

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Entering the Kingdom of Heaven

(Jerry Fite)

**E**ntering the kingdom of heaven should be our number one goal. The ultimate destination of heaven begins when we are translated into the kingdom of Christ as forgiven people, and completed when Jesus returns the faithful in the kingdom back to the Father at the resurrection (*Colossians 1:13-14, I Corinthians 15:24*).

In His Word, Jesus reminds us of the various conditions of entering the kingdom of heaven. We cannot travel anywhere in the universe where we escape God, the Creator. The visible and invisible have their existence because of God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, the Creative Word (*Colossians 1:16, John 1:1-3,14*). Therefore, God has the right as Creator to establish the conditions of entering into His eternal rule and realm of heaven.

We must humble ourselves as little children in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, “*Verily I say unto you, except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven*”

(*Matthew 18:3*). Jesus’ disciples were thinking in terms of who is the “greatest” in the Kingdom, and Jesus set a little child in their midst and said, “*Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*” (*Matthew 18:4*). Unless one humbles himself to submit to God and minister to others (*Matthew 23:11*), he will not only miss “greatness”, he will miss heaven.

A Humble heart should lead to an obedient life. We can say Jesus is our Lord, but if we do not do the will of the Father, we will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus makes it clear: “*Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven*” (*Matthew 7:21*).

All of us entered this world created in the image of God, but unless we become born again spiritually, we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, “*Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*” (*John*

*3:5*). This regeneration or rebirth takes place with Christ in baptism for the remission of our sins. It is the “*washing of regeneration*” connecting “*water*” with “*the word*” that allows us to be made alive together with Christ (*Titus 3:5-7, Ephesians 5:26, Colossians 2:12-13*).

Once made alive spiritually in Christ we must avoid pitfalls. The Scribes and Pharisees claimed a righteousness, which we must “*exceed*” (*Matthew 5:20*) Our righteousness is found in Christ, not the Law of Moses, and goes deeper into the thoughts and motives of the heart, than just the outward compliance to the Law (*Matthew 5:27*). We must separate from religious teachers who appear righteous, but may be making us “*twofold more a son of Hell*” than they (*Matthew 23:13-15*). Knowing Jesus said it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, we must guard our hearts and set our affections on God, not riches (*Matthew 19:23-24, Matthew 6:24*). Will you follow Jesus, and enter the kingdom of heaven?