

# SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

## LESSON 7



## THE NEED FOR THE KINGDOM

*Scripture Texts: 1 Corinthians 15:22; Genesis 6:5; Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 John 3:8*

In former lessons we have seen that Christ came to earth to set up His kingdom, and did so. It was at great cost to Him—suffering and death followed by resurrection. This was necessary. The kingdom is the life of Christ in the heart. Mankind needed it. You and I need it now.

Both the Bible and experience teach that mankind is in the grip of Satan's kingdom. The only escape is through Jesus Christ. He will redeem us into the kingdom of God.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

— **2 Timothy 4:18**

### All Have Sinned

**1 Corinthians 15:22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Going back to the beginning of the human family (**Genesis 2:17**), we find that God told Adam that in the day he would disobey God he would surely die. He did disobey and died (**Genesis 3**). That death included both spirit and body. When he sinned his heart became sinful immediately. That was spiritual death—separated from God. His spirit came from the breath of God. Also, death entered his body made of the dust. It began to grow old and death began to work. He had access to the tree of life whereby he would live forever before sin separated him from that tree of life (**Genesis 2:9; Genesis 3:22**). By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (**Romans 5:12**). There is only one escape from this death for any of us—Jesus Christ (**1 John 5:12**). For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ (**Romans 5:17**). Here we can see the great need for the kingdom of God.

### An Evil Heart

**Genesis 6:5** Man continued in sin. Around two thousand years after Adam's sin, God looking down saw that the wickedness of man was great . . . only evil continually. He sent the flood to destroy the wicked ones, but it did not cleanse evil from men's hearts. They were still evil when Christ came. He said evil hearts produce evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies to defile lives (**Matthew 15:19**). The heart cannot be reformed. It must be made new, a heart of flesh in place of the stony heart. What is needed here? Only the blood of Christ will purge your conscience from dead works and put it into God's kingdom to serve the living God (**Ezekiel 36:26; Hebrews 9:14**).

Looking closely at the picture given here, do you see that all the evil has its beginning in the heart? Jesus said . . . of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh (**Luke 6:45**). Outward evil comes from inward evil. Inward evil is the result of Satan reigning in the heart of man. This is the reason mankind needed Jesus Christ to come and set up His kingdom with power, power to drive out Satan and to keep him out of every life who will receive Him as his King. This is why we are told, Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life (**Proverbs 4:23**). There is no middle ground. Either Christ sits on the throne of our hearts or Satan reigns there. It is our individual choice to whom we open the heart door.

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### Christ Brought Salvation

**Ephesians 2:1-3** Paul describes the state of the saints of Ephesus before they were saved. Not only they, but we all had our conversation in the same in times past. The sinner is dead in trespasses and sins. He follows the ways of the world, which is serving the prince of the power of the air—the devil. Sinners are in the kingdom of Satan. They obey **the lusts of our flesh**—natural sinful human nature. Sinners are children of wrath—under God's wrath. This is all of us until regenerated. He that believeth not the Son . . . the wrath of God abideth on him (**John 3:36**). But it is not God's will that we remain so. **For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9).**

### Who Is Lost?

**2 Thessalonians 2:12** That they all might be damned . . . All who will not allow Christ to reign over them here in this present life. God does not will to damn souls. He is not willing that any should perish (**2 Peter 3:9**). Going back a few verses in **Chapter 2 of 2 Thessalonians**, we see that these are followers of false religion. They have a form of religion but are deceived because they received not the love of the truth. They refused the truth. They had pleasure in unrighteousness, so have the produce of unrighteousness—damnation. It need not be so, for God gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish (**John 3:16**).

The idea prevails among many that every person will go to Heaven unless he does something extremely bad. No one can be saved by being good by his own efforts. In examining these Scriptures we learn that a person becomes lost when he refuses to allow Christ to be King.

### The Kingdom of Darkness

**1 John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil**—Partakes of his nature, belongs to his kingdom. It is a kingdom of darkness from which there is but one escape. If we will let Him, God will translate us from it into the kingdom of his dear Son (**Colossians 1:1-13**). The Son of God was manifested for this purpose—to free those enslaved by the devil, to destroy the works of the devil. If we repent and turn to Him, He will wipe out now the work that the devil has done in our hearts.

### Strong Words

In the verses of our lesson today some pretty strong language is used in describing people—**wickedness . . . only evil continually . . . dead in . . . sins . . . children of disobedience . . . of the devil. . .** Is it only the scum of society who miss God's standard of holiness? How wicked must one be to need salvation? Paul said, **Among whom also we all had our conversation . . .** God can look at some of the most respected, leading, kind, and honest religious people, and see hearts loaded with corruption, bound by Satan (**Luke 13:1-5**). Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse and free us from sin.

### JUST A THOUGHT

**"Conscience never speaks peace until God speaks pardon."**

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