

“Thy Kingdom Come”
Lesson 3. The Nature of the Kingdom
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Introduction: Leadership determines the nature of any organized effort.

- A. The leaders will direct the work and set an example for those under them.
 - 1. Those who are looking to work for a company would be wise to know something about the leaders!
 - a. Years ago I briefly worked for a company that had a “Gestapo” leadership. Within a short time this company went from 88 stores to 0.
 - b. I have also worked with well-run companies.
 - 2. The wrong leaders will create worldly and selfish expectations among those who follow them. **(Jer 5:1, 30-31; 6:13-14)**
 - 3. God’s leaders will always be servants who lead those under them to God’s blessings! **(Psa 23)**
- B. Why would someone want to be in God’s kingdom?
 - 1. It depends on what they are looking for and what they perceive the kingdom to be.
 - 2. Both Jesus and the apostles gave great emphasis as to what the kingdom of God is and to what it is not! **(Rom 14:16-18)**
 - 3. If we are looking for something other than being “acceptable to God” then we are in the wrong place!
 - 4. The best way to determine the nature of the kingdom of God is to look at the nature of the king Himself.

I. The Nature of the King

- A. He was meek and lowly. **(Mt 11:28-30)**
 - 1. Jesus did not come to gain worldly attention. Satan tried to tempt Him with this! **(Mt 4:8-10)**
 - 2. This is the kind of shepherd that one can approach. He gently works with us!
- B. He came to serve and not to be served. **(Mk 10:40)**
 - 1. He is a shepherd that will go after just one! **(Mt 18:12-13)**
 - 2. Again it is this kind of person that you would want to submit to!
- C. He came to boldly and lovingly proclaim the truth. **(Jn 18:37)**
 - 1. Jesus spoke the truth because it alone would give men what they need. **(Jn 8:32, 44-47)**
 - 2. Jesus told the truth tenderly even when it hurt! **(Lk 10:21-22)**
 - 3. I want to follow someone who will tell me what I need to know and not just what I want to know.
- D. He came to suffer for righteousness sake. **(Mt 16:21; 17:12)**
 - 1. He did this to defeat Satan and show us the way of life. **(Jn 12:31-33; 14:30)**
 - 2. He also did this to show us how much He loved us. **(Rom 5:6-8)**
 - 3. How can you not serve such a savior?
- E. He would not fight with the world’s weapons. **(Jn 18:36-38)**

1. Jesus knew that God would take care of vengeance so He committed Himself to God's plan. **(1 Pt 2:21-23)**
2. Will you join this loving savior in patient suffering?

II. The Nature of the Kingdom

- A. They will know and love the king. **(Jn 10:4, 14-15, 27-29)**
 1. Our identity is with the king or we are not in the kingdom! **(Rom 8:29)**
 2. Many claim to serve Jesus but they do not know Him.
- B. They will be servants. **(Mk 10:38-40)**
 1. Our purpose and fulfillment will be found in this! **(Phil 2:3-5; 17-20)**
 2. Can we be in the kingdom and ignore people?
- C. They will lovingly teach the will of the king. **(Phil 2:14-16)**
 1. Teaching others was a way of life for them regardless of circumstances. **(Acts 8:3-4)**
 2. What is your light showing in the kingdom?
- D. They will suffer quietly for what is right. **(1 Pt 2:20-21)**
 1. We will understand this is the nature of our service in the present kingdom. **(2 Tim 3:12; Acts 14:21-22)**
 2. Do you understand the nature of life in the kingdom?
- E. They will not fight and think like the world.
 1. We will not use the tactics of ungodly men. **(2 Cor 10:3-5)**
 2. Do you have enough faith in the king to submit to His ways?

III. Worldly Kingdoms and God's Kingdom

- A. How does one enter the kingdom?
 1. He cannot without first being taught to know the king. **(Heb 8:8-12)**
 2. They must be born again. **(Jn 3:3-5)**
- B. What are we looking for in the kingdom?
 1. If we are looking for glory then we are in the wrong place. **(Jn 5:41-44)**
 2. If we are looking to satisfy the flesh we are in the wrong place. **(Rom 14:17)**
 3. Why are you here?
- C. What are we doing in the kingdom?
 1. The Lord did not call us to sit and do nothing.
 2. Have you found purpose in His kingdom

Conclusion: Are you in the Lord's kingdom?

- A. Remember the Pharisees talked about the kingdom but never found it. **(Mt 21:31)**
- B. We must have the tender heart of a child and not become hardened in our stubborn ways. **(Lk 18:16-17)**

The Nature of The King and His Kingdom

Larry Ray Hafley

Fleshly Israel longed and looked for a glorious, exalted earthly King and civil Kingdom **(Lk. 24:21; Jn. 6:15; Acts 1:6)**. They read the grand, prophetic, utterances which foretold of the Mighty Messiah who would be involved in a universal labor of liberation and

domination, so they "inquired and searched diligently" for a royal, regal Ruler who would banish the Babylon of their day and in the generalship of David restore the splendor of the kingship of Solomon. A casual, unstudied reading of the Scriptures of the prophets might render such a conclusion possible, but the life of the Nazarene was a living identification and interpretation of the essence and substance of the King and His Kingdom.

When the expectant Jews saw a humble teacher rather than a triumphant conqueror, they were disappointed, disillusioned and incensed with frustration. The very features and facets of the Lord's demeanor that should have and in truth *did* stamp Him as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy caused them to cull and condemn Jesus as an unfit stone. The truth personified before them was a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.

Reading alone such passages as **Psa. 2:6-9**, one can conceive a government of God for men on earth. But Psalm 2 is not the only statement of the matter. Beside every segment of Scripture telling of might and majesty, one can lay those revealing weakness and humility. That is not to say that the Kingdom is only to be viewed as weak and humble, far from it, but collectively compiled and considered, the prophets assert the Messiah's majesty while dispelling and defeating a carnal conception with a meek and lowly servant. Matthew cites and quotes Isaiah and Zechariah to this effect (**Mt. 12:17-21; 21:4, 5**).

Instead of presenting an armed warrior, Isaiah spoke of a retiring character and Christ. "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets." He is not going to rally men with the ostentatious display of a summoning soldier, still, he shall "send forth victory." That passage contradicts and corrects carnal notions. In similar and familiar language, Isaiah said, "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not" (**Isa. 53:2-3**).

Zechariah's prophecy was also one the Lord interpreted in act and *in* fact before the people (Mt. 21:2-11). It achieve, in its fulfillment at least three purposes. (1) It publicly proclaimed Jesus as the King of Old Testament prophecies. (2) It revealed that His Kingship was not temporal in that he did not seek opportunity to use the peoples' popular favor to seize the government. (3) It gave the people an avenue of expression through which could flow their conviction that He was the Christ, the Son of David. (In seeing Him as King but not as a civil office seeker, they should have perceived the true nature of the Kingdom.) That we are not forcing a subdued, subservient view of the prophets' King and Kingdom and thereby dulling their resplendence can be seen in the results of New Testament teaching.

The apostles' doctrine pronounced repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ with an "ascended" and "exalted" "Prince of life" who hath been made "Lord and Christ"

on the throne of David (Acts 2 & 3). Many thousands then saw the true import of the prophets and felt the full impact of the gospel and by the implanted word were sanctified and justified in Him who was now glorified (**Acts 2:36-41; 3:26; 4:4**). If the submissive servant and the suffering Savior were contrary to the word picture of the prophets, why did Peter and the rest of the apostles use them? How could they have been successful? The truth, therefore, is as we have set it forth. Thus, when the scales of prejudice fell from their eyes and the veil over their hearts was lifted, they bowed in faith, repentance and baptism.

Paul preached a suffering Savior, a dying Deliverer, and a resurrected Redeemer as the Son of God (**1 Cor. 2:2**). As minds were then opened, he testified "that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ" (**Acts 17:2, 3; 18:4, 5**). What was the result of reasoning out of the Old Covenant Scriptures? Did the people with one accord reject the spiritual King and Kingdom? Hardly! After an open study of the prophets, many of them believed" (**Acts 17:11, 12**).

Paul was charged with wresting, perversion and blasphemy because he preached through Christ the forgiveness of sins. He was accused of not believing the law and the prophets because of his "heresy" that Jesus was somehow the King of the Old Testament prophecies. However, he could answer with complete confidence in the prophets and Moses: "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets" (**Acts 24:14**). "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22, 23). That serves as the Spirit's exclamation point as to the true nature of the King and His Kingdom.

Questions on Lesson 3 **The nature of the kingdom**

1. What will happen to any group or nation that has selfish and wicked leaders? How does this happen?

2. Why do we need to know the nature of God's kingdom?

3. What is the best way to determine the nature of God's kingdom?

4. How is Jesus “meek and lowly?” (**Mt 11:28-30**) Why does His disposition give encouragement to us?

5. How is Jesus unlike worldly kings?
 - a. In relationship to His subjects.

 - b. In relationship to the truth.

 - c. In relationship to His battles.

6. Why did Jesus suffer?

7. What is the first requirement before we can follow the king?

8. How does the citizens of Christ’s kingdom differ from the citizens of worldly kingdoms?

9. Could one seek to enter the kingdom of Christ with the wrong motives? Why would this happen?

10. What must be the condition of heart for one to enter and remain in the kingdom? (**Lk 18:16-17**) Why is this hard to do?