

BETWEEN THE LINES

A Deeper Look...

#940- RADICAL KINGDOM CONCEPTS: Revolutionary Teachings of Jesus

What is "the Kingdom?" What is Jesus really talking about? What's the difference between His view of kingdom and that of the average Jacob on the street? We surely can't resolve all of this in two pages but let's scratch the bit more deeply at the revolutionary Kingdom of Jesus...

Search The Word: Here are some of the best passages of Jesus with regard to His perception of this Kingdom-

- John 18- This is not a kingdom based on military force.
 - We're not talking about something just a cut better than Rome!
- Luke 17- This is not a kingdom based on some geographic boundary.
 - It's portable. You carry it with you... even in dungeons and by gravesides.
- Matthew 3- You don't have to wait any longer. It's already begun.
 - It's a current reality to those who are its citizens.
- Mark 1- You can't be a passive citizen in this one. There's no latent citizenship.
 - Citizenship here requires repentance and active faith.
- Matthew 10- It is in balance with the reality of a healthy universe.
 - It is, primarily, a place where God's will is the standard of living.
- Mark 9- It is more fully exhibited at various times than others.
 - Just as there were times when the *Shekinah* Presence of God was more evident/more intense in the age of the wilderness wandering so it is that this Kingdom, at times, is more fully within our current reality.
- Mark 14- The Kingdom is now, but not quite yet. Jesus, and His children, will not fully experience all that it entails until they can rejoice in the Kingdom living together.
- Matthew 1- This Kingdom cannot be purchased. You cannot bribe anyone for this citizenship. In fact, it seems that a reliance on your own assets (whatever they may be!) is a definite detriment to most who covet it.

That's just a sampling of what Jesus said about His kingdom. The truth is that some of the best insights into His perception of Kingdom were "hidden" away in parable tales. Let's spend time with a few...

- Mark 4- The invitation (seed) to be part of the Kingdom is spread far and wide but it appears to be the minority who choose to be susceptible to germination. Most just have no lasting interest in being a vibrant medium of His type of kingdom.
- Matthew 13- From a natural, human perspective it appears that this Kingdom just doesn't appear to be a dominant "force." The inception of the Kingdom within the heart of a man is so quiet, so nearly imperceptible, that most of us would not believe that it could bring such an end result. Little sees "turn the world upside down." (Acts 17)
- Luke 13- It is particularly foolish to delay entrance into this Kingdom. No matter what other allegiance you hold, anything else only destines you to death. So, why would anyone stall around in any other loyalty?
- Matthew 20- This Kingdom does not run on the order of any other. It is overseen by a Lord who has exceedingly generous priorities. He simply aches to expand His boundary to include every willing heart. He doesn't get lost in energy and time clocks... only in the heart service of His people. He yearns to be squanderous with His resources for any who would join Him.
- Matthew 22- He has no regard for our perception of social standing. The "right kind of people" to Him are those who are pliant and receptive, that's all.
- Luke 14- He doesn't force anyone to be a part of His kingdom. He will ache for you if you're not interested, but it won't force Him to exclude any other.

- Matthew 25- The rapidity of the full reception of the Kingdom will catch everyone napping... even those who have been waiting for it and are prepared!

Reconsider This...

Some of the richest theology of Jesus was formalized in **John 3** when Nicodemus sought Jesus out that momentous night. We are familiar with **John 3:16** and the fact that this is the extended "born again" passage, but were you aware of how often He referred to "Kingdom" in this dialogue? Let's paraphrase the front end of this event...

- **3:1-2** A renowned scholar approached Jesus and stated, "It's obvious your perceptions of reality are different from the rest of us. The evidence of your life shows you live on a different plane..."
- **3:3** "Yes, and you'll have to learn to live in that Kingdom too!"
- **3:4** "I don't get it. How can a person live in a different reality than this?"
- **3:5, 6** "The old life you've known has to be drowned out, flooded away and a new life has to be breathed into you for you to live in this Kingdom. You can either stay in this kingdom or really find out how to live by moving into another.
- **3:7,8** "Don't be too surprised. There are many things you're not capable of understanding."
- **3:9** "Nicodemus responded, "I'm sorry. I just don't get it. I live here and now. How can I live in another reality? This is all I know."
- **3:10-12** "As renowned a theologian as you are and you haven't grasped this simple concept? Isn't that what I already said? The reality of this Kingdom is not this reality. It's a Kingdom that operates by completely different rules. Is it so contradictory to the expected norm that I share with you again that without a complete re-orientation of your thinking you cannot fathom, let alone be part of, my Kingdom.
- **3:14,15** "It's as contradictory to your thinking as the idea that the symbol of a snake could be put on a pole to stop a plague of snake infestation... and all you had to do to defeat the poison was to look at the pole!"
- **3:16,17** "I speak of a Kingdom where the High King orders His crown Prince to be a servant to the scum of the street... eventually to be slaughtered by the mob and the rabble of those who hate His Father, the King. And the Son rejoices to be able to serve His King that way!"

"And for what? So that a few might look at the broken corpse and say,

'Wow, what a King! By all rights He should hate me and yet the arms of His Son are reaching for me even in death. I don't understand Him or His Kingdom but I wonder what it takes to be a citizen?'"