



# What God Has (And Has Not) Joined Together (10)

Church and Kingdom

**Matthew 16:18-19**

Our 2026  
Theme

- Today we continue our theme for 2026, “What God has (and has not) joined together”. This theme is based on **Matthew 19:6**.
- Our last lesson addressed: The gospel and doctrine of Christ based on **2 John 9**.
- Today, we want to address how the church and kingdom of God/Christ/heaven are joined together.

# The problem stated

- While most acknowledge that the church is the body of Christ, there are many who make a fundamental distinction from the kingdom.
- Some advocate that today we are living in “the church age”, but the kingdom, as God intended in prophecy, is yet future (premillennialism).
- While there is a distinction to be made between the terms and purpose of the church and kingdom, this lesson will show that God has joined them together.

# Defining the terms

- What does the term “church” mean?
- From the Greek, ἐκκλησία (ekklēsia), it was a common Greek term indicating an assembly or gathering.
- The term is used secularly in **Acts 19:32-41** (3x). But the other 112x it has spiritual reference.
- Whenever the term “church” is found in the NT, it refers to “the called out body of the saved.” The gathering of God’s saved people. “Called out” of the ways of the sinful world and committed to serving Jesus according to His will.

# Defining the terms

- “Church” is used primarily in 2 senses in the NT.
- Universal – the body of the saved at all times. This is descriptive of the relationship one saved has with Jesus (**Acts 2:47** – NKJV, **Ephesians 1:23**, **Matthew 16:18**,...). There is no earthly organization in this.
- Local – a group of the saved (as defined above) in a given location to joined together to do God’s will designed to be done collectively. This can be either a single group, or several congregations (**1 Corinthians 1:2**, **Galatians 1:2**, **Acts 14:23**, etc.)

# Defining the terms

- “Church” is used primarily in 2 senses in the NT.
- Bible students have little problem defining the church as those who are saved and generally understand the distinction of its usage (though many misunderstand application).
- IF you are saved, you are added to His church – **Acts 2:47, Ephesians 1:22-23.**
- In this lesson, our primary focus will be the “church” in its universal sense.

# Defining the terms

- What does the term “kingdom” mean?
- Kingdom is from the Greek word, βασιλεία, basileia. It describes a domain ruled by a king.
- There are many qualities associated with a kingdom – a ruler (king, Lord), subjects (citizens), territory (realm), and a law governing the kingdom.
- The Bible speaks of the kingdom of God/heaven more than 150 times.
- Like “church”, if you are saved, you are part of this kingdom – **Colossians 1:13, James 2:5, 2 Peter 1:11**

# Defining the terms

- Why 2 different terms?
- While describing the saved, they identify different functions of the same group.
- In the same way that the same man can have different roles – Christian, man, husband, father, employee, etc., so it is with saved believers.
- Church implies a gathering or group, while kingdom reminds us who our King is and that we are subject to Him.

# Defining the terms

- Why 2 different terms?
- NOTE: The saved are also described with other terms:  
Body – **Ephesians 1:22-23,**  
**1 Corinthians 12:12-13**  
Temple – **1 Corinthians 3:16-17**  
Household (family) – **1 Timothy 3:14-15,**  
**Ephesians 2:19, 3:15**
- Together we get a more complete picture of our relationship with Christ, God and one another.

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- **BOTH** began on the day of Pentecost
- Point of clarification:  
The kingdom of heaven is spiritual –  
**John 18:36** – not of this world  
**Luke 17:20-21** – it is within you  
See the teachings of Jesus – **Matthew 5:3, 13:11, 24**  
**Romans 14:17** – not eating and drinking.
- The church is a reference to the saved.  
- It is NOT the building, an action, a group of congregations or a denomination.  
As noted, universally, it is relationship. If you are saved, you are part of the “church of Christ”.  
Even locally, it identifies a specified group of the saved – the saints joined together.

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- BOTH began on the day of Pentecost
- The Kingdom was prophesied
  - Daniel 2:44** – in the days of these kings
  - Daniel 7:13-14** – the messiah would receive a kingdom that would never be destroyed (following a vision of 4 beasts – kingdoms).
  - Psalms 45:6** - an everlasting kingdom,  
see **Hebrews 1:8-9**
- **Luke 1:31-33** – Gabriel speaking to Mary
- Matthew 3:2** – John;
- Matthew 4:17** – Jesus – the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
- Mark 9:1** – would be present during their lifetime.

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- **BOTH began on the day of Pentecost**
- The church was prophesied  
While a specific prophecy is not found in the Old Testament, Jesus was clear about His intent to establish His church.  
**Matthew 16:18-19** – Jesus would build His church and open the kingdom.
- **Ephesians 3:8-11** – the church was part of God's eternal plan!

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- **BOTH** began on the day of Pentecost
- On the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**) – Kingdom!
- **Acts 1:6-8** - kingdom still future but details given of its beginning.  
**Acts 2:1-4** – the apostles are baptized by the Holy Spirit.  
A great introductory sermon.  
**Acts 2:16-21** – fulfilled the prophecy of **Joel 2:28-32** (anticipating this kingdom).  
See also **Isaiah 2:2-4**

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- BOTH began on the day of Pentecost
- On the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**) – Kingdom!
- Following **Acts 2:1-4** – the kingdom is spoken of as in existence:
  - Colossians 1:13** – conveyed (transferred) into
  - 1 Thessalonians 2:12** – into His kingdom
  - Hebrews 12:28** – we are receiving a kingdom
  - Revelation 1:9** – companion in ... the kingdom

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- **BOTH** began on the day of Pentecost
- On the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**) – Church!
- Following **Acts 2:1-4** – we read continually of the church throughout this book (~17x)
  - Acts 2:47** – Lord added to the church (NKJV)
  - Acts 5:11** – fear on the church
  - Acts 14:22-23** – kingdom... elders in every church
- Letters written to churches
  - Hebrews 12:22-23** (note also vs. **28**)

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- OTHER related qualities
- The blood of Jesus
- **Colossians 1:13-14** – in the kingdom we have redemption through His blood
- **Acts 20:28** – the church was purchased with His own blood

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- OTHER related qualities
- Christ is head/Lord
- **Acts 2:30, 36** – Christ is sitting on the throne of David,... both Lord and Christ (kingdom language)
- **Ephesians 1:22-23, Colossians 1:18**  
– He is the head of His body, which is the church

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- OTHER related qualities
- Baptism
- **John 3:3-5, Acts 8:12** – Philip preached the kingdom in Samaria – men and women were baptized
- **1 Corinthians 12:13** – baptized into one body (His). **Cf. Acts 2:47**
- Both related to our salvation

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- OTHER related qualities
- We are subject to Jesus
- **Ephesians 2:19, Philippians 3:20** – citizens; **Colossians 1:13** – transferred into His kingdom
- **Romans 12:4-5, 1 Corinthians 12:27** – we are part of His body and subject to the head
- To be a citizen in the kingdom is to be a part of the body of Christ, His church.

# How are the church and kingdom related?

- OTHER related qualities
- The Lord's Supper
- **Luke 22:18, 29-30** – Jesus would not drink of the cup until the Kingdom of God Comes.
  - **1 Corinthians 10:16-17** – as we partake of the Lord's Supper we are in fellowship with Him
- **1 Corinthians 11:18-26** – they came together as the church, and partook of the Lord's Supper. **Acts 20:7**

# Concluding thoughts

- Why is this important?
- Because confusing the difference between church and kingdom has led to serious doctrinal errors about what will happen when the Lord returns.
- Far too many fail to grasp the spiritual nature of God's kingdom & church, leading to materialistic views far greater than God & Jesus ever intended.
- For some it will call into question the power of God to accomplish His will
- For others it leads to endless speculation about the Lord's returns and "the times" we are living in.

# Concluding thoughts

- When you examine the church & kingdom, there is distinction in their usage (the terms are not always interchangeable based upon the text). However, when it comes to fellowship with God and Christ, they are synonymous. IF you are in the church, you are in the kingdom. If you are in the kingdom, you are in His church.
- Clearly, they are joined together. Let us not separate them.



**Are you a part of His  
kingdom/church?**