

Life Hope & Truth  
Bible Study Course

**LESSON 5**

# The Gospel of the Kingdom



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**IF IT IS  
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ACTUALLY IS!**

The word *gospel* is a widely recognized religious term—it’s common to hear of people preaching “the gospel” or singing “gospel” music. If something is true, some even refer to it as being “the gospel truth.”

But while the word has multiple meanings in the vernacular, what does the biblical word *gospel* actually mean?

The common assumption is that “gospel” refers to the story of Jesus, focusing on His life as a human and what He did for mankind on the cross. Thus, gospel preachers preach about Jesus and gospel musicians sing about Jesus.

But as you have been learning in this Bible study course, what is commonly believed is not always exactly what the Bible teaches. Sometimes the full biblical teaching on a subject is not correctly understood, even by churches and religious people. Sadly, this has occurred with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to earth with a message—and that message was called the gospel.

This is a very important topic to understand. Jesus Himself declared it one of the essential calls to action of His message. He said people must “repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). If it is necessary to believe the gospel, then it is essential that we understand what the gospel actually is!

The gospel was Jesus’ message. But what was that message? Was it only a message about Himself? Was it a message about health and wealth? Was it a message just for the first century? Or was it a message that is just as important for our world today?

As we covered in our previous lesson, it is essential that we teach and understand the truth about Jesus Christ the person. But it’s also vital that we teach and understand the message He brought.

In this lesson, we’ll carefully examine what the Bible reveals about this important subject.

## PART 1

# What Is the Gospel?

**THE TERM  
“GOSPEL OF  
THE KINGDOM”  
WAS USED BY  
MATTHEW TO  
SUMMARIZE  
THE MESSAGE  
JESUS WAS  
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TO THE PEOPLE.**

### Where does the word *gospel* first appear?

Matthew 4:23: “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the \_\_\_\_\_ of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.”

#### Deeper insight

The first time we see the word *gospel* used, Jesus is preaching it early in His public ministry. The term *gospel of the kingdom* was used by Matthew to summarize the message Jesus was proclaiming to the people.

### What does the word *gospel* mean?

Look up the meaning of *gospel* in *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* and answer the following questions:

What is the Greek word translated “gospel”?

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Fill in the blanks from the first sentence of *Vine’s* definition of this word:

“Originally denoted a reward for \_\_\_\_\_; later, the idea of reward dropped, and the word stood for ‘the \_\_\_\_\_’ itself. The Eng. word ‘gospel,’ i.e. ‘\_\_\_\_\_,’ is the equivalent of \_\_\_\_\_.”

So what is the basic meaning of the word *gospel*?

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### What is Jesus’ gospel message about?

Mark 1:14: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.”

Matthew 4:23: “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the \_\_\_\_\_, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.”

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Matthew 9:35: “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the \_\_\_\_\_ and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

**Deeper insight**

When we read about the gospel (good news) that Jesus taught, it is most often described as the good news of the Kingdom of God. Sadly, most churches that claim to follow Christ today almost never mention the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

As you continue through this lesson, you’ll learn more details about what exactly the Kingdom of God is.

**Did those who preached after Jesus Christ went to heaven also teach the gospel of the Kingdom of God?**

Acts 20:25: The apostle Paul said, “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, will see my face no more.”

Acts 28:30-31: “Then \_\_\_\_\_ dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”

**Deeper insight**

The leaders of the Church of God after Christ’s death and resurrection continued preaching the same gospel Jesus preached—the gospel of the Kingdom. They also taught the crucial truth about Jesus’ identity and role in God’s plan of salvation for mankind.

This is without doubt an essential theme of the Bible. But the true gospel is focused on the message of the Kingdom of God. The gospel of the Kingdom is not typically taught in mainstream Christian churches.

**How does Jesus Christ’s life, death and resurrection connect to the true gospel?**

Acts 8:12: “But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and the name of \_\_\_\_\_, both men and women were baptized.”

Acts 28:23: “So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, persuading them concerning \_\_\_\_\_ from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.”

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**Deeper insight**

The above scriptures show us that the leaders of the early Church continued teaching the same message about the Kingdom of God that Jesus taught. But alongside that, they also powerfully taught about Jesus Christ.

This included the many truths associated with understanding that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah—that He was God in the flesh, that He lived a perfect life as an example for us, that He died for our sins, that He rose from the dead, that He is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven and that He is going to return to earth.

It is impossible to separate the truths associated with Jesus Christ from the understanding of the Kingdom of God. Here are four reasons why:

1. You cannot be in the Kingdom of God without going through Jesus Christ and having your sins forgiven through His sacrifice (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
2. You can attain salvation—which ultimately means entering the Kingdom of God—*only* through Christ’s resurrected life and His ongoing role as our High Priest and Advocate in heaven (Romans 5:10; 8:34; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 2:10).
3. You can only be in the Kingdom by imitating the way of life Jesus lived while on earth (1 John 2:6; Ephesians 4:13).
4. Jesus Christ is *the King* of the coming Kingdom (Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 1:5; 19:16).

There’s no disconnect between Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. Everything Jesus did and taught points to the Kingdom of God, and everything about the Kingdom of God hinges on its King. The true Church of God has always taught and will always teach “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). That is why this Bible study course has developed full lessons on each of these central Bible themes.

**Does the Bible say anything about a false gospel being preached that is not the same gospel that Jesus and the apostles taught?**

2 Corinthians 11:4: “For if he who comes preaches \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a \_\_\_\_\_ spirit which you have not received, or a \_\_\_\_\_ gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!”

Galatians 1:6-9: “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a \_\_\_\_\_ gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be \_\_\_\_\_. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

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**Deeper insight**

Paul, the author of Galatians, dealt with people in the first century who were preaching a gospel that wasn't the same one preached by Christ, the other apostles and Paul himself. He used the strongest possible language to address this—for emphasis repeating a curse on anyone who preached a “different gospel.”

Sadly, much of the Christian world teaches a gospel limited to the person of Jesus Christ while ignoring the very message He came to earth to teach.

**Was the message of the Kingdom of God proclaimed in the Old Testament?**

Since space doesn't allow us to cover what every Old Testament prophet wrote about the Kingdom of God, we have selected two of the Old Testament's most prominent prophets: Isaiah and Daniel.

**The prophet Isaiah**

God inspired the prophet Isaiah to write about the Kingdom of God approximately 700 years before Christ's birth.

**Read Isaiah 9:6-7 and answer the following questions about Isaiah's description of the Kingdom of God.**

What does Isaiah say will be on Jesus Christ's shoulder? (Note that Jesus the Messiah is described here as “a Child,” “a Son,” “Wonderful,” “Counselor,” “Mighty God,” “Everlasting Father” and “Prince of Peace.”)

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How long will the growth and peace under Christ's rule last?

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**The prophet Daniel**

God inspired the prophet Daniel to write about the Kingdom of God approximately 600 years before Christ's birth.

**Read Daniel 2:44 and answer the question below.**

What will the Kingdom of God do with the human governments that preceded it?

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## PART 2

# What Exactly Is the Kingdom of God?

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS THE FAMILY OF GOD.

#### Did Jesus clearly say that the Kingdom of God isn't on earth now?

John 18:36: "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this \_\_\_\_\_. If My kingdom were of this \_\_\_\_\_, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from \_\_\_\_\_.'"

Matthew 6:10: "Your kingdom \_\_\_\_\_. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

#### Deeper insight

The Kingdom of God does not currently rule the earth. Since the Kingdom of God is the government of God, it currently resides in heaven—where God the Father and Jesus Christ presently are and rule. That is why it is often called "the kingdom of heaven" in the Gospels.

But the Kingdom of God is coming to earth. That is why in His model prayer Jesus instructed us to pray, "Your kingdom *come*."

It's important to understand that the Kingdom of God has two major components:

- 1. Those who are *in* it.** The Kingdom of God is the family of God. Currently, the Kingdom is composed of God the Father and God the Son. Though the begotten children of God on earth are not yet *in* the Kingdom, they are considered spiritual citizens of that Kingdom and heirs to it (Philippians 3:20; Romans 8:17; Titus 3:7). When God's people are given eternal spirit life—they will be *in* the Kingdom of God in the fullest sense (1 Corinthians 15:50-51).
- 2. Those who are *ruled over by* it.** Currently, the dominion of the Kingdom of God is heaven—where the Father and Son are and exercise supreme authority. When Jesus returns, the entire earth will come under His dominion. At that time, the people on earth will be ruled by the authority of that Kingdom. They will experience the blessings of its rule, but they will not be in the Kingdom until they enter it themselves.

An analogy we could use to demonstrate this distinction is the United Kingdom under the royal House of Windsor. The queen and her family have sovereignty over the United Kingdom. As citizens of a monarchy, the people of the U.K. are under the authority of the royal dynasty, but they are not *in* the dynasty. They are under the queen's dominion, but not heirs or inheritors of her throne.

When God's Kingdom is established on earth, all people will likewise be under its sovereign dominion, but unlike in a human kingdom, they will have the opportunity to enter the ruling family and be *in* the family of God too!

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL RULE OVER PHYSICAL KINGDOMS, NATIONS AND PEOPLES HERE ON EARTH.

Throughout this lesson, at times we will use the term *Kingdom of God* to refer to the spirit-born family of God and other times as the time period when the earth and its people are under the supreme sovereignty of the Kingdom.

**Many people believe that the Kingdom of God is something a person believes in his or her heart. Others believe it is the Church. Still others believe it is going to heaven to be with God. Where, according to the Bible, will the Kingdom of God be established?**

Jeremiah 23:5: “Behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a \_\_\_\_\_ shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the \_\_\_\_\_.”

Micah 1:3: “For behold, the LORD is \_\_\_\_\_ out of His place; He will come down and \_\_\_\_\_ on the high places of the \_\_\_\_\_.”

Zechariah 14:9: “And the LORD shall be King over all the \_\_\_\_\_. In that day it shall be—‘The LORD is one,’ and His name one.”

Revelation 11:15: “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this \_\_\_\_\_ have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall \_\_\_\_\_ forever and ever!’”

### Deeper insight

The Kingdom of God will rule over physical kingdoms, nations and peoples here on earth. The Kingdom of God is the government of God.

Because all the kingdoms of this world will be under God’s jurisdiction, it is obvious that the Kingdom of God has not yet been established here on earth.

**What city will Jesus return to and use as His capital here on earth?**

Zechariah 14:3-4: “Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of \_\_\_\_\_, which faces \_\_\_\_\_ on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.”

Joel 3:17: “So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in \_\_\_\_\_ My holy mountain. Then \_\_\_\_\_ shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again.”



**THE KINGDOM  
OF GOD  
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NATIONS OF  
THE WORLD.**

**Deeper insight**

When Jesus returns to earth, His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, a mountain just outside the city of Jerusalem. From that mountain, He will begin His reign on earth. Jerusalem, also called Zion (Psalms 51:18; 102:21), will be the city where Christ will dwell (Psalm 135:21). From there He will rule the nations—establishing the Kingdom of God on earth (Isaiah 2:3-4).

The Kingdom of God is a real government that will be sovereign over all nations of the world.

**The Four Elements of a Kingdom**

There are four elements required to have a kingdom: a king, territory, subjects and law. Will all four of these exist in the Kingdom of God?

The following chart shows these four elements and a scripture or two that shows how each will exist when the Kingdom of God rules this earth. Look up each scripture and briefly describe what it reveals.

<b>Element of a Kingdom</b>	<b>Scripture</b>	<b>How will this element be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God?</b>
King	Revelation 11:15; 19:16	
Law	Isaiah 2:3	
Territory	Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 19:15	
Subjects	Isaiah 2:2; Daniel 7:14	



**TERMINOLOGY**

**The bottomless pit**

A place of restraint where Satan and the demons will be banished during the 1,000-year rule of Christ and the saints on earth. During this period, they will be forbidden any opportunity to influence or deceive human beings.

**Does the Bible reveal a time frame for this first period of the rule of the Kingdom of God on earth?**

Revelation 20:3: “And he cast him [Satan] into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should \_\_\_\_\_ the nations no more till the \_\_\_\_\_ years were finished.”

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OF THAT RULE.**

Revelation 20:6: “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first \_\_\_\_\_.

Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a \_\_\_\_\_ years.”

**Deeper insight**

After Jesus Christ returns, a period of 1,000 years will begin. This is often called “the Millennium.” Revelation 20 gives us two major details about this 1,000-year period:

Satan will be restrained, and the earth will be ruled by Christ and His faithful followers.

It is important to understand the distinction between the Millennium and the Kingdom of God, because though they are connected, they are not synonymous. The Kingdom of God is the government led by Jesus Christ and composed of His family. The Millennium is the period of time they rule uninterrupted by Satan and before the next major events in God’s plan.

**So does the Kingdom of God only last 1,000 years?**

Psalm 45:6: “Your throne, O God, is \_\_\_\_\_ and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.”

Isaiah 9:7: “Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even \_\_\_\_\_. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

Daniel 7:18: “But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom \_\_\_\_\_, even \_\_\_\_\_ and ever.”

Revelation 22:5: “There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign \_\_\_\_\_ and ever.”

**Deeper insight**

If you wrote out the missing words in the above scriptures, you wrote a single word five times: *forever*.

Once established, the Kingdom of God will rule forever. The Millennium represents only the first 1,000-year phase of that rule. The book of Revelation reveals the major events that occur after the Millennium. See the appendix titled “The Major Eras of the Kingdom of God After Jesus Christ Returns” at the end of this lesson for an overview of events that occur after the Millennium.

Let’s now take a deeper look at how this world will change under the rule of the Kingdom of God.

## PART 3

# The World Under God's Kingdom

**A WORLD LED  
PERFECTLY  
BY THE GOD  
FAMILY WILL  
PROSPER AND  
PRODUCE A  
PERFECTLY  
PEACEFUL  
UTOPIA.**

### Who will rule over the restored nation of Israel?

Jeremiah 30:9: "But they [Israel] shall serve the LORD their God, and \_\_\_\_\_ their king, whom I will raise up for them."

### Who will rule over the individual tribes of the restored nation of Israel?

Matthew 19:28: "So Jesus said to them, 'Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the \_\_\_\_\_ of His glory, you who have \_\_\_\_\_ Me [Christ's disciples] will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

### Who will rule over the other nations of the earth?

Revelation 2:26: "And he who \_\_\_\_\_, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the \_\_\_\_\_."

Luke 19:17: "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten \_\_\_\_\_.'"

#### Deeper insight

The Kingdom of God will be a *real* government ruling over the earth. It will be well organized and structured.

Jesus Christ will be the ultimate authority—He will be the King of Kings and will rule the entire earth from Jerusalem (which will serve as world capital of His government). Under Him, the resurrected King David will lead the restored nation of Israel as king. Under David, the resurrected 12 apostles will govern over the individual tribes of Israel.

The rest of the nations and local governments will be governed by the rest of God's faithful family. Those who respond to God in this life and are faithful to His ways will rule the earth as kings and priests (Revelation 5:10). Some will be tasked with governing cities, and some will rule entire nations.

The government of the family of God—led by Jesus Christ—will be perfect. It will rule based on God's law and exercise perfect judgment and justice. Spiritual character, not political acumen, will be the primary qualification for authority in God's Kingdom. A world led perfectly by the God family will prosper and produce a perfectly peaceful utopia.

**AFTER JESUS  
CHRIST  
RETURNS, HE  
WILL BEGIN  
THE PROCESS  
OF RESTORING  
GOD’S  
GOVERNMENT  
ON EARTH.**

**The Minor Prophets**

A grouping of books in the Old Testament written by prophets and containing prophetic material. They are not called “minor” because they are less important, but because they are shorter in length compared to the prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel (called the “Major Prophets”).

**What did the apostle Peter call the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth?**

Acts 3:20-21: “. . . that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of \_\_\_\_\_ of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy \_\_\_\_\_ since the world began.”

**Deeper insight**

After Jesus Christ returns, He will begin the process of restoring God’s government on earth. The word *restoration* means returning something to a state that existed in the past. This refers back to the time when God actively ruled this earth.

The book of Genesis describes the very beginning of human history. God created Adam from the dust of the ground, and later He created Eve from Adam’s rib. For a period of time, Adam and Eve were governed directly by God—to be more specific, God the Word (the One who later came to earth as Jesus Christ).

This was a world without sin. Adam and Eve lived in an idyllic world that was perfect. God referred to that world as “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Under Christ’s direct rule in the Garden of Eden, there was peace and blessings.

But that all changed after Adam and Eve willingly chose to eat the forbidden fruit at the urging of Satan (who was disguised as a serpent). After sin entered humanity, Adam and Eve were removed from the garden, and mankind as a whole went its own way (Genesis 3:24). God’s government no longer actively governed the earth.

Today’s world is governed by the deadly combination of Satan’s influence and human reasoning (Ephesians 2:2). That deadly combination has caused the world we live in, with all its suffering, poverty, wars, violence, oppression and tragedy.

But Jesus Christ is returning to *restore* what was rejected in the garden—God’s government. At the point when humanity will be on the brink of destroying itself (Matthew 24:22), Christ will intervene to save this world. He will forcibly prevent Satan from having influence for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3).

With Jesus Christ actively governing the earth, God’s government will be restored. This will begin the process of the “restoration of all things” that Peter described. Obedience to Christ’s rule and law will transform the world in many ways.

As Peter also said in this scripture, this “restoration” was described in detail by many of the Old Testament prophets. Let’s take a closer look at some of the Old Testament prophecies of this future time of restoration.

**What are some of the details of the reign of the Kingdom of God found in the Minor Prophets?**

Prophecies about what the world will be like under the Kingdom of God are scattered throughout the Minor Prophets. Read the following scriptures and use them to answer the questions about the world during the Millennium.

**THE RULE  
OF GOD'S  
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BETTER IN MANY  
WAYS.**

**Amos 9:13:** What does this prophecy say about the agriculture under the rule of the Kingdom of God?

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**Micah 4:4:** What does this prophecy say about people's lives under the rule of the Kingdom of God?

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**Zephaniah 3:9:** What does this prophecy say about language under the rule of the Kingdom of God?

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**Zechariah 14:16:** What does this prophecy say will be observed by all nations under the rule of the Kingdom of God?

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The above prophecies are just a sampling of many details that are revealed in the Bible's prophecies about what the rule of the Kingdom of God on earth will be like. The earth will undergo a radical change. The rule of God's government combined with the worldwide practice of God's law will transform this world for the better in many ways.

This positive change is one reason that Jesus Christ called the message of the Kingdom of God the *good news*.

## PART 4

# When Will We Enter God's Kingdom?

**TO BE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, A PERSON MUST BE TRANSFORMED FROM PHYSICAL FLESH TO NONPHYSICAL SPIRIT.**

**Some believe that the Kingdom of God is already on earth in one form or another. But can flesh-and-blood human beings really be *in* the Kingdom of God now?**

1 Corinthians 15:50: "Now this I say, brethren, that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption."

John 3:5: "Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the \_\_\_\_\_, he cannot \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of God.'"

### Deeper insight

Jesus Christ and Paul are emphatic: A flesh-and-blood human being cannot be in the Kingdom of God.

To be in the Kingdom of God, a person must be transformed from physical flesh to nonphysical spirit. Jesus called this being "born of the spirit"—which He defined very clearly: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh [physical], and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit [nonphysical]" (John 3:6).

Paul used many terms in 1 Corinthians 15:40-54 to describe being "born of the spirit":

- A "celestial" body (or "heavenly" body, meaning a body *from* heaven or *like* those in heaven).
- "Raised in power."
- "Spiritual body."
- "Bear the image of the heavenly Man."
- "Raised incorruptible."
- "Put on immortality."

All these phrases describe the transformation of human beings from the human level to the divine level of existence. In our next lesson, Lesson 6, we will explore this important topic in greater depth.

**When will God's people be transformed to spirit and enter the Kingdom of God?**

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep [dead]. For the Lord Himself will \_\_\_\_\_ from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ will

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**The Pharisees**

A powerful religious sect in Judea that dominated the synagogues and often came into conflict with Jesus Christ because of their rigid interpretations of Old Testament law and their traditions, which actually often contradicted the law's original intent.

\_\_\_\_\_ first. Then we who are \_\_\_\_\_ and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

**Deeper insight**

God's faithful people will be transformed to spirit and enter the Kingdom of God at the return of Christ to earth. Contrary to what many believe, the “dead in Christ” are not in heaven now, but are unconscious in their graves. They will be resurrected to spirit life when Jesus returns to earth.

Those who are still living at that time will be “caught up” into the atmosphere to meet Christ in the air. They will then follow Him as He descends onto the Mount of Olives to begin His rule (Zechariah 14:4).

**What about scriptures like Luke 17:21 that seem to indicate the Kingdom of God is in our hearts now?**

Luke 17:20-21: “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is \_\_\_\_\_ you.”

Matthew 6:33: “Seek \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

Philippians 3:20: “For our \_\_\_\_\_ is in heaven, from which we also eagerly \_\_\_\_\_ for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

**Deeper insight**

Some mistakenly read Christ's statement to the Pharisees in Luke 17:21 and conclude that the Kingdom is something ethereal that exists in our hearts. But this ignores the scores of scriptures (many of which are cited in this lesson) that show the Kingdom of God is a literal government that is coming to earth and the fact that Jesus was speaking directly to the Pharisees—a group He corrected constantly and who by no means had the Kingdom of God in their hearts. They were about as far from the Kingdom of God as anyone who lived at that time (Matthew 23).

In order to understand this, we have to understand the Pharisees' incorrect understanding of the Kingdom. They were looking for the Messiah to come as a national Jewish leader who would lead the Jews in a military revolt against Rome and free Judea from Roman rule. They thought the Messiah would establish a physical kingdom in their time. They didn't understand that the Messiah would come twice—first to die for the sins of man and second to establish the Kingdom of God on earth (Hebrews 9:28).

The word translated “within” in Luke 17:21 is the Greek word *entos*, which can also be translated “in the midst of.” Many translations translate it this way. Jesus was referring to Himself—the King and representative of the Kingdom of God who was standing and preaching right in front of them. He was *in the midst of them* and was representing and preaching about the Kingdom—yet they didn't recognize it.

Though it is not what Jesus was speaking about in this statement, it is true that Christians should have the Kingdom “in their hearts”—meaning that the Kingdom should be their central hope and motivation. Christ said we are to “seek first the Kingdom of God” (Matthew 6:33)—which means we are to make it our top priority. We are to pray for it to come. We are also to be guided by its laws today.

Just as the rule of Jesus Christ and the law of God will be the central elements that change the world in the Kingdom of God, so the rule of Christ and law of God are to govern the lives of Christians today. Even though we aren’t in the Kingdom of God now (because we are still flesh and blood), we are considered “citizens” of it. We represent its King and laws today, on this earth, as “sojourners and pilgrims” (1 Peter 2:11).



## PART 5

# How to Enter the Kingdom of God

**THE GOSPEL OF  
THE KINGDOM  
OF GOD MUST  
BE BELIEVED—  
AND THEN THAT  
BELIEF MUST  
TRANSFORM  
OUR THINKING  
AND LIVES.**

### Did Jesus reveal what a person needs to do to enter the Kingdom of God?

Mark 1:14-15: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ in the gospel.’”

#### Deeper insight

In this statement, Jesus summarizes the two action steps we need to take in response to hearing the true gospel of the Kingdom of God.

#### 1. Repent.

Repentance is a constant theme of the Bible. It was preached not only by Jesus, but also by the Old Testament prophets and the apostles (Jeremiah 25:5; Ezekiel 14:6; Mark 6:12; Acts 2:38). In order to be in the Kingdom, we have to “repent . . . and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19).

Repentance means to recognize our sins, ask God’s forgiveness of those sins and then *turn from* those sins and live a life of obedience to God’s laws.

After we repent of our sins, we seek to be “baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission [forgiveness] of sins” (Acts 2:38). After baptism, we commit to a life of continual growth and repentance.

Of course, repentance and forgiveness of sin are only possible through Jesus Christ. That is why the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom *must be accompanied* with preaching about the King of that Kingdom, Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

#### 2. Believe the gospel.

The gospel of the Kingdom of God is not just something to understand intellectually. It must be *believed*—and then that belief must transform our thinking and lives.

As you read this lesson and go through this Bible study course, you are learning about the true gospel and the many truths associated with it. We hope and pray that it won’t be just an intellectual pursuit—but that you truly will believe these truths in faith—and then translate that belief into how you live your life. Jesus taught that belief in Him was only legitimate if it included obedience to the things He said (Luke 6:46).

The apostle Paul lamented in Romans 10:16 that “not all obeyed the gospel.” This underscores the essential truth that the gospel is not just something to be intellectually believed—but has to be *acted upon* and *obeyed*.

We will cover the topics of repentance and belief in greater depth in Lesson 10.

**CHRISTIANS  
WHO ARE  
SEEKING FIRST  
THE KINGDOM  
IN THEIR LIVES  
WILL STRIVE TO  
LIVE BY THAT  
KINGDOM'S  
LAWS IN THEIR  
LIVES TODAY.**

**Is it necessary to obey God's law to be in the Kingdom of God?**

Matthew 19:16-17: "Now behold, one came and said to Him [Jesus], 'Good Teacher, what good thing shall I \_\_\_\_\_ that I may have eternal life?' So He said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.'"

Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are those who do His \_\_\_\_\_, that they may have the right to the tree of \_\_\_\_\_, and may enter through the gates into the city."

**Deeper insight**

Jesus makes it clear that to enter into eternal life—which is another way of saying entrance into the Kingdom of God—one must obey the 10 Commandments. The book of Revelation, which culminates in prophecies about the establishment of the Kingdom on earth, reinforces the same truth: Those who will be in the Kingdom are those who strive to obey God's Commandments.

As we have already learned in this lesson, the Kingdom of God will be a real government, which will include *laws*. The 10 Commandments will be the "law of the land" in the Kingdom, and when they are obeyed on a global scale, they will result in peace, prosperity and blessings for the entire earth.

Christians who are *seeking first* the Kingdom in their lives will strive to live by that Kingdom's laws in their lives today. They will consider themselves *citizens* and *ambassadors* (representatives) of that Kingdom by obeying its laws today.

## PART 6

# Preaching the Gospel Today

**JESUS  
PREACHED THE  
GOSPEL OF  
THE KINGDOM  
OF GOD AND  
COMMANDED  
THAT HIS  
FAITHFUL  
CHURCH  
CONTINUE TO  
PREACH THE  
SAME GOSPEL.**

**How did Isaiah describe those who would bring good news regarding events that will occur when the Kingdom of God is established on earth?**

Isaiah 52:7: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings \_\_\_\_\_ news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims \_\_\_\_\_, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”

### Deeper insight

In this prophetic passage, the feet (a poetic way of describing one’s behavior and direction in life) of the messenger bringing the good news (gospel) are described as “beautiful.” Paul apparently had this passage in mind when he said of New Testament ministers: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace” (Romans 10:15).

Jesus preached the good news of the coming Kingdom of God and commanded that His faithful Church continue to preach the same gospel.

**Did Jesus teach that this same gospel would continue to be preached by His Church, even into the end times?**

Mark 16:15: “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel to every creature.’”

Matthew 24:14: “And this gospel of the \_\_\_\_\_ will be preached in all the world as a \_\_\_\_\_ to all nations, and then the \_\_\_\_\_ will come.”

### Deeper insight

There are very few today who preach the gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus and the first-century apostles proclaimed. But those who are faithfully following Christ will support the preaching of the same gospel and will do all they can to make it available to as wide an audience as possible.

Jesus said this effort would continue even into the times preceding “the end”—a reference to the *end* of “this present evil age” (Galatians 1:4) at the return of Jesus Christ. In the end times, God’s people will be preaching the gospel of the Kingdom to “all nations.” Modern media technology (mainly the Internet and the printed word) allows the Church of God to literally reach all nations with the true gospel.

This prophecy is, in a sense, being fulfilled at this moment as you study this Bible study course and learn what the Bible says about the true gospel.

**THE REALITY  
IS THAT VERY  
FEW RESPOND  
TO THE TRUE  
GOSPEL NOW.**

**Should we expect many people to repent and believe the gospel?**

John 6:44: “No one can \_\_\_\_\_ to Me unless the Father who sent Me \_\_\_\_\_ him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Mark 4:11: “To you it has been given to know the \_\_\_\_\_ of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables.”

Matthew 7:14: “Because \_\_\_\_\_ is the gate and \_\_\_\_\_ is the way which leads to life, and there are \_\_\_\_\_ who find it.”

**Deeper insight**

Though the gospel of the Kingdom is the most positive and amazing message one can hear and believe, the reality is that very few respond to it now. The Bible describes a *calling*, or *drawing*, that must take place in order for someone to truly understand, believe and respond to the gospel. God specifically selects a small number of people to be called in this age.

After Jesus’ 3½-year ministry, only 120 were gathered together when the Church began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:15). By a great miracle, later that day 3,000 people were called and added to the Church (Acts 2:41). But that was a miraculous anomaly. The Bible doesn’t reveal any other days when that many were called. Throughout its history, the Church has always remained a relatively “little flock” (Luke 12:32).

**Why doesn’t everyone understand the true gospel today?**

Read each scripture and answer the question.

**Revelation 12:9 and 2 Corinthians 4:3-4:** What do these passages say Satan has done to the “whole world”?

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**Romans 11:7-10:** What does this passage reveal about the spiritual blindness of our world?

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**GOD HAS A  
SYSTEMATIC  
PLAN FOR  
SAVING  
MANKIND. HE  
IS NOT TRYING  
TO SAVE THE  
ENTIRE WORLD  
RIGHT NOW.**

**Deeper insight**

What these scriptures show may be one of the most surprising truths found in the Bible—and one of the least understood. God does not intend for everyone to understand His truth now, in this age. He has intentionally allowed the majority of humanity to be blinded. He is currently working with only the small number of people He has specifically called.

But He is not doing this with the intent to condemn those who don't understand to an ever-burning hell. Romans 11:32 begins to unlock the key to why God is doing this:

“For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.”

God has a systematic plan for saving mankind. He is not trying to save the entire world right now. He is calling a few now, but will work with the rest of humanity at a later time—after the return of Jesus Christ. At that future time, the minds of those who were blinded in this present age will be opened to an understanding of the true gospel. We will cover this topic in more detail in Lesson 9.

By studying this course, you are gaining understanding of a subject that is a mystery to most people. That puts extra responsibility on you not just to learn about these truths, but to embrace and act on them.

**Lesson Wrap-Up**

This lesson has covered, through many scriptures, what the true gospel is. We have learned that Jesus Christ and the apostles taught the gospel, meaning *good news*, of the Kingdom of God. We have also seen that this message goes further back into Old Testament times.

The message that God is building a kingdom that will one day come to this earth and have dominion is truly *good news*—especially as we look at the current state of our world. We are witnessing a world that is becoming ever more corrupt, violent, dangerous and divided.

The Bible tells us it will get worse—so much worse that Jesus Christ will literally have to intervene to save us from ourselves. After He does this, He will establish His rule on earth and begin the process of fixing this broken world.

And that isn't a process that will be started off in the distant future. He is starting that process by fixing broken people today and preparing them to help Him fix the entire world. He has been building, and still is building, His Church. The saints will be raised as the children of God at Christ's return. It is His family that will compose the Kingdom when it rules the world in the future. Those people He is calling and working with are learning His way of life now, so that they can teach it on a global scale when the Kingdom of God rules the earth.

We pray that those enrolled in this Bible study course will respond to the gospel message and commit their lives to the cause of the Kingdom of God. If you feel you are being called to respond to the gospel message, then we urge you to take to heart the two actions steps Jesus taught in Mark 1:15: *Repent* and *believe* the gospel. You will learn how to take these steps in great detail in Lesson 10.

If you wish to assist us in taking this gospel of the Kingdom to the world, your prayers would be greatly appreciated. There is no charge for this Bible study course or for the educational literature provided on the LifeHopeandTruth.com website. We operate based on the principle found in Matthew 10:8: “Freely you have received, freely give.” If you would like to join us in this effort to preach the true gospel to the world, we would love to hear from you. Our contact information is available at the bottom of this page.

Now that we have covered what the gospel of the Kingdom is all about, the next lesson will take a closer look at your personal part in it. In Lesson 6, we will dive deeper into what the Bible says about the purpose for human life. God created you for a great purpose—a purpose that you need to understand in order to fulfill.

### Supplemental Reading

Life, Hope & Truth offers additional resources that can help you better understand God’s inspired Word, the Holy Bible.

- [The Mystery of the Kingdom >](#)
- [Change Your Life >](#)
- [From Holidays to Holy Days: God’s Plan for You >](#)
- [God’s Purpose for You: Discovering Why You Were Born >](#)
- [What Is the Kingdom of God? >](#)
- [What Is the Gospel of the Kingdom? >](#)
- [What Was Jesus’ Message? >](#)
- [Messiah’s Message: Gospel of the Kingdom >](#)
- [Messiah’s Message: Repent >](#)
- [Messiah’s Message: Believe in the Gospel >](#)
- [Many Are Called, but Few Are Chosen >](#)
- [The Last Enemy: What Really Happens After Death? >](#)
- [1,000 Years—the Millennium >](#)
- [Born to Be a King >](#)

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# The Major Eras of the Kingdom of God

## AFTER JESUS CHRIST RETURNS

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### 1. The Millennium.

For 1,000 years, the Kingdom of God will rule over the physical earth. Those who survive the Great Tribulation (and those who descend from them) will live under the rule of Jesus Christ and His family. With the law of God in effect, perfect justice

enforced and Satan unable to influence anyone, the world will be transformed from a smoldering wasteland to a beautiful paradise.

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### 2. The “little while” Satan is released.

After the end of the Millennium, God will allow Satan to be released for a short time (Revelation 20:3). He will be permitted to deceive again and will successfully convince a number of people to rebel against God. Even after living their whole lives under the Kingdom of God, some will still

choose Satan’s way. But this rebellion will be swiftly defeated (verses 7-9). After this rebellion, Satan and his demons will be restrained for eternity and will never again have any influence or freedom.

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### 3. The Great White Throne Judgment.

After this rebellion, we come to the era of the “great white throne” (Revelation 20:11). This is when the “rest of the dead” (verse 5) will be resurrected to physical, mortal life. This will include everyone who lived throughout human history who wasn’t called by God. This will include billions upon billions of people throughout all ages of human history. Ezekiel 37 describes this physical resurrection and how the people will

be given physical life and offered God’s Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit will open understanding of God’s Word. The Book of Life will finally be opened to them (Revelation 20:12). The world built over the millennial period will be home to these people, and they will have the ability to see the stark contrast between the world they lived in before and the world built under the rule of Jesus Christ.

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### 4. The destruction of the wicked.

The next event described is the resurrection of the incorrigibly wicked—those who knew God’s truth, but rejected it in their

lives. They will be resurrected, judged to condemnation and destroyed in a lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15; Malachi 4:3).

---

### 5. New heavens and new earth.

After the unrepentant are destroyed in the lake of fire, a new phase of history will begin. All human beings will have been transformed from flesh to spirit and entered God’s family. The physical elements will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced by a “new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1).

God the Father will then bring His holy throne to this new earth and reside with His family for eternity (verse 3). This is the ultimate fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. For eternity, all life will be based on the three major spiritual characteristics of the Kingdom: righteousness, peace and joy (Romans 14:17).

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## LESSON 5

# Quiz

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### True or false

Write or type in T if the statement is true and F if the statement is false.

1. \_\_\_\_ The apostles preached a different gospel from the one Christ preached.
  2. \_\_\_\_ After Jesus' resurrection, the apostles also taught about Christ's identity as the Messiah.
  3. \_\_\_\_ The Kingdom of God currently exists on earth.
  4. \_\_\_\_ The Kingdom of God is sometimes called the "kingdom of heaven" because it will always be in heaven.
  5. \_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ instructed us to pray for the Kingdom to come to earth.
- 

### Multiple choice

Select the correct answer to each question.

6. The biblical word *gospel* literally means

- |                                    |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. music sung at a church service. | c. an absolute truth.    |
| b. good news.                      | d. passionate preaching. |

7. The more complete name of the message Jesus preached is

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| a. the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Mary. | c. the gospel of the Kingdom of God. |
| b. the gospel of peace.   | d. the gospel of grace.              |

8. When the Kingdom of God is established, it will rule over

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. only those who agree to be subject to its laws. | c. only the restored nation of Israel. |
| b. only those who practice Christianity.           | d. all peoples and all nations.        |



9. Where does the Bible say the Kingdom of God will be established?

- a. in the hearts of Christians
- b. on earth
- c. within the Church
- d. wherever two or more are gathered in Jesus' name

10. The 12 prophets who wrote shorter prophetic books and prophesied frequently of the Kingdom are called

- a. the Priestly Prophets.
- b. the Sons of the Prophets.
- c. the Major Prophets.
- d. the Minor Prophets.

11. When the Kingdom of God is established on earth, what city will serve as the capital from which God's laws will go out to the nations?

- a. Jerusalem
- b. Rome
- c. Babylon the Great
- d. London, England

12. The four elements of a kingdom are

- a. territory, subjects, roads, ruler.
- b. territory, subjects, foreign policy, law.
- c. territory, taxes, law, king.
- d. territory, subjects, law, king.

13. The Bible teaches that flesh-and-blood humans

- a. have an immortal soul.
- b. cannot enter the Kingdom of God.
- c. are predestined to either be in God's Kingdom or spend eternity in hell.
- d. can be "born again" and enter the Kingdom in this life.

14. What major change must occur for people to enter the Kingdom of God?

- a. They must be changed into spirit.
- b. They must accept Jesus into their hearts.
- c. They must have the Kingdom in their heart.
- d. They must join the Church.

15. When will humans first have an opportunity to enter the Kingdom of God?

- a. when they die and go to heaven
- b. when Christ returns to rapture Christians to heaven
- c. when Christ returns to earth
- d. when God decides He needs more angels

16. Where will Christians reign when they enter the Kingdom?

- a. in a location not revealed in the Bible
- b. in heaven
- c. in purgatory
- d. on the earth

17. In Matthew 19 Jesus told the young rich man who asked him how to have eternal life to “keep the \_\_\_\_\_.”

- a. traditions of the Jews
- b. rite of circumcision
- c. commandments
- d. faith

18. What are the two major action steps Jesus gave for people to do when they hear the gospel and desire to respond to it?

- a. fast and go to church
- b. pray and confess your sins
- c. join a monastery and give up all worldly possessions
- d. repent and believe the gospel

19. To repent means

- a. to recognize that we have faults.
- b. to ask God to forgive other people’s sins.
- c. to change our lives from disobeying God to obeying Him.
- d. to feel sorry for our sins.

20. The period of time that begins immediately after Jesus returns is often called the \_\_\_\_\_ and will last for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

- a. Rapture, 3½
- b. Millennium, 1,000
- c. Reformation, 500
- d. Dominion, 10,000

## CHECK YOURSELF

### Lesson 5 Quiz

- |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|
| 1. F | 6. b | 11.a | 16.d |
| 2. T | 7. c | 12.d | 17.c |
| 3. F | 8. d | 13.b | 18.d |
| 4. F | 9. b | 14.a | 19.c |
| 5. T | 10.d | 15.c | 20.b |