

“Thy Kingdom Come”
Lesson 11 – Misconceptions of the Kingdom
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Introduction: When we misunderstand one aspect of scripture we will later find conflicts with other passages of scripture.

- A. There are several reasons false concepts are placed in our hearts.
 - 1. We have not carefully listened and understood certain scriptures. **(Lk 24:44-45)**
 - 2. Men who we have great respect for misunderstood and preached things that were wrong. **(Mt 5:43-44)**
 - 3. We have greater esteem for the “traditional understanding of brethren” than for a careful examination of God’s word.
- B. Our loyalty to God will be tested when our misconceptions conflict with scripture.
 - 1. The early Christians had major misconceptions that they struggled with. Their hearts were open and they gladly changed when taught. **(Acts 11:1-2,18)**
 - 2. The struggle to learn and change must never stop! Have we “restored the church?”

I. What is the kingdom of God?

- A. The kingdom of Christ is a spiritual relationship between individuals and God. **(Lk 17:20-21)**
 - 1. When one is baptized into Christ they now share in the kingdom of God. **(Col 1:13-14; 2:11-13)**
 - 2. When one lives for the Lord they will suffer persecution. Why? Because Jesus is ruling in his life. **(Rev 1:9)**
 - a. When you have the rule you get the persecution but you also get the “patience of Jesus Christ.”
 - b. Is submitting to the rule of God worth it? **(Heb 13:5-6)**
- B. Because it is a relationship between individuals and Christ Himself then we should not be surprised that this relationship is sustained individually.
 - 1. The parable of the vine and the branches reveal this individual relationship. **(Jn 15:1-8)**
 - 2. We are individually stones in a spiritual house. **(1 Pt 2:5)**
- C. There are other relationships that Christians sustain with others. These however are not the relationship we call the kingdom of God.

II. Misconceptions of the kingdom and their fruits

- A. **As a political body with places of power used to control men.**
 - 1. How often in history have men tried to take the kingdom by force?
 - a. Rome learned the lesson that no earthly force can subdue the kingdom. **(Dan 2:44)**
 - b. Why is it not possible for men to take this kingdom? **(Mt 10:28)**
 - 2. Men who claim loyalty to the king may try to seize it. **(Mt 11:12; 3 Jn 9-10)**
 - a. If you understood it’s nature you would never try! Jesus wanted His disciples to understand what true service means. **(Mt 20:25-28)**

- b. Whenever men create positions of power to influence Christians then in time men of power will take those positions and try to “rule the church.”
- c. Consider some things that can be used as positions of power: the sponsoring church arrangement, a college operated by Christians, a publication, a regular lectureship in a local church, a local church, “brotherhood” meetings and organizations.
- d. Some of these should not exist. Others may exist but great care should be exercised in their function. Some must exist by God’s command.

B. As a local church.

- 1. A local church is not the “one body” described in Eph 4. (**Eph 4:4-6; 1:22-23**)
- 2. The “one body” is a relationship of individuals to Christ. (**Mt 16:18-19**)
- 3. A local church must exist by God’s design. When God reigns in my heart as an individual then I seek to follow God’s plan for His people in a given location. (**Acts 14:23**)
- 4. A local church may have those within it that no longer have a relationship with the King. This may not affect my relationship with the Lord. (**Rev 3:1,4**)

C. As an institution existing apart from the people.

- 1. The church is not some **thing** separate and apart from people.
- 2. It is not some ethereal **corporation** or **organization** established by God to which people are added when they become Christians.
 - a. It is the **temple** of God made up of **living stones** (**Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pt 2:5**)
 - b. If there were no living stones, there would be no temple
- 3. Jesus did not die for and purchase an institution; He died and purchased His people. (**Acts 20:28**)
- 4. Jesus does not sanctify, love, and cleanse an institution; He sanctifies, loves, and cleanses His people. (Above points adapted from Kevin Kay)

D. As an institution that dispenses salvation and reveals God’s will.

- 1. There is one lawgiver! (**Jas 4:12**)
- 2. There is one mediator (**1 Tim 2:5**)

E. As a denomination founded by some man.

III. A proper understanding will allow us to have the proper loyalty.

- A. How do we “seek first the kingdom of God?” (**Mt 6:33**)
- B. When we speak of restoration what do we mean?
- C. How can we be sure we are not following men? (**Jn 5:42-45**)

Conclusion: We serve a mighty King who will deliver us if we allow Him to reign in our hearts.

- A. Where is your loyalty? Whom do you praise? (**2 Cor 10:12,18**)
- B. Are you a member of the “church of Christ?” Are you a member of the “kingdom of God?” Do you love and serve God with all your heart? (**Mt 22:37**)
- C. We may need to let Jesus come back into our hearts to reign.

Questions for Lesson 11
Misconceptions of the Kingdom

1. Why do we sometimes fail to understand Bible truths?
2. What should result when our concepts conflict with the scriptures?
3. What is the kingdom of God? Can you prove it from the scriptures? Do it!
4. What things will we share in if we are in Christ's kingdom? (**Rev 1:9**)
5. List as many misconceptions of the kingdom that you can think of.
6. How does each misconception listed affect our service to God?
7. What do we mean when we say we have "restored the one true church?"
8. Why is the church not a "go-between" with men and God?
9. How do we seek first the kingdom of God?

10. Whose praise are you seeking? (**2 Cor 10:12,18**)