

GOD'S KINGDOM MINDED LOVE (Matthew 11)

In the King James translation of the Scriptures, "kingdom of God"¹ is used 69 times and "kingdom of heaven"² is used 32 times in the New Testament. Therefore, it is then important to us to know what God's Word is teaching us about the "kingdom or heaven" or the "kingdom of God". Likewise, the word "love", corroborates with the meaning of "kingdom of heaven or God", & is found 237 times in the New Testament. Both of those phrases, "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are essentially speaking of the same thing, that we are presently in the time, where God is building His eternal kingdom, one person at a time so to speak, according to the "New Covenant" that God our Creator, the Sustainer of all things has established through the life, death, and resurrection of His only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. That covenant is established with each of us personally, as Apostle John stated, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:12-13**) And it is in the love of God, that He has initiated an offering of a reconciliation with Him and in then having a covenant relationship with Him. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**)

It is, as Jesus Himself put it, being "**born-again**", that is, born of the Holy Spirit of God. Being born of the Spirit of God then means we live according to the Spirit of God. As the Apostle Paul tells us in **Romans 8:1-2**, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh [the sins of the flesh], but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **made me free** from the law of sin and death." "Has made me free", sound familiar to what Jesus said? In **John 8**, we read Jesus having a discussion with the stubborn and rebellious Pharisees. Yet, the Scripture says, "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "**If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**" They [Pharisees] answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?" Jesus answered them, "**Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**" (**John 8:31-36**) To go along with that, Jesus expounded upon that in **John 14:23** saying, "**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.**"

1 <https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/phrases/Kingdom-of-God/type/kjv>

2 <https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/phrases/Kingdom-of-Heaven/type/kjv>

So, we are not living according to the flesh (that is, the sins of the flesh) or according to the law of God, that we can read about in the Old Testament, according to the Old Covenant that God had with His people according to the "law of Moses". What then are we expected to do? Jesus told us, to keep His Word! We can't just say we believe on Jesus and then just do whatever we want to do until Jesus takes us home to to paradise. It doesn't work that way. After all, Jesus paid a great price for us so that we can be children of God. We are the pearl of great price that Jesus gave His all for, His life for us. Now it is upon us, to reciprocate, and give back to Him our lives as we are truly His to begin with. As God's Word tells us, Christ Jesus upholds all things by the word of His power! (**Hebrews 1:3**)

We aren't then just waiting for our time to swim in the crystal sea, to take strolls on the streets of gold, frolicking in the fields of glory, or maybe even challenging one's self to climbing the pearly gates. Ultimately, we are given the understanding through God's Word, of what is expected of us, by what Jesus said was the great commandment of God's, and the second that is like unto it. That is, to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind, and then also to love others as ourselves. Loving others means more than just being chummy with our pals. As children of God, who have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, and as God IS love, the Apostle Paul tells us, "Love suffers long and is **kind**; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up [prideful]; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity [sin], but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**) That ties in nicely with what Jesus elaborated on, with regards to loving others, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (**Matthew 5:43-45**) Sometimes we're going to miss the mark of that though, right? Sometimes we may not be so kind or patient or loving but that IS what testifies to Christ Jesus. As Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." That doesn't just mean our friends, because as Jesus pointed out, even the tax-collectors do that.

God's mission, and then our mission too, is to be "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven" minded, not just for ourselves, but to have that understanding that God desires for none to perish but for all to come to repentance (**2 Peter 3:9**), and that all would believe on and receive Christ Jesus!

======(Matthew 11:1-6)=====

Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. **And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.**"

It seems incredibly unlikely that John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask Jesus if He was the One, for his own understanding. John the Baptist, when He had seen Jesus coming to him, proclaimed, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John the Baptist also witnessed, after he had baptized Jesus, "the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22) John the Baptist wanted his disciples to know and believe on Jesus and not to just receive "the baptism of John". After all, Jesus Himself, as He said in John 14:6, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." That included, not through John the Baptist, or any other preacher, or teacher of the Word of God. One must know Jesus. For it is "he who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (1 John 5:12)

======(Matthew 11:7-15)=====

As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.' "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the **kingdom of heaven** is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the **kingdom of heaven** suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

What do you suppose Jesus was getting at when He said, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Both violent and violence stem from the same Greek word "biazo" which means to seize something forcefully. If there is any violence and seizing by force, what Jesus said next speaks to that. He said, "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." ALL of God's prophets suffered

persecution and many were martyred. The Apostle Paul warns us, "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12) That coincides with what the Apostle Peter warns us about saying, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8) When Jesus had sent out His disciples, to the lost sheep of Israel, just prior to our Scripture in Matthew 11, He warned them, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved." (Matthew 10:16-22) Jesus Himself did not seize anything by force, He overcame the world, conquered death, sin, and evil by submitting to the will of God.

=====Matthew 11:16-19=====

But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, and saying: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not lament.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."

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John the Baptist preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2), as did Jesus at the start of His ministry. (Matthew 4:17) Once again, "repent" is the Greek word "metanoeo", to have a change of mind-recognizing a need for change and then setting one's mind to the heeding of that need. John the Baptist gave us examples. He told his disciples to bear fruit worthy of repentance. The tax collector asked John what he should do and John told him, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you." (Luke 3:13) A soldier asked also what he should do and John replied, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages." (Luke 3:14) While Jesus had just got done sending His disciples out to the lost sheep of Israel, it is NOW upon us to be kingdom of God and kingdom of heaven minded. We are given what is called Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 25, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have

commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

=====**(Matthew 11:20-24)**=====

Then He [Jesus] began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

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Not only can and does one person's actions make a difference but collectively we too can make a difference, for the better or for worse. Jesus prayed to our Heavenly Father before being crucified, "I do not pray for these alone [the disciples], but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." (John 17:20-23) Our unity in God's kingdom-minded love makes a difference!

=====**(Matthew 11:25-30)**=====

At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

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While we are indeed God's workmanship in Christ Jesus (**Ephesians 2:8-10**), we are His vessels or tools that He uses to accomplish His intended purpose. For the analogy of a yoke of oxen, imagine how much better the task becomes when we are all working together in Christ. Contrary to that, just imagine how just one rebellious ox can make it difficult or practically impossible for the others to accomplish the task. We are not being called to conquer the world. As God is presently building His eternal kingdom, and the kingdom of God is upon us, we are being called and led by God to share and show the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ, to the glory of God!