



The tribe of Issachar understood the times and knew what Israel should do

Issachar Ministries UK seeks to be a people who understand the times, listen to the Lord and know what should be done

## ***Resourcing for Prayer Network*** **Spiritual Guidelines**

# **What are Kingdom Values?**

**Monica Hill**

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**There has been a lot of talk recently in the media about 'British values', but there is no agreement on what are British values. It is surely time for Christians to join in this debate because historically the values of our nation have been derived from the Bible. This is overlooked by the media and is being ignored by our politicians. A recent letter from an MP sent to our office listed Christian values as: 'responsibility, hard work, charity, compassion, humility, tolerance and love' adding moral leadership and a sense of community. The Home Secretary, Amber Rudd recently defined British values as 'tolerance, respect of democracy, individuality and the rule of law'.**

Few of these can be recognised as coming from the Bible. But kingdom values, as we have discovered by examining the Beatitudes, turn the values of the world upside down. The teaching of Jesus contrasted secular values with the values of the kingdom.

### **What do we know of the Kingdom?**

When we introduced this series in September 2016 we looked to see if there was any difference between the Kingdom of God (used 68 times by Luke) and the Kingdom of Heaven (used 32 times by Matthew) and agreed that they were most likely synonymous terms. But each contains the heart of Christ's message. We pray the Lord's Prayer and '*your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*' (Matthew 6.10) and we are encouraged to seek first the Kingdom of God. Matthew 6 tells us: '*So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*' (verses 31-33).

### **Mysteries of the Kingdom**

Jesus also taught that the mysteries of the Kingdom will be revealed to believers and will not be fully understood by non-believers. So Jesus taught in parables. A parable is often defined as "a saying or story in which something is expressed in terms of something else". Jesus told parables for a reason and not just because people love stories. But 'a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning'. Everyone can understand and enjoy parables at different levels without understanding the deep complexities of the teaching. Jesus told them, '*The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"*' [Mark 4.11-12]

## Expectations as a result of Kingdom Living

We love the passage from 1 Peter 2 which tells us that we are a people belonging to God that there is unity in diversity. *'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may*

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*declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy'* (vv9-10). We find Mark 3.35 *'Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother'* encouraging. But we often do not want to hear Jesus talking about how Kingdom Values which can divide *'Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'* (Luke 12.51-53)

## Entering the Kingdom

We enter the Kingdom by changing our mindset - we think differently and turn our thinking to God and away from the world. We change direction and this invariably involves repentance and turning. John the Baptist's message rings true for all ages *'The time has come,'* he said. *'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'* (Mark 1.15)

Metanoia is a transliteration of the Greek, and can be defined as "a transformative change of heart; especially a spiritual conversion". We then begin to see things through God's eyes and our lives will change as *'Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people'* (Luke 5.10). When we accept the Good News the whole direction of our life changes.

Jesus told Nicodemus about the need for a spiritual rebirth when he was asked the way into the Kingdom, *'Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, "You must be born again."* (John 3.5-7)

We then become Children of God *'Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.'* (John 1.12-13). This is all through God's mercy and none of our own doing *'he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit'* (Titus 3.5).

## The Requirements of Jesus

First we must seek the Kingdom and God's righteousness *'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well'* (Matthew 6.33). Then with God's help we are called to be his ambassadors even preaching the Gospel wherever we go as Paul did (Acts 20-25). But we are not alone *'For we are fellow workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building'* (1 Corinthians 3.9) - we are co-workers with Christ.

The Kingdom of God will be established on earth when Jesus returns. We prepare for the Kingdom by living according to the values of the Kingdom now.

## Anomalies and Paradoxes

When we think 'Kingdomly' and willingly change our values to Kingdom values we find there are many anomalies and paradoxes which we need to understand such as *'For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it'* (Matthew 16.25). Jesus teaching summed up many of these in his parables and there are others we will be following in the coming weeks such as:

Leaders who are led

Set free to become slaves

Good news about bad news

In the coming months we will be exploring the parables of the Kingdom in these papers - and probably topically in **Prophecy Today.uk**. There are more than 46 parables that Jesus used, many of them made into children's songs (<http://www.biblesongsandmore.com/songs/new-testament-songs/parables-of-jesus/>) in order to introduce children to the concepts. The challenge is for you, as individuals or in groups, to start thinking Kingdom-wise and to send your thinking in - and we can include your contribution in these papers coming up.



*(C and M Ministries Trust registered charity no 1029797 )*

*5 Shannon Court, High Street, Sandy, Beds SG19 1AG*

*Telephone: 01767 223270*

*Website: [www.issacharministries.co.uk](http://www.issacharministries.co.uk)*

*office e-mail: [info@issacharministries.co.uk](mailto:info@issacharministries.co.uk)*