

The Kingdom Of God Is ...

Romans 14:15-23

Why so much confusion?

- Many have concluded the Kingdom of prophecy (**Daniel 2:44; Isaiah 9:6-7**) was (and is) a physical kingdom with a fleshly king.
- Even the Lord's apostles didn't understand for a time. **Acts 1:6**
- Jesus was clear! "**My kingdom is not of this world**" (**John 18:36**); cf. **Luke 17:20-21**

Turning the spiritual into the fleshly ...

- This was true in the first century church when both Jewish and Gentile Christians defined their relationship in Christ on fleshly terms rather than spiritual.
- In **Romans chapter 14**, we read how "**walking like mere men**" (**1 Corinthians 3:3**) had led to great problems in the church in Rome.
- They were allowing food and the eating of meat to divide them when it had been communicated by God that it simply does not matter either way (**Romans 14:3-6**).

Turning the spiritual into the fleshly ...

- As Paul began to make the point that it's not about asserting our rights and pleasing ourselves but about the building up of one another, he prefaced his closing remarks by reminding them in **verse 17** that, "**the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**"

The Kingdom of God is NOT ...

- **Eating and drinking.**
 - The church is not about satisfying the fleshly wishes and desires of man. Paul addressed this problem in the church in Corinth when they had perverted the Lord's Supper into a fleshly feast. **1 Corinthians 11:20-21**
 - Coming "**together not for the better but for the worse**" (**verse 17**). They were to address their fleshly needs at home (**verses 22, 34**).

The Kingdom of God is NOT ...

- **Eating and drinking.**
 - When Paul wrote the letter to Timothy, part of the "**sound teaching**" (**1 Timothy 1:10**) he was to uphold was to "**let not the church be burdened**" (**1 Timothy 5:16**) by placing our individual responsibility to provide for the fleshly needs of our family upon the Lord's church.

The Kingdom of God IS ...

▪ Righteousness.

- The purpose of the church is not to entertain, amuse, or alleviate fleshly needs but it is about making man right with God.
- Beginning in **Matthew 6:19**, Jesus is clearly contrasting the fleshly and the spiritual. He summarizes that point in **verse 33** where He says, "**But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things (our fleshly needs) will be added to you.**"

The Kingdom of God IS ...

▪ Righteousness.

- Our driving "**hunger and thirst**" has to be to be right with God (**Matthew 5:6**).
- That's what the kingdom of God is all about – making man right with his Creator and Redeemer.
- A righteousness born not of perfection but forgiveness through the proclamation of the gospel and our faithful obedience to it (**Philippians 3:9**).

The Kingdom of God IS ...

▪ Peace.

- The purpose of the church is to help man resolve the conflict between God and man and bring about reconciliation. (**2 Corinthians 5:17-21**)
- Without the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, Paul reminded the brethren in Ephesus (**Ephesians 2:12**) that they were, "**separate from Christ ... having no hope and without God in the world.**"

The Kingdom of God IS ...

▪ Peace.

- Peace was established for all mankind through Christ (**Ephesians 2:14-16; Acts 10:36; Colossians 3:15**)
- A peace that that is incomprehensible (and illusive) to the world (**Philippians 4:7; John 14:27; Luke 19:41-42**)

The Kingdom of God IS ...

▪ Joy.

- Paul spoke of joy that comes from being forgiven of all our sins and is not dependent on temporal circumstances.
- When David contemplated the impact of his sin against God, he petitioned (**Psalms 51:12**) that God would "**restore to me the joy of Thy salvation ...**"
- We see the example of the Ethiopian eunuch in **Acts 8:39**, who responded with great rejoicing to the forgiveness he had just obtained through his obedience.

The Kingdom of God IS ...

▪ Joy.

- Only through the forgiveness of sins and the renewed fellowship with God can one truly "**rejoice always**" (**Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16**) regardless of trials and tribulations we may face (**1 Peter 1:6-7**).
- Can you imagine hearing the words from our heavenly Father, "**enter into the joy of your Master**" (**Matthew 25:21**)? The kingdom of God is about providing such eternal joy.