

Lesson 5

A Kingdom To Be Sought

“May your Kingdom come”

Matthew 6:10

Most men and women have plans for their lives. They want to be doctors or lawyers. They want to become rich and well-known. They have a picture in their minds of what life will be like when they have reached their goals. They are kingdom builders!

Some people have no plans of their own. They would rather find some strong person who is building a kingdom, and help him in his vision. They get their happiness out of being a part of someone else’s plans.

This is what the Christian does. He builds no kingdoms of his own. He does not try to be known for some great work he has done. Rather, he seeks God’s glory and the coming of God’s kingdom. His prayer is always, “May your kingdom come.” His only desire is to have a part in the coming of that kingdom. He not only prays for it, but he goes out to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus.

One important prayer a believer should always pray is, “Lord, let me build Thy kingdom, and not my kingdom!” Many believers are very busy, but they are busy building their own kingdoms instead of God’s kingdom.



lesson outline

The Nature of God's Kingdom
The Place of God's Kingdom
The Time of God's Kingdom

The Growth of God's Kingdom
The Commission
The Completion

The Glory of God's Kingdom
Christ in the Assembly of Believers
Christ in Acts of Worship

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Distinguish between the inward kingdom and the outward kingdom of God.
- Evaluate your part in fulfilling Christ's command in Matthew 28:19-20.
- Understand why worship in every local assembly of the body of Christ must be centered around the person of Christ.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson development section by section. Write the answers to the study questions and self-test questions.
2. Pray for five missionaries by name and write words of encouragement to one of them.
3. Write a description of the “Living One” defined in Revelation 1:12-18.
4. Review the new words that you have learned in the first four lessons.

key words

disciple
evangelize

Great Commission
nature

lesson development

THE NATURE OF GOD’S KINGDOM

Objective 1. *Explain how God’s kingdom is both now and yet to come.*

There is no kingdom like God’s kingdom. There is no king like God.

The kingdom of God is now, yet is to come. The kingdom of God is now unseen, yet soon to be seen. The kingdom of God is inward (in the heart of the believer), but still its glory is around us.

- 1** Circle the letter to the left of each TRUE statement.
 - a** The kingdom of God is now.
 - b** The kingdom of God is yet to come.
 - c** The kingdom of God is within the believer.
 - d** The kingdom of God will be seen.

The kingdom of God is first on the list of things for which we should pray. Its priority takes equal place with the righteousness of God. And why not? The kingdom of God is righteousness. God’s righteousness! So, he who seeks the

kingdom of God is seeking the righteousness of God. He who seeks the righteousness of God is seeking God Himself. You cannot separate God and His righteousness. So, it all goes together . . . YOUR name, YOUR kingdom, YOUR righteousness. You cannot have one without the other. He who seeks them all above everything else is praying as he should.

2 Explain how the name of God and the kingdom of God cannot be separated.

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The Place of God’s Kingdom

Where is God’s kingdom? In heaven? Yes, in heaven. On earth? Yes, it will be. In man? Certainly, but only in those who receive Christ.

How can this be? Well, it’s this way—a kingdom must be in a citizen before he can be a good citizen in the kingdom. There are many examples of leaders who rule by force. Their citizens obey them because they fear them. But, such leaders soon lose their kingdoms, because their kingdom is not in the hearts of the people. At the first chance they get, the citizens will revolt. They will replace the old leader with one they trust and love.

This has happened over and over again throughout the world. An evil ruler will receive outward worship and praise from his people; but they are only speaking words to please him lest he be angry with them. Even while they are praising him with their lips, they are hating him in their hearts. They have already rejected him.

- 3** A true kingdom must be in a man’s heart because
- a) a kingdom cannot last unless it is in the people’s hearts.
 - b) obedience can only come from the heart.
 - c) citizens must fear the ruler if the kingdom is to be strong.

This is why we say that a strong and lasting kingdom must be in a man before the man can be a good citizen of a kingdom. This is why the kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom. It

starts in the hearts of its citizens the moment they believe. So, we can say that the “place” of the kingdom of God is *in* the heart of man.

The kingdom of God is not only in the hearts of believers. The day will come when Christ will rule over an “outward” kingdom. It will be a kingdom that can be seen and one that includes the whole world and all the people in it.

The only thing about the outward kingdom of God that will be different to the believer will be that which was “unseen” will now be “seen.” But the goodness of the kingdom will be the same. Its righteousness, its peace, and its joy which the Holy Spirit gives will not be something new to the believer. He has been a citizen of God’s kingdom from the day of his spiritual birth!

4 The kingdom of God is,, and which the Holy Spirit gives.

What a day that will be when the kingdom we can see comes! What happiness for those who know the true nature of the kingdom of God. They have known and practiced a life of righteousness, peace, and joy which the Holy Spirit gives!

Yes, many will rejoice in that day. But what about those who don’t know the Savior? What about the nations that have never heard? There will be no joy for them unless we go and tell them that Jesus saves!

Then how busy we should be! How we should pray! How we should work until all the world knows that there is a kingdom that starts in the heart. A kingdom that will be seen by all when Jesus comes.

This means that we should pray that everyone everywhere will accept Christ. We should pray that God’s kingdom will spread to the hearts of all men all over the world. At the same time, we must be prepared to go anywhere God tells us to share the good news about Jesus. No man can pray as he ought to pray who does not have a deep cry within himself to see the lost saved.

5 What must those who pray “May your kingdom come” be prepared to do?

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When the “Great Commission” means nothing to us it is impossible for us to pray as we should. We must never allow our work, our friends, or the cares of this life to interfere with this task. Those who pray “May your kingdom come” must be ready to go into all the world and carry the gospel to every creature. God’s kingdom cannot come to those who have never heard, for faith comes by hearing.

The Time of God’s Kingdom

The kingdom of God is now. Its boundaries are not marked. It has no customs barriers or immigration posts. It has no national flag. It is a kingdom in the heart of believers. God sits on the throne of the believer’s heart and rules His kingdom from there! “The Kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). “Jesus said, ‘My kingdom does not belong to this world’” (John 18:36). In other words, God’s kingdom is unlike any other kingdom in the world. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. “The Kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen” (Luke 17:20). Of course not! When it is in the heart, it cannot be seen except by the life and actions of its citizens! And that is what our next Scripture verse talks about: “For God’s Kingdom is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of the righteousness, peace, and joy which the Holy Spirit gives” (Romans 14:17).

6 Match the letters on the left of the statements to the Scripture texts that are on the right.

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| a | “The Kingdom of God is within you.” | 1) John 18:36 |
| b | “My kingdom does not belong to this world.” | 2) Luke 17:20 |
| c | “The Kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen.” | 3) Luke 17:21 |

When the kingdom of God is now, the proof of the kingdom will be seen now. If we put the kingdom of God before everything else now, it will be seen in our home, at our work, and among our friends. We will not be the king in these places. God will be the King! Most problems people face in their homes, at work, and with their friends come from the fact that they seek their own will rather than God's pleasure. When we put God's kingdom before everything else in our lives, most of our problems are solved! Our homes become happy places. Our work becomes satisfying. Our friends find us easier to live with because we are not selfish. No wonder Jesus said all these other things would be added if we would put His kingdom before everything else (Matthew 6:33).

7 Name three places where proof of the kingdom of God within us will be seen.

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The kingdom of God is still to come. It is "now," but it is also "yet to come." We pray "May your kingdom come." We groan for the day when what will die must be changed into what is immortal (1 Corinthians 15:53). One of the great joys of worship is to sing and tell of what will happen when Jesus comes. A wonderful Scripture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 tells of Jesus' coming. It ends with the words, "So then, encourage one another with these words." Worship is sharing our hope about things to come. It is talking to God about the kingdom that is within us, and letting Him reveal to us some of the joys of the kingdom we have yet to see.

- 8** First Thessalonians 4:13-18 tells us that
- a) only the people living when Christ returns will go to heaven.
 - b) the dead in Christ will rise first.
 - c) the angels will come down from heaven to take believers back with them.
 - d) those who are alive on the day the Lord comes will go to heaven.

THE GROWTH OF GOD’S KINGDOM

Objective 2. *List four things a believer should do to see that the Great Commission is carried out.*

Prayer and worship are wonderful to enjoy. But they must be enjoyed with the full knowledge of God’s plan. We will talk more about this in the next lesson. But we need to speak a little about it in this lesson because it concerns the growth of the kingdom of God.

Jesus said that He would build His church. Christ’s “church” is people—people who believe in Jesus. Wherever there are believers, there you will find Christ’s church. Members of His church are the citizens of the kingdom of God. So, when Christ builds His church He is building His kingdom. This is the great plan and work of God, This is what we should be praying about.

The church grows in two ways. These are two things we should be praying about.

1. It increases in number of members.
2. Its members increase in Christlikeness.

9 Circle the letter to the left of each TRUE statement.

- a** The believers make up the “church.”
- b** The “church” grows in number as buildings are built.
- c** The kingdom of God is being built as believers are added to the “church.”
- d** The “church” always stays the same.

The Commission

To do this work, Christ gave His disciples the “Great Commission.” He said, “Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

10 What is the name given to the command Jesus gives in Matthew 28:19-20?

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There are four parts to the command:

1. Go to them.
2. Disciple them.
3. Baptize them.
4. Teach them.

That is a job that should keep us praying until Jesus comes! Let us look at them one by one.

Go to them

This is not a call. It does not say, "Come." It says "Go!" It is a command. Do not be troubled in your praying about a "call." Jesus called His disciples to Himself and sent them forth. The call of God is to salvation. We are called to belong to Jesus. That



is the "come" of the gospel. But the command is different. Jesus is talking to those who have heard His call and have come unto Him. He says to these, "Go!" "Go to all peoples everywhere. Go and make them My disciples. Go and baptize them. Go and teach them." We do not have to wait for a voice from heaven. A voice has already spoken. It is the voice of Jesus, and it said, "Go!"

11 Explain the call of God as it relates to the Great Commission.

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Disciple them

This is the command to evangelize. To cause men to believe that Jesus is the Savior and Lord is what we have been sent to do. We are commanded to make converts in every nation. People do not begin to believe in Jesus because we know how to argue. They do not begin to believe in Jesus because we have a



good education. It is only when the Holy Spirit takes the words we speak that they feel the guilt of sin. It is when the love of Jesus touches their hearts—it is then that they will repent and believe. This means that we must pray and ask God to put the right words into our mouths.

12 What does the command to disciple mean?

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Baptize them

This is a command to bring those who have believed to commit themselves publicly to follow the Lord. It is not enough to believe in our hearts. We must confess with our mouths and



BAPTIZE

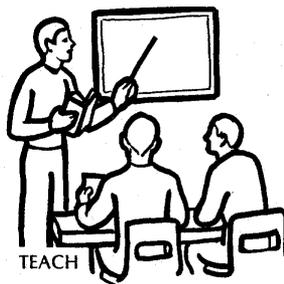
be baptized in water. The command to be baptized is very clear. It is a public testimony and picture of what has happened within us. When we believed, we died to sin. This is what being put under the water tells those who are watching. When we believed, we became new people—sons of God. This is what coming out of the water tells those who are watching. Every believer should be baptized in water. It is a command.

13 Water baptism speaks of what?

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Teach them

What a job this is! How much prayer and study it requires to teach new converts to be like Jesus. What are we supposed to teach them? Not just to be a church member. Not just to know church rules. Not just to be able to say the Lord's prayer and pass the new believer's test. Not just how



TEACH

to sing and pray. But, to be like Jesus! New converts (and old ones, too) must be taught God's love, His way of living, and His Word.

14 What should new converts be taught?**The Completion**

God's great plan is not yet complete. To each of us is given a task. Each of us can finish our part of the plan.

Jesus finished His part. He became a man. He healed the sick. Jesus taught men the truths about God's kingdom. Then He did what He had come to do. He died, and by dying He took away the sins of the world. As He hung on the cross He cried, "It is finished!" His work was complete!

Jesus gave the disciples work to do. He said, "Go, preach, baptize, and teach." They obeyed, and the gospel spread from country to country. One by one the disciples died, but each was able to say that he had finished his part of the plan.

Today the command is still with us. We each have our task from God. Each of us should pray to know exactly what our part in the plan is. Then, when we have fully obeyed and our life is over, we will be able to say, "It is finished. I have completed my task!"

15 Circle the letter to the left of each TRUE statement.

- a** We do not have to pray because Jesus said, "It is finished."
- b** The disciples obeyed the "Great Commission."
- c** Jesus has given each of us a task to do.
- d** Jesus finished His part of the task.

Paul said, "And now there is waiting for me the prize of victory awarded for a righteous life" (2 Timothy 4:8). The apostle prayed earnestly to know Christ and to be like Him. "All I want is to know Christ and to experience the power of His resurrection" (Philippians 3:10). What an objective! What a goal!

This should be our goal, too. This should be our prayer daily! This should be our objective as we worship in services and in private. God wants to complete His work in us. He can only do this if we are willing. God does not want us to wait until we get

to heaven to be like Jesus. He wants to change us now—and He will if we will be faithful in worship and prayer.

16 What is needed before we can fulfill our part of God’s plan?

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There are several things we should pray for as we think of the time of Christ’s coming and of the end of the world.

1. We should pray to the owner of the harvest that He will send out workers to gather in His harvest (Matthew 9:38).
2. We should pray that the good news about the kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all mankind and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).
3. We should pray, “So be it. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20) in answer to the words of Jesus, “Yes indeed! I am coming soon!”

17 Circle the letter to the left of each TRUE statement.

- a** Jesus will return before the good news is preached throughout the world.
- b** As a believer we should fear Jesus’ return.
- c** Workers are needed to gather in the harvest.
- d** Jesus is coming again.

THE GLORY OF GOD’S KINGDOM

Objective 3. *Compare Christ’s presence today in local assemblies with Revelation 1:9-20.*

Christ in the Assembly of Believers

We know that we shall see Christ in His glory when He comes. Today Christ’s glory is present with every gathering of believers, and we can see His glory through worship.

God gave John a vision of Christ in the churches. We read about it in Revelation 1:9-20. Jesus is pictured as the “Living One” who stands among the lampstands. The lampstands were the seven churches of Asia.

It is still true what Jesus said in Matthew 18:20. He said, “Where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them.” If we want to see Christ’s glory, we must meet together in His name. He will be there!

18 How is Jesus pictured in Revelation 1:9-20?

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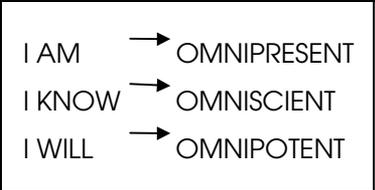
In Hebrews 10:25, it says, “Let us not give up the habit of meeting together.” Something happens when believers meet together. Christ comes! Those who do not “go to church” miss the chance of being there when Christ visits. He comes wherever believers meet in His name. He walks among the lampstands! The lampstands are churches, gatherings of believers! Just think! No matter how small or how large a group is, if they meet in Jesus’ name, He is there! What a reason for worship and praise! What a reason for singing and rejoicing! Jesus approves of believers meeting together. He visits them!

19 What happens when believers meet together?

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There are things that we should know about these visits by Jesus to our gatherings. To each of the churches in Asia He said three things:

1. He said, “I am.”
2. He said, “I know.”
3. He said, “I will.”



He who walks among the lampstands is present everywhere (omnipresent). He knows all things (omniscient), and He has power to do what He wills (omnipotent).

Christ in Acts of Worship

Christ is there as we sing. As our voices are lifted together in song, we can feel His Spirit move among us. “I will sing with my spirit, but I will sing also with my mind” (1 Corinthians 14:15). We often come to the house of God with our minds

filled with many thoughts; thoughts that concern our homes, our friends, and our families. As we sing, our minds are turned from earthly cares to thoughts of heaven and “things above,” and we receive strength to face the tasks of life again!

Christ is there when we pray. “I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray also with my mind” (1 Corinthians 14:15). As we enter our room, forget those around us, and talk to Jesus, we can feel Him by our side. We draw strength and blessing from His presence. As we hear those around us praying, our hearts are filled with praise. We know Christ is walking among His people!

Christ is there when the Word of God is preached. We can hear Him talking to us. We see the preacher, but we hear the voice of Jesus. “If you have ears, then, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!” (Revelation 2:7). We should pray for our preachers. They are the ministers of His Word. We ought to pray for them because the Spirit wants to speak to us through their minds and lips!

20 What does 1 Corinthians 14:15 tell us to do?

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self-test

SHORT ANSWERS. Write the correct answer in the space provided.

1 What two forms does the kingdom of God take?

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2 Name three places where evidences of the kingdom within us will be seen.

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3 What important truth does Matthew 18:20 teach us about our meeting together in Jesus' name?

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4 In what two ways does the church grow?

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5 Name the four commands of the "Great Commission."

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6 What does 1 Thessalonians 4:18 tell us to do concerning the knowledge of Christ's coming?

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7 What does Matthew 9:38 say we should pray for?

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8 What should Matthew 24:14 inspire us to pray for?

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9 How can we see Christ's glory today?

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answers to the study questions

11 The call of God says, “Come.” The command of God says, “Go.” The “Come” is to Jesus. The “Go” is to take the message to those who have not heard.

- 1 a** True.
- b** True.
- c** True.
- d** True.

12 To evangelize—tell men that Jesus is the Savior.

2 The kingdom of God is righteousness, and righteousness is of God.

13 Our death to sin, and that we are new people, sons of God,

3 a) a kingdom cannot last unless it is in the people’s hearts.

14 Christ’s love, His way of living, His Word.

4 righteousness, peace, joy (any order)

- 15 a** False.
- b** True.
- c** True.
- d** True.

5 To go anywhere to spread the gospel if God tells them that they are the ones to do it.

16 We must know Christ and be like Him.

- 6 a** 3) Luke 17:21
- b** 1) John 18:36
- c** 2) Luke 17:20

- 17 a** False.
- b** False.
- c** True.
- d** True.

7 In our homes, at our work, among our friends.

18 As the “Living One.”

8 b) the dead in Christ will rise first.

19 Christ comes.

9 a True.

b False.

c True.

d False.

20 Sing with the spirit.

Pray with the spirit.

Sing with the mind.

Pray with the mind.

10 The “Great Commission.”

For Your Notes