

PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD

STUDY GUIDE



THE KINGDOM OF GOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 6:9-13

After this manner therefore pray ye: “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.”

Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Luke 17:20-21

And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, ‘Lo here! or, lo there!’ for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”

THEME

The kingdom of God is an often misunderstood term and kingdom. Many people view heaven as the kingdom of God. Although heaven is, obviously, under God’s dominion, heaven and the kingdom of God are not synonymous. God desires to establish His kingdom in the Church so that He, through the Body of Christ, can exercise His dominion in the earth. Let’s be attentive and obedient to the Scriptures, which instruct us to seek the kingdom of God.

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Much error concerning the kingdom of God is being taught. I do not wish to be identified with that error; therefore, there are some statements, which I trust will identify our beliefs, that must be made from the outset of this teaching.
 - 1. The Bible does not teach that all evil will become good. It does teach that all evil will be judged and punished.

2. According to the Word of God, the devil will be cast into the lake of fire, which burns forever and ever. He will not be saved. (Revelation 20:10)
3. God's kingdom, in this age, is an internal kingdom rather than an external kingdom.
 - a. We must not go about trying to set up a physical kingdom; the kingdom of God, as it relates to the Church Age, is not a physical kingdom.
 - (a) In the Church Age, God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, not a physical kingdom.
 - (b) In the Church Age, God's kingdom is an internal kingdom, not an external kingdom.
 - (c) Physical kingdoms can be seen naturally; spiritual kingdoms cannot be seen naturally.
 - (d) The religious people of Jesus' day were looking for a natural kingdom; consequently, they did not recognize the Messiah when He stood before them, and they refused to submit to His lordship.
 - b. The design for God's kingdom at this time is to rule in us and through us. God wants to control His Church and His children.
4. There will be an age when Jesus sets up a physical kingdom, but this is not the time.
5. We, both as individual believers and the corporate Church, must be led by the spirit (internal), not by the flesh (external).
- B. It is vital that we properly understand the concept of the kingdom of God.

II. THE LOCATION OF GOD'S KINGDOM

- A. The kingdom of God and heaven are not synonymous.
 1. Heaven is ruled by God, but God's rule is not limited to heaven.

2. In Mark 9:1, Jesus stated that some who were with Him would not taste death until they saw the kingdom of God come with power; therefore, He could not have been referring to heaven.
 - a. All of those who were with Jesus when He made this statement are dead today.
 - b. Obviously, we have not gone to heaven; neither has Jesus set up a physical kingdom.
- B. “Kingdom” is the Greek word *baselia* (bas-il-i’-ah), which means royalty and relates to rule or a realm; it denotes sovereignty and royal power, or dominion; consequently, when we talk about the kingdom of God, we are referring to the rule and dominion of God.
- C. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of Heaven are closely related, yet unique in revelation.
 1. The term “kingdom of God” reveals the rule and dominion as God’s.
 2. The term “kingdom of Heaven” reveals the origin of the rule and dominion; this government comes from heaven, not earth. (John 18:36)
- D. The kingdom of God is within us. (Luke 17:21)
 1. God’s kingdom is sown into our hearts when we accept Jesus as Messiah and Savior.
 2. God does not intend for His kingdom to remain hidden within us; He desires for His kingdom to grow within us and manifest itself through us, taking complete control of our lives.
- E. God wants His kingdom established in earth as it is in heaven; therefore, it is crucial that we understand that God’s kingdom must be established **in us** before God can rule **through us**.
- F. The establishment of God’s kingdom in us precedes the establishment of God’s kingdom in the local church.
- G. Jesus has instructed us to pray that God’s kingdom come and that His will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

1. Jesus would not have requested that we pray for God's kingdom to come in earth if God did not want to rule in earth.
2. God's kingdom can and will operate in the earth, in and through the Body of Christ.

III. SEEKING GOD'S KINGDOM

- A. Matthew 6:33 tells us to seek God's kingdom; therefore, God's kingdom must not be obvious. Otherwise, there would be no need to seek it.
- B. Physical kingdoms are not difficult to find, but a spiritual kingdom must be spiritually discerned. (I Corinthians 2:14)
- C. Jesus told the Pharisees of His day that the kingdom of God would not come with observation. (Luke 17:20-21)
 1. The Greek word translated as "observation" means inspection or ocular evidence; consequently, the physical eye will neither see nor recognize God's kingdom.
 2. God is Spirit; God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. (John 4:24)
- D. Seeking the kingdom of God requires seeking the Spirit of God.
- E. Seeking suggests effort and diligence; therefore, we must put forth the necessary effort and diligence to find God's kingdom.
- F. Both the rule and principles of God's kingdom are revealed through the Scriptures; therefore, it is vital that we read and study the Scriptures.
- G. Jesus' redemptive work is the first place to look for God's kingdom.
- H. The Gospel of the kingdom begins with Jesus' redemptive work.
 1. Rightstanding with God precedes the rule of God in an individual's life.
 2. The only way one can become righteous is through Jesus.
 3. Jesus is the only way to God's kingdom.

IV. ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- A. The Word of God must enter into a person's heart before he can enter into the kingdom of God. (Romans 10:13-17)
- B. Jesus told Nicodemus that only those who have been born again can **see** the kingdom of God. (John 3:3)
 - 1. The new birth comes as a result of God's Spirit entering into the heart of an individual.
 - 2. Without God's Spirit revealing God's kingdom, one could not possibly see this spiritual kingdom.
- C. One must be born of water and of the Spirit in order to **enter** the kingdom of God. (John 3:1-8)
 - 1. "Born of water" probably relates to the "washing of water by the Word," and "being born again by the Word of God." (Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23)
 - 2. "Born of the Spirit" relates to God's Spirit entering into man's spirit.
 - 3. It appears that one cannot **enter** the kingdom of God until he is immersed in God's Spirit and His Word.
 - a. The "new birth" is not the kingdom of God; the "new birth" precedes the kingdom of God.
 - b. One who is not "born-again" cannot **see** the kingdom of God.
 - c. Jesus is the door one must go through in order to **enter** the kingdom of God.
 - d. Many people are standing at the door, but they have not yet entered into the kingdom.
 - 4. God rules by His Word and by His Spirit; consequently, one who does not know the Word of God and the Spirit of God will not submit to the dominion of God.
 - 5. One who is submitted to the Word of God and the Spirit of God is ruled by God.

- D. There are three parables found in the fourth chapter of Mark that give tremendous insight into the operation of God's kingdom.
1. The parable of the sower reveals four conditions of the heart; it also reveals truths which will assist us in understanding other parables. (Mark 4:3-20)
 - a. The heart which does not understand the Word of God allows the Word of God to be stolen through **doubt**. This heart **defies** the kingdom of God.
 - b. The heart which **forsakes** the Word **denies** the kingdom of God.
 - c. The heart which allows the Word to be **suffocated** because of interest in other things **disregards** the kingdom of God.
 - d. The heart which **nurtures** the Word will manifest or **demonstrate** the kingdom of God.
 2. The parable of progression teaches us the process of God's kingdom. (Mark 4:26-29)
 - a. This parable reveals the Word of God as seed and our hearts as soil.
 - b. Just as the farmer does not know how the soil produces, the head does not know how the heart produces, but that does not stop the heart from producing.
 - c. The kingdom of God gains progressive control rather than instant control—first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.
 - d. God does not expect a baby Christian (one who is newly converted to faith in Jesus Christ) to function like a mature Christian.
 - e. God is looking for a harvest from everyone who has received the Word into his heart.
 3. The parable of the mustard seed also reveals some valuable spiritual truths concerning God's kingdom. (Mark 4:30-32)

- a. This parable teaches that many kingdoms operate in and dominate peoples' lives.
 - b. When God's Word is sown into the heart of an individual, it is the smallest kingdom in the individual.
- E. There are many kingdoms operating in the world today, but there are only two major kingdoms, the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light.
 - 1. All other kingdoms are subservient to one of these two major kingdoms.
 - 2. The kingdom of light is ruled by Jesus.
 - 3. The kingdom of darkness is ruled by Satan.
 - a. Contrary to what some think, Satan does have a kingdom. (Matthew 12:26)
 - b. Satan offered the kingdoms of the world to Jesus. (Matthew 4:8-9; Luke 4:5-6)
 - c. The kingdoms of philosophy, economics, education, religion, sports, recreation, etc., are all kingdoms which are under the rule of Satan.
 - (1) Satan opposes God and seeks to establish a dominion contrary to the rule of God.
 - (2) Each of these kingdoms has sought to exalt a god, a throne, or a dominion above God's.
 - (3) Philosophy's god is **reason**—man with his intelligence receives all the glory.
 - (4) The kingdom of economics is ruled by **greed**—all glory is given to the financial wizards who have great possessions.
 - (5) The god of education is **knowledge**, which presumably holds the "key to the future"—all glory is given unto those who hold the certificates and degrees.

- (6) **Tradition** is the god of religion—all glory is given unto men who lead people according to the desires of the people.
 - (7) The **physical body** driven by ego is the god of the sports world—all glory is given unto the athletes, coaches, and owners.
 - (8) **Pleasure** is the god of recreation—all glory is directed toward the pleasures of this life.
 - (9) Any kingdom that exalts itself above God's Word and exempts itself from God's rule is a kingdom of darkness ruled by Satan.
 - (10) Although it may not be as apparent, hurt and abuse, which are motivated by the devil, may also control an individual's life.
- 4. When God's Word is sown into the heart of an individual, it is expected to grow and rule over all these other kingdoms.
 - 5. It is possible for God to rule in one area of our lives and not rule in other areas, but this should not be. A man cannot serve two masters; consequently, each area of our lives must be submitted to God's kingdom.
 - 6. God wants to establish His kingdom in every area of our lives—spirit, soul, and body.

V. GOD'S KINGDOM IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE

- A. There are usually many controlling factors in an individual's life. Each of these areas can be described as a kingdom.
 - 1. Anything that controls an individual is actually ruling over the individual.
 - 2. Habits are kingdoms ruling over certain areas of an individual's life.
 - 3. Tradition is another ruling factor in an individual's life. (Matthew 15:3-9)
- B. God wants to rule in every area of our lives.

C. Kingdoms rule in each part of man—spirit, soul, and body.

1. The spirit of an unregenerate person is ruled by the kingdom of darkness, but the spirit of a regenerate person is ruled by the kingdom of light, which is the kingdom of God.
 - a. Although the spirit of the unregenerate person is ruled by the kingdom of darkness, that person may not choose to carry out all the desires of Satan.
 - b. The same is true of a regenerate person. Even though one may be born-again, he still has the power to violate the desires of God's kingdom.
 - c. To say that one is under the dominion of a certain kingdom does not imply that an individual cannot make choices contrary to the desires of that kingdom.
2. The soul, which is divided into three categories—mind, will, and emotions—is also subject to kingdom rule.
 - a. The mind, which is the intellectual apparatus of an individual, is a vital control area in a person's life.
 - (1) The mind absorbs information which plays a major role in the response and actions of an individual.
 - (2) Programming the mind with information concerning God's kingdom will allow God to rule in the mind of an individual.
 - (3) Programming the mind with information provided by the world will allow the world kingdoms to rule in the mind of an individual.
 - (4) God's kingdom will rule in the mind which has been renewed by the Word of God.
 - b. The will of man determines what man does.
 - (1) Man's will is man's choice; neither God nor the devil can overrule man's will.
 - (2) The strength of man's will is based upon the material that has been programmed into the mind of man.

- (3) The will chooses, but it makes its choices in light of the mind's recommendations.
 - (4) The will of man is a powerful force; consequently, it should be operating under the influence of God's will, which is His Word.
 - c. The emotions of man are also under kingdom rule.
 - (1) Like the will of man, the emotions of man are also based upon the information that has been programmed into the mind.
 - (2) The display of emotions can be good or bad, depending upon which kingdom is dominating the emotions.
 - (3) It is imperative that we constantly subject ourselves to God's Word; otherwise, the wrong kingdom will control our emotions.
- 3. The body of man is also controlled by kingdom rule; the body can be controlled by God's kingdom, or it can be controlled by the world's kingdom.
 - a. The body can be ruled by the spirit, or it can be ruled by the circumstances.
 - b. The body is the house of the spirit-man, but it is currently residing in a natural environment.
 - c. Romans 12:1 suggests that the spirit-man should present the physical body to God.
 - d. It is vital that the body display the Lordship of Jesus, thereby demonstrating God's kingdom rule in action.
 - e. Submitting the body to God's kingdom will enable the body to enjoy God's benefits of healing, prosperity, etc.
 - f. Submitting the body to the kingdom of darkness will bring forth the expectations of the world--sickness, disease, etc.
- D. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in my life," should be the cry of our hearts.

- E. According to Acts 14:22, it is through much tribulation that one enters the kingdom of God.
1. The Greek word translated as “tribulation” in this passage of scripture means pressure.
 2. Luke 16:16 speaks of pressing, or forcing, or crowding into the kingdom of God.
 - a. “Presseth” means to force or crowd.
 - b. The word “presseth” in Luke 16:16 is the same Greek word as “violent take it by force” in Matthew 11:12.
 3. These statements should make us aware of the opposition to God’s kingdom; neither flesh, nor religion, nor the world is comfortable with God’s rule.
- F. In order for one to enter God’s kingdom, he must trust in God and God alone.
1. The kingdom of God must be received with childlike faith. (Mark 10:13-15)
 2. In Mark 10:23, Jesus’ statement, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God,” astounded His disciples.
 - a. The Greek definition for the word translated as “hardly” means impractical; impractical means not capable of being carried out in practice.
 - b. Jesus’ statement illustrates the fact that one cannot trust in God and riches, nor can one submit to two masters. (Matthew 6:24)
 - c. Confidence in and submission to God give one access into God’s kingdom.
 - d. Luke 19:1-10 confirms the fact that a rich man can enter into the kingdom of God; Zacchaeus was rich, but he did not trust in his riches. He trusted in God.
- G. Religious people struggle with entering into the kingdom of God, while certain sinners receive God’s kingdom with gladness. (Matthew 21:28-32)

- H. “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 5:3; Luke 6:20)
1. The Greek word translated as “poor” means to crouch or cower, which suggests hiding oneself in fear, hence a recognition of one’s inadequacies.
 2. Spiritual poverty is the opposite of spiritual pride.
 3. Those who recognize their inabilities are granted access to God’s rule and power.

VI. THE OPERATION OF GOD’S KINGDOM

- A. The “spiritual laws” that govern the kingdom of God are similar to the “natural laws” that govern in earth.
1. The “law of sowing and reaping” works in both the natural and spiritual realms.
 2. The “law of progression” also works in both the natural and spiritual realms.
 3. The yield of natural seed is dependent upon the soil; the yield of spiritual seed is dependent upon the heart. Obviously, the same principle applies in both the spiritual and natural realms.
- B. The kingdom of God is often compared to something natural.
1. Jesus referred to the parable of the sower as a mystery concerning the kingdom of God, and then He revealed the mystery by explaining the parable. (Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:11)
 2. Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a man sowing seed into the ground; even though he did not understand how the seed produced, the man sowed with confidence that it would produce. (Mark 4:26-29)
 3. Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed, which is extremely small when sown, but grows into the largest herb of the garden. (Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32)

4. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but an enemy came and sowed tares among the good seed. (Matthew 13:24-30 & 36-43)
 5. Jesus compared the kingdom of God to leaven, revealing the slow, sure progression of God's kingdom, which begins internally and manifests externally. (Luke 13:20-21)
 6. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to treasure hidden in a field. (Matthew 13:44)
 7. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a merchant seeking beautiful pearls. (Matthew 13:45)
 8. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a dragnet that was cast into the sea. (Matthew 13:47-50)
 9. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a householder who brings out of his treasures both new and old. Matthew 13:52)
 10. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven like a king who settled accounts with his servants. (Matthew 18:21-35)
 11. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a property owner who hired laborers to work in his vineyard. (Matthew 20:1-16)
 12. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a king who arranged a marriage for his son. (Matthew 22:2-14)
 13. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to ten virgins. (Matthew 25:1-13)
 14. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a man traveling to a far country and entrusting his goods to his servants before he left. (Matthew 25:14-30)
- C. Although the kingdom of God is compared to natural things, the natural man cannot inherit God's kingdom; it is a spiritual kingdom. (I Corinthians 15:50)
- D. We must be aware of certain "keys of the kingdom," which play a vital role in the operation of God's kingdom. (Matthew 16:19)

1. Keys of the kingdom unlock and allow entry into certain areas of the kingdom.
 2. The keys of the kingdom grant unto us legal access to God's resources, which are located in heaven; yet, these resources can be successfully used in earth.
 3. In order to properly exercise the authority and dominion given unto us by Jesus, we must first know the principles of the kingdom of God. These principles are the "keys."
 4. According to Matthew 18:18, we have the power and privilege to bind or release a brother who sins against us. When this scripture is acted upon, a kingdom principle is implemented.
- E. God depends upon our authority as human beings to **establish** His kingdom in earth; as human beings, we must depend upon God's power and ability working in us to **exercise** His dominion in earth.
1. The success of the kingdom of God in earth is dependent upon God and man **working together** in perfect harmony.
 2. When the Body of Christ becomes saturated with God's Word and yields to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, God's kingdom will be established and His will accomplished in earth, as it is in heaven.
- F. The kingdom of God is not **of** this world, but it does operate **in** this world. (John 18:36; John 17:16)
- G. God wants His government to be seen through the Body of Christ, just as it was seen through Jesus.
- H. Those who are waiting until they die to submit to the kingdom of God may never have the privilege of entering God's kingdom.
1. One who refuses to submit to God's kingdom in earth probably would not submit to God's kingdom in heaven.
 2. Jesus did not advocate dying and going to heaven; He did exhort people to submit to the kingdom of God **in this life**.

- I. The kingdom of God is already operating in earth; consequently, we do not have to wait for God's kingdom to come to earth, but we do have the responsibility of recognizing and submitting to His kingdom, which is already here.

VII. JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- A. The word "kingdom" is used one hundred fifty-eight times in the King James Version of the New Testament. The phrases "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" were used one hundred one times.
- B. The phrase "kingdom of God" is used sixty-nine times in the King James Version of the New Testament. Of the fifty-four times that this phrase was spoken in the gospels, Jesus said it forty-six times.
- C. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used thirty-two times in the King James Version of the New Testament. Of the thirty-two times this phrase was spoken, Jesus said it thirty times.
- D. Jesus spent much of His time teaching and preaching the kingdom of God; therefore, it must be extremely important to God for the Body of Christ to be aware of and to submit to the kingdom of God.
 1. Jesus went forth announcing that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand. (Matthew 4:17; Matthew 12:28)
 2. Jesus emphasized the nearness of God's kingdom by saying that some of those who were present would not die until they had seen God's kingdom in power. (Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27)
 3. Jesus announced the consummation of the "law and prophets" and the beginning of God's kingdom. (Luke 16:16)
 - a. Jesus did not spend His time teaching the "law and prophets."
 - b. Jesus used the "law and prophets" to teach and convey kingdom principles. (Matthew 13:52)
- E. Jesus not only taught the kingdom of God before His crucifixion, but also He taught it after His resurrection. (Acts 1:3)
 1. We must preach the same gospel that Jesus preached.

2. We have preached the gospel of Jesus, which is good, but people need to hear the message of God's kingdom and its principles and to see the power of God's kingdom manifested.
- F. Not only did Jesus preach the kingdom of God, He also demonstrated the power of God's kingdom. (Matthew 4:23; Matthew 9:35; Luke 8:1; Luke 9:11)
 - G. Jesus commissioned the "twelve" and the "seventy" to go forth and to announce the arrival of God's kingdom. (Matthew 10:7; Luke 9:1-2; Luke 10:9)
 - H. Jesus also instructed His disciples to pray for God's kingdom to come in earth. (Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2)
 - I. Jesus made it very clear that the kingdom of God should be the number one priority in an individual's life. (Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:31)
 - J. Jesus revealed the fact that the kingdom of God has keys which have been given unto us. (Matthew 16:19)
 1. The keys are principles that enable us to utilize the power of the kingdom.
 2. The keys have been given unto us with the anticipation of our using them.
 - K. Jesus declared that we can know the mysteries of the kingdom. (Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10)
 - L. Jesus revealed the location of the kingdom. (Luke 17:21)
 1. Jesus warned against looking for a physical kingdom. (Luke 17:20)
 2. Some thought the kingdom of God should appear immediately. (Luke 19:11)
 3. Jesus revealed the mystery of God's spiritual kingdom that was being established in the hearts of men.
 4. Although the kingdom of God is not **of** this world, it is operating **in** this world. (John 18:36)

- M. Jesus gave some insight into the kingdom when He told the scribe that he was not far from the kingdom of God. (Mark 12:28-34)
 - 1. The scribe was placing all of his attention upon God.
 - 2. He realized that obedience was better than sacrifice.
 - 3. Submitting to God through obedience gives God dominion over one's life.
- N. Jesus also made it very clear that it pleased God to give His kingdom unto us. (Luke 12:32)
- O. Jesus revealed many truths concerning the kingdom of God.
 - 1. Only those who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 7:21)
 - 2. Children of the kingdom who refuse to submit to the dominion of God will be cast into outer darkness. (Matthew 8:12)
 - 3. God's kingdom can be taken away from those who refuse to follow its principles. (Matthew 21:43)
 - 4. God's kingdom will be purged. (Matthew 13:41)
 - 5. God's kingdom consists of those who are teachable and pliable and willing to change. (Matthew 19:14)
 - 6. Not everyone is fit for the kingdom of God.
 - a. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. (I Corinthians 6:9-10)
 - b. Those who follow the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)
 - c. Those who look back are not fit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62)
 - 7. The kingdom of God will not be stopped; rebellion against the kingdom will be removed. (Luke 19:27)
 - 8. God's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; it has no end. (Luke 1:33)

9. God's kingdom is available and should be seized, but only the energetic will seize it. (Matthew 11:12; Luke 16:16)
 10. The great ones in God's kingdom are those who are humble and have a contrite spirit. (Matthew 18:1-4)
 11. Casting out devils is a manifestation of God's kingdom in power. (Matthew 12:28)
- P. Jesus felt compelled to preach the kingdom of God wherever He went. (Luke 4:43)
- Q. Jesus made it clear in Luke 9:60 that the mission of a disciple is to proclaim the kingdom of God.
- R. Even the thief on the cross had a kingdom awareness. (Luke 23:42-43)
1. Jesus made what seems to be an unusual reply to the thief—"Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise;" it did not appear that God's kingdom was in control of the situation, but it was.
 2. The kingdom of God was manifested in the heart of the earth when Jesus conquered death and set the captives free. The kingdom of God defeated the kingdom of darkness on its own turf!
- S. Jesus declared that the gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; the power of God's kingdom will be displayed in all the earth. (Matthew 24:14)
1. The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom is one of the last events to take place in the end times.
 2. The nations of earth have been taught many things in the past, but the time has now come to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to display the power of God's kingdom.
- T. The emphasis of Jesus' earthly ministry was upon the kingdom of God; therefore, the kingdom of God must be emphasized today.

VIII. KINGDOM PRINCIPLES

- A. The following are a few of God's kingdom principles:

1. A tree is identified by its fruit. (Matthew 12:33)
 2. Our words will either justify or condemn us. (Matthew 12:37)
 3. Man is defiled internally, not externally. (Matthew 15:17-18)
 4. A divided kingdom or house cannot stand. (Mark 3:24-25)
 5. Bind the strong man, and you can spoil his goods. (Mark 3:27)
 6. The yield of seed is dependent upon the soil. (Mark 4:3-8)
 7. God's method of production is progression and growth. (Mark 4:28)
 8. God's kingdom begins small, but it progressively becomes great. (Mark 4:30-32)
 9. God's kingdom begins within the heart of an individual and gradually affects his entire being. God rules from the inside out, not from the outside in.
 10. The great ones in the kingdom of God are those who give themselves to serving. Those who focus on serving are the true "ministers" of God. (Mark 10:42-45)
 11. Give, and it shall be given back to you proportionately. (Luke 6:38)
 12. Seed must die in order to reproduce. (John 12:24)
 13. Sowing will result in reaping. (Galatians 6:7)
 14. We must not overlook the principle found in Romans 1:16, which is "the power of salvation is in the gospel of Jesus."
- B. A principle is a method of operation; consequently, we must learn the principles of God's kingdom in order to understand its operation.
1. We must understand the operation of God's kingdom in order to utilize its potential resources.

2. One cannot fully submit to a kingdom without some basic understanding of its principles.
- C. Kingdom principles are not mystical; they are spiritual. They are not hidden from us; they are revealed to us.
- D. Understanding kingdom principles will reduce failure and silence disgruntlement among those who have entered the kingdom.

IX. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM

- A. Jesus introduced the kingdom of God in His earthly ministry by teaching and demonstrating God's power and dominion.
- B. Jesus commissioned the "twelve" and the "seventy" to proclaim the arrival of God's kingdom. (Luke 9:1-2; Luke 10:8-11)
- C. God's kingdom is graciously presented to His flock, which are the saints. (Luke 12:32)
- D. God's kingdom was taken away from national Israel and given unto the Church. (Matthew 21:43; I Peter 2:9)
 1. Israel refused to allow God to govern them; they even killed the Son of God.
 2. The **true Church** is governed by the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ.
 - a. The Church, which is the Body of Christ, is identified as a holy nation. (I Peter 2:9)
 - b. God has chosen to establish His kingdom in the Church, which will, in turn, establish His kingdom in the earth.
- E. Not everyone wants God to rule over him. (Luke 19:11-14, & 27)
 1. God is very patient and tolerant with us; He gives us ample time to submit to His kingdom.
 2. Those who refuse to submit to God's kingdom will ultimately be destroyed.
- F. God is establishing His kingdom in earth slowly, but surely.

1. The Pharisees of Jesus' day asked when the kingdom of God was coming, not realizing that the ruler of God's kingdom stood before them. (Luke 17:20; Luke 19:11)
 2. The disciples were also inquisitive about the coming of God's kingdom, not realizing that they were to play a major role in establishing God's kingdom in earth. (Acts 1:6)
 3. We must keep our spiritual eyes and ears open and alert to God's kingdom so that we can see and understand what God is doing among us.
- G. God's kingdom is made up of volunteers who have willingly agreed that God should rule over them.
1. Not everyone who attends church is under the lordship of Jesus; some have entered the church under the guise of servants and have challenged the kingdom of God, even to the point of harming God's servants. (Luke 20:9-18)
 2. Some have become disenchanted with God's rule, and they have tried to create problems for those who have submitted to God's rule; others have deserted God's kingdom.
 3. God's kingdom can be compared to Gideon's army of 10,000 volunteers, out of which only 300 actually passed God's fitness test. (Judges 7:2-7)
 - a. It was necessary for God to prove the 10,000 volunteers by testing them, although they were not among the fearful.
 - b. God knew that the war tactic to be used by Gideon would be different from anything Israel's army had ever seen.
 - (1) Not everyone can accept a torch, a pitcher (clay container), and a trumpet as weapons of warfare.
 - (2) Not everyone can stand still when the enemy panics and goes about killing its own allies.
 - c. Many are called; few are chosen. (Matthew 22:14)
 - d. The kingdom of God places its emphasis upon quality, not quantity.

- e. Others in the army of Israel were used later to pursue and destroy the enemy. (Judges 7:23-25)
 - f. Many people are not prepared, ready, and fit for the first assignment.
4. Those who put their hand to the plow and look back are not fit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62)
- H. God's kingdom has taken deep root in the earth, and it will not be plucked up.
- I. The kingdom of God is not being established with the dramatic display many expected; however, the kingdom of God is definitely a kingdom of power. (I Corinthians 4:20)
- J. God is dealing with the hearts of individuals; He must first establish His kingdom in the individual's heart before He can establish His kingdom in the Church.
- 1. The Church, which is the Body of Christ, is made up of individuals.
 - 2. When the individuals in the Church submit to God, the Church will be submitted to God.
 - 3. God wants complete control of our lives so that He can fulfill His purpose in and through us.

X. UNITY IS VITAL TO KINGDOM SUCCESS

- A. A divided kingdom cannot stand! (Matthew 12:25-30)
- 1. The strength of a kingdom is dependent upon agreement within the kingdom.
 - 2. Disunity in the camp is a far greater threat than the enemy outside the camp.
 - 3. Satan has discovered the principle of binding the strong man, and he has successfully used this principle against the Church.

- a. Matthew 28:18 teaches that Jesus has all authority, both in heaven and earth; therefore, Satan has no authority over the Body of Christ. (The “Head” and the “Body” share the same authority.)
 - b. Satan knows that he does not have any authority over the Body of Christ; therefore, he offers suggestions that, if followed, will bring division to the “Body.”
 - c. The “strong man” in earth must not be viewed as Satan—the strong man is the Church; yet, the Church has failed to demonstrate its strength because of division in the camp.
 - (1) Deceptions and bluffs have weakened the “strong man.”
 - (2) Satan, through simple suggestion, has divided the Church; he has bound the “strong man;” he has also stolen valuable treasures from the Church.
 - (3) The Church is now weak because it believes that it is weak, but God is exposing the enemy and restoring strength to the Church.
 - d. The Church, in the past, has relinquished its authority to Satan by yielding to his suggestions; consequently, the Church has been divided and helpless.
- B. The kingdom of God is reuniting the Church, and the “strong man” will come forth and display his power in earth.
 - C. Just as Satan crowded into the Church, he is now being crowded out of the Church through the establishment of God’s kingdom. (Matthew 11:12)
 - D. God’s kingdom recognizes neither denominations, nor education, nor the organization of man; God’s kingdom is governed solely by the Word of God and the Spirit of God.
 - E. Unity does not require compromise, but it does require cooperation and consideration.
 - 1. Anything diluted loses its potency or power.

2. Unity will require close scrutiny of our beliefs; we must determine whether our beliefs are scriptural or traditional.
 - a. Scriptural beliefs will unite the Body of Christ.
 - b. Traditional beliefs will divide the Body of Christ.
- F. Christ has only one “Body;” it is imperative that we recognize His “Body.”
- G. The kingdom of God is one kingdom under the rule of one God.

XI. GOD’S KINGDOM IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

- A. God’s kingdom must be established in the local church.
 1. *Webster’s Dictionary* defines “establish” as follows: to make steadfast, firm, or stable; to set or fix unalterably.
 2. The Lord is not only to build the house, but He must also be allowed to maintain His house. (Psalm 127:1)
 3. If Jesus is not governing the local church, its efforts are futile.
- B. The kingdom of God is ruled by theocracy, not democracy; consequently, God will settle for nothing less than theocracy in the local assembly.
 1. *Webster’s Dictionary* defines “theocracy” as the literal rule of a state by God.
 2. God’s theocratic rule in the local assembly operates through the overseer (Senior Minister) of the assembly.
 - a. God reveals His plans and purposes for the local assembly to the overseer of the assembly.
 - b. The overseer of the local assembly is responsible for the execution of God’s plans and purposes.
 - c. The overseer is the resident authority ordained by God to direct the local assembly.

- (1) God sees the overseer as His messenger to the assembly; therefore, the overseer is responsible for instructing the assembly in the ways of the Lord.
 - (2) Every overseer will give an account unto God for the way he carries out his duties.
- d. The overseer must convey to the local assembly the current will of God; consequently, the overseer must maintain constant communication with the Head of the Church, Jesus.
- e. Psalm 77:20, Psalm 78:18-20, and Psalm 78:70-72 give evidence that God leads His people through God-appointed men.
- f. According to the Scriptures, the overseer is governed by God, not men. (Revelation 2 & 3)
 - (1) The word translated as “angel” (King James Version) is the Greek word *aggelos*, which means a messenger (spiritual or natural).
 - (2) The Greek word *aggelos* was translated as “messenger” in the following scriptures: Matthew 11:10; Luke 7:24; Luke 9:52; II Corinthians 12:7; James 2:25. (King James Version)
 - (3) The context of chapters 2 and 3 of the Revelation gives obvious evidence that John is writing to a natural man, not a spiritual being.
- 3. The nation of Israel provides an excellent example of God’s theocratic rule and the detrimental effect of the democratic rule of man.
 - a. God told Moses to lead the nation of Israel into the “Promised Land,” but influential men persuaded the people to rebel against God. (Numbers 13; Numbers 32:9)
 - (1) God’s theocratic rule can be violated, but such action will always be detrimental to the one who violates.

- (2) One who does not have God's vision or one who does not hear God's Word will not submit to God's rule.
 - (3) The generation who had seen God's power displayed in their behalf refused to submit to God's rule; consequently, they died in the wilderness.
 - b. God appointed Moses as Israel's leader, and He also appointed Aaron as the High Priest, but Korah led a rebellion against God's ordained authority. (Numbers 16)
 - (1) Korah was not content to function in the position of God's choosing; he wanted to be more visible.
 - (2) God confirmed His choice by accepting Aaron's offering and by destroying Korah and those who followed him, but even then the people complained about God's actions, and God took action against the complainers.
 - c. Moses' own brother and sister murmured and complained against him, but, once again, God divinely intervened. (Numbers 12)
 - d. King Saul allowed the people to persuade him to disobey God's command. As a result, the kingdom was taken from him. (I Samuel 15:10-23; I Samuel 16:1)
 - e. David refused to submit to the desires of the people; consequently, he led those who had talked of killing him to a great victory. (I Samuel 30:1-19)
 - f. The Pharisees and Sadducees, through democratic rule (Sanhedrin Court), demanded the death of Jesus. (Luke 22:66-71; Luke 23:13-25; Acts 2:22-23)
- 4. God has given unto us the right and privilege of submitting to His kingdom, but we can choose to usurp His authority over us and suffer the consequences.
- C. Jesus is the Head of every God-ordained assembly; consequently, the local church must operate under **His** ordained authority and structure. (The overseer of the local church must be chosen by Jesus, not men. Afterall, he is to represent Jesus, not men.)

- D. Democracy is diametrically opposed to theocracy.
1. Democracy is government of the people, by the people, and for the people. It originates in people, derives its authority from people, and operates to fulfill the purposes of people.
 2. Theocracy is government of God, by God, and for God. It originates in God, derives its authority from God, and operates to fulfill the purposes of God.
 3. The kingdom of God cannot be established in an environment where the government of men takes precedence over the government of God.
- E. Contrary to popular belief, God is responsible for the welfare of the local church.
1. The local church exists for God, not man.
 - a. The local church is ordained by God to do the service of God.
 - b. The congregation exists for God, not man.
 - c. The local church serves as a means for God to bring the local body together in corporate worship, that our oneness in Jesus might be made manifest.
 2. When men take it upon themselves to control and dominate the local church, God's authority is usurped, and spiritual disaster is inevitable.
 - a. The local church did not begin with deacons; deacons came into existence because of a need. (Acts 6:1-3)
 - (1) The deacon's authority was limited solely to benevolence.
 - (2) The twelve apostles delegated authority to the believers to select seven deacons, who met the requirements of the apostles, to carry out the distribution of benevolence.
 - b. Deacons may not always be needed; deacons should only be selected when the need to administer benevolence arises.

3. God holds the overseer of the local assembly accountable for any ungodly activity allowed to operate in the assembly where he is the resident authority.
- F. The leadership structure of the nation of Israel is an excellent example of proper church structure.
1. The beginning leadership of the nation of Israel was appointed by God.
 - a. God sets the members of the “Body” in their proper position through His own selection, not the election of men. (I Corinthians 12:18)
 - (1) God selected Moses to be the first leader of the nation of Israel. Moses selected men to help him carry out his duties. (Exodus 3:9-10; Exodus 18:13-26)
 - (2) God selected Joshua to succeed Moses as Israel’s leader. (Numbers 27:18-23; Deuteronomy 34:9)
 - (3) God selected Saul to be Israel’s first king.
 - (4) God selected David to be king over Israel after Saul’s disobedience.
 - b. All leadership positions should be filled by God’s selection rather than man’s election.
 2. Israel was not content with God’s government and decided to form a new type of government; this new type of government was not in the best interest of the nation of Israel. (I Samuel 8:4-22)
 - a. Although God told Samuel to give Israel a king as they desired, He reminded Samuel that it was He Who had been rejected, not Samuel. (I Samuel 8:7)
 - (1) Israel wanted to be like the other nations; God wanted His people to be different from the other nations.
 - (2) God wanted Israel totally dependent upon Him; He wanted Israel to look to God, not man, for guidance.

- (3) Following man is a substitute for following God.
- (4) Samuel proved to the people that God was not pleased with their desire for a king. (I Samuel 12:12; I Samuel 12:16-19)
- b. God gave Israel the type of government they desired, but He did not allow them to fill the leadership position; Saul was selected and appointed by God, not man. (I Samuel 10:1)
 - (1) Saul was placed in the position of king to represent God to the people, but he failed to wait upon God, and he refused to follow God's plans and procedures.
 - (2) Saul's downfall came as a result of following the desire of the people; his disobedience ultimately cost him everything, including his life. (I Samuel 15:24)
- 3. Israel's violation of God's perfect will proved detrimental to the nation.
- 4. The Church should learn and profit from Israel's mistakes.
 - a. God desires to have complete control of the Church; therefore, He selects and appoints people to represent Him in the Church.
 - (1) Poor representation is God's problem, not the people's.
 - (2) Under God's government, the people do not have the prerogative to deal with God's appointed leadership. (Acts 13:21-22)
 - (3) God's choice may not always be agreeable with the people, but it will always be the best way for the people.
 - b. The Church began with Jesus in control, but man was not satisfied with God's methods and procedures; consequently, man refused to allow God to control the very Church He birthed through Jesus.

- c. God is once again taking control of **His** Church and removing it from the hands of men; He is using men of **His** choosing to establish **His** kingdom in **His** Church.
 - d. Isaiah prophesied that the government would be upon the shoulder of Jesus. (Isaiah 9:6)
 - (1) God is fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah in this present day.
 - (2) The “shoulder” that the government is to be upon represents the Body of Christ, which will bear the rule of God’s kingdom.
- G. Creation reveals the method and procedure of God’s rule in the earth.
- 1. The purpose of Old Testament types was not that Jesus nor man seek to fulfill them; their purpose was to announce what Jesus and man would do.
 - 2. Creation gives valuable insight into God’s purpose and future for man.
 - 3. God knew that He would establish a kingdom in earth before He ever created the earth.
 - 4. God also knew that He would not have the only kingdom operating in earth; consequently, He revealed through creation how He would govern the other kingdoms.
 - a. God created two great lights, one to rule the day, the other to rule the night. The greater light He called sun; the lesser light He called moon.
 - b. The sun’s purpose is to rule the day, which is an allegory revealing the rule of Jesus over the Church, the kingdom of light.
 - c. The purpose of the moon is to rule the night, which is an allegory revealing the rule of the Church over the kingdom of darkness, the world system.

- d. The sun generates its own light, but the moon is incapable of generating light; therefore, the moon must reflect light by exposing itself to the sun, which is an allegory revealing that Jesus is capable of generating the knowledge and wisdom of God, but the Church, like the moon, cannot generate. It must reflect by exposing itself to Jesus.
- e. God, in His infinite wisdom, predetermined the rule of His kingdom through the Church before the Church ever existed.

XI. SUMMARY

- A. Jesus put great emphasis upon God's kingdom coming to earth and being established in the hearts of men.
- B. Jesus spent much time teaching and preaching the kingdom of God.
- C. Jesus has revealed unto us many mysteries concerning the kingdom of God.
 - 1. Many of these mysteries have been revealed through parables.
 - a. Parables serve a two-fold purpose: they reveal and conceal.
 - b. Parables reveal truths and principles about God's kingdom, but only those who are spiritually alert can understand these truths and principles. (Matthew 13:11-17)
 - 2. God never intended for the kingdom of God to be a mystery to the Church. (Mark 4:11)
- D. God's kingdom must be sought after, which suggests that the kingdom of God is not visible to everyone.
- E. God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom which must be spiritually discerned.
- F. There seems to be a procedure for finding and operating in the kingdom of God: seek; see; enter; become established; and operate.

- G. God's kingdom operates according to predetermined principles; therefore, it is vital that we learn God's kingdom principles.
- H. The keys to the kingdom, which have been given unto us, are spiritual principles which make the resources of heaven available for us to use in the earth.
- I. God is establishing His kingdom upon the earth.
- J. It is imperative that the Body of Christ come together in unity and function as one so that God's kingdom will not be divided, but strengthened.
- K. God's kingdom is within us; therefore, it is vital that we come together as one so that God's kingdom may be manifested in the earth, as we corporately utilize and manifest the power of God's kingdom.
- L. God's kingdom is also being established in the local churches which truly bear His name.
- M. God is setting up His theocratic rule in the hearts of men so that His theocratic rule may be set up in the local church; Jesus will govern His "Body!"
- N. God fills His positions of authority through the method of selection, not election.
- O. God has never used men to determine His sovereign will; He does use men to execute His will.

XII. CONCLUSION

- A. It is of utmost importance that we recognize that there are many kingdoms in the earth, but we must never attempt to mingle any of these kingdoms with the kingdom of God.
 - 1. Give unto the world only what belongs to the world; pay your taxes and abide by the laws of the land. (Matthew 22:21; Luke 20:25; Romans 13:1-7)
 - 2. Give unto God what belongs to God. We are God's property; therefore, everything we have belongs to God.
- B. It is mandatory that we proclaim the kingdom of God and teach kingdom principles.

1. Jesus preached and taught the kingdom of God extensively; we must do the same.
 2. Philip preached the kingdom of God, and he saw the power of God's kingdom manifested. (Acts 8:12)
 3. Paul preached the kingdom of God, and many miracles occurred as God revealed Himself in power and authority. (Acts 19:8; Acts 20:25; Acts 28:23)
 4. Even Balaam prophesied concerning the dominion of God, although he never entered into it. (Numbers 24:17-19)
 5. King Nebuchadnezzar recognized God's kingdom. (Daniel 4:1-3, 17, 25, 32, & 34-35))
 6. King Darius also recognized God's kingdom. (Daniel 6:25-27)
- C. The disciples placed so much emphasis upon the kingdom of God that they forsook all and followed Jesus. (Mark 10:28-31; Luke 18:28-30)
- D. Many people are becoming so engrossed in other things that the kingdom of God is pushed aside and not recognized as vital in this life.
1. Guarding, protecting, and caring for the incorruptible seed which has been sown into our hearts is essential to life.
 2. Although God's kingdom cannot be stopped, it can be violated and even suffocated by the cares of this world. (Mark 4:19)
 3. The cares of the world can choke faith to death. Remember, faith comes by hearing.
 - a. When we listen to the circumstances and situations of life, our faith in God diminishes; consequently, God ceases to rule in our lives.
 - b. When we listen to the Word of God and the Spirit of God, faith arises, and God's kingdom rules in our lives.

- c. The cares of the world will not only choke the faith of an individual, but they will also choke the faith of the local church.
- E. Although God's kingdom is being established, it is not being established without opposition.
1. The kingdom of God was opposed and interrupted in the garden of Eden, but it was not stopped. It cannot be stopped!!! (Genesis 3)
 2. Mutinies and uprisings often occur when a new kingdom comes into power; these mutinies and uprisings in the local church must be suppressed and disallowed.
 3. God's ordained authority must take its stand and disallow the things that are not pleasing to God.
 4. Not all church attenders are happy with God's kingdom principles and rule; consequently, mutinies and uprisings come from within.
 5. Jesus stated that every plant which His heavenly Father had not planted would be uprooted. (Matthew 15:13)
- F. The establishment of God's kingdom follows the same principle as that of the children of Israel when they went in to possess the "Promised Land;" they took the land a city at a time.
1. Although God gave unto the Israelites the land of Canaan, their possession of the land did not come without opposition.
 2. The Israelites were even deceived into making a league with their enemy. (Joshua 9:3-15)
 - a. Many kingdoms fear the kingdom of God; consequently, they will attempt to make a league with the citizens of God's kingdom.
 - b. God's kingdom must not become diluted with any other kingdom; therefore, compromise is forbidden.
 3. The Israelites had to concentrate on one city at a time; otherwise, the task would have seemed overwhelming.

- G. Never in the history of mankind have we had so much unrest in every area of the world. Homes are divided, churches are divided, nations are divided, and there seems to be no solution to these problems. God's kingdom must be established; otherwise, these problems will continue to escalate. We must conquer each of these areas until we possess the entire territory.
- H. God's kingdom could have been established with the first Adam, but he refused to stay submitted to God. The last Adam (Jesus) remained submitted to God and ushered in God's kingdom, which is constantly increasing.
- I. God's kingdom is not an external kingdom of religion and ceremonial rites; God's kingdom is an internal kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Romans 14:17)
 - 1. Righteousness, peace, and joy are keys to and fruit of kingdom rule.
 - 2. One who remains in rightstanding with God, always maintaining his peace and joy, is under the rule of God.
 - 3. Righteousness, peace, and joy come through the Holy Spirit, Who resides in us.
 - 4. One who is led by the Spirit is under the rule of God; one who is under the rule of God will always enjoy righteousness, peace, and joy.
 - 5. As we can see from the statements above, righteousness, peace, and joy are directly related to the kingdom of God; therefore, those who desire to be under the dominion of God must pursue righteousness, peace, and joy.
 - 6. The fruit of righteousness, peace, and joy is realized and obtained through intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- J. King Nebuchadnezzar went through some difficult circumstances until he recognized the kingdom of God. (Daniel 4)
- K. The stone that destroyed the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream has already been cut out, and God's kingdom is filling the earth. (Daniel 2:31-45)

- L. Joseph of Arimathaea was waiting for the kingdom of God; in contrast, the Church is waiting for the rapture. (Mark 15:43)
 - 1. Joseph wanted to see God's kingdom established in earth; He is described as both "honorable" and "bold." The Church wants to be taken out of the earth. Is that desire honorable and bold? (Mark 15:43)
 - 2. The Church must awaken and realize that its mission is not to leave the earth; its mission is to establish God's kingdom in the earth.
- M. May the kingdom of God come into full fruition so that God's will may be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Amen!