



# Lesson 1

## A Tale of Two Kingdoms

### Introduction

As Christians, we enjoy citizenship in two kingdoms. Yet, at times, our citizenship in one kingdom may seem to clash with our citizenship in the other kingdom.

#### Read Psalm 2.

This is a messianic psalm, which means it speaks about the coming Christ.

1. As different as the rulers of the world are and as hostile as they may be toward one another, what common bond unites them all?
2. Give examples of this from Bible history and the history of the church.
3. Read Matthew 10:22,25; Mark 13:12; and John 15:18. What can we expect in this world as followers of Christ?
4. Which words in Psalm 2 tell us that we don't need to be afraid?
5. The following passages give us some truths about the kingdom of God. What can we say about God's kingdom (over against the kingdoms of this world) based on these passages?
  - Luke 17:20,21
  - Matthew 13:1-9,18-23
  - Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

- John 18:33-38; 19:8-11
6. Using the prompts below, identify at least five truths about the kingdom of God.
    - Regarding its existence
  
    - Regarding its growth
  
    - Regarding where it is found
  
    - Regarding its view of truth
  
    - Regarding the way its citizens view themselves
  
    - Other
  7. Summarize the purpose of the church.
  8. The church growth movement is a philosophy adopted by many Christian churches today that attempts to use research, analysis, and sociological tools to bring people into the church. The emphasis is on getting more people into the church, not necessarily on teaching the truth. The church growth movement has given us mega churches and nondenominational churches. List some dangers within this movement that could lead us as a church to lose our sense of purpose.

9. We sometimes call the governments of this world Jesus' "other kingdom." While the people of this world deceive themselves into thinking that they are in charge, it is Christ who rules all things for the benefit of the church (Ephesians 1:19-22). What do the following passages tell us about the "other kingdom" (the state)?
- Romans 13:1-7
  - Isaiah 44:24-28
  - Daniel 2:36-45
  - Colossians 1:16-18
10. Using the prompts below, identify at least five truths about the "other kingdom" over which Christ rules.
- Regarding its existence
  - Regarding its purpose
  - Regarding its tools for establishing itself
  - Regarding its method of ruling
  - Regarding its source of truth
  - Other
11. Identify times in the history of the church when God has used the governments of this world to benefit his church.
12. Why must we be cautious about identifying current events as divine interventions?

13. From what you have learned so far, complete the statements below to identify the primary differences between the church (the kingdom of God) and the state (the other kingdom).

| <b>The church</b>                      | <b>The state</b>              |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Established by                         | Established by                |
| Governed by                            | Governed by                   |
| The church will last                   | Kingdoms of this world will   |
| God's people distinguish themselves by | The rulers of this world seek |
| The church moves                       | The state moves               |

14. How might you address the following conflicts in the life of a Christian who has citizenship in both of these kingdoms?

- We become involved in a political discussion and want to witness to our unbelieving friends.
  
- Increasingly in our culture, we as Christians are defined by what we are against and not what we are for.
  
- We are frustrated because the state does not reflect our Christian values.

15. Imagine that a friend suggests the church should mobilize to get conservative Supreme Court judges approved in order to overturn Roe v. Wade. How would you respond?

16. What comfort do you find in what you've learned about church and state so far?