

The Kingdom of God

All men live in a natural kingdom of this world. They live in a city or village which is part of a nation. That nation is a kingdom of the world. In addition to the natural kingdoms of this world there are two spiritual kingdoms which exist. Every person alive is a resident of one of these two kingdoms: The kingdom of Satan or the Kingdom of God. The phrases “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven” are synonymous with one another. Jesus said: *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*(MAT6:33) Bible provides spiritual keys for gaining access to the Kingdom of God and warns of things which result in being cast out of the Kingdom.

Man exists in two worlds: The natural world and the spiritual world. The natural world is that which can be seen, felt, touched, heard, or tasted. It is real and visible. You are the resident of a natural kingdom located on one of visible continents, country, nation, city or village of the world. You can see the people who are part of your environment. You can communicate with them. You can experience the sights, sounds, and smells around you. But there is another world in which you live. That world is a spiritual world. You cannot see it with your physical eyes, but it is just as real as the natural world. *There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.* (1Co.15:40) All men have a natural body which lives in the natural world. But man is also a spiritual being with an eternal soul and spirit. Man is body, soul, and spirit. Your spiritual being (soul and spirit) is part of a spiritual world just as your natural body is part of the natural world. Because the Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom and not a natural kingdom of this world, it must be understood with a spiritual mind: *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*(1 Corinthians 2:14)

There are natural kingdoms of this world, that visible world around you. A natural kingdom is a territory or people over whom a king rules. The Bible speaks of the kingdoms of the world. The kingdoms of the world are presently under the control of Satan: *Again, the devil took Him(Jesus) up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”*(Mat4:8-9) In the natural world a king is the sovereign ruler of the kingdom. All territory and people of the kingdom belong to him. He has the power of life and death over his subjects. But there is another world which surrounds you of which you are a part of spiritual kingdoms, the Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God.

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’(Mark 1:15)The Gospel of the Kingdom is an invitation for man to return to realm of life God originally intended. The kingdom of God is a spiritual rule over the hearts and lives of those who willingly submit to God’s authority. Those who defy God’s authority and refuse to submit to Him are not part of the kingdom of God; in contrast, those who acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and gladly surrender to God’s rule in their hearts are part of the kingdom of God. In this sense, the kingdom of God is spiritual—Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world.(John 18:36) For enter the Kingdom, there is one requirement for entrance.(Mat.4:17) Repenting from sin which results in spiritual re-birth or born again. Through repenting and accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior you are born into the Kingdom and become a Kingdom resident. The kingdom of God can be equated with the salvation. *Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*(John 3:5–7), where Jesus says the kingdom of God must be entered into by being born again experience.(1Co. 6:9) Explaining how one might enter the Kingdom of God, Jesus told Nicodemus that one must be “born again”(John 3:1-8). This process begins with baptism, which signifies the death of the former sinful man and the beginning of a new life dedicated to Christ. (Romans 6:1-5) It culminates in a change from mortal flesh and blood to immortal spirit, glorified body at Christ’s return. Once we embark on this process, we are symbolically “conveyed” into the Kingdom (Col.1:13) and our “citizenship” is now described as being in heaven. At the completion of the process of being born again, we will be changed into immortal beings and become kings and priests serving in God’s Kingdom on earth.(Rev.1:6;5:10)

God has all authority over and has ultimate control over His creation.(Mar.1:27) Believers in Christ are no longer under the rule of Satan.(Col.1:13) Residency in the Kingdom of God requires a new lifestyle governed by the laws of the Kingdom. The lifestyle of the Kingdom is exactly opposite of the lifestyle of the kingdoms of the world. It is different in both structure and principles. When you enter the Kingdom of God it is like immigrating to a new country. You must learn a different culture. In the natural world, culture is the behavior patterns which govern life in a given society. It is important to know the principles which govern life in the Kingdom of God because you must live by Kingdom principles to maintain residency. In Luke 12:22-31 Jesus taught that the Kingdom should be the primary concern of life. Jesus taught that our focus should be away from this world—its status and its lying allurements—and placed upon the things of God’s kingdom, by set our hearts on things above, where Christ is, Set our affection on things above. When one is a loyal subject of the King, he or she will desire to please this King in everything he or she says and does. If you seek the Kingdom first, its principles, its lifestyle, its Gospel then all necessary things in life will be provided.(Mat.6:25-33) The Bible promises, when the follower of Jesus lives in this manner, God will supply all our needs.*But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*(Phi.3:20)

The spiritual world is composed of two spiritual kingdoms, the Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God. Kingdom of Satan consists of Satan, spiritual beings called demons, and all men who live in sin and rebellion to God's word & His command. From the time of the rebellion of Satan, there has been spiritual warfare raging between the Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God. This spiritual warfare being waged throughout the world is over the minds, souls, spirits of mankind. Satan is trying to keep men captive to sin in his kingdom. Through deceptive methods he entices men and women to partake of the temporary lusts of sinful living. He aims for the affections of the soul and spirit which rightfully belong to God. The history of Satan is described in the Bible about his rebellion in Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-19. What caused Satan to be cast from Heaven? He fell because of pride that originated from his desire to be God instead of a servant of God. Satan was originally an angel created by God and was part of Kingdom of God, but he desired to be God and rule the universe, tried to take over God's Kingdom. Several angels joined Satan. They formed their own kingdom which is called the Kingdom of Satan. God cast Satan out of heaven as a fallen angel. *"So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him"*(REV:7-9) This warfare in spirit world will continue until the end of time. It was evident that he controlled the earthly kingdoms when he tempted Jesus. It appears that Satan will possess the antichrist, who will then walk into a rebuilt Jerusalem temple and claim to be Messiah and God. The number of his name will be 666.(DAN7:24-25) Anti-christ, the Beast will claim to be the true Messiah ie Christ will rule the world for seven years.(Rev13) He begins sign a covenant with many and rises to world dominance. And he exalt himself persecute God's people and demands the worship of all inhabitants of the earth.(Daniel11) He will sit in the temple. The Abomination of Desolation will occur in the temple leading up to the Battle of Armageddon. After the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth is finished, Satan is loosed from bottomless pit where he has been imprisoned. Satan goes out again to deceive the nations. Finally rebellion against Lord Jesus in the battle of Gog Magog at the end-millennium but fire came down from heaven and consumed in a moment. *Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, who is destined for hell"*(2TH2:3-4,7)Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.(JOH12:31)

The kingdom of God is the rule of an eternal, sovereign God over the entire universe. It is ruled by God from His throne in Heaven. *"The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all"*(Psa103:19) The Kingdom of God cannot be moved, shaken or destroyed. *Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*(Heb.12:28) The Kingdom is the Lord's: *For the Kingdom is the Lord's; and He is the governor among the nations.*(Psa.22:28) God's Kingdom is based on spiritual principles: *for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*(Romans14:17; 5:1-2) God wants us to inherit His Kingdom. *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.*(Luk.12:32) The Kingdom of God consists of God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, spiritual beings called angels, and all men who live in righteous obedience to God's Word.

There is no kingdom without a king. *And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end.*(Luk1:33) The greatest of all kings is the Lord Jesus Christ. *which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,*(ITim6:15)*for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings.*(Rev17:14) And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.(Rev.19:16) Jesus is the King of kings because He rules over a Kingdom that is eternal and sovereign. The Kingdom of God will never come to an end. There will never be another ruler who will succeed King of kings.

Jesus existed before His earthly ministry. His pre-existence with God revealed in John 1:1-18. In the Old Testament prophecies reveal how, when, and where the King was to be born and many details about His life, ministry, death, and resurrection. Jesus really the Son of God born to the Virgin Mary.(Isa.53)The King of Kings was rejected by His own people: *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*(Joh1:11) He came into Jerusalem, but the same people who honored him as king that day soon turned against Him. Many of those who cried "Hosanna" as Jesus rode into Jerusalem were shouting "Crucify Him" just a few days later. But the Kingdom of God was not to be set up at this time in visible form. Jesus said: *My Kingdom is not of this world: if my Kingdom were of this world.* After His death by crucifixion, the King was buried but He did not remain in the tomb. Through His resurrection from the dead, Jesus gained victory over physical death. Those who become part of the Kingdom of God may experience physical death just like Jesus, but they will also experience resurrection from the dead as He did. Because our King is eternal, we are part of an eternal Kingdom and have eternal life. After His resurrection from the dead, King Jesus appeared to many people. After Jesus appeared to many people over a period of forty days, He returned to Heaven. He will remain there until time for Him to return and establish the visible Kingdom of God in final form. Bible reveals that Jesus will return to earth in great power and glory to set up the visible Kingdom in its final form. Every kingdom of earth and the kingdom of Satan will be defeated by the King of kings. The Kingdom of Jesus will be eternal.(ZEC14:9)

The Kingdom of God is eternal. This means it has always existed and will always exist: *Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations.*(Psa.145:13) God's Kingdom existed first in Heaven. When God created the earth, it was His desire that His Heavenly Kingdom be extended to the world. To fulfill this desire, God created a perfect environment as an extension of His Kingdom. In this Garden of Eden He created the first man and woman who were to multiply and populate the earth. The creation of the world marked the preparation of the Kingdom of God to be inherited by man: *Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'*(Matthew 25:34) The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were given dominion over the earthly extension of God's Kingdom. God did not want forced servitude from the subjects in His earthly Kingdom. He wanted man to be part of the Kingdom of God by free choice. So He made a law in the new Kingdom. The law was based on freedom of choice. The choice would determine whether or not man would continue to live in the Kingdom of God. But Adam and Eve sinned, they lost their inheritance in the Kingdom of God. They lost eternal life. Because of sin, certain curses came upon Satan, the earth, and man. The earth was no longer a perfect environment for a faultless extension of the Heavenly Kingdom. Man no longer had dominion over the earth, and he was separated from the presence of the King because of sin. Man lost the inheritance prepared for Him by God and Satan took control of the earth. But in this darkest hour came the promise of God to restore the Kingdom of God to man.(Gen.3:15) The promise of a King who would someday come and crush the power of the enemy, Satan.(1Jo3:8) From a woman the King, Christ, would come. Through His death man could be cleansed from sin, reborn into the Kingdom of God, obtain eternal life, reclaim his rightful inheritance.

After man failed, God chose a nation through which He could extend His Kingdom throughout the world. God raised up Abraham as the man from whom this nation would descend. He made many promises concerning the nation of Israel and their role in the extension of God's Kingdom throughout the world. God gave Kingdom laws to the nation of Israel. But the nation of Israel failed in its responsibility to extend the Kingdom. Time and time again the nation sinned and turned to false gods. The nation of Israel waited for coming of a Messiah who would fulfill these promise.

In New Testament, God sent His own Son, Jesus, to extend Kingdom to the world. Jesus fulfilled this responsibility, as He made it the central purpose of His life and ministry.(Mar.1:14-15) During His earthly ministry, Jesus selected His disciples. Jesus instructed them to go and preach saying "*The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*"(Matthew 10:7) when the king is present, the kingdom is also present. Israel believed that the true King would immediately establish the Kingdom in all the glory like King David. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, people thought He was coming to establish the visible Kingdom. *Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest.*(Mark11:10) Short time later the same people who had received Him as King rejected Him. They turned against Him and called for His death by crucifixion. Because Israel rejected the Kingdom and the King, visible establishment of the Kingdom in its final form was postponed until second coming of the King, Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament, God selected the Church, those who receive and respond to the Gospel, as the corporate body through which the Kingdom is to be extended. The Apostle Paul, chosen of God to bear the Gospel of the Kingdom to the Gentiles,(Ephesians 3:8-11) The Church is the visible corporate body through which the Kingdom of God is to be extended throughout the world. Jesus left the Church with the responsibility: *Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.*(Mark 16:15) He equipped believers with the power to accomplish the task:(Acts 1:8) In the end, all things will be brought into subjection to the King, Jesus, who will return to establish visible Kingdom.

The Present Kingdom: Jesus taught that "the Kingdom of God is within you." That is, where the King is and where His rule is acknowledged, the present Kingdom of God exists. The Kingdom of God was actually in their midst. It is not something in the future which we cannot know until it is visibly established at the end of the world. The rule of the King is presently acknowledged in the hearts of individual believers. The rule of the King is acknowledged in the true Church of Jesus Christ. The Kingdom is present wherever people love God, have been born into the Kingdom, adopt Kingdom principles as their lifestyle, and acknowledges the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ as King. Kingdom is said to be a "mystery" now.(Mark 4:11) In the Lord's prayer, Jesus teaches to pray: "*Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*" In this prayer, Christians are praying for God's reign to come.

The Future Kingdom: Jesus spoke many things about the Kingdom of God. The disciples asked, "*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel*"(Acts1:6-7) Jesus answered: It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. The coming of the Kingdom is certain, but the timing of its visible restoration rests with the Father. Jesus did share many things which must happen on earth before Kingdom would be established in its final form. Signs were revealed to help us recognize when the time is near.(Mat-24-25) *when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.*(Luk21:31) Revelation 11:15 says: "*The Kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.*"

Jesus revealed that Peter would be one of the spiritual foundation stones of the first church. This meant he would be a vital part of its growth and development. Peter's name Petros in Greek word means —a fragment, a stone or small rock. The second word Christ used was *petra* means Rock. The rock He was building His Church on was a rock big enough to serve as the chief cornerstone in the foundation; it was large, strong and immovable. This describes Jesus Christ Himself! He distinguished the rock (*petra*) He was building the Church on from Peter (*petros*), "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone"(Mat.21:42; Eph.2:20;1Cor.10:4) Jesus then said of Himself, "...upon this rock I will build my Church" He would be the spiritual rock upon which the Church was built. Jesus then made two comments regarding this Church. First, He said that "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." This implied that the Church would have enemies fighting it, but assured that the enemies would not overcome it. Second, Jesus promised to give the keys to His Kingdom to the Church. He gave the Church spiritual keys to the doors of His Kingdom. Jesus said I will give them. The power and authority of the Church was to flow from Jesus. This power was released in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit was given to believers: The keys to the Kingdom were the power to bind and loose. To bind something means to put bond on it. It is like closing and locking the door to a room. To loose something is to release or set it free. The Church would have a position of authority. It would have the keys to God's Kingdom. It would be the instrument through which the spiritual doors to the Kingdom would be opened to nations of the world. The Church would have the power to loose the spiritual forces of good and bind the spiritual forces of evil. In every difficulty faced by believers, binding and loosing would be the key to victory.

The keys to the Kingdom were given by Jesus to the Church. But specifically, how was entrance to be gained to the Kingdom of God? John 3:1-21 records the story of Nicodemus, a religious leader at the time of Christ's ministry on earth. He came to Jesus desiring to gain access to the Kingdom of God and by doing so, inherit eternal life. Jesus told him: *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*(John 3:3) Jesus explained to Nicodemus that the born-again experience of which He spoke was not a physical birth. At natural birth, you are born into a kingdom of this world as a citizen of a nation. You inherit the basic sin nature.(Psa.51:5) Because God's Kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, you must be born into it thru spiritual re-birth. You must change your residency from the kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Paul explained that you could not enter the Kingdom with a flesh and blood body:(1Cor.15:50) You enter the Kingdom of God and become heirs of the Kingdom through spiritual rebirth. The way to be born again is by believing that Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins. You must confess your sins, ask forgiveness and place your trust in Him: It is through Jesus that you can move from the kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of God: (God) *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son.*(COL1:13) In spiritual Kingdom, it is necessary to become like a little child in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus warned that you should enter gate to eternal life now. Now the door to the Kingdom is open. Jesus is knocking on the souls of mankind to offer us a resting place. In the time of God's judgment of the world, it will be too late, door will be closed.

Cast out of the Kingdom: There are many who profess to be part of God's Kingdom who are not actually Kingdom residents. The Bible speaks of the Kingdom being filled with good seed and tares resulting from bad seed:(Mat13:38) At the present time there are those who claim to be Kingdom residents who still live in sin. There will come a future day of judgment when God will separate these people from the true residents of the Kingdom. Those who are evil will be cast out of the Kingdom of God. Before the final establishment of the Kingdom, God will judge all men. At the time of final judgment there will be division. Some will enter the Kingdom and some will be cast out.(MAT25:31)

but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.(Luk10:20) It is important to understand how to gain permanent residency in the Kingdom of God. After accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior you must continue to do the will of God. You must live by the principles of the new Kingdom into which you have entered. Sin prevents entrance to the Kingdom of God: *Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor abusers of themselves, nor cheats (thieves), nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor robbers shall inherit the Kingdom of God.*(1Co.6:9-10;Gal.5:19-2; Eph5:5) Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is deceitful or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.(Rev.21:27;20:15;3:5;Dan12:1;Exo32:33)

During the earthly ministry of Jesus, a rich ruler wanted to follow Him as a disciple.(Luk.18:18-25) It is the love of riches that keep him from the Kingdom. When the pleasures of this life are more important than following Jesus it prevents entrance to the Kingdom. Jesus teaches that if your hand or foot offends you, you are to cut them off. He says if your eye offends you, pluck it out.(Mar9:47) Jesus means that anything which causes sin in your life must be removed. He uses the example of the hand, foot, eye. In the natural these are needful body parts. But Jesus says if they cause you to sin, it is better to remove them than to let them prevent your entrance into the Kingdom. When you are cleansed from all unrighteousness, you are forgiven of all sins which prevent entrance to the Kingdom of God.

When you take up residency in the Kingdom of God you must learn the patterns and principles of Kingdom living. It is similar to learning the lifestyle of a new country to which you have immigrated. It is important to know principles which govern life in the Kingdom of God because you must live by Kingdom principles to maintain residency. Bible pattern is a spiritual model, example given in Scripture for purposes of imitation. For example, the life of Jesus is given as a pattern or model which believers are to follow. A Biblical principle is a spiritual truth taught in Scripture.

Read Ezekiel 43:7-12. This passage stresses importance of patterns and principles. God established specific patterns for nation of Israel to follow which included spiritual patterns of conduct as well as material patterns for their places of worship. But Israel created their own patterns; they erected a wall of separation between them and God which stopped the flow of God's power. It prevented their worship and service from being acceptable to Him. When people set up their own patterns of conduct, their own denominational, religious, cultural rules, they set up a false standard of measurement. They begin to teach as Biblical doctrine things that are nothing but commandments of men.(MAT15:9) It is important to understand Biblical patterns and principles because otherwise your worship of God can be in vain. When Moses was given instruction for building the tabernacle, he was cautioned to do everything according to pattern given by God. Christian leaders are to be examples to their followers: *be examples for the flock to follow.*(1PE5:2-3)

There are definite requirements to maintain residency in the Kingdom. Jesus said: "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*(MAT7:21) In II Timothy 2:12 indicates that believers will reign with Jesus in the future Kingdom of God. To "reign" means to "rule with power and authority." If you are to reign with Him, you must know the laws, commandments and statutes which govern the Kingdom. The foundation of the Kingdom of God and its governing principles is righteousness.(HEB1:8) The foundation of God's Kingdom stands on righteous men living righteous lives. There are 2 levels of commitment to this righteousness. One level of righteousness is necessary to enter into life. This is the righteousness that comes through the new birth experience when man is cleansed from sin, begins to live by God's commandments. But there is another level of righteousness, perfection(spiritual maturity). To achieve perfection requires total consecration of worldly values, standards, possessions which are precious to you. To achieve perfection we must embrace principles of God's Kingdom. *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.*(HEB12:22)

There are two great Kingdom principles upon which all other principles are based.(MAT.22:37-40) To summarize, the two greatest principles of God's Kingdom are: 1. Loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. 2. Loving and doing to others as you love yourself and want others to do to you. The basic principles upon which the Kingdom of God operates are exactly opposite of common thinking of man of earthly kingdoms. Jesus established a basic Kingdom principle: "It shall not be so among you."(MAT.20:25-28) Jesus humbled himself—even further in his death—then we also should be humble in all we do for Him and others.(Joh.13:13-17) God's Kingdom is a united Kingdom. It is described as one spiritual body with many parts: Prayer in the Kingdom is based on three principles: Asking, seeking, and knocking. The basic principles of worship in the Kingdom are Giving: Outward look, Praying: Upward look, Fasting: Inward look. All three areas of worship are to be done in secret in order to be blessed of God.

The Kingdom belongs to those who are poor in Spirit. *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*(MAT.5:3) The world emphasizes the spirit of self-reliance, self-expression, and self-improvement. But God approves those who are poor in spirit who realizes they have no ability to save themselves, to satisfy their spiritual needs, or to solve their own problems. In the Kingdom, those who mourn are comforted and sorrow brings joy. To be meek means to be gentle in nature, not easily provoked. It is the opposite of worldly principles which advise "assert yourself, stand up for your rights." Meekness is one of the spiritual fruits of the Kingdom. Men hunger after many things in the world. They hunger after power, wealth, success, and happiness. Kingdom residents should not hunger for such material things. They should seek righteousness which is the basic principle of the Kingdom. The religious leaders of Jesus' day stressed the outward keeping of law and tradition rather than inward heart attitudes. Jesus stressed the inward attitudes of the heart rather than the outward sacrifices. *Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.*(MAT.5:8) God delights in those who reconcile others to Himself. Those who bring the wonderful message of God's peace to the world are peacemakers, and Jesus calls them the children of God. Kingdom principle pronounces blessing on those who suffer for specific reason for righteousness sake. In the world, greatness is exalted. People are considered great if they are successful, famous, wealth or power. In the Kingdom of God, those who are great live and teach Kingdom principles, they are greatest in the Kingdom of God. The kingdoms of the world hold leaders in high esteem. They are honored and exalted. They are waited upon by servants and considered in a social class far above all others. In the Kingdom of God, to lead you must become a servant: You lose your life by denying of worldly pleasures, standards in order to follow King. A yoke speaks of labor. A burden is something that is carried. You find rest by being yoked together with Jesus to carry His burden. His burden is that the Gospel of the Kingdom be extended to the nations of the world. *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.*

The greatest person in the kingdom will of course be Jesus Christ. After that, ranking the greatest is records in Matthew 18:1–5, “*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ [Jesus] called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’*” Jesus’ power was evident, and the disciples recognized Him as Messiah and King. Evidently, they were interested in what their roles would be in His kingdom. Rather than provide qualifications for greatest, Jesus said those who became like children—humble—were greatest.

In Matthew 20, A request from John and James to sit with Jesus in His kingdom. Jesus replied by asking them if they were able to suffer as He was going to suffer. He then said, “*To sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father*” Being great in God’s kingdom is not about prestige or privilege. Rather, it involves responsibility and sacrifice. Jesus told His disciples, “*Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.* (Mat.16:24–27) To be great is to serve self-sacrificially. Being great in God’s kingdom is about giving oneself for the sake of God’s glory and for the benefit of others. Luke 22 tells about another dispute among the disciples about who was the greatest, Jesus said to them, “*The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves well-doers. But not so among you;* (Luke 22:25) Jesus performed the service of the lowest of servants by washing His disciples’ feet. The greatest is not the one with power or prestige, but the one who is secure in the Father’s love and willing to serve. During Jesus’ earthly ministry, some children were brought to Him. (MAT19:13) The disciples tried to turn the children away, but Jesus said, “*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these*”. Those who come to Christ must do so in childlike humility, faith, and simplicity. Like children who trust in God. The greatest in the kingdom are those who have the humility of a child and the meekness of Jesus.

In Matthew 5:19, Jesus says, *Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*” The Law is perfect and holy, every command that God gave is equally important. Jesus said, that if someone sets aside what might be considered one of the least of them, then that person will be called “least in the kingdom of heaven.” Conversely, the one who teaches the whole Law—and obeys it—will be called “great” in the kingdom. Jesus’ reference to the “least in the kingdom of heaven” suggests that there will be different levels of honor in the kingdom. The criteria used for assigning honor seem to be based on handling of God’s Word. Those who received God’s Word and fulfilled their responsibilities in God’s sight will be called “great,” but those who rejected parts of God’s Word and shirked their responsibilities will be called “least.” *For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven*”. The Pharisees, were examples of those who set aside some of the commandments, and they would suffer shame for it. There will be rewarded based on how faithfully we served Christ. (2Co.5:10)

God’s Kingdom is a united. It is described as one spiritual body with many parts: *For the body is not one member, but many.* (1Co.12:12-14) The residents of God’s Kingdom are united together in God. The Kingdom of God is to penetrate the world in two ways: As light and as salt: You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. “You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Mat.5:13-16) In the natural world, salt works silently. It is used to preserve food, heal wounds, and add flavor A little salt affects great amount of food. In the spiritual world, Kingdom residents are to penetrate the world as salt. They are to preserve the values and quality of the Kingdom, be a healing balm to others, and like the flavor of life, as salt flavor of the food it seasons. Where there is strife, we are to be peacemakers; where there is sorrow, we are to be the ministers of Christ, binding up wounds, and where there is hatred, we are to exemplify the love of God in Christ. As salt enhances flavor and prevents decay so, by our very presence we should bring a sense of well being to those around us and prevent the advancement of moral decay. They are to spread the Kingdom steadily.

“*You are the light of the world,* the good works of Christ’s followers are to shine. The presence of Christians in the world must be like a light in the darkness, not only truth of God’s Word brings light to the darkened hearts of sinful man, but also our good deeds must be evident for all to see and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Light dispels darkness so as we reflect the life, love and character of Jesus we help to open the way for others to get to know Him and so bring hope. Jesus compared the penetration of the Kingdom to leaven. Like salt, a little leaven works silently to penetrate a great lump of bread. In the natural world, light exposes darkness. It shows the way out of darkness. In the spiritual realm, light represents life. The Kingdom resident is to be a spiritual light in the world. He is to expose the way out of darkness. He is not to allow anything in his life to hide the light of the Kingdom. Believers are to live the life of the Kingdom in a visible way, steadily penetrating kingdoms of the world with the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Kingdom Parables

- 7 -

During His earthly ministry, Jesus used a unique teaching method called "parables" to reveal other spiritual truths about the Kingdom. A parable is a story which uses an example from the natural world to illustrate a spiritual truth. The actual meaning of the word "parable" is to lay beside to compare. In parables, Jesus used a natural example and compared it to a spiritual truth. A parable is an earthly story with a Heavenly meaning. That which is natural is something you can observe with your spiritual senses. In analyzing the parables, we discover the King's personal view of His Kingdom through His church. *And the disciples came and said to Him, Why do You speak to them in parables? He answered and said to them, Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.*(MAT13:10-11) Knowledge of the spiritual truths of the Kingdom was given to disciples because they had spiritual minds. Those without spiritual minds heard the parables and failed to understand them because spiritual truths can only be understood by a spiritual mind.(1 COR2:14) *therefore "blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears, for they hear"* We must thank God and produce the results of spreading the gospel to all.

The parables concern the offer made by Jesus of the Kingdom of God: The Patched Garment: Matthew 9:16; The Wine Bottles: Matthew 9:17; these two parables teach that Jesus offered a Kingdom that was new and unique. It could not be confined to the old patterns of religious tradition. It is not possible to understand the Kingdom of God by trying to fit it into old thought patterns and lifestyles. Here Jesus is contrasting the old law with the new covenant as foretold by the prophets and revealed in the New Testament. The Good Shepherd: John 10:1-16, King Jesus is compared to a shepherd. He would lead His sheep out of religious bondage and bring them into the liberty of His Kingdom. His sheep would know His voice and respond to His offer of the Kingdom. The Lost Sheep: Matthew 18:12-14; The Lost Coin: Luke 15:8-10; The Lost Son: Luke 15:11-32; these parables illustrate how the Father seeks lost sheep for the Kingdom, how His followers should seek the lost, and how repentance is the key to becoming an heir to the Kingdom. The Wedding Banquet: Matthew 22:1-14; The Great Banquet: Luke 14:16-24; through these parables, Jesus invited the present generation to enter the Kingdom. The original announcement was sent to a special group of people, the nation of Israel. Not all those chosen responded, so another invitation was extended to the Gentile nations. The Two Builders: Matthew 7:24-27; In this parable Jesus taught that the Kingdom was built on Him. He compared Himself to a rock on which a person may build their life. A house built on such a secure foundation will stand through every storm. Jesus offered men the opportunity to build their lives on the eternal foundation of the Kingdom of God. The Two Gates: Matthew 7:13-14; only one gate leads to the Kingdom. That gate is the Lord Jesus.

The parables concern the rejection of the King: The Murderous Husbandmen: Matthew 21:33-44; Jesus used parables to reveal that the nation of Israel would reject Him as Messiah and King. God sent prophets to earth with the offer of the Kingdom but Israel killed the prophets. Then God sent His own Son. He, too, was rejected and killed. The Barren Fig Tree: Luke 13:6-9; the fig tree is a symbol of the nation of Israel. God raised up Israel as the nation through which He could reveal the Kingdom to the world. Time and time again God tried to get the "tree" of Israel to bring forth "fruit" among heathen nations by sharing their knowledge of the true God, but Israel remained barren and unfruitful. The Wedding: Matthew 22:2-14 to illustrate His rejection. Servants were sent to call people to the wedding but the people killed the servants and rejected the invitation. This revealed how the offer of the Kingdom was to be rejected.

The parables concern the postponement of the Kingdom: The Talents: Matthew 25:14-30; The Man on a long Journey: Mark 13:34-37; The Servants: Matthew 24:43-51; The Watching Servants: Luke 12:36-38; Jesus told several parables which revealed the Kingdom of God would be established in its final form in the future. The Kingdom would not come at the present time because Israel rejected Jesus as King. These parables also revealed Jesus would be absent for a time from the realm in which the Kingdom would finally be instituted. They stressed that His followers should be faithful over the task given them, using their talents and abilities to extend the Kingdom of God. The Fig Tree: Matthew 24:32-34; Jesus told a parable about a fig tree which revealed the approximate timing for the final establish of God's Kingdom. He said one can tell when summer is near, the fig tree puts out growth in leaves and blossoms. Jesus revealing that when Israel was restored to her own land and began to blossom again as a nation, the time of the return of the King near. Note, the state of Israel was founded, people re-gathered from the four corners of the earth.

The parables concern the value of the Kingdom: Jesus used parables to illustrate the great value of the Kingdom of God. The Pearl of Great Price: Matthew 13:45-46; The Hidden Treasure: Matthew 13:44; These parables show that the Kingdom of God is of such great value that nothing else compares with it. It is more valuable than any possession of man. If you must give up everything you possess in order to obtain the Kingdom, it is worth the sacrifice. The Householder: Matthew 13:52; In this parable Jesus compared Himself to the custodian of a storehouse who brings forth items needed by the residents of the Kingdom of God. Jesus asked His disciples, "Have you understood all these things?" That they understood made it possible for Jesus to conclude with the responsibility of the disciples as scribes in the church under the authority of Jesus Christ, instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven. The church Jesus would build upon the large rock, would bring forth a treasure of knowledge and understanding, things new and old.

Jesus told parables which illustrated how the Kingdom of God would extend throughout the world. The Talents: Matthew 25:14-30; This parable reveals that the Kingdom will be spread by wise use of the spiritual talents and abilities God has given to believers. The Sower (or the Parable of the Four Soils): Matthew 13:3-8; The Gospel of the Kingdom will be spread by the sowing of the seed of the Word of God. A Sower scatters seed which falls on four different types of ground. The hard ground or "by the way side" represents someone who is hardened by sin; he hears but does not understand the Word, keeping the heart dull and Satan plucks the message away. The rocky ground pictures a man who professes delight with the Word; however, he has no root in himself, but endures for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because, eventually he falls away. The thorny ground shows one who seems to receive the Word, but the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. The good ground shows the one who hears, understands, receives the Word and produces much fruit—and then allows the Word to accomplish its result in his life. A man's reception of God's Word is determined by the condition of his heart. To this sowing there will be varied responses, depending on the attitude of the hearers. The fruit depends not on the sower but on the life that is in the seed itself and the condition of the soil (man's heart). Salvation is more than a hearing of the gospel. The Tares And Wheat: Matthew 13:24-30; Satan will try to defeat the spread of the Kingdom by sowing people described as "weeds" among the good seed of God's Kingdom. The weeds Satan sows resemble good wheat. At the time of harvest wheat can be identified by the grain it produces. The Drag Net: Matthew 13:47-50, The Kingdom is also compared to a net thrown into the sea. All kinds of fish are caught, but when the net is drawn to shore the good fish are separated from the bad. The Kingdom will draw in men and women from all nations. Prior to the final establishing of the Kingdom, there will be judgment to determine those who must be excluded. The Mustard Seed: Mat13:31-32; The Kingdom of God will grow like a mustard seed. The seed is very small and has small beginning, but dynamic growth of the church and offer of refuge and life even while adversaries confront it. The Leaven: Matthew 13:33; Like leaven the Kingdom of God will spread throughout the whole "lump" penetrates and transforms the world. The progress of the church is against and despite the contagious outspread of sin.

The following parables concern life in the Kingdom: Many parables Jesus told illustrated principles of Kingdom living. The Two Sons: Matthew 21:28-32; Jesus taught that obedience is the test of son-ship within the Kingdom family. The Good Samaritan: Luke 10:30-37; The Kingdom principle of love to all is taught in this parable. Our neighbor is anyone in need, whose need we know, and whose need we are able to meet. The Two Debtors: Luke 7:41-43; This parable teaches that love will be shown by the one who has experienced the love of the Kingdom. The Pharisee And The Publican: Luke 18:10-14; The Pharisee approached God on the basis of his own righteousness. The tax collector recognized there was nothing in himself worthy to stand before the Lord. In this parable Jesus taught how people should approach God to offer worship, praise, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession in the Kingdom. It also taught humility in prayer and warned of the sin of self-righteousness. The Persistent Widow: Luke 18:1-8; The Persistent Friend: Luke 11:5-10; These two parables illustrate the importance of persistence in prayer. The Faithful Manager: Matthew 25:14-30; This parable stresses the importance of wise and righteous stewardship of Kingdom treasures which God entrusts to believers. Seats at the Wedding Feast: Luke 14:7-11; This parable illustrates the importance of humility and that promotion in God's Kingdom comes from the Lord. The Vine and the Branches: John 15:1-6; This parable describes the relationship of Jesus to the Church. The Laborers in the Vineyard: Matthew 20:1-16; This parable teaches that eternal rewards are not made on the basis of worldly standards. The Servant's office: Luke 17:7-10 This parable teaches that it is our responsibility to serve and do those things commanded by the King. The King going to War: Luke 14:31-33; The Man building a Tower: Luke 14:28-30; These parables emphasize the importance of proper understanding of commitment to the Kingdom. The Wedding Garment: Matthew 22:10-14; This parable emphasizes necessity of being clothed in righteousness to remain in the Kingdom. It is through Jesus' righteousness, not self-righteousness, that this is achieved. The rich man's Meditation: Luke 12:16-21 This story illustrates the folly of relying on temporal material wealth. The priority of life is the eternal Kingdom of God. The Mote and the Beam: Matthew 7:1-5; This parable teaches that we should judge ourselves rather than others. The Harvest: Matthew 9:37-38; It was the story of a harvest, ripe and ready to gather, which Jesus used to focus the attention of His disciples on the need for extending the Kingdom. Understand His mission. It was the vision conveyed by this parable that changed them from "fishermen" to "fishers of men." *And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

The parables concern Kingdom Judgment: The Ten Virgins: Matthew 25:1-12, The Sheep and The Goats: Matthew 25:31-46; Jesus told several parables concerning future judgment in the Kingdom. At the time of judgment, those who are sheep of the true shepherd, Jesus Christ, will be accepted. All others will be denied entrance into the Kingdom. The Son of Man now sits on His throne judging all the nations. As exalted King the Messiah now exercises judgment, separating the sheep from the goats. The righteous are invited to share in the blessings of the kingdom that has been prepared for them from the beginning by the Father's design, while the wicked are sent to join their father, the devil.

In this parable Jesus revealed that kingdom of God is mysterious and rebellious nature.(MAT.13:24-30,36-43) One field, Two sowers. One sows good seed and the other sows weeds. Jesus explains that the field is the world. The frequent phrase "kingdom of heaven" denotes Christ's work through His church, to announce the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. The landowner tells servants not to pull up weeds in the field, but to leave them until end of the age.

In the explanation of parable, Christ declares that He Himself is the sower. He spreads His redeemed seed in the field of the world. By His grace, these Christians bear the fruit of the Spirit. Their presence on earth is the reason like the field of the world. When the kingdom of heaven comes to its fruition, kingdom will be a reality and there will be no "weeds" among the "wheat." But for now, both good and bad seeds mature in the world. The enemy in the parable is Satan. In opposition to Jesus Christ, the devil tries to destroy Christ's work by placing false Christ, prophets, teachers in the world who lead many astray. Satan's malicious intention in sowing tares among the wheat is to cause problems and confusion. *if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth? Before your eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as dying on the cross?(GAL1:9:3:1)* The landowner in this parable wisely waited until the harvest. After harvesting the whole field, the tares could be separated and burned. The wheat would be saved in the barn.

The parable contains two warnings that are important to how we deal with possible tares within God's church. First, we need to be aware that tares are a reality. Counterfeit members do exist and are at work. In addition tares could also be false ministers even false apostles.(MAT24:24) False church leaders, teaching false doctrines that spread spiritual disorder, are a dire threat. Tares in the church spread destructive attitudes and ideas that can influence true brethren toward negativity, and doubt. Jesus warns us of such deception. Knowing that tares are in the church, we must be vigilant, clinging to the truth lest we be deceived. Second, Christ's parable warns us not only to take care to avoid the false doctrine and attitudes of the tares, but also to be mindful about how we treat young, immature "wheat" that we may mistake for tares. God knows who belongs to Him and who does not, and He allows both to grow together. The tares in the parable were likely appears as wheat. The interaction between wheat and tares, true and false, provides a constant test: *"Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!"(JAM5:9)* In order to endure to the end, we must develop patient attitude. We must not easily offend in our dealings with wheat or tares, never taking insults, offend personally. When we deal, we all must be long-sufferings patient, having a great deal of love. God is refining us into the mature wheat that He wants to reap at His harvest.

Jesus Christ provides the perfect example of how to treat and interact with a tare. He had to deal with a tare close to Him throughout His ministry. In John 6:70-71, "Jesus answered [His disciples], 'Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?' He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve." How Christ dealt with Judas sets the example for how we ought to deal with recognized tares. Jesus knew Judas; He knew his character and heart after traveling with him throughout His ministry. Yet, Judas was allowed responsibilities and given duties just as the other disciples were. Judas was appearing just as religious as the other eleven, but not in character. However, Jesus never revealed to the other disciples that Judas was a tare. He only mentions the presence of a tare, forcing the disciples to look inward and evaluate their own hearts. At final Passover, the disciples had no idea who would betray the Master. Each of them began to say to Christ, "Lord, is it I?"(MAT26:22) It is clear disciples were unaware of Judas' corrupt character. Instead of singling out Judas and treating Him poorly, Jesus showed love and kindness to him. Jesus knew that if He revealed Judas' character, He would risk uprooting some of His other disciples. Christ would not risk losing one of them on account of Judas, who betrayed with a kiss.

As we Christians, we must judge our own lives, recognizing the sin within ourselves. But when we recognize sin in others, and even correctly identify a tare in the church, we must still show love and kindness. For we don't know if immature and innocent believers might be injured by our efforts, the responsibility of separating true believers from false, a task reserved for God alone. He has not even given us the job of exposing who they may be. Christ allows them to remain until His return. At that time, angels will separate saints from wicked one. God, in wisdom infinitely greater than our own, will separate the wheat from the tares. As wheat, our responsibility is to grow in kindness, patience, and godly love, producing healthy and good fruit. This requires an attitude of meek, humble, and godly service. Most importantly, we have the responsibility to grow into the perfect image of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ will one day establish true righteousness. After He raptures the true church out of this world, God will pour out His wrath on the world. During tribulation, He will draw others to saving faith in Jesus Christ. At the end of the tribulation, all unbelievers will be judged for their sin and unbelief. During the final judgment, the angels will separate the "sons of the evil one"(the tares or weeds) from the "sons of the kingdom"(the wheat). Then, the tares will be removed from God's presence and cast them into the furnace of fire. True followers of Christ will reign with Him. *Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe"* The Lord will return for the harvest to signify the gathering of the righteous by the mercy of God. What a glorious hope for the "wheat"!

Jesus came to this earth with a special mission to establish the Kingdom of God. The commitment of Jesus to the Kingdom of God was evident throughout His entire ministry: *And He said unto them, I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.* (Luke 4:43) Jesus began His ministry by declaring the message of the Kingdom. (Mat.4:17) After His death and resurrection, Jesus remained on earth for a short period of time and appeared to many people. His message focused on the Kingdom of God, He ended His earthly ministry by *speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.* (Acts 1:3) His chief concern was the extension of God's Kingdom

Jesus prepared His disciples to continue the extension of the Kingdom. First, the disciples were observers of how the message of the Kingdom was to be presented. (Luke 8:1) Next, Jesus trained the disciples by participation. He sent them throughout Israel with directions to.....preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. (Luke 9:2) Finally, He commissioned them with the responsibility of extending the Gospel of the Kingdom to the nations of the world: *And He said unto them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."* (MAR 16:15; MAT.28:18-20) Before Jesus returned to Heaven, He said to His followers: *And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto Me.* (Luke 22:29) Jesus left His followers with a responsibility of extending the Kingdom of God throughout the world. They were to be ambassadors of the Kingdom. An ambassador is a representative sent by kingdom to represent and transact business in another. He is a messenger of the kingdom he represents. Paul said: We are ambassadors for Christ, sent by the King to represent and transact the business of the Kingdom of God in the world. *preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.* (Acts 28:31) Once we have accepted this commission, we cannot look back, is fit for the kingdom of God. (Luk 9:62)

As ambassadors, we are to be witnesses for the Kingdom of God. A witness is someone who can testify and present evidence of something experienced. He is one who personally sees, observes, experiences, and produces proof of what he has experienced. (John 15:27) The witness of the ambassadors of the Kingdom was to extend throughout the earth. (Acts 1:8) We are to be ambassadors of the Kingdom, giving witness to its message, with God confirming our witness by the demonstration of His power. Why is this responsibility to extend the Kingdom so important? Jesus said...*And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.* (Matthew 24:14) The final establishment of the Kingdom of God will not come until the Gospel of the Kingdom is preached to all the world. The basic Gospel message is that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, He was buried, and He rose again according to the scriptures. Men must be informed of its existence and taught how to enter and live as Kingdom residents. Specific guidelines were given by Jesus on how the message of the Kingdom is to be shared. The message of the Kingdom must include the call to repentance from sin. The message of the Kingdom is to be spread through both teaching and preaching: *And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom.* (Mat.9:35) The message of the Kingdom is by the demonstration of God's power, evident in the example set by Jesus. (Luk 9:11) The Gospel must be preached, but it must include message of the Kingdom. Jesus instructed His disciples to not only teach and preach Kingdom, in every city to... The demonstration of power...miracles and healings...is the Kingdom of God in action.

The apostle Paul discusses the ministry of reconciliation, as "ambassadors" for Christ: *"Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,* (2Co5:18-20) Paul likens his own calling to that of an ambassador, and he urges all Christians to consider themselves ambassadors for Christ. Our reconciliation with God is possible only because Christ died on the cross and received the punishment, atonement due for our sin. As we go through this world, we represent another Kingdom. (John 18:36), and it is our responsibility to reflect official position of heaven. We are in this world, but not of it. (Joh 17:16) God's ambassadors are to be "as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16) Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we must take the message of our King to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), plead with men everywhere to be reconciled to God.

The extension of the Kingdom became the central purpose of the early Church. (Acts 8:1,4) The Church was raised up by God as an instrument through which the Kingdom can be extended to the nations of the world. Many churches have lost the vision of this calling. They have emphasized building their membership and denomination instead of building the Kingdom. Competition between pastors, churches, and denominations has broken the unity of the Body of Christ. We have lost the vision of one united Kingdom of God of which each local Church is a part. Instead of helping one another in the mission to extend the Kingdom, we compete for greater buildings, and increased finances to build our own kingdoms. The plan of God was that the Church not only preaches the Kingdom but that it should be a living example of the Kingdom. The Church needs to dedicate its efforts to fulfill the commission of extending the Kingdom of God by teaching and preaching with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Church needs to seek first the Kingdom of God which surpasses sects, denominational, cultural, language, national boundaries, then all these other things will be added. *They returned again...confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.* (Acts 14:21-22)