

ML105 Kingdom of Heaven vs Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of Heaven [KH] is God's plan; the Kingdom of God [KG] is both the work of His plan and the finished product. Both kingdoms are easy to understand by comparing them to secular things.

For example, suppose you tire of mice taking bait from a trap without getting caught. Then you design a trap in your mind that will solve the problem. You take pencil, paper and drawing aids and put your design on paper. Your mental image is like the "Kingdom of Heaven;" your drawing is like the "Kingdom of God."

Next, you take the paper to your workbench and make a prototype. The drawing becomes like the Kingdom of Heaven; the prototype is like the Kingdom of God.

Then you test the mousetrap to ensure that mice cannot take the bait without getting caught. You contact the CEO of a factory and mass produce your invention. When the product comes off the assembly line, your prototype is now like the Kingdom of Heaven and the new traps are like the kingdom of God.

Thousands of people purchase the new traps. However, they soon complain that your trap poses a danger to little children. You use one of the new traps to work on the problem. The factory makes the change you devise. Your first model now becomes like the Kingdom of Heaven, and your second model is like the Kingdom of God.

Now you see why it's difficult to define the two kingdoms. Texts that refer to the Kingdom of Heaven can be almost identical to texts that refer to the Kingdom of God.

Text - 1

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven [Mt 19:13-14].

Text - 2

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God [Mr 10:13-14].

Text-1 likens little children to believers in the Kingdom of Heaven and Text-2 likens little children to believers in the Kingdom of God. Read these and you will understand that Text-1 concerns God's plan and that Text-2 concerns the work of God's plan.

Two other almost identical texts are Mt 13:31-32 and Mr 4:30-32. The first text equates the Kingdom of Heaven to a mustard seed; the second text equates the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed.

Now you know why two writers heard Jesus speak the same words but wrote unique messages. God inspired Matthew to write about God's plans; He inspired Mark to write about the work of God's plans.

Research the four Gospels for the "Kingdom of Heaven." Only Matthew mentions the Kingdom of Heaven, but all four writers mention the Kingdom of God.

You may not use this tool often, but when applicable, it answers questions that other tools cannot.