



Life Lesson

THE KINGDOM OF GOD--

God's Eternal Purpose

PURPOSE:

1. Show the plan of God in establishing the church.
2. Clarify the starting date for the church and the message of the gospel.

PLAN:

Contrast and compare the prophecies about the kingdom of God with their fulfillment in the first two chapters of Acts.

INTRODUCTION:

In this lesson we are going to search for clues to the mystery of the kingdom of God. We will look for answers to 5 questions:

What is the kingdom of God?

When did the kingdom come?

How does one enter the kingdom?

Is it important that I go to church?

Are the messages of the Old and New Testaments in agreement?

This study will consider the use of the word "Kingdom" in the Old and New Testament. We will make a list of the characteristics of the Kingdom by examining prophecies of the Old Testament as well as predictions in the New Testament. Then we will study Acts 1 and 2 to see how these characteristics are fulfilled.

The answers to many of these questions about the kingdom do not come until the end of the study. The teacher must be careful not to use words and terms that are unfamiliar to the student.

ISAIAH 2:1-3

This passage was written by the prophet Isaiah 750 years before Christ was born. It was written to the Jews during the time when they had their own king and were living in disobedience to God. God prophesied the destruction of that kingdom and in this passage promises a future kingdom. The term "mountain of the Lord" is a poetic way of expressing the idea of the kingdom.

When is this kingdom to be established? *in the last days*
Who is to be a part of this kingdom? *people from all nations*
Where will it start? *Jerusalem (Zion = hill inside Jerusalem)*

DANIEL 2:31-45

This prophecy was written 550 years before the birth of Christ. Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled and the Jews were carried off to Babylon. The king of Babylon had a dream about future world kingdoms. In this passage Daniel, a Jew living in exile in Babylon, interprets the king's dream.

Who does the head of gold represent? *Babylonian kingdom v. 38*
Historically what are the other world kingdoms that followed the Babylonian empire?
Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman
The illustration on the study sheet has the answers.
What special event will take place in the time of the fourth kingdom (Roman Empire)?
God will establish His kingdom. v. 43-44

JOEL 2:28-32

This passage was written more than 500 years before Christ was born. The prophet is speaking about the coming kingdom.

What does verse 28 say will be poured out on all people? *God's Spirit*
In verse 32 what will happen to people who call on the name of the Lord?
They will be saved.
Where will this take place? *Jerusalem*
(Be sure to emphasize that we will be seeing this passage again in the New Testament at the coming of the kingdom.)

Now we will leave the Old Testament prophecies and look at New Testament predictions of the kingdom.

MATTHEW 3:1-2

What was the message of John the Baptist? *The kingdom of heaven is near.*
(The term "kingdom of heaven" means the same thing as the term "kingdom of God.")
Compare Mark 1:15 and Matthew 4:17.)
Had the kingdom arrived at this time?

MATTHEW 4:17

What was the message of Jesus?
Had the kingdom arrived at this time?

MARK 9:1

In this passage Jesus is talking to His disciples.

How was the kingdom to come? *with power*
Would any of the apostles be alive when the kingdom comes?
Would at least one of the apostles be dead?

JOHN 3:1-5

According to John 3:3, what do you have to do in order to see the kingdom?
Be born again.

To be born again means that you get a fresh start. The slate is wiped clean and you get to begin all over. So entrance into the kingdom will certainly involve some life changes.

According to Jesus' statement in verse 5, what two things would have to be a part of the new birth? *born of water and the spirit*
These terms will be explained more fully later in this lesson.

MATTHEW 16:13-19

Peter gave the correct answer to the most important question Jesus ever asked. It was the first time that the apostles, especially Peter, began to understand and trust who Jesus really was.

According to I Corinthians 3:11, who is the foundation for the church? *Christ*
In verse 19, what does Jesus say that He will give Peter? *keys to the kingdom of heaven*
How do verses 18 and 19 indicate that there is a connection between the church and the kingdom? *Both words seem to refer to the same thing.*

Before reading Acts 1 and 2, review briefly the prophecies and predictions. Now go back and review the clues that you have found but don't explain their fulfillment yet.

TRANSITION:

Now comes the exciting part! We are going to Acts 1 and 2 to see the fulfillment of all of these prophecies and predictions.

ACTS 1:1-11

The book of Acts is the second volume of the book of Luke. It begins with the ascension of Jesus into heaven and tells what happens to His followers.

According to verse 6, what kind of kingdom do you think the disciples of Jesus were looking for? National or earthly kingdom?
Had the kingdom arrived at this time?
In Mark 9:1 Jesus said that the kingdom would come with power. What is the power source referred to in verse 8?

ACTS 1:12-26

Where are these events taking place?
Which one of the apostles had died by this time? *verse 16*

ACTS 2:1-13

What significant event occurs in verses 1-4?
According to verses 5-6, who was in Jerusalem at this time?

ACTS 2:14-17

Who stands up and addresses the crowd? *Peter*

Peter says these are "the last days" prophesied by the prophet Joel.

ACTS 2:22-24

The theme of the message was the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Peter proves from the scriptures in the rest of his sermon that Jesus is raised from the dead. Any privileges granted Peter in Matthew 16:19 are more than fulfilled by God's allowing him to preach the first gospel message.

ACTS 2:32-33

Does this mean that Jesus is now ruling as King?
What then would Jesus be ruling over? *His kingdom*

ACTS 2:37

What was the people's reaction to the sermon? *"Cut to the heart" and asked, "What shall we do?"*

ACTS 2:38

What did Peter tell them that they needed to do? *Repent and be baptized.*
What two things would happen to those who would repent and be baptized?
They would receive "the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit."

When Peter told them how to be saved, he gave them the "keys" to the Kingdom.

Compare Acts 2:38 to John 3:5.

ACTS 2:41-47

How many accepted Peter's message and were baptized? *3,000*
To what were they added that day? *the kingdom or the saved*

Let's make a list of the things that these people began immediately to do.

1. Devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings.
2. Devoted themselves to the fellowship.
3. Devoted themselves to the breaking of bread.
4. Devoted themselves to prayer.

What does this look like to you? *the church*

Now let's review what we have learned.

Go back over the prophecies and predictions and show how they were fulfilled in Acts 1 and 2.

CONCLUSIONS:

Now let's see if we have answered all of our beginning questions.

What is the kingdom of God? *the church*

When did the kingdom come? *on the day of Pentecost*

How does one enter the kingdom? *Accepting the gospel message, they repented and were baptized.*

Is it important that I go to church? *They considered no other option.*

Are the messages of the Old and New Testaments in agreement?

WORKSHEET The Kingdom of God: God's Eternal Purpose

Five key questions:

1. What is the kingdom of God?
2. When did the kingdom come?
3. How does one enter the kingdom?
4. Is it important that I go to church?
5. Are the messages of the Old and New Testaments in agreement?

Characteristics of the Kingdom

Isaiah 2:1-3

Daniel 2:31-45

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|----------|--|----------------|
| Gold |  | Babylonian |
| Silver | | Medo-Persian |
| Bronze | | Grecian |
| Iron | | Roman |
| The Rock | | Kingdom of God |

Joel 2:28-32

Matthew 3:1-2

Matthew 4:17

Mark 9:1

John 3:1-5

Matthew 16:13-19

Fulfillment in Acts 1 and 2

Acts 1:1-11

Acts 1:12-26

Acts 2:1-13

Acts 2:14-17

Acts 2:22-24

Acts 2:32-33

Acts 2:37

Acts 2:38

Acts 2:41-47

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____