

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Entering the Kingdom of Heaven

By Jerry Fite

Entering the kingdom of heaven should be our number one goal. The ultimate destination of heaven begins when we are translated into the kingdom of Christ as forgiven people, and completed when Jesus returns the faithful in the kingdom back to the Father at the resurrection (Col. 1:13-14; 1 Cor. 15:24).

In His Word, Jesus reminds us of the various conditions of entering the kingdom of heaven. We cannot travel anywhere in the universe where we escape God, the Creator. The visible and invisible have their existence because of God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, the Creative Word (Col. 1:16; Jn. 1:1-3,14). Therefore, God has the right as Creator to establish the conditions of entering into His eternal rule and realm of heaven.

We must humble ourselves as little children in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, *“Verily I say unto you, except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt. 18:3). Jesus’ disciples were thinking in terms of who is the *“greatest”* in the Kingdom, and Jesus set a little child in their midst and said, *“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt. 18:4). Unless one humbles himself to submit to God and minister to others (Matt. 23:11), he will not only miss *“greatness”*, he will miss heaven.

A humble heart should lead to an obedient life. We can say Jesus is our Lord, but if we do not do the will of the Father, we will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus makes it clear: *“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven”* (Matt. 7:21).

All of us entered this world created in the image of God, but unless we become born again spiritually, we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, *“Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”* (Jn. 3:5). This regeneration or rebirth takes place with Christ in baptism for the remission of our sins. It is the *“washing of regeneration”* connecting *“water”* with *“the word”* that allows us to be made alive together with Christ (Titus 3:5-7; Eph. 5:26; Col. 2:12-13).

Once made alive spiritually in Christ we must avoid pit-falls. The Scribes and Pharisees claimed a righteousness, which we must *“exceed”* (Matt. 5:20). Our righteousness is found in Christ, not the Law of Moses, and goes deeper into the thoughts and motives of the heart, than just the outward compliance to the Law (Matt. 5:27). We must separate from religious teachers who appear righteous, but may be making us *“twofold more a son of hell”* than they (Matt. 23:13-15). Knowing Jesus said it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, we must guard our hearts and set our affections on God, not riches (Matt. 19:23-24; 6:24). Will you follow Jesus, and enter the kingdom of heaven? – *Parkview Church of Christ Bulletin*, February 14, 2016. ■

“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”

By Joe R. Price

A form of this question was asked three times in the New Testament: Acts 2:37; 9:6; 16:30. Each time a direct answer was given. Before looking at the answers given, please consider the question:

- **WHAT:** An inquiry about the nature of a matter or thing.
- **MUST:** Something is necessary or essential in order to be saved.
- **I:** Each individual sinner is lost and bears a personal responsibility toward his or her own salvation.
- **DO:** There is a duty that must be act upon.

- **TO BE:** There is purpose in sight, namely, salvation.
- **SAVED:** Delivered from the bondage of sin and death.

If someone were to ask, “What must I do to be saved from foreclosure?”, a debt-relief plan would be arranged with a series of necessary steps in order to prevent the loss of one’s house.

God has arranged a “sin-relief” plan – a plan of salvation – that will save you from your sins when you follow it. The answer that was given to those who believed Jesus to be the Son of God was to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38-41). A repentant believer was told to **“arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16). The man who did not know anything about Jesus was told to **“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house”** (Acts 16:31-32).

To be saved from your past sins you must:

- **HEAR** the gospel of Christ (Mk 16:15; Acts 16:32)
- **BELIEVE** Jesus is the Son of God (Jn. 8:24; 20:30-31)
- **REPENT** of your sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30)
- **CONFESS FAITH** in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9-10)
- **BE BAPTIZED** to wash away your sins (Acts 22:16)

Now the important question is, “Have you done what the Bible says you must do to be saved?” If not, you are still lost. Obey Jesus now and be saved from your sins! (Heb. 5:9; Mk. 16:16). — *The Spirit’s Sword*, October 5, 2008. ■

The Kind of Church Some Need

By Johnie Edwards

I just thought of the kind of church some folks need. Take a look and see if you agree and know anyone like this:

1. **Allows its members to come and go as they like:** This church never mentions Hebrews 10:25 where we can read about **“forsaking the assembling of yourselves together...”** It lets its members know that they can come and go as they please. This church shows no concern about whether or not its members attend.
2. **Encourages the members to put everything else ahead of the Church.** If you make a list of priorities, the church goes at the bottom of the list. Oh, I know the Bible says: **“But seek ye first the kingdom of God....”** (Matt. 6:33).
3. **Has appropriate sermons:** The sermons preached in this church are about love, grace, funny stories that make one laugh, kid skits and drama, and news events. The preacher doesn’t always quote Scripture; and he says nothing about sin and hell. Who wants to hear that old stuff? The modesty taught in the New Testament was for those who lived back in the first century (1 Tim. 2:9).
4. **Allows social drinking:** Oh, I don’t mean getting drunk! A church that understands that **“a little wine is good for the stomach”** is my kind of church (1 Tim. 5:23). Everyone knows that Jesus turned water into wine (Jn. 2).
5. **Knows that sports build character:** A church that doesn’t know this is simply out of touch. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, you know. I know what Paul said about exercise, but remember, he didn’t have any kids (1 Tim. 4:7-8). A church should not expect my son/daughter to leave a Wednesday night game to attend Bible study. Children get enough studying at school!
6. **Does not withdraw from unruly members:** Oh, I know the apostle Paul said **“withdraw from those who walk disorderly”** (2 Thess. 3:6-15); but that just makes folks mad, and they may *withdraw* themselves from the church. After all, not many churches today are following this old command!
7. **Quotes less scripture:** People need a church that is fun to attend—one where they can hear funny stories, watch kids’ skits, and participate in book/movie reviews. Most church members do not want to hear so much Scripture; they want to leave with a fuzzy feeling.

This sounds like the kind of church for which many people are searching—my kind of church! What do you think? — *Knollwood Church of Christ*, May 2010. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250