Spirit is nothing short of miraculous, for the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power and in demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

The kingdom is also a kingdom **of mercy and forgiveness**. For a person to truly claim that they are a citizen of the Kingdom of God, mercy and forgiveness needs to be present in their lives. It is how God interacts with us; therefore, if we are to be like Him we will also interact with one another with mercy and forgiveness.

### ***Matthew 18:21-35***

Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you,

up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

Peter wants to know the rules. What is the extent of mercy and compassion he will be subject to? Perhaps he was fighting with Andrew or John and was sick of

them. You see, the Rabbis taught that you were to forgive a person 3 times; therefore, in a wonderfully religious fashion, Peter more than doubles that amount in his question, probably hoping to get a kudos from Jesus. Seven times? But the Lord surprisingly says seventy times seven. This number has an interesting correlation to **Genesis 4:24** when Lamech says that if anyone revenges him for having killed a man for wounding him and a boy for striking him that they will be punished or avenged seventy times seven. Even though blatantly guilty, man utters the greatest punishment for the transgression of others whereas God utters the greatest mercy for our own transgression and the transgression of others. And like Lamech's proclamation, the story Jesus tells about the kingdom is extreme.

In this comparison, Jesus juxtaposes two debtors. The first owes his king a number that is in our day and age in the billions of dollars. There is no way a slave would ever be able to pay the king this amount. But just the size of the debt also brings into question the ethics of this slave; and that was the whole point. He deserved great punishment but upon seeking relief the king gave him great mercy. The slave merely asked for more time to pay back this unfathomable debt, but the king actually released the slave from the entire debt and all the punishment that was due him. The king was motivated by compassion not justice. It would have been just and right for him to punish this slave as well as his wife and children, but mercy triumphed over justice. I find it interesting that Jesus mentioned the slave's wife and children. In that day and age the family would be punished along with the slave, but the spiritual point highlights the impact of our sin on those who love us. If God were to give us what we were due, it would greatly impact those in our lives

who love us. No one would be spared the trauma of it all. Great indeed is His mercy over our lives.

This slave, though forgiven, did not let this great act of mercy transform him in any regard. He was so wicked that not only did he rack up such a great debt in the first place, he takes advantage of the mercy he has been shown. He literally seeks out a fellow slave who only owed him a few dollars—just a few. In comparison to the billions, probably less than \$100 dollars. He does not even have a discussion with this other slave, he just physically attacks him and demands his money. This other slave plead in a similar fashion to his own pleading, but it fell on deaf ears and a cold heart; and he had this other slave thrown in prison until he worked long enough to pay off the debt. This is how we so often treat those who have hurt us. And it does not even require a big transgression, we are not picky.

Upon hearing of this travesty, the words of the king were harsh and severe: “Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?” Accordingly, the Lord gave him over to the tormentors until he paid what was owed him, which given the size of his debt meant he would spend the rest of his life in torment. And then like the king, Jesus uttered words that seem harsh and severe: “My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.” It is not unlike what He said in **Matthew 6:14-15**: “For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

The citizens of the kingdom are expected to show the same mercy and forgiveness that they have been shown by the one true King. Our sins are great, too

numerous to count; and those are only the ones of which we are conscious. Yet, the Father has rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (***Colossians 1:13-14***). Our great debt, ranking up in the billions, has been cancelled. In fact, every transgression, charge, or accusation that could ever be made against us was cancelled, taken out of the way, having been nailed to the cross (***Colossians 2:13-15***). He has forgiven us of it all: past, present, and future. And because we have received such great mercy, He desires us to forgive as we have been forgiven.

This is tricky. The tendency to hold offenses against others is part of the plague of humanity. Yet, God wants us to hold our offenses with an open hand. Besides, we have learned that what comes against us is, in any shape or form, He has allowed and ordained. Therefore, even though God has used people to hurt us and they have deeply grieved and vexed our spirit, we can forgive because we know God is using them as a tool to shape us and allow Him to transform us into His image. Truly our complaint should be with God not with people. It is sad that they were filled with so much darkness that they could be used as a tool. Accordingly, we can have mercy and compassion knowing that the Father will hold them accountable for what they have done to us. We will be avenged, but He is the one who will do it.

Vengeance belongs only to the Lord. Therefore, we are not to overcome evil by evil, but we are to overcome evil with good (***Hebrews 10:30; Romans 12:19-21***). I know that we think it would feel great to take vengeance on those who have hurt us, but as true citizens of the Kingdom of God we were not created for such things; therefore, it will never satisfy. Our vengeance will only lock us in a dark prison and

leave us subject to the demonic tormentors who will jump at the chance to hurt us. When we hold offenses, we are always the one who ultimately suffers. Often, the other person is clueless while we needlessly writhe within ourselves. Unforgiveness is a dark prison; and in this cage we are subject to the tormentors and we do not escape until we have paid our debt. Don't waste your time in this prison.

With that said, I do not believe any of us can muster up the power to forgive those who have damaged our lives. But, by the Spirit, Jesus gives us the power of forgiveness. Therefore, forgive as you have been forgiven. The Father has forgiven you an unfathomable debt; you can forgive your fellow servant the few dollars they owe you. Know the sweet release of trusting that everything has come at the hands of God and He will right every wrong ever done to His children, it is just a matter of time. This truth frees you up to be a man or woman of compassion, not a man or woman of justice. And keep in mind this is how you are to live with all people; how much more so for your brothers and sisters of the Kingdom.

***Ephesians 4:32***

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Forgiveness, mercy, and compassion is to mark our lives. It is one of the supernatural evidences that the Kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.

So what have we learned about the kingdom:

- It will have no end, it is an eternal Kingdom.
- The citizens of the Kingdom are also eternal and will have no end.
- The Kingdom will be given to the true citizens of the Kingdom of God.
- For now, it is an unseen Kingdom that lives within the souls of its citizens.
- It is not of this world.
- It cannot be shaken or moved.
- It is a Kingdom of ultimate power.
- It is a Kingdom that is marked by mercy, redemption, compassion, and forgiveness.

Let's stop here for tonight and we will pick up with a few more descriptors of the Kingdom next week.

Let's Pray