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Kingdom Instructions for the Church



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #93 ~

You need to understand the kingdom of God to fully grasp what it means to be a Christian, to really know how you are to live on earth, and to be genuinely excited about the future God has for you. Jesus came to this earth as Savior, Lord and King. He told the Jews, "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand"* (Mark 1:15). But how could they be a part of His kingdom? Jesus told them how, for He was *"proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom*" (Matthew 4:23). The key to the kingdom is the gospel, for it is the salvation message, the means by which people can enter God's kingdom. But a person needs to see his sin, and his need for Jesus to be his Savior. He needs to *"repent and believe in the gospel"* (Mark 1:15), this good news that Jesus died on a cross to pay for his sins, and then was raised from the dead.

Yes, some of the Jews repented and believed in Jesus. But most of them didn't repent; they didn't want Jesus to be King in their hearts; they just

wanted Him to be King over their country. For their rejection of Him, Jesus had no choice but to reject them. He couldn't be their King, at least at that time, and consequently, His Father's plans for the Jews were suspended and put on hold. But Jesus gave His disciples hope about His coming kingdom. At the Passover meal, He told them, *"I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes... I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom."* Luke 22:18, 28-30

Jesus had already told the disciples, *"I will build My church"* (Matthew 16:18). The church would be God's new plan to build His kingdom on earth, and for the past 2000 years, that's exactly what has been happening. People are spiritually being born again, and are entering into the kingdom of God (John 3:3-8). But God's kingdom during this church age is not physical and external, but spiritual and internal, that which exists in the hearts of those who belong to Christ the King.

What is the purpose of the Christian on earth? To work with Christ and the church, and build the kingdom of God, the most important, noble, and satisfying work in the world. But what specifically are you to do?

1. You are to seek the kingdom of God. *"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness..."* (Matthew 6:33). This is to be your work, your purpose, your ambition, your life. You are not to be seeking what you want, building your own little kingdom, and worrying about what you will eat, drink or wear. You are to spend your time, energy and money, seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness, doing that which builds His church, and therefore, that which builds His kingdom.

2. You are to preach the gospel of the kingdom. *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come"* (Matthew 24:14). Christ preached the gospel of the kingdom. Paul preached the gospel of the kingdom, for he *"declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to*

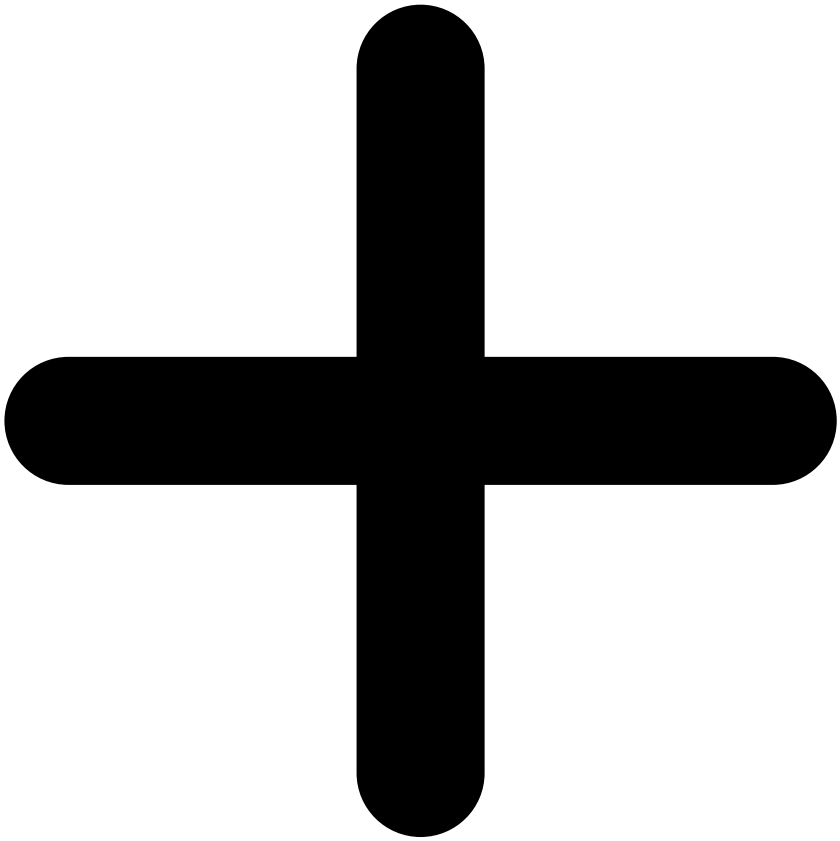
convince them about Jesus Christ." (Acts 28:23, 31). You, too, are to preach the gospel of the kingdom. It's important for you to see that your life is not just about building the church – it's much bigger than that, for you are to work with Jesus in building God's kingdom, a kingdom that started way back with Adam and Eve, continues now, and goes on forever and ever.

3. You are to preach the word: *"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word"* (2 Timothy 4:1-2). Yes, this is for pastors, but in a larger sense, it applies to all of us. In view of the fact that Christ will appear and rapture the church, judge the unbelievers, and then set up His kingdom on earth, we are to preach the word of God. We must see that God's word needs to be preached in the context of Christ's coming. Proper and powerful preaching must be connected and related to the fact that our Savior and King is returning to establish His kingdom on earth.

4. You are to pray: *"Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven"* (Matthew 6:9-10). You are to pray for Christ's kingdom to come, for Christ to come back and physically and spiritually rule over His kingdom on earth. Of course, you should pray for people to be saved, for the church to grow, but it's more than that – it's seeing the connection between the growth of the church and the return of Christ to set up His kingdom on earth. You don't want to be short-sighted, you need to see the church in the context of the entire kingdom of God, and that the church age leads to Christ's coming and the millennial kingdom age.

Just think, you are a royal priesthood, a kingdom and priests to our God! (1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 5:10). Understanding who you are, and knowing the real truth about the kingdom of God, and your part in it, will motivate you to live for the King, and to look forward to that time when you will see Him, and say, *"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and*

the glory forever. Amen.” Matthew 6:13



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