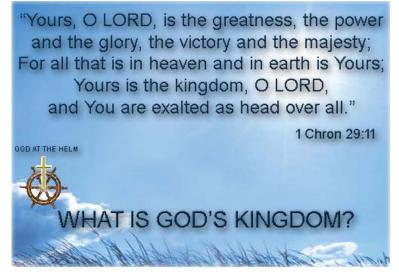
THE KINGDOM OF GOD



Throughout the bible, the Kingdom of God or of heaven is mentioned over 160 times, and Jesus referred to the kingdom 41 times in Matthew.

The big question is, "How could we define the Kingdom of God?" Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Mat 19:14). Then in Mark 4:31, Jesus likened the kingdom of God to a mustard seed, the smallest of seeds yet grows into a huge tree where birds make their nests. In other words, the Kingdom of God rests in the simplicity and submission of a child's heart, but with such power as to grow and harbor anyone who wishes to make God's Kingdom their home.

Another aspect of God's Kingdom is that contrary to the world, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17) In laymen's terms, it's about celebrating God's Glory, Righteousness and Holiness, with joy and peace."

When asked when it would come, Jesus answered, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; for indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." In essence, believers and followers of Christ all have God's Kingdom in their hearts; do you?



What does it mean to seek the Kingdom of God, and how do we access it?

In John 3:3, Jesus laid out the one required condition to enter the Kingdom of God this way: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He further pointed out the difficulty in entering God's Kingdom in Mat 7:13; "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it."

In other words, we must realize the seriousness of our decision that entering the kingdom of God requires that we completely reassess our life focus towards a new life in Christ. As well, this can't be a wide open decision, but rather a serious commitment of the heart to follow Christ, through the narrow door.

The prophet Isaiah described Christ as the King in Is 52:7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good *things,* who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

In Mat 18:3, Jesus added, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Are we there yet?



How could we define who will be on Christ's right hand at the great judgment? When the disciples asked Jesus why He was speaking to the Pharisees in parables, He answered them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." (Mat 13:11)

In some of the beatitudes of Matthew 5, Jesus defined who will inherit the kingdom this way: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Mat 5:3) "Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Mat 5:8) Clearly, Jesus always condemned those who chose and perpetuated religions of men, rather than truly seeking God, the reason He used simple parables that only those with an open heart for God can understand.

On the other hand, Paul gave us the definition of those who surely won't inherit God's Kingdom in 1 Cor 6:9-10: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

In the end, God always has the last Word!



How powerful could we state that God's Kingdom is? If we bring this down to simplicity, we have to admit we don't really have a clue because God's power is beyond what human nature can understand.

The prophet Isaiah prophesied about Christ this way: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Is 9:6) This identifies Christ as the King of kings over all creation.

The prophet Daniel added: "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Dan 2:44)

Interestingly however, Jesus gave His true Church whose Rock is Christ alone, the power of the Kingdom this way: "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Mat 16:19)

Is our faith in Christ and God rather than religions of men? Is Christ our Rock, our Salvation? Have we entered God's Kingdom yet?