



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A1624 ~ The Kingdom of God is at Hand.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

Both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ in Matthew's Gospel, Chapters 3 and 4, taught the people of Israel that the Kingdom of heaven is near. They used the same words: 'Kingdom of Heaven'. However, in Mark's Gospel, Chapter 1, we find that it says: "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe the gospel."

Is there any difference between 'Kingdom of heaven' and the 'Kingdom of God?' Some verses speak of one or the other yet many verses speak only of 'the kingdom'. From a vision of the kingdoms of the world that was given to King Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel, we can know without a doubt that the last kingdom that reigns forever will be God's.

When the Lord Jesus came to Israel offering the people a spiritual kingdom, they rejected Him as Messiah because they were looking for a world-ruling political kingdom, as predicted by the prophets. In Luke's Gospel, Chapter 17, the Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God would come. Jesus answered them: "The Kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen. No one will say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!', because the Kingdom of God is within you." In this statement, Jesus was declaring a spiritual truth that Israel could not see.

When questioned by Pontius Pilate about His kingdom after being arrested, Jesus spoke of a literal, political kingdom yet to reign on the earth. Jesus Himself will return to rule and reign for a 1,000 years, as foretold in the book of Revelation. In Acts, Chapter 1, the disciples of Jesus asked Him: “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” The disciples were expecting a literal kingdom to rise up that they would belong to, yet Jesus said it is not for them to know the time when this literal kingdom (which is the Kingdom of Heaven) will take place.

For some people, there needs to be a further sorting out of Church doctrine from tribulation doctrine. Some churches don't want to do this because they believe that in the present Church Age the Church has replaced Israel and that unbelieving Jews are no longer relevant in God's kingdom. Satan hates Jews; and the world is under Satan's control at this time. The world does not want to have the Lord Jesus Christ to return or rule over it. This is why the Jews killed their king over 2,000 years ago. Yet the Bible predicts there will be a huge difference between Jesus' first coming to earth as the gentle Lamb of God and His second coming as a warrior king, the Lion of Judah, to war against the nations of the earth and Satan himself.

The entire theme of the Bible is about the battle over ruling a kingdom on earth and the rightful ruler of that kingdom.

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke to the Jews as heirs of the promised political kingdom that the Lord preached about as the 'Kingdom of Heaven' – a literal physical Kingdom soon to come. Although Satan has lost the war by Jesus' resurrection from the dead, the final battle for physical possession of rulership on earth is still in the future. This is the present status of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The eventual triumphant ruler of this Kingdom, both in the literal world and over the spiritual forces, will be the Son of the living God of Israel, who is the Lord Jesus Christ and the world's Messiah.

For the Gentiles (or those aren't Jews), Jesus preached about the coming Kingdom of God, which is filled with righteousness and holiness.

Because the Lord used the terms 'Kingdom of Heaven' and 'Kingdom of God' interchangeably in the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, most Christians think these terms mean one and the same. They will be, but not until after the tribulation and the second coming of the Lord Jesus as king. Then Jesus will rule the world for 1,000 years on the throne of His related human father King David in Jerusalem.

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The Jews as a nation rejected Jesus as their Messiah because they wanted their physical kingdom to come. His teaching didn't stir them to warfare but instead, focused them on their sinfulness and lack of spiritual holiness.

Some Jews at the time led riots and revolts against the Romans in the hope that God would give them victory. But these attempts were always quickly quelled by the mighty Roman army. One of these riot leaders was called Barabbas –he was caught and put into prison. It was at the trial of the Lord Jesus that the people called out for this Barabbas to be released, instead of Jesus.

In Matthew, Chapter 13, the Lord Jesus taught parables about the kingdom of heaven. In one about the wheat and weeds growing up together, He likened the kingdom of heaven to a man who planted good seed in his field. But an enemy secretly planted weeds one night in the same field. When the plants grew up, the man's servants saw the weeds and wanted to pull them out. But the man said leave them until harvest time, lest the wheat might be harmed. At harvest time, the weeds would be destroyed.

The words 'field', 'soil' and 'earth' are symbolic of the human heart, where beliefs are held and resulting actions come from. The seeds represent a message that a person accepts as 'truth' and this teaching becomes part of that person's belief system. When the seed is from God, it's the truth but when the seed is from Satan, it's a deceptive lie. The seed that takes root and matures in a person's life is an expression of the person's final destination.

For those who have God's Holy Spirit living within them, Jesus' message is clear: two sets of people live in this world. Although the evil people at present seem so powerful, there will be an end to them and their ways – they have a destination of torment. But God's children will be clothed in righteousness and live with their Father forever more.

In the mustard seed parable, the kingdom of heaven is like the good seed of God's message of redemption planted in the hearts of people. From very small beginnings, it visibly grows in responsive individuals and in the Church (or the body of Christ) to a remarkable size and it encourages the spread of the Gospel message for others to hear it. In the parable of the leaven, a woman places leaven or yeast in some good flour to make a batch of dough. The leaven invisibly works through the dough, and so the kingdom of heaven is spreading throughout the world!

The two following parables are the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price. They emphasise the preciousness and value of the kingdom of heaven.

In the parable of the hidden treasure, a man accidentally finds a treasure and he immediately recognises its value. He hides the treasure again and sells everything he has to secure it for himself. The treasure is the gift of salvation and blessed are those who discover it and obtain possession of it without even looking for it!

The kingdom of heaven is worth infinitely more than the cost of discipleship and those who value it joyfully abandon everything else to secure it. The Apostle Paul discovered salvation unexpectedly on the road to Damascus. Once Paul met the Lord and learned about the will of God, he didn't hesitate to accept God's message of salvation, as he was willing to pay whatever price was necessary to have Christ as his Saviour.

In the parable of the pearl of great price, a dealer was searching for a pearl of great value. When he found it, he sold everything he had to obtain it. We cannot buy our salvation or even a small part of it. But some people are actively seeking the more meaningful things in life and the pearl of great price is the kingdom of heaven.

The last in this group of parables is the dragnet. Fishermen would cast a fishing net with weights sewn into the bottom edge from a boat out in the sea and men on the shore would pull in the net and everything caught in it. On the beach, they would sort out the fish, keeping the good ones and throwing the bad away.

This parable is similar to the parable about the wheat and the weeds. Jesus explained that at the end of the age, God's angels will separate the wicked from the righteous and the wicked people will be thrown into the fiery furnace. That Jesus would emphasise the judgment and condemnation of the wicked people in this parable should impress upon us that the 'good news' of the kingdom of heaven also contains 'bad news' for those who reject it.

This teaching of Jesus shows that He knew the end time events more clearly than any prophet that had gone before. Was Jesus truly the Messiah? We must believe in Christ and His authority over all things for ourselves. No one before Him or since, has been able to teach like this. At the end of the age, there'll be no place to hide from Him or these angels.

If anything is troubling your conscience today, then confess it without delay to Him and ask for Christ's forgiveness as the Holy Spirit shows you what needs to be put right with God and with others.

Here's the Christian way to live, as recorded in Colossians Chapter 3 Verse 17: "Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through Him to God the Father."

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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