

## OUR Kingdom? Our Glory? Or Gods?

1 Chron 29:10-13

King David said that all the wealth of the temple was Gods alone.

Jesus said to pray –

Matt 6:9-13 Your kingdom come, your will be done

1. our accumulations of “things” (house, car, friends, money, abilities)
2. our ambitions, dreams, our hopes and plans
3. Our Legacy of what we hope to leave behind.

\* Joseph in Pharaoh's kingdom, was owner of nothing, but responsible for everything!

this is so overwhelming, sorrowful and anguishing

He prayed – Luke 22:42 - Not my will but yours

Vs 44 – a Hematohidrosis of sweat turning to blood in the garden.

This overwhelming, sorrowful and anguishing

“KINGDOM RELINQUISHMENT”

Gives God glory, turns to eternal reward, and supernatural dividends we know not of.

# The Kingdom Of Heaven



Marshall Billingslea

## The Kingdom... Key thoughts -

1. who? Us, a body of believers
2. where? Here (*heaven is only the headquarters*)
3. when? Now
4. what? Culture, way of life
5. why? His kingdom is Life giving & Eternal

### **Matt 16:19 - I will give you the "keys" of the Kingdom**

Jer 33:3— Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you of great and hidden things, (mysteries) that you have not known.

Mar 4:11 He told them, "The secret" of the kingdom of God has been given to you.

Isa 22:22—What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

A "Priest" represents God to the people and the people to God.

He / She performs spiritual duties, or tasks to serve the church, both publicly and privately.

YOU pray directly to God, Confess directly, ask for direct revelation, No longer do we need a hierarchy to reach the throne of God.

We have a "soul competence" to hear personally, directly, and respond personally to the Holy Spirit. We all have opportunities and responsibilities to pray for others (intercession) , and interpret scripture as God reveals it (hermeneutics) .

### **A humbling role— (not for title & position)**

Luke 14:10— But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests.

1 Peter 4:10—As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

Matt 20:25— But Jesus called them aside and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their superiors exercise authority over them. 26It shall not be this way among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant

Phil 2:1— Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

**Priesthood of the Believer**— positioned to operate in your gift

Delegated heir of Salvation— Appointed to serve the Kingdom.

Gods Ambassador, direct representative, leadership role:

Title and ranks of Nobility in a Kingdom:

Prince / princess— Heir in waiting / training

1. Duke / Duchess (monarch but not King)

2. Marquess

3. Earl / countess

4. Viscount—

5. Baron / Baroness

6. Lords and Ladies

“Title & Position”

Religion = Pope, Archbishop, Bishop, Priest,  
Laity (member)

Protestant = Jesus, & Believer

(believers are the lowest and highest  
“position “ in the church. Title and position  
such as Pastor or Deacon, define a role, not  
a RANK in Christianity.)

1 Peter 2:9But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

Heb 4:6— Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess....So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

2 Cor 5:18—And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him ...So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!”

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**The Kingdom IS...****The Kingdom IS NOT...**

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. A body of people    | Organized Religion      |
| 2. Gods Culture        | modern POP culture      |
| 3. Here and Now        | Off in space, whenever  |
| 4. Simple & Attainable | Complicated and Elusive |
| 5. An Atmosphere       | Limited to one address  |
| 6. An open invitation  | an Exclusive club       |
| 7. A Way of life       | List of rules           |
| 8. Supernatural power  | Weak and Fearful        |
| 9. Gods will           | Selfish Ambition        |
| 10. A Gift             | Earned or entitled      |

**The term “Kingdom” is in the Bible 162 times****Timing? Location? Substance?**

Rom 14:7 - For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

1 Cor 4:20 - For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

Matt 4: 17 From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Luke 17:21 - nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

**5. With the right attitude**

- a. a bad attitude can mask the facts
- b. an angry disposition does not help
- c. communicate loyalty, and gratefulness regardless of the outcome

**6. With appropriately selected words**

- a. avoid inflammatory remarks that cause unnecessary reactions
- b. separate personal opinion from the facts
- c. never challenge authority

**7. Have the right response if it’s rejected**

- a. Being Godly is more important than being right
- b. a right spirit will validate the issue
- c. a wrong spirit will ruin your witness and the outcome

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Sometimes appeals are wise, with the right motives, the right place and time, but still it is rejected. TRUST the King. You have delivered your soul! Let Him take responsibility from here.

Only a control freak thinks he has to win every appeal.

It’s not really trust if you only trust when you’re happy with the result.

6. I should not dream, plan, or prepare if my ideas might get shot down anyway

7. I have no responsibility if I didn't make the decision.

### **When should we appeal to an authority?**

1. When we are asked to do evil
2. When our authority is about to do evil

### **How should we appeal?**

1. We must be in right standing
  - a. be under authority
  - b. not have a history of complaining
  - c. confess any wrongdoing on your part
2. We must have the right motives
  - a. manipulation is evil
  - b. what is best for everyone, not just me
  - c. how will this benefit my leader
3. At the right time
  - a. privately— never before an audience
  - b. without other distractions
  - c. wait till your leader is receptive
4. Give accurate facts and information
  - a. don't leave out important details
  - b. include alternate perceptions of the situation

Mark 12: 28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"<sup>29</sup> "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."<sup>32</sup> "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. 33 To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."<sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from **the kingdom of God.**" And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

1600 yrs between Moses and Jesus... (400 years of silence from God)

Mark 1:**The beginning** of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, 2 as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: (700 years earlier)

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" — "a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"<sup>4</sup> And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. .. 9 **At that time** Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ..<sup>14</sup> After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 **"The time has come,"** he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (almost 2 years passed between prison and Jesus Crucifixion)

Dr Kent Hovind - where did God come from?

1. This question displays that you are thinking of the wrong God.  
( He's too small)
2. The God of the Bible is not affected by **time, space or matter**.
3. This 3 part continuum has to happen simultaneously.
4. Matter without space would have no place to exist.
5. Matter and space has to have a time to exist.
6. In the beginning (time) God created the heaven (space) and the earth (matter).
7. A trinity of trinities – time has past, present and future, space has length, width, height, and matter has solid, liquid and gas.
8. The God who created them has to be outside of them, not limited by them.
9. The God who created the universe has to be greater than His creation.
10. The guy who created a computer is not inside the computer doing calculations and graphics.

### **What to do:**

1. Pray for the person in Authority
2. Pray for your attitude
3. Pray about your motives
4. Appeal to them privately at the right time  
\* if your appeal is rejected...
5. Bring a witness to appeal with you
6. Stay in the right spirit if your appeal is rejected
7. Wait for God to vindicate the truth, be patient, trust

Do not confuse passive behavior with humility , meekness, or submission. This is not a Godly response to Authority.

Passive - overtly compliant./ inert., useless, . Not participating, acting, or operating; / to shut down mentally, emotionally, or physically to be a carpet, or "wet noodle"

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### **Misbelief by those in Submission:**

1. My opinion doesn't matter, so I should keep it to myself.
2. I must always agree with my leader in order to submit to them
3. I only have to do what I'm told to. should set around and wait for orders.
4. I am usually less intelligent, qualified or experienced than the one in authority over me
5. I should seek out a third party's biased opinion when I don't agree.

## **APPEAL...**

The King is Sovereign . Absolute Authority. He delegates to representatives and discharges them at his pleasure. When it comes to human leaders it is difficult to follow at times. Submission is an attitude. It is absolute. Obedience is an action. It is conditional. When you submit to delegated authority, you honor the King.

Here are some principles to follow when making an appeal:

### **Determine the issue:**

1. Moral or legal
2. Biblical
3. Ethical
4. Personal \* (most power struggles and conflicts of interest come about in this arena. If our problem with compliance is over personal preferences, we put ourselves at the threshold of sinning.

### **Determine who is affected:**

1. Just you
2. A group of people

(are YOU responsible to protect and provide for these people?)

What needs to happen:

1. Change of heart
  2. Change of course
  3. Change of leadership
- you must have a clear expectation, a complaint without a solution is not Godly

11. God is above the universe, beyond it, in it, through it, and unaffected by it.

12. A spiritual force absolutely has effect over a physical body, which created emotions, love hatred, envy, jealousy, and rationality.

13. If your brain is a random collection of chemicals, formed by chance over billions of years, how can you trust your own reasoning process?

14. The question “where did God come from” assumes a limited God who was created.

15. If I could fit the infinite God in my 3 pound brain, He wouldn't be worth worshipping.

Some people ask, where did God come from?

Others proclaim, everything came from God.

## It is NEAR? HEAR and NOW ?

The Atmosphere, presence,

Gen 3:8 – heard Him, felt Him, in the garden

Mark 1:15 – The time is now! It is here!

Matt 18:20 – 2 or 3 are gathered, He is there

Exod 40:34 – Moses and tabernacle

Acts 2:1,2 – Upper room, day of Pentecost

Rev 21:3 – The dwelling place of God is with man

What is it? What does it look like? How does it feel?

1. at hand, perfect timing in history, now dwelling at our exact location

a. the tabernacle, the temple, our hearts, the church body

b. could be **random vague elusive** if we don't have time and place

c. if it includes one specific time and place, does it exclude all other times and places?

2. enter into it?

Appearances - Pharisees thought it was Race, behavior, dress, laws,

Reality - Jesus taught parables, examples, stories, concepts

3. Seek the kingdom – Matt 6:33 – first, before everything else

## Appealing to the King?

make a serious or urgent request, apply to a higher court for a reversal of the decision of a lower court .

What if things in the Kingdom seem wrong? Unfair? Unjust?

The Legend of Robin Hood is about a medieval 14th century outlaw who fought the evil sheriff of Nottingham because lands were illegally seized while King Richard was away from his throne. So what does one do when it seems as though the King is not acting for the peoples best interest or is unaware of the problems? Maybe the King has permitted or even sanctioned trouble in the Kingdom. Are we expected to turn a blind eye or just roll over and take it?

### Here are some examples in scripture:

1. Esther appealed to the Persian King Ahasuerus to save the Jews.
2. Abraham appealed to God to save the city of Sodom and Gomora
3. Syrophoenician woman appealed to Jesus about healing her daughter.
4. Appeal directly and personally to a sinful Christian brother.
5. Paul appealed as a Roman citizen to Caesar.
6. Nathan the prophet appealed to King David.
7. Job appealed to God for his troubles.
8. Moses appealed to God to spare the people in the desert.



13. Don't call OGE and say, turn on my fridge, my microwave, my kitchen lights. Don't claim a job or career that you did not apply for.
14. Everything God is ever going to do for you, He has already done it! It is on deposit in your account. He will not make withdrawals for you.
15. say to this "teller" be gone \$100, you have to ask for it.
16. God will not relinquish you from the Responsibility to exercise authority. 17. You don't need more faith, just be careful of the object of your faith. Do you have faith in something made up? Tooth fairy, santa, unbiblical ideas?
18. Do you know His character, His word, His promises? If you have illegitimate faith, you get illegitimate results.
19. We know more about TV, sports, and shopping than we do the word.
20. We must be able to recognize the nature of the mountain – the lie of addictions, habits, shortcomings.
21. Faith is our positive response to what He has already provided.
22. Joshua 1:3 - I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Gods plan was already set in motion, they had to take authority of it.
23. Faith does not MAKE anything happen, authority allows the power to do the work.
24. Law enforcement officers only enforce the existing law, they can not invent a law. They only have authority to carry it out.
25. If you don't know the Law of God, the principles of scripture, the doctrines, the boundaries, you cannot exercise Spiritual Authority.

**It is LIKE... (32 times in the gospels, this phrase)**

- A. seed, weeds, grain, tree, pearl, treasure, net, fish, landowner, vineyard
  - B. patiently wait for results, sell everything the acquire it, harvesting, gathering
- Matt 13:44-48 -            Luke 13:18 -

**The KINGDOM of God is like... A Place?**

Heaven? (about 144,000 square miles, size of the usa. Extravagant construction and beautiful display of endless wealth and prosperity)

Only the headquarters, not all encompassing. His Kingdom is beyond one limited place. It is vast, worldwide.

Garden of Eden was a Perfect paradise (3k-5k miles, 163k acres, like a huge national park)

Jerusalem? (Promised land) (30 acres, or 1/2 sq mile)

Community, realm, or major territory having a monarchy form of government headed by the will of a king or sovereign ruler.

LIKE... a type of...a metaphor Luke 13:18

Matt 13 - a man who sowed good seed in his field;

Matt 13 - a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,

a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. <sup>15</sup> And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

A treasure hidden in a field. A man found it, and he concealed it. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” (secure it for yourself)

Luke 17:21 - “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

Matthew 25:34

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Colossians 1:13

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

John 3:3-5

Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

### **Spiritual Authority (POWER)** - Tony Evans

1. Having no authority means perpetual defeat, never being able to overcome; Constantly being subject to circumstances, helpless to do anything about it.
2. We are unhappy Christians, depressed spiritually, not because we don't believe the right things, but because we are unable to act upon our beliefs.
3. The greatness of God is elusive. We know it is true, it's just not true for us.
4. How can we move the mountains? Mark 11:12-25
5. Religion without life is like a tree with no fruit, leaves with no bud; external appearance that something is going on.
6. A mountain is immovable (a problem or situation) by yourself; you can't do anything about it.
7. Spiritual Authority is the RIGHT to use divine power.
8. You don't have the power but you have the authority to use it.
9. OGE has the power, you have authority to use it, it's already there, you have to flip the switch.
10. If you don't exercise the authority, you won't experience the power even if you believe in it.
11. Power available does not equal power utilized. You can have it and not use it.
12. we ask God, “why aren't you giving us power?”, He asks us “why aren't you exercising your authority?”

John 19:10—"Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.

Romans 1:16—For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes:

Luke 24:49—I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Acts 1:4 - Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father

has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses

Acts 4:29 And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,

Acts 14:3 Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.

Acts 16:25 - About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.

John 18:36

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

Romans 14:17

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:11

for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

1 Timothy 1:17

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 15:50

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

### **Kingdom Values:**

1. life, liberty, pursuit of happiness? Scripture?
2. love and peace (give it away, not fight for your right to have it)
3. acceptance and inclusion
4. wisdom and truth (seek it don't argue that you alone have it)
5. contentment, fulfillment
6. Order and freedom – with purpose!

The World is always COMPETITION trying to replace Gods values.

**Opposing culture?** (Halloween, tarot cards, Ouija boards, seances, sorcery)

Demonic, worldly, flesh, evil, sinful

Hell is eternal separation from Gods culture, byproducts, benefits and values

What about the “angel of light”? church people who gossip, stuck in tradition, religious, never had a life changing experience, manipulate like jezebel, oppose leadership, etc

These same people are often, nice, friendly, work hard, volunteer, give money, etc.

Zach 4:6 - ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.

Acts 19 - God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. 13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

Matthew 3:11 - “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Matthew 22:29 - Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

Luke 4:36 - All the people were amazed and said to each other, “What words these are! With authority and power he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!”

Luke 6:19 - and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

Luke 8:46 - But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.”

Luke 9:1 - [ Jesus Sends Out the Twelve ] When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases,

## Kingdom Authority - The Supernatural Power of God

2 Tim 3:5 – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

Heb 4:16 – Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need

Luke 10:19 – I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

Matt 16:19 - I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Rom 8:11 - if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Mark 9:29 - his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? 29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

2 Tim 1:7 - 7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

1 Corinthians 4:20 - For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

Jeremiah 32:17 - “Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

Jeremiah 51:15 - “He made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.

## Discovered and Defined?

Tolstoy – a Russian Novelist in the late 1800’s wrote war and peace (1200 pages, same as Bible) also wrote “The Kingdom of God is within”

Orthodox Christian values until 18 yrs. He left that belief until his 50th birthday.

He was a “Christian anarchist and pacifist” – excommunicated by the orthodox church of Russia in 1901 for heresy

not a fan of state or church oversight.

Spiritual but did not like organized religion

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Martin Luther and the reformers had a problem with “organized religion”

The Church in Rome –

said salvation apart from the church is impossible

Said tradition is just as authoritative as the Bible

Said the popes word “ex-cathedra” over rides scripture

The church in Rome is one of the worlds largest corporations owning 177 million acres of land. The largest non govt land owner in the world. Also owning billions of shares in gulf oil, shell, general motors, morgan bank, chase manhattan, TWA, etc

Is a sovereign nation, with its own banking system and billions of gold according to the united Nations. Vatican city ruled by an absolute monarchy has jurisdiction over international laws.

I too have a problem with “organized religion”

We as a local church are not tethered to a denominational home office.

We live and die by our own internal vision, actions and financial support.

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But the body of Christ is not limited to one local church.

It includes:

Baptist, Methodist, Assembly of God, Lutheran, etc

Missions, para church ministries,

Americans, liberals, conservatives, Canadians, Mexicans, Africans,

Swahili, Ethiopians, and yes we have structure and order.

We are a living organism!

A body, an army, a family, and more.

But never reduced to a man made organized religion!

Matt 7:13 - Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14But small is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life, and only a few find it.

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Acts 24:14 – (Paul) But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets

Isa 30:21 - And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

Acts 9:2 - And asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 18:24-25

Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.

## The Way? - "The Kingdom is a way of life!

Are you in the way? Or on your way?

a method, style, or manner of doing something. A culture, an atmosphere, custom.

A recognizable pattern, a road, track, path, or street for traveling along

going a direction to complete a journey.

A pilgrimage is internal (spiritual) and external (physical) to discover who we are as a person. As we experience others on their journey, we are interrupted, annoyed, and eventually taught by watching others along THE WAY.

A Father / son journey. A Husband / Wife journey. A prodigal and His God.

THE WAY—(Movie, Martin Sheen 2010) Emilio Estevez said it was sort of a "wizard of oz" journey. Each character finding individual purpose but only within the group. Walking alone can never accomplish it.

1. What does the journey tell you about yourself? Self discovery
2. How do you respond to others life issues?
3. Will you slow down and help others take the pilgrimage?

## KINGDOM CULTURE :

The Culture of Heaven? An atmosphere, environment, and presence.

The Worlds perception?

The kingdom of heaven - movie in 2005 with Liam Nisan, Orlando Bloom, Jeremy Irons about the crusades. 3hrs long grossed 218 million

Examining Christian culture? Islamic culture?

What is Culture =

INWARDLY - atmosphere, presence, beliefs, feeling of belonging, relatability, ideas, values

OUTWARDLY - Expression of "manners and customs" pop art, clothes, music, location / region

In your school? In your home?

A "Christian Nation" practiced imminent domain with Native Americans and embraced ownership of African slaves. How is that THE KINGDOM of heaven?

I do NOT believe in Critical race theory, nor do I believe that the "perfect puritans" and founding fathers were free from establishing their own kingdom on earth.

Many Christians over the years, use "faith" to serve their own purpose.

i.e. – televangelists buying jets, politicians who manipulate followers

The CULTURE of Heaven – white people who eat too much mayo, listen to country music, and talk about NASCAR?

Opposite of Drug Culture, Prison Culture, (fear, power, slavery, domination)

What IS God like?

**What DOES God like?**

Community / society... Caribbean / Bahama speak Creole ?

(it is not cajun French (15%) vs African Creole (4%) each has distinct music and religious expressions. (Cajun = Catholics / Creole = Haitian voodoo)

(A Hybrid mix from surrounding cultures, languages, so that people can interact.)

Religion? Catholic? Baptist? Assembly of God? LifeChurch?

Religion / Pharisees – exclusive, limited, members of a club.

A Local church can only try to represent the Culture of heaven. Sometimes we get it. Sometimes we don't. When we are convinced that God will include something, we go too far and think that, that 1 thing is now exclusive. (Doctrines, music, Bible translations, high church/ low church, governing)

Holy Spirit – inviting, including, loving, peaceful, truthfilled, righteous (uncompromised Holiness) Heaven is a Holy Spirit Sanctioned environment!

1. Are we hardwired for the supernatural?
2. Are we hanging out with God's anointing?
3. Is your decision making process a partnership with the Holy Spirit?

Heb 10:26–27 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment... How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

2 Peter 2:20; after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

1 John 5:16 If you see a Christian sinning in a way that does not end in death, you should ask God to forgive him, and God will give him life unless he has sinned that one fatal sin. But there is that one sin which ends in death, and if he has done that, there is no use praying for him.LB

2 Thess 2:3 – (Great apostasy) that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first.

Rev 3:5 - He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels

Revelation 22:19 says, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book"



The kingdom of Heaven was promised and covenant to the Jews, who rejected Christ. The inheritance was now given to gentiles.

Matt 21:43 – The Kingdom will be taken away and given to those who will produce its fruit.

John 10: The Jews surrounded him. They asked him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

25 Jesus answered them, “I’ve told you, but you don’t believe me. The things that I do in my Father’s name testify on my behalf.

26 However, you don’t believe because you’re not my sheep. 27 My sheep respond to my voice, and I know who they are. They follow me, 28 and I give them eternal life.

Acts 18:5— Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

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1 Timothy 5:12, 15; Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge... when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ...Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

Hebrews 3:12 – See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

Heb 6:4–6, It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age 6 and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance.

God’s preferences? What DOES God like?

(not just permit, or bless, or instruct)

Atmosphere? Music?

Dressed? Robe of righteousness, gown of salvation?

Food? (In heaven is the tree of life. Bearing 12 fruits, 1 each month)

Teaching, learning? Serving?

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### **This is what GOD LIKES...**

Zeph 3:17— The Lord your God is with you as a hero who will save you. He takes great delight in you. He will quiet you with his love. He will rejoice over you with singing.”

Luke 15:7— I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

3 John 1:4— I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Gen 6:8-10— But Noah was a pleasure to the Lord. Here is the story of Noah: 9-10 He was the only truly righteous man living on the earth at that time. He tried always to conduct his affairs according to God’s will.

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If I dwell in His Kingdom, and really want His culture, atmosphere, presence, and power, then I should care about what He likes.

## Gods Answer to different cultures –

The worlds culture-                      Heavens Culture –

our shared core values should guide our groups culture, but are by no means an exhaustive, complete description. Our groups culture must accurately reflect our values and align with our overall mission.

What does God “value” highly?              What does He like? (prefer)

What is His mission? What is my mission in life? What is our corporate mission?

Is He rigid? Absolute? Protective, defensive? Exclusive? Structured, hierarchy, chain of command? (holiness)

Or flexible, adaptable, risk taking, and informal? Creative, Inclusive? (unconditional love)

King James Only church vs Universalist Unitarians (extremes)

If OUR culture (see list) overrides God’s culture in our lives,

we embellish small (good) values and justify large holes and vacancies.

Heavens culture (atmosphere, values) must over shadow all other cultures.



James 1:5 - a doubtful mind will be as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind; and every decision you then make will be uncertain, as you turn first this way and then that. If you don't ask with faith, don't expect the Lord to give you any solid answer.

Backsliding is not the result of one impulsive sin. One good decision leads to others. One bad decision leads to others, many similar decisions creates a culture. A decision of core belief, encompasses all other small decisions affected by that belief. It creates a narrative. If a detective who investigates can jump to a theory to soon, all the facts point in that direction. And vice versa. A choice, leads to a belief, a belief leads to a culture. A culture is an environment where you belong. James 1:15 (lust leads to sin, sin leads to death)

Defining Security and assurance of our relationship and salvation.

John 15:6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

Luke 8:13 But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

1. Salvation is available to anyone and everyone.
2. Always by faith alone, not by works
3. Any Relationship is an ongoing challenge. One of conflict with temptation, sin, and loyalty with trust.
4. God is always faithful and true. On point, Waiting on us to return.

## Taken away? Given away? Banished, exiled, expelled

### Backsliding? Apostacy

Do you really believe in backsliding? Believe it? We practice it!

Go back to old previous ways, falling away from the original goal.

A Moral lapse, to dismiss truth, or relapse into bad ways.

The abandonment or to renounce ones faith. To Recant.

Refusing to continue to follow, obey, or recognize Gods leadership in your life. Jerusalem (Temple) has been destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times because of disobedience, several during the Crusades.

Prov 26:11 - As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly.

Matt 12:31 - the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven (calloused, permanent, rejection) if your asking, you haven't committed it!

We are designed to be free moral agents, from birth to death, always choosing.

By nature, we enter into covenant, and divorce ourselves from good and bad relationships. We can forfeit or abandon the benefits and consequences of staying or leaving.

Josh 24:15 - choose this day whom you will serve

Deut 30:19 - I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose

1 Kings 18:21 - "How long are you going to sit on the fence? If God is the real God, follow him; if it's Baal, follow him. Make up your minds!" Nobody said a word; nobody made a move.

Heavens culture is defined by values in repentance, the golden rule, Gods word governing our behavior, beatitudes, fruit of the spirit.

Heavens culture is an atmosphere of love, forgiveness, serving, giving, sharing, caring, faithfulness, passion, etc.

The mission is a co-mission – "go into all the world"

Religion says – learn our rules and join our club!

le – my group is ambitious, or loving... so its overall good.

In reality this group has no moral compass and is governed by popular feeling

The culture is unhealthy, with elusive values, and no shared mission.

We all choose to leave a certain way of life for a better way of life, to give up something you love for something you love more.

Heaven is inclusive, right up to when it's exclusive!

God will separate all things in the end of time—

Wheat / tares, sheep / goats

**The worlds -**

**Heavens Culture –**

“I” identify with... (the atmosphere of). Without God, these things alone are incomplete. Things that may be good (or not) but definitely not without God.

1. Mental health, psychology—become emotionally stable with therapy	1. 2 Timothy 1:7 “For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and a sound mind.” Rom 12:2—be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind
2. Doctors and Medicine - healing	2. Col 4:14 - Luke, the beloved physician... sends you greetings. 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick' (Matthew 9:12)
3. Scientific discovery—understanding discovered facts	3. Psalm 111:2 - Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them. Dan 1:17 -God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom.
4. Drug abuse culture—self medicate Living for the “high”	4. 1 Tim 5:23 - use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses. Eph 5:18 - Do not get drunk on wine. -Isa 38:21 - Make an ointment and he will get well
5. Prison culture—control, gangs, fear	5. Rom 16:17 - I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles 1 cor 15:33 - “Bad company ruins good morals.”
6. Educational, Intellectual culture	6. 2 tim 2:15 - Study to show yourself approved. 1 cor 1:13 "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.
7. Sports and competitive culture	7. 1 cor 9:26 - Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. we do it for a crown that is imperishable.
8. Fashion culture	8. 1 Tim 2:9 -adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, 1 Peter 3:3 - Do not let your adorning be external
9. High finance culture	9. Luke 12:14 - “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”
10. Beauty pageant culture	10. 1 Sam 16:7 - man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

**The worlds -**

**Heavens Culture –**

11. pop culture music, clothes	11. Gal 1:10 -If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. Isa 2:22 - Stop regarding man... for of what account is he?
12. gender fluid culture	12. Gen 1:27 - God created mankind in his own image, male and female he created them.
13. woke culture— guilt, prejudice, inclusion	13. Rom 5:1 - since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God. James 2:1 - show no partiality Rev 7:9 from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne
14. music culture—gift turned to idols	14. Psalm 150 praise Him with trumpets, harps, strings, cymbals. Every breath “PRAISING GOD”
15. animal lovers culture— priorities, exalting out of balance	15. Prov 12:10 -A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal. Matt 7:6 - Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs.
16. socially acceptable, politically correct	16. Isa 8:14 -And he will become a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling . 2 Tim 3:12 - all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,
17. Religious culture— churchy, exclusive, self righteous	17. Matt 23:4They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders Matt 15:3 - break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?
18. military culture— structure, authority, order	18. Matt 8:9 I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me...I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.
19. hippie culture— free expressive, accepting, anarchy	19. 1 cor 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order, God is not a God of confusion but of peace Gal 5:13 you, my brothers, were called to freedom; only do not let your freedom become an opportunity for the sinful nature
20. political culture— national governing, law making, policies	20. Rom 13 - The authorities that exist have been established by God. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, Acts 5:29 We ought to obey God rather than men.
21. corporate culture— employees, management, hierarchy, corp ladder	21. Gal 6:4 Each one should test their own actions without comparing themselves to someone else Matt 20:25 You know that foreign rulers like to order their people around. And their great leaders have full power over everyone they rule. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant