

Study 12

The Kingdom Living
JESUS
commanded

The “Kingdom of God” was *the* subject of Christ’s preaching and the only topic that He commanded His disciples to preach. It constitutes the main topic of what the New Testament records as Christ’s teaching. Christ’s original audience had built up certain expectations of what they thought God was about to do that affected how they understood “the Kingdom of God”. These Jews expected their “messiah” (*promised saviour*) to be a military ruler who would conquer the Romans and once again make Israel a world-power. The Old Testament *seemed* to support this idea.

1. What expectations of the Messiah might the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6-7 have given?

But Jesus presented a radically different concept about the Kingdom of God.

2. How does Christ's statement in Luke 17:21 give a different understanding about the Kingdom of God than what the Jews expected?

3. How did Jesus say a person must enter the Kingdom of God? (Luke 18:17)

Entering the Kingdom of God is a matter of eternal life or death! The greatest thing you can do with your life is to enter the Kingdom of God! The greatest thing you can do with your life is to help others enter the Kingdom of God! The greatest thing you can do with your life is to represent the King of the Kingdom to those outside of the Kingdom of God.

4. How important did Jesus say entering the Kingdom was? (Mark 9:47)

5. What priority did Jesus give His followers about the Kingdom of God, and what benefits did He include in this? (Matthew 6:33)

6. Why did Jesus say it could be difficult for some to enter the Kingdom of God? (Matthew 19:24;)

The Kingdom of God, Jesus said, was the place of peace with God where those who enter it have been forgiven by God. This then demands that people realise their need for God's forgiveness in order to enter the Kingdom of God.

7. How does this explain Matthew 21:31 and Mark 12:34?

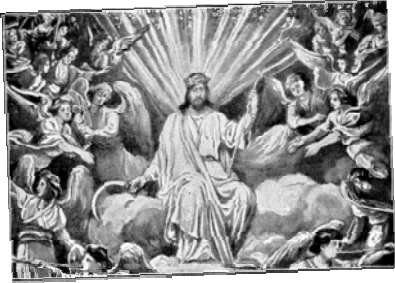
8. What did Jesus say was necessary before entering the Kingdom of God—that is, what was necessary to *see* the Kingdom of God let alone *enter* it? (John 3:3)

9. According to 1Corinthians 6:9, who will *not* be able to enter the Kingdom of God? (Note also Galatians 5:21)

We cannot enter the Kingdom of God because of what we eat or drink (for example, taking *Holy Communion*), or what we don't eat or drink (you are not saved by fasting or abstinence of alcohol) (Romans 14:17).

Jesus taught that the hallmark of the Kingdom of God was the miraculous. If God has not truly *done* miracles in the past then Christianity is false and pointless. If God cannot *do* miracles, then Christianity is just an idea and a moral code. If God *does* not do miracles then Christianity is powerless to change lives, restore the lost, heal the broken, deliver the oppressed.

10. How is the Kingdom of God described in 1Corinthians 4:20? (Note Luke 11:20)
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The Kingdom of God is where God reigns. Does He reign in your life? When He rules our hearts we obey His Word *and* the promptings of His Spirit (note Romans 8:14). And when we enter His Kingdom we become His priests (Revelation 1:6; 5:10) who are led by His Spirit. We are then responsible to both represent God to people and intercede on behalf of people to God.

And the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us..."

1Samuel 7:8

The Kingdom of God is represented by the church. It is the church's mission to extend the Kingdom of God on earth. We do this by leading people to Christ so that He reigns in their hearts. While the church can give itself to many worthy causes, our main cause is His Cause: *to extend the Kingdom of God on earth through the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of Kingdom communities (called- churches)*. If someone gave me a billion dollars I would dedicate it to this Cause. In the meantime, please join with me to dedicate our existing time, talent and treasure to strive for the Kingdom of God to conquer lost souls with Christ's love.

Father, help me to enter Your Kingdom. Please conquer my heart with Your love so that I love to do Your will. Give me the ability to spread Your message of grace through Jesus so that Your Kingdom is extended in earth today. Amen.