

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

Now these were the numbers of the divisions that were equipped for war, and came to David at Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD...of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command. (1 Chr 12:23, 32 NKJV)

Part 2: Kingdom Vs. Culture

- Introduction: Understanding the **times** vs. understanding the **culture**

- If we are truly going to “**understand the times**,” it will be MUCH MORE IMPORTANT for us to understand the **principles** of the kingdom of God, than merely being able to interpret the **signs of the times** revealed through our culture.
- The culture of the Kingdom of God is the one culture to which **all Christians belong, but not all necessarily practice on this earth**, in fact, our tendency is to **follow** the cultures of this world. In the end, **It's not about what you do, but who you are!** *Ian Clayton*
 - Paul says: "All who have been united with Christ in baptism have **put on Christ**, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal 3:27–28 NLT-SE)
- Even though we remain Christians in this world, **we will always know at least two cultures**: the one of our country of our **natural birth**, and the one of our **spiritual birth** – God's kingdom. But **the natural culture should be submitted to the spiritual one and eventually should fade into insignificance once we have been translated to the "culture" of Heaven**. Here's the way Jesus put it to His disciples...
 - “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. **But my Kingdom is not of this world.**” (John 18:36 NLT-SE)
 - “My kingdom,” said Jesus, “doesn’t consist of what you see around you. If it did, my followers would fight so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. But **I’m not that kind of king**, not the world’s kind of king.” (John 18:36 MESSAGE)
- Definition of Culture:
 - **Learned behavior**...Culture is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of society use to **cope with their world and with one another**, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through **learning**.

- **Expressing who we are...** Culture is the **totality** of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought. Culture is the **whole** of patterns, traits, and products that are the expression of a particular period, class, community, or population.
 - **Specific groups...** Culture reflects the predominating **attitudes, behavior, and function** of a group or organization with respect to a particular category, such as a field, subject, or mode of expression such as: religious culture in the Middle Ages; musical culture; oral culture.
 - **The Fruit of Culture...** The fruit of a culture consists of the **intellectual and artistic activity and the works** produced by it.
 - **In Summary...** The word culture, with its root meaning "**to cultivate**," generally refers to **patterns of human activity** and **the symbolic structures** that give such activity **significance**.
- **Kingdom Defined:**
- The government of a **king**.
 - A kingdom is the **sovereign rule** and **governing influence** of a king over his territory (domain), impacting it with his **will, intent** and **purpose**, producing a citizenry which reflects the culture and nature of the king.
 - **A kingdom is much different than a democracy...** in a democracy, you don't become like the president. That's not the goal of a democracy. In a kingdom everything points to the king.
 - In a kingdom, **the king insists that every person take on his will, intent, and purpose**. In a kingdom, you are obligated to take on the culture of the king!"
 - When Jesus says, "**I am King**," He's trying to tell us something. He is saying, "**You're going to be just like Me! You will loose your culture** (habits, values, morality, etc.) **and take on mine.**"
 - **That's why a king is dangerous...** "So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say? (Luke 6:46 NLT-SE)
- **Kingdom Concepts:** Myles Munroe, in "Rediscovering the Kingdom, (2008)" actually lists 24 Kingdom Concepts. Concepts determine how you view life.
- **The message of the bible is about a king, a kingdom, and a royal family...** not about a religion! Kings are never voted in or out of power. A king's word is law. A king personally owns everything in his kingdom. He also provides for the needs of his subjects.
 - **Everyone is seeking the kingdom...** humans are not seeking a religion, but the kingdom.
 - **All religions are man's attempt to find the kingdom...** religion will never satisfy the yearnings of the human heart.
 - Jesus' **mission** and **message** was a kingdom. The predominant opposition to Jesus' ministry did not come from "sinners," but from religion.
 - All true kingdoms contain the same **characteristics** and **components**.

- All kingdoms are manifested through the **weight**, or **influence** of its culture. All kingdoms want to expand.
- **The Bahamas: A Colony...** "a country or area under the full or partial political control of another country, typically a distant one, and occupied by settlers from that country."
 - Little kids, they grew up **worshipping** a king, **singing** about a king, and every morning speaking out a **pledge** to the king.
 - **They** (The Brits) **put their culture on the people in the Bahamas**. They made them speak English. They made them drive on the left hand side of the road. That was the **culture of the kingdom** in Great Britain. They made them study English history ONLY. And they made them drink tea in the afternoon!
 - **They lived under the laws of a kingdom that was far away from us**. They were strictly, BRITISH SUBJECTS. They were under the **authority of a king** (until 1973, when it became a democracy)."
 - How did the British **influence** the people of the Bahamas? Through the **transporting of their culture** to their islands. Why? **That's what kingdoms do!**
 - **Key!** "When God created the heavens and the earth, He was thinking about the same thing. He created the earth to **extend the realm of Heaven to earth**; to actually be a **colony of Heaven**.
 - The heavens belong to the LORD, but **he has given the earth to all humanity**. (Psa 115:16 NLT-SE)
 - [God's Mission Statement for mankind] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And **let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." (Gen 1:26 ESV)
- **The Divine Assignment For All of Mankind:** What motivates the Lord's heart is His purpose (original intent), not our plans.

Then God said, "**Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us**. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, "**Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over** the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground." (Gen 1:26–28 NLT-SE)

You can make many plans, but **the LORD's purpose** will prevail. (Prov 19:21 NLT-SE)

- Establish a **colony** of the kingdom of Heaven on earth.
- Establish the kingdom **government** of Heaven on earth.
- To **colonize** the earth with Heaven.
- To make earth a **colony of Heaven**.

- **Glory and Culture**: The Lord wants to **fill the earth with the glory of God**.
 - The Hebrew word for glory is **kabob**, which means **heavy...weight...**or the **imprint** that something heavy makes. This word also means, “true essence.”
 - Simply put, the word glory means “**culture**.” All kingdoms manifest themselves in culture. Example: A Mexican restaurant in Longview, WA. The glory follows the people. **The glory is not in the country, it's in the people...**it's called “culture.” The weight of the culture is so heavy that, even though you've been away from the country for 30 years, the imprint of the culture is still there!
 - When the word says that “the earth will be filled with the glory of God,” it's literally saying, “The earth shall be filled with the **weight of the culture of heaven**.
 - For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Hab 2:14 ESV)
 - So, if you want to experience the culinary culture of the Jalisco state in Mexico, you don't have to go there, you can go to **Plaza Jalisco on Main Street in Kelso**!
 - That's why you don't need to go to Heaven to experience heaven. **You can experience heaven on earth**. The Lord said, “I want the earth to be filled with the glory of God.” He is saying, “I want earth to look just like heaven!” That's why it's important to understand that culture is not in the land, but the people.
 - So, if you're going to colonize a place, **you must get the people in that land**. If God wanted to fill the earth with Heaven, He had to send His own citizens here. That's why He created man who was “born of God.” **The King wanted to establish Heaven on earth!**
- **Understanding the Times**: How does all this information **impact** the way we live our lives and **influence** the way we “Understand the Times?”
 - We have been **born into a kingdom** which is **located within a culture**. Our American culture is **powerful, pervasive, and poisonous**.
 - The most critical issue for American Christians is “**Lordship**.” Who has **your** heart? Who is Lord of **your** life? What are the **implications** of him being Lord of your life? When the angel came to Mary and told her she would birth the Son of God, she ultimately responded:
 - “I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” (Luke 1:38 NLT-SE).
 - **Important Key!!!!** If we truly want to understand the times, our primary focus needs to be on **understanding the kingdom, NOT figuring out the culture**.
 - If you want to be able to tell the difference between the real money and counterfeit money, you don't spend all your time looking at all the different types of counterfeit bills, trying to memorize the nuances of each. You learn to recognize the real bills by spending the majority of your time **looking at real bills**.

- Remember, A kingdom is the **sovereign rule** and **governing influence** of a king over his territory (domain), impacting it with his **will**, **intent** and **purpose**, producing a citizenry which reflects the **culture** and **nature** of the king.
- **Issues of the kingdom of God are NOT settled in the courts of the culture, but in the courts of Heaven!**
 - ²⁰ Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, “See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, **the kingdom of God is within you.**” (Luke 17:20–21 NKJV)
 - ⁶ Then the Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, ⁷ “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘If you will walk in My ways, And if you will keep My command, Then you shall also **judge My house**, And likewise **have charge of My courts**; I will give you **places to walk** among these who stand here. (Zech 3:6–7 NKJV)
- **We know when Jesus will return...**
 - And the **Good News about the Kingdom** will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all **nations** (ethnos) will hear it; and then the end will come. (Matt 24:14 NLT-SE)

Extras:

- **Five Ministry Realms...** Everything to do with foundational things comes in 5's. We are trans-dimensional beings. We have the freedom to move within kingdoms. Responsibility is progressive. Unless you take responsibility for the lower levels, you will not move into the upper levels.
 - **Kingdom of the Earth...** “walk in my ways.” The realm of his **presence**.
 - **Kingdom of God...** “keep my laws.” The realm of his **government** (the light of God) through us as a doorway.
 - **Kingdom of Heaven...** “judge my house.” This is the realm of his **domain**, where we learn to judge (like judging the “fruit”).
 - **Heaven...** “judge my courts.” His throne is in the middle of Heaven. God judges everything below it. “What is” is a mess.
 - **Heaven of heavens...** “I will give you a place.” The realm of his eternity.
 - The Realm of Perfection...
 - The Realm of Eternity...