

Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven?

1. What is a kingdom? What does it look like?

2. When you read or listen to the Bible, pay close attention to the details. John the Baptist preaches a certain message, and after his arrest, Jesus proclaims a similar message. Are they saying the same thing?

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!" (Matt 3:1-2, CSB)

After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:14-15, CSB)

3. If you were a king, would you feel threatened by this message? Can you think of any Bible passage that would illustrate this?

4. Where is the kingdom of God?

Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven? Teacher Notes

1. What is a kingdom? What does it look like?

Engage the student and ask him to think of what a kingdom is. What does a kingdom require? Do kingdoms exist today? Has he heard of any good or evil kings?

Kingdoms requires a king, people, and land.

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This question attempts to get the student into the habit of careful observation of details very much like Sherlock Holmes. According to John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, the kingdom of heaven is the same as the kingdom of God.

3. If you were a king, would you feel threatened by this message? Can you think of any Bible passage that would illustrate this?

To help the student gain a sense of the competition for power and authority, remind them of the birth of Jesus:

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born **king of the Jews**? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Messiah would be born. (Matt 2:1-4, CSB)

Encourage the student to think on a larger scale. How would Satan respond to a threat to his power?

In their case, the **god of this age** has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (1 Cor 4:4, CSB)

In the above examples, a ruler feels threatened when the loss of their authority is very real. What about our all powerful God? God's authority is absolute so there is never any threat to His kingdom. From God's perspective, there is only good that exists in His kingdom; evil is removed.

Jesus responded, "This voice came, not for me, but for you. Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out. (John 12:30-31, CSB)

4. Where is the kingdom of God?

Allow time for discussion among the class. Both John the Baptist and Jesus speak of the kingdom of God has come near. Is this near in proximity or near in time? Is this kingdom present or in the future?