

The Nature of God's Kingdom
(John 18:33-37)

Introduction:

1. In our last 3 Sunday morning lessons we have studied a number of passages that relate to God's kingdom.
 - a. We examined prophecies from the Old and New Testaments relating to the establishment of the kingdom.
 - b. We showed that these prophecies were fulfilled in Acts 2 -- God's kingdom was established in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost that followed the Lord's resurrection and ascension.
2. Today we are concentrating on "the nature of God's kingdom."
3. Let us begin by pointing out that . . .

Discussion:

- I. GOD'S KINGDOM IS A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM
 - A. According to John 18:36, the Lord's kingdom *"is not of this world."*
 1. When Jesus made this statement He was on trial before Pilate.
 2. As Pilate interrogated Jesus, Pilate asked if Jesus was *"the king of the Jews."*
 3. Many of the Jews had been looking forward to an earthly kingdom for years.
 4. They were waiting for a "messiah" who would drive the Romans out of Palestine and restore Israel to its former glory.
 5. Jesus was not the kind of king they were looking for, so they crucified Him.
 6. This resulted from a misunderstanding of the nature of God's kingdom.
 7. God's kingdom is not of this world -- it is a spiritual kingdom.
 8. The Lord's kingdom is not of this world; however, . . .
 - B. The kingdom exists on earth at the present time.
 1. It was established in Jerusalem.
 2. In Revelation 1:9, John said that he and others were in it.
 3. The Lord's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom that exists on earth at the present time [the church].
 4. We learn from 1 Corinthians 15:24 that the Lord will deliver the kingdom to the Father at *"the end."*
 - C. As we continue studying passages that relate to the nature of God's kingdom, let us consider . . .
- II. 3 CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S SPIRITUAL KINGDOM
 - A. First, God's spiritual kingdom has a king -- Jesus.
 1. He is *"King of kings, and Lord of Lords"* (1 Timothy 6:15).
 2. As King, Jesus possesses all authority (Matthew 28:18).
 3. He is *"the head"* of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).
 - B. Second, God's spiritual kingdom has a law -- the New Testament of Christ.
 1. We learn from Galatians 6:2 that the Lord has a law.
 2. His law is identified in Hebrews 8:6; 9:15.
 3. The Lord's people have a responsibility to His law (Colossians 3:16a).
 4. Those who fulfill this responsibility will be blessed (John 14:21).
 - C. Third, God's spiritual kingdom has citizens -- Christians.
 1. Christians are identified as citizens of God's kingdom in Ephesians 2:19; 1:1.
 2. We become citizens of God's kingdom when we are saved (Acts 2:47b).
 3. The citizens of God's kingdom are subject to the King (Colossians 3:17).

Conclusion:

1. In closing, let us touch on an important responsibility that relates to God's kingdom (Matthew 6:33).
2. Have you entered God's kingdom?
3. Are you seeking it first in your life?