

What is the Kingdom of God?

What Does it Mean to be a Citizen?

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus taught his disciples to pray as follows: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰**your kingdom come**, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9,10). He also said, “But seek first **his kingdom** and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33)

We will spend the next few weeks exploring the **Kingdom of God**. As we begin our journey, it’s a good time to take off our shoes...at least, figuratively. This truly is ‘holy ground.’ In this first lesson, we are going to spend some time simply reading passages from the Bible that tell us about the Kingdom of God. Before we do so, here are two points to keep in mind:

1] The scriptures speak of the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of Heaven. We will use these terms interchangeably, as Jesus does in Matthew 19: 23,24:

²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom of heaven**. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom of God**.”

2] Scripture describes God’s Kingdom as limitless, incomprehensible, of unlimited value, and indescribable. However, since words are used to describe the indescribable, it’s tempting to reduce the Kingdom to our own understanding. This tendency is called ‘reductionism’.

For example, in Mark 9:1, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the **kingdom of God** has come with power.”

According to scholars, Jesus may be referring to the transfiguration, His own resurrection, the destruction of the temple 40 years after His death, or possibly, to the establishment of the church on the day of Pentecost. Adding to this complexity, is Jesus’ response to the Pharisees in Luke 17:20-21:

²⁰ Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the **kingdom of God** would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the **kingdom of God** is not something that can be observed, ²¹ nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the **kingdom of God** is in your midst.”

I remember being taught that the Kingdom was revealed with the establishment of the church on the day of Pentecost. That may be true, but we may be tempted to reduce the Kingdom to our understanding of the church, and draw boundaries where they don’t exist. The ‘church’ refers to the ‘assembly’, and the assembly of those in the Kingdom of God includes many who preceded the day of Pentecost. In Matthew 8:11, Jesus said, “I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the **kingdom of heaven**”.

As we contemplate the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, let's start by looking at the assembly in the very throne room of God, found in the 4th and 5th chapters of Revelation:

Note: In the 9th chapter of Hebrews, we are told that the earthly tabernacle made with hands was only a replica of the true one located in heaven. As we read about the heavenly assembly, let's not discount the description too quickly as 'figurative' simply because we can't comprehend it.

Suggestion for the class reading: Designate readers ahead of time and assign sections, as indicated in the handout (see lines separating text). The boxed items are for the teacher to comment. The handout consists of four pages, two-sided; however, additional passages are included below that you may want to include.

At the end of the reading, depending on the time remaining, the class can discuss the following:

What stood out to you from this reading?

Action Item:

What do you think about the analogy of tending the garden? How can we spend time this week planting and watering? How do we avoid getting caught up in the tendency to start pulling the weeds? (What does that mean?)

Are there ways you can put this concept into practice in your home? At work?

Additional notes in preparation for teaching:

Revelation 4 - The Throne in Heaven

4 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. ³ And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. ⁴ Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. ⁶ Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸ Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night, they never stop saying:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come."

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

¹¹ "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Revelation 5 - The Scroll and the Lamb

5 Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they were saying:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

¹⁴ The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Through the use of parables, Jesus gives various perspectives on the Kingdom of Heaven, several of these are in the 13th chapter of Matthew. One important point Jesus makes is that our hearts must be soft and fertile to learn about the Kingdom. After Jesus told the familiar Parable of the Sower the disciples asked, "Why do you speak in parables?"

¹¹ He replied, "Because **the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven** has been given to you, but not to them....

...¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷ For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

¹⁸ "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about **the kingdom** and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The

seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Jesus loved to use the concept of a 'seed' to represent the kingdom. Seeds grow to yield bountiful, and surprising, treasures; but seeds require work and patience:

Mark 4: ²⁶ He also said, "This is what the **kingdom of God** is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast (back in Matthew 13)

³¹ He told them another parable: "The **kingdom of heaven** is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

³³ He told them still another parable: "The **kingdom of heaven** is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

Not everyone has the coveted 'green thumb'. Given our own shortcomings in gardening, and understanding about the Kingdom, we must be careful about being impatient, and too quick to judge others:

The Parable of the Weeds (continuing in Matthew 13)

²⁴ Jesus told them another parable: "The **kingdom of heaven** is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷ "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

²⁸ "An enemy did this," he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

²⁹ "No," he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

...The Parable of the Weeds Explained

³⁶ Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

³⁷ He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and **the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom**. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁰ "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his **kingdom** everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in **the kingdom of their Father**. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

Note: Perhaps we should spend more time fertilizing and watering the garden, and leave the 'weeding' to the Master Gardener. Otherwise, we could be guilty of the sin of the Pharisees:

Matthew 23:13 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the **kingdom of heaven** in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

Matthew 18:1-6 - At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the **kingdom of heaven**?" ² He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. ³ And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the **kingdom of heaven**. ⁴ Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the **kingdom of heaven**. ⁵ And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. ⁶ "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl (again in Matthew 13):

⁴⁴ "The **kingdom of heaven** is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the **kingdom of heaven** is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

⁴⁷ "Once again, the **kingdom of heaven** is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied.

⁵² He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the **kingdom of heaven** is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

Characteristics of Citizens of the Kingdom

Matthew 4:17 - From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** has come near."

Matthew 5:3 - "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven**."

Matthew 5:10 - Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven**."

Matthew 5:19 - Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the **kingdom of heaven**, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the **kingdom of heaven**."

Matthew 11:11 - Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the **kingdom of heaven** is greater than he.

Matthew 19:14 - Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the **kingdom of heaven** belongs to such as these."

Mark 10:14-16 - ¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the **kingdom of God** belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the **kingdom of God** like a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Luke 6:20 - Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the **kingdom of God**."

John 3:3 - Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the **kingdom of God** unless they are born again."

John 3:5 - Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the **kingdom of God** unless they are born of water and the Spirit."

James 2:5 - Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the **kingdom** he promised those who love him?

2 Thessalonians 1:5 - All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the **kingdom of God**, for which you are suffering.

Matthew 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."

Luke 18:29 - ²⁹ "Truly I tell you," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the **kingdom of God** ³⁰ will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life."

Romans 14:17 - For the **kingdom of God** is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

Luke 9:62 - Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the **kingdom of God**."

Matthew 19 ²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom of heaven**. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom of God**."

²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁶ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

²⁷ Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"

²⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

Matthew 20:1-16 **The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard**

"For the **kingdom of heaven** is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ² He agreed to pay them a denarius[Ⓜ] for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

³ "About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴ He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' ⁵ So they went.

"He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. ⁶ About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

⁷ "'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.

"He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

⁸ "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

⁹ "The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰ So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ¹² 'These who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

¹³ "But he answered one of them, 'I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵ Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

¹⁶ "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Mark 9:47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the **kingdom of God** with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,

Luke 9:62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the **kingdom of God.**"

The Kingdom of Heaven is Powerful and Eternal

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

John 18: ³⁶ Jesus said, "My **kingdom** is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my **kingdom** is from another place."

Psalms 45:6 - Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your **kingdom.**

Daniel 7:27 - Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the **kingdoms** under **heaven** will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His **kingdom** will be an everlasting **kingdom**, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

Hebrews 1:8 - But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O **God**, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your **kingdom.**

Revelation 11:15 - The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The **kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah**, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Scriptures not used in the handout

Matthew 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the **kingdom of heaven**.

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the **kingdom of heaven**, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 18:23-35 "Therefore, the **kingdom of heaven** is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold[□] was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

³⁰ "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Matthew 19:16-30 **The Rich and the Kingdom of God**

¹⁶ Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

¹⁷ "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments."

¹⁸ "Which ones?" he inquired.

Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, ¹⁹ honor your father and mother,'[Ⓞ] and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'[Ⓞ]"

²⁰ "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

²¹ Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

²² When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom of heaven**. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom of God**."

²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"

²⁶ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

²⁷ Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"

²⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

Matthew 21: 28-32 **The Parable of the Two Sons**

²⁸ "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

²⁹ "'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰ "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

³¹ "Which of the two did what his father wanted?"

"The first," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the **kingdom of God** ahead of you. ³² For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

Matthew 22:1-14 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ² "The **kingdom of heaven** is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

⁴ "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'

⁵ "But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. ⁶ The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

⁸ "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ⁹ So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' ¹⁰ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹² He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless.

¹³ "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie his hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

¹⁴ "For many are invited, but few are chosen."

Matthew 25:1-13 "At that time the **kingdom of heaven** will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³ The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴ The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵ The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶ "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

⁷ "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

⁹ "'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

¹⁰ "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹ "Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'

¹² "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'

¹³ "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Matthew 25:31-46 **The Sheep and the Goats**

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the **kingdom** prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the **kingdom of God**? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men, nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the **kingdom of God**.

1 Corinthians 15:50 I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the **kingdom of God**, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Galatians 5:21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the **kingdom of God**.

Ephesians 5:5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the **kingdom of Christ and of God**.

Revelation 12:10 - Then I heard a loud voice in **heaven** say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the **kingdom of** our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.