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**“Come, Let Us Reason Together” About the Bible**  
**Understanding Life’s Greatest Questions Through the Bible**  
**Bible Study Series**

*“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. (Isaiah 1:18)*

**LESSON EIGHT**  
**The Kingdom of Heaven**

*Estimated time to read this lesson: 6 - 8 minutes*

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The Kingdom of Heaven is a central theme throughout the Bible, yet it is often misunderstood or thought of as distant and mysterious. However, Scripture presents it as something real, present, and knowable. When we take time to examine what God’s Word says, especially the teachings of Jesus, we begin to see the true nature of the Kingdom revealed in a clear and meaningful way.

One important truth that emerges early in this study is that the Kingdom of Heaven and the church are not two separate entities. They are, in fact, one and the same. While this may be surprising to some, the Bible consistently supports this connection. The kingdom Jesus declared to be "at hand" is the very church He established, described throughout the New Testament.

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**Prophecies and Preparation**

Long before Jesus came to earth, God spoke about this coming kingdom through His prophets. One of the most direct prophecies is found in the book of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had a dream that Daniel interpreted, a dream about a great statue representing four kingdoms. Daniel said:

***“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” – Daniel 2:44***

That kingdom, the one set up by God, isn’t some future political empire. It’s spiritual. And Jesus would bring it in His lifetime. Isaiah prophesied something similar:

***“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains... and all nations shall flow to it.” – Isaiah 2:2***

Jesus Himself pointed back to these prophecies when He preached. Early in His ministry, He said:

***“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” – Matthew 4:17***

That means it was close, not thousands of years away.

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**Jesus and the Kingdom**

Jesus talked about the kingdom constantly. In the Sermon on the Mount, He said:

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**“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 5:3**

He described the kingdom in parables (stories about common, every-day life with a heavenly meaning) to help people understand its nature: a mustard seed, a hidden treasure, a pearl of great price. All of these showed that the kingdom would start small but become something incredible, something of ultimate value.

In *Matthew 16*, Jesus made a very direct connection between the kingdom and the church. When Peter confessed that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus replied:

**“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock (confession - editor) I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...” – Matthew 16:18–19**

Did you catch that? *My church... the keys of the kingdom*. The church and the kingdom aren’t two separate things. They’re the same, Jesus said so Himself.

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### **The Church is the Kingdom**

So when was this church, this kingdom, established?

It happened in *Acts 2*, on the Day of Pentecost, after Jesus had been crucified, raised, and ascended to heaven. The apostles preached, and Peter told the people:

**“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” – Acts 2:38**

And what happened next?

**“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” – Acts 2:41**

But added to *what*, exactly?

**“...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” – Acts 2:47**

They didn’t *join* the church, they were *added* to it by the Lord when they obeyed the gospel. That’s still true today.

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### **Christ Is the Head of the Church**

Here’s another vital truth: **Jesus is the only head of the church**. Not the pope, not a council, not any man or organization takes His place. Listen to Paul:

**“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead...” – Colossians 1:18**

The church is described as the *body*, and Christ is the *head*. There’s only **one** body:

**“There is one body and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism...” – Ephesians 4:4–5**

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And again:

***“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body...” – Ephesians 1:22–23***

So there’s only one church. It’s not many churches or different denominations with different teachings. There is one true church, Christ’s church, and it belongs to Him.

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### **What Happens When Jesus Returns?**

Now, you might be wondering, what’s going to happen to this kingdom, the church, when Jesus returns?

Paul tells us clearly:

***“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.” – 1 Corinthians 15:24***

That’s the goal, to be part of **His church, His kingdom**, so that when Christ returns, He can present us, His people, to God.

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### **How Do You Enter the Kingdom?**

You don’t just walk into the kingdom like joining a club. You enter the same way those in Acts 2 did. Jesus said:

***“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” – John 3:5***

To enter the kingdom, you must:

➔ **Hear** the word of God

***“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” – Romans 10:17***

➔ **Believe** in Jesus as the Son of God

***“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” – John 8:24***

➔ **Repent** of your sins

***“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.” – Acts 17:30***

➔ **Confess** Jesus before others

***“...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” – Romans 10:9***

➔ **Be baptized** for the forgiveness of sins

***“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” – Mark 16:16***

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When you do these things, God **adds you** to the church, His kingdom.

**“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”** (Acts 2:47)

Then if you **live faithfully** in accordance with the New Testament, you will be awarded a crown of life in the heavenly kingdom.

**“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”** – Revelation 2:10

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### **An Invitation**

So here’s a heartfelt invitation to you: Don’t wait. Don’t settle for man-made churches or confusing doctrines. Come to the church Jesus built, the one you can read about in your own Bible. It’s called the “churches of Christ” in Romans 16:16. It’s real, and it’s here.

If you’re ready to obey the gospel, to believe in Jesus, repent of your sins, confess Him as Lord, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, God will add you to His church. And you’ll be part of His kingdom, His church.

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### **Questions to Confirm Understanding**

*Estimated time to answer these questions: 3 – 5 minutes; with scripture lookup: 20 – 30 minutes*

**Answer the following questions by circling True / False. Look up the scripture references given to determine the answers, or refer back to the discussion. An answer key with explanations of the correct answers is provided below.**

1. **True | False** The Kingdom of Heaven and the church are two separate institutions. (Matthew 16:18–19)
2. **True | False** God prophesied about setting up an eternal kingdom through Daniel. (Daniel 2:44)
3. **True | False** Jesus said the kingdom of heaven was far off in the future. (Matthew 4:17)
4. **True | False** Isaiah prophesied that the Lord’s house would be established and all nations would flow to it. (Isaiah 2:2)
5. **True | False** Jesus used parables to describe the value and nature of the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 13:31–33, 44–46)
6. **True | False** Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)
7. **True | False** The church Jesus built began before His death and resurrection. (Acts 2:38–41)
8. **True | False** People were added to the church by the Lord, not by joining it themselves. (Acts 2:47)
9. **True | False** The kingdom of heaven is a physical nation established in Jerusalem. (John 18:36)
10. **True | False** Jesus is the head of the church, which is also called His body. (Colossians 1:18)

11. **True | False** There are many true churches with different teachings, all belonging to Christ. (Ephesians 4:4–5)
  12. **True | False** God gave Jesus to be head over all things to the church, which is His body. (Ephesians 1:22–23)
  13. **True | False** When Jesus returns, He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father. (1 Corinthians 15:24)
  14. **True | False** It is possible to enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. (John 3:5)
  15. **True | False** Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)
  16. **True | False** Jesus said if we do not believe in Him, we will die in our sins. (John 8:24)
  17. **True | False** Repentance is a command God gives to only a few selected people. (Acts 17:30)
  18. **True | False** Confessing Jesus as Lord is part of being saved. (Romans 10:9)
  19. **True | False** Baptism is not necessary for salvation. (Mark 16:16)
  20. **True | False** If we are faithful until death, Jesus will give us the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)
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### Answer Key

*Estimated time to read the answers: 5 – 7 minutes; with reflection and contemplation: 20 – 30 minutes*

1. The Kingdom of Heaven and the church are two separate institutions., **False**  
*“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church... And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...” – Matthew 16:18–19*  
Jesus used the terms "church" and "kingdom" interchangeably in this passage, indicating they refer to the same institution.
2. God prophesied about setting up an eternal kingdom through Daniel., **True**  
*“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...” – Daniel 2:44*  
Daniel clearly foretold a divine kingdom that would last forever, which Christians understand as the church.
3. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven was far off in the future., **False**  
*“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” – Matthew 4:17*  
Jesus said the kingdom was “at hand,” meaning near or imminent, not distant.
4. Isaiah prophesied that the Lord’s house would be established and all nations would flow to it., **True**  
*“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established... and all nations shall flow to it.” – Isaiah 2:2*  
Isaiah prophesied the universal reach of God’s future spiritual house, the church.

5. Jesus used parables to describe the value and nature of the kingdom of heaven., **True**  
*Parables such as the mustard seed, the treasure hidden in a field, and the pearl of great price – Matthew 13:31–33, 44–46*  
 Jesus used everyday stories to reveal spiritual truths about the kingdom’s value and growth.
  
6. Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”, **True**  
*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 5:3*  
 This beatitude shows that those who are humble before God are part of His kingdom.
  
7. The church Jesus built began before His death and resurrection., **False**  
*“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized... and the Lord added to the church daily...” – Acts 2:41, 47*  
 The church was established after Jesus’ resurrection, on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.
  
8. People were added to the church by the Lord, not by joining it themselves., **True**  
*“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” – Acts 2:47*  
 Entrance into the church is by divine action, not human choice alone.
  
9. The kingdom of heaven is a physical nation established in Jerusalem., **False**  
*“Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world.’” – John 18:36*  
 Jesus made it clear that His kingdom is spiritual, not political or geographical.
  
10. Jesus is the head of the church, which is also called His body., **True**  
*“And He is the head of the body, the church...” – Colossians 1:18*  
 Paul affirms Jesus’ authority and leadership over His singular body, the church.
  
11. There are many true churches with different teachings, all belonging to Christ., **False**  
*“There is one body and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism...” – Ephesians 4:4–5*  
 The New Testament teaches unity and oneness in doctrine and in the body of Christ.
  
12. God gave Jesus to be head over all things to the church, which is His body., **True**  
*“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body...” – Ephesians 1:22–23*  
 Christ has complete authority over the church, which is identified as His body.
  
13. When Jesus returns, He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father., **True**  
*“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father...” – 1 Corinthians 15:24*  
 Paul explains the kingdom’s destiny, to be handed over to God at the end.
  
14. It is possible to enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit., **False**  
*“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” – John 3:5*  
 Jesus explicitly said spiritual rebirth through water (baptism) and the Spirit is necessary for entrance.

15. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God., **True**  
*“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” – Romans 10:17*  
Faith is produced by listening to God’s revealed word.
16. Jesus said if we do not believe in Him, we will die in our sins., **True**  
*“For if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” – John 8:24*  
Belief in Jesus as the Son of God is essential for salvation.
17. Repentance is a command God gives to only a few selected people., **False**  
*“But now commands all men everywhere to repent.” – Acts 17:30*  
God commands repentance universally, it is required of everyone.
18. Confessing Jesus as Lord is part of being saved., **True**  
*“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus... you will be saved.” – Romans 10:9*  
Confession is part of the obedient faith that leads to salvation.
19. Baptism is not necessary for salvation., **False**  
*“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” – Mark 16:16*  
Jesus links both belief and baptism as conditions for salvation.
20. If we are faithful until death, Jesus will give us the crown of life., **True**  
*“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” – Revelation 2:10*  
Enduring faithfulness to Christ leads to eternal reward in heaven.
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