

The pages of the New Testament are literally filled with teachings about the Kingdom. During His earthly ministry, Jesus taught the gospel of the kingdom everywhere He went (Matthew 4:23). After His resurrection, He spent His last forty days on earth teaching about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Throughout the book of Acts, evangelists of the first century traveled around preaching about the kingdom (Acts 8:12; 19:8). But, what did they say? What did they teach? In this "Bible Talk" we shall explore some of the things that were taught by Jesus and Paul concerning the nature of the Kingdom.

First of all, the "Kingdom of Heaven" is not like any other kingdom. It belongs to those who are "poor in spirit" and "persecuted for the sake of righteousness" (Matthew 5:3,10). It is occupied by the "poor" (Luke 6:20); and the rich have a difficult time entering into it (Matthew 19:23-24). Only those with child-like humility may enter (Matthew 18:3-4); and only those who are willing to serve are considered great (Matthew 20:25-28). No "unrighteous" person may enter (I Corinthians 6:9-10), and within its realms you will find no immorality, no impurity, nor sensuality; no strife, no jealousy, nor disputes; no envying, no drunkenness, nor carousing (Galatians 5:20-21). This kingdom is characterized by "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

It is not easy to enter the kingdom of heaven. One must seek it seriously and think about it carefully (Mark 12:34). Paul said, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). No other pursuits can come before the Kingdom (Luke 9:59-61); and no one who looks back, once beginning, "is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Nevertheless, there are rich rewards and great blessings for those who make the effort. If we "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness," Jesus said, the necessities of this life will be given to us (Matthew 6:33). If we sacrifice worldly possessions or precious relationships "for the sake of the kingdom of God," we shall receive many times as much in this life, and in the age to come, eternal life" (Luke 18:29-30). Those who are in the Kingdom are greatly honored. Jesus said that no one greater than John the Baptist was ever born of woman, "yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than *John*" (Matthew 11:11).

Jesus often used "Parables" to teach about the Kingdom. A "Parable" is a simple earthly story with a deeper spiritual meaning. Jesus used parables to conceal the truths about the Kingdom from those who were not really interested (Matthew 13:10-17). But, He would gladly explain their meanings to anyone who cared enough to come back and ask (Matthew 13:36-37). By using parables, Jesus taught the following concepts about the nature of the Kingdom:

It begins small, but then covers the earth (Matthew 13:31-33)

It grows slowly and mysteriously, like a farmer's crop grows in the field (Mark 4:26-29)

There are elements of things both old and new in the Lord's Kingdom (Matthew 13:52)

It's a precious treasure and must be secured at any price (Matthew 13:44-46)

The Kingdom of God is a place of work, with equal reward for all who labor (Matthew 20:1-16)

God expects Kingdom citizens to forgive others, as they were forgiven (Matthew 18:23-35)

Anyone who is not clothed in Christ will not be allowed into the Kingdom (Matthew 22:1-14)

For various reasons, some hearts will not be able to receive the Kingdom (Matthew 13:18-23);

Repentant sinners will enter the Kingdom, but self-righteous hypocrites will not (Matthew 21:28-32)

The kingdom will be corrupted, but sorted out at the day of judgment (Matthew 13:36-43)

Both good & bad will be attracted to the Kingdom, but separated at the last day (Matthew 13:47-50)

Those who don't accept the Lord's directions will be cast out of God's Kingdom (Matthew 21:33-44)

We must be watching & ready for the Lord when He returns for His Kingdom (Matthew 25:1-13)

We must be good stewards of the Lord's Kingdom until He returns to collect it (Matthew 25:14-30)

Our deeds upon the earth will determine if we inherit the Kingdom eternally (Matthew 25:31-46)

The writer of Hebrews expressed the sentiment we all should feel for the opportunity to participate in the Kingdom of God. He said, "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"

(Hebrews 12:28). The next “Bible Talk” will explore the Scriptures which explain how a person may enter the Kingdom of God and receive Citizenship in the Kingdom.



1. How do you know that Jesus and His apostles taught about the Kingdom?
  
2. Describe the type of person who will be in the Kingdom of God.
  
3. In Acts 14:22, Paul said, “Through many \_\_\_\_\_ we must enter the kingdom of God.”  
what
  
4. According to Luke 9:59-62 and Matthew 6:33, how important should the Kingdom of God be in one’s life?
  
5. What rewards and blessings are there for those who sacrifice for the Kingdom’s sake?  
(Matthew 6:33; Luke 18:29-30; Matthew 11:11)
  
6. Why did Jesus teach in “Parables”? (Matthew 13:10-17)

What else do we learn from Matthew 13:36-37?

7. Assignment: Read the parable passages cited in the lesson text and carefully absorb the lessons that Jesus wanted us to understand about His Kingdom.