

***“Thy Kingdom Come”***  
***Lesson 1. The Anticipation of the Kingdom***  
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***Introduction:*** Have you ever been filled with excitement at the anticipation of a future event?

- A. Sometimes we may have anticipated things that never come. (Ex. Snow)
  - 1. When it comes to God’s plan it will happen. **(Isa 46:9-11)**
  - 2. The real problem we have is listening to God rather than putting our desires and wisdom in place of what He has said. **(Isa 55:8-9)**
  - 3. The challenge in Jesus’ day and today is to listen to God and appreciate the great gifts that He gives us.
- B. Sometimes we are disappointed when the thing we anticipated becomes reality.
  - 1. Often this happens because we overestimated what we were getting or we failed to see our own need and what would meet that need.
  - 2. When God raises our expectation with a gift that He describes as rich, we never will be let down if we receive it. **(Lk 12:31-34)**
  - 3. Many who anticipated the kingdom were disappointed.
    - a. Some anticipated a kingdom that never came.
    - b. Others failed to enter the kingdom because they loved the world and put it first.
  - 4. Those who trusted God and were prepared found the full blessings of God. These were not disappointed!

***I. Jesus and the Apostles created an expectation of a kingdom***

- A. Both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ began their preaching with the same message, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” **(Mt 3:2; 4:17)**
    - 1. The gospel was called the “gospel of the kingdom.” **(Mt 4:23; 9:35)**
      - a. What does the word “gospel” mean?
      - b. Did John fully understand the message he preached?
    - 2. Why did Jesus and John have a popular following at first?
  - B. Jesus commonly spoke of the kingdom in His teaching.
    - 1. To those who have the right heart they would have the kingdom of God. **(Mt 5:3,10)**
      - a. What earthly kingdom values these things?
      - b. Many did not understand this at first.
- “Evangelical agencies with ready funding may have too little depth and vision to cope with the current conflict. God’s kingdom is built not on perpetual motion, one-liners, and flashbulbs, but on Christ.” -- Carl F.H. Henry, “Money in Christian History,”
- 2. Jesus emphasized the commitment required to find the kingdom. **(Lk 9:60-62)**
  - 3. Jesus taught His apostles to give emphasis to this in their prayers.
    - a. They asked for the kingdom to come. **(Mt 6:10)**
    - b. Praise to God is framed in terms of His kingdom. **(Mt 6:13)**
    - c. Could God get the glory and it be an earthly kingdom?

4. The kingdom was of such importance that they were to actively seek it first.  
(Mt 6:33)  
“When we seek first the kingdom of God and righteousness, fulfillment comes as a by-product of our love for God. And that satisfaction is better than we ever imagined. God can make the pieces of this world's puzzle fit together; he helps us view the world from a new perspective.” - Erwin W. Lutzer
  5. When they were marveling at the power of God wrought in a miracle they were pointed to the kingdom of God and its nearness. (Mt 12:28)
  6. Jesus greatly raised the level of anticipation by saying some who heard Him would see the kingdom of God come with power. (Mt 16:28; Mk 9:1)
  7. Jesus expected to partake of the Lord’s supper with His followers in His kingdom. (Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25)
  - C. The apostles preached the same message and gave great emphasis to the kingdom.
    1. The kingdom was described as being near even to those who rejected them. (Lk 10:9-11)
    2. Did the apostles fully understand what they were preaching?
- II. Teaching concerning the value of the Kingdom raised expectations***
- A. Those within the kingdom would be greater than John the Baptist. (Mt 11:11-12)
    1. Why is this so? Do they have greater faith?
    2. What does the kingdom of God mean to you?
  - B. Jesus taught parables emphasizing the great value of the kingdom. (Mt 13:44-45)
    1. What have you given up for the kingdom?
    2. Can one be in the kingdom and not have joy?
  - C. Jesus indicated that some would make great sacrifice for the kingdom. (Mt 19:12)  
“Everyone wants the kingdom of God, but few want it first. Everyone wants high achievement, but few want to pay the price. Everyone wants God, but few want to put him first.” - Charles L. Venable
1. Does this passage have any application to us today? (Mt 19:9-11)
  2. Why would it be more valuable than human companionship?
- “Jesus now has many lovers of his heavenly kingdom, but few bearers of his cross.”  
--- Thomas a Kempis in The Imitation of Christ.

### ***III. Contrasting expectations and reality***

- A. Consider the large number of people expecting the kingdom.
  1. One – (Lk 14:15)
  2. Everyone – (Lk 16:16)
  3. Pharisees – (Lk 17:20-21)
  4. The triumphant entry – (Mk 11:6-10)
  5. The mother of Zebedee’s sons - (Mt 20:20-21)
  6. The thief on the Cross – (Lk 23:42)
  7. Joseph of Arimathea – (Mk 15:43; Lk 23:51)

**Class Discussion:** Go through the list and ask these questions:

1. Did this one have the right kind of heart to enter the kingdom?
2. Did they have a proper understanding of what the kingdom was?
3. Did they enter the kingdom when it came?

**Conclusion:** Do you have the heart of one who is in the kingdom of God?

A. What would the Pharisees of Jesus' day have replied? (**Lk 18:8-14**)

B. How did the thief on the cross respond?

"In the kingdom of God the surest way to lose something is to try to protect it, and the best way to keep it is to let it go." - A. W. Tozer

C. What is really important to us?

Thus it was from the beginning and so it is today. Yet the early Christians had one great advantage over us; then it was clear that the surrounding culture was groping in the darkness of paganism, and thus it was clear that the culture should have no hand in defining the role of God's people in the world. But today we have grown accustomed to thinking of ourselves as a part of the "Christian West," living in a "Christian nation." That habit is hard to kick, for it has the narcotic effect of easing the painful reality of the stark contrast between twentieth-century American culture and the calling of Christ to His Church.

Yet we must kick that habit if by serving heaven we are to be any earthly good. Our challenge is clear: We must reject the illusions, seductions, and false alternatives of the current political scene and reassert the ageless truth that Christ is Lord of lords, King of kings. With Athanasius, the great fourth-century champion of the faith, we must stand for Christ against the world. In the very moment of our clearest opposition to the world, we will find that as witnesses to the Truth and Life we will have the inestimable privilege of helping to make His invisible kingdom visible in the world. For with Christ we will "preach good news to the poor ... proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and recovery of sight for the blind, ... release the oppressed, [and] proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19, NIV). --James S. Hewett