



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 077: The Kingdom of Heaven

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Read: Matt 13:33-47.

Introduction. There are two expressions in the Gospels: *The Kingdom of Heaven* and the *Kingdom of God*. They both mean the same. Matthew uses *Kingdom of Heaven*, as his Jewish readers would be uneasy about using 'God' as a name. Others had in mind Greek readers to whom the *Kingdom of Heaven* would be meaningless.

1. The Kingdom in prophecy. Read what Daniel prophesied of an everlasting kingdom ruled by God (Dan 2:44 & 7:13-14) then compare this to the announcements of John the Baptist (Matt 3:2) and Jesus (Matt 4:17).

2. The location of the Kingdom. Jesus stressed that His Kingdom was not *of* this world (John 18:36). However, it is *in* this world. What 3 words are used to describe its location, in Matt 12:28, Luke 10:9 & Luke 17:21.

3. The nature of the Kingdom. This is best described as **God's Rule in action.**

- (i) In People's Lives. Subjects of God's Kingdom are those who accept the rule of God – not by force but by free will. Can you see how this is seen in two lines in the Lord's Prayer?
- (ii) In Divine Power. Who did Jesus say currently has control of this world (John 12:31)? But what did Jesus say in Luke 11:20?

For the time being, the Kingdom of God has to exist in the world alongside the Kingdom of Satan. How is this illustrated in the Parable of the Tares (Matt 13:24-30) and how do you think this manifests itself today?

4. The Kingdom is Spiritual Life Read Mark 9:43-48. about the overwhelming priority of eternal life. In verses 43 and 45 He speaks about entering *life*. But he mentions something different in verse 47. What is it, and what does the difference suggest to you?

5. The new Kingdom demands new thinking Jesus used two illustrations to show how a familiar religious system was inadequate to express or contain the Kingdom. What were they (Matt 9:16-17)?

6. Entering the Kingdom. Make a list of what it means to enter or belong to the Kingdom, from the following verses: Mark 1:15, John 3:3-5, Matt 7:21, Luke 12:29-34, Mat 13:44-46, Luke 9:62, Matt 18:3-4, Matt 11:12, or any other scripture that comes to mind.

To think about: Am I fulfilling my responsibilities as a 'citizen' of the Kingdom of Heaven?

To dig deeper: Read about the Kingdom of Heaven in a Bible Dictionary or Bible Encyclopaedia. For something deeper still, look up references in the Gospel of John to 'life' and 'eternal life' and consider if these could be referring to the Kingdom.