

When New Testament writers set out to explain the nature of “God’s People,” they were guided by the Holy Spirit to use descriptive analogies. An analogy is an extended metaphorical statement or similitude. When applied to our study, this means that “The People of God” are compared to various other similar entities -- such as A Kingdom, A Family, A Human Body, A Temple, and A Vineyard. As we think about the similarities between “The People of God” and these other things, we are able to learn many points about the nature of God’s People. Each of these analogies has a unique slant which helps us to better understand the church.

Seven “Bible Talks” have already been devoted to a study of “The Kingdom.” But, in this “Bible Talk,” we need to demonstrate that “The Kingdom” and “The Church” are one and the same thing. Both of them are descriptive analogies which help us see what “The People of God” are like.

New Testament writers used the word “Ekklesia,” or “Church,” to emphasize the “called out” nature of God’s People. The church is said to be “called out of darkness” in I Peter 2:9, it is described as “holy” in I Peter 1:15, its members are called “saints” and are said to be “sanctified” in I Corinthians 1:2. All of these terms demonstrate a quality about God’s People that we need to understand - **God’s People are distinct.** They are different. They are no longer like the rest of the world. The Biblical term for this quality is called “Sanctification.” It means “to be set aside for a special purpose; to be separated out.”

Likewise, the word “Kingdom” is used to emphasize another unique quality about the People of God. The “Kingdom” analogy demonstrates the form of governmental authority that God intended for His People. They are a “Kingdom.” They are ruled by a monarchy. Only one person has total authority over these people. It is not a democracy, it is a theocracy (that is . . . it is ruled by God alone). As citizens of this kingdom, we are to be in submission to the king. We are to live by His laws and obey Him. This seems to be the emphasis of the “Kingdom” analogy. Whereas “The Church” analogy demonstrates the sanctification aspect of God’s People (that is, they are “called out” and separate from the world), “The Kingdom” analogy demonstrates the form of governmental authority that God intended for His People.

You see, “The Church” and “The Kingdom” are two different descriptions of the same group of people. “The Church” and “The Kingdom” are one and the same entity. The same person who is “king” over the kingdom (John 18:36-37) is also “head” over the church (Ephesians 5:23). Those who are “citizens” in the kingdom (Philippians 3:20) are also members of the church (Ephesians 2:19; 5:29-30). Both await the same eternal reward (Hebrews 12:23; I Corinthians 15:24). Both were foretold at the same time (Matthew 16:18-19); yet, neither was actually seen to be in existence until after Acts 2 (Acts 5:11; Colossians 1:13). The Lord’s Supper was promised to be a part of “The Kingdom” (Luke 22:16-18; 29-30); yet, it was observed in the Corinthian church (I Corinthians 11:23-29). The Apostles were promised authority in Christ’s Kingdom (Matthew 16:19; Luke 22:30); yet, they are seen to have authority in the church (Ephesians 4:11-12; 1:22-23). It seems obvious that these two terms are interchangeable. Their only distinction is that they illustrate two separate characteristics of God’s People. The church emphasizes sanctification, the kingdom emphasizes authority.

In the next few “Bible Talks,” we shall look at four more analogies which teach us other qualities about The People of God.

1. List six New Testament analogies used to describe "The People of God":

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2. What quality about God's People was intended to be conveyed by using the term "church"?

What does the term "sanctification" mean?

How do the following scriptures illustrate this definition?

I Peter 2:9

I Peter 1:15

I Corinthians 1:2

What does the word "Saint" mean and who is included in this group?

3. What quality about God's People was emphasized by use of the term "kingdom"?

What does the word "monarchy" mean?

What does the word "theocracy" mean?

What is the responsibility of Kingdom Citizens toward their King?

4. Review the following scripture references and then provide evidence that "The Church" and "The Kingdom" are one and the same thing.

John 18:36-37 -- Ephesians 5:23 \_\_\_\_\_

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Philippians 3:20 -- Ephesians 2:19; 5:29-30 \_\_\_\_\_

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Hebrews 12:23 -- I Corinthians 15:24 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matthew 16:18-19 -- Acts 5:11; Colossians 1:13 \_\_\_\_\_

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Luke 22:16-18, 29-30 -- I Corinthians 11:23-29 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matthew 16:19; Luke 22:30 -- Ephesians 4:11-12; 1:22-23 \_\_\_\_\_

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