

Lesson 7 from the Synoptic Gospels

JESUS' TEACHING ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS KINGSHIP (Scripture Passage for the lesson is Matthew 13)

What is the kingdom of God? The kingdom is that territory over which a king reigns. Since God is the Creator of all things, His kingdom is the whole world. Since He reigns everywhere, His kingdom is everywhere and eternal. Several Scripture passages show that God is the undeniable Monarch of all creation: "The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all" (Psalm 103:19). Every authority that exists has been established by God (Rom 13:1).

More narrowly, the kingdom of God is a spiritual rule over the hearts and lives of those who willingly submit to God's authority. Those who deny God's authority and refuse to submit to Him are not part of the kingdom of God; in contrast, those who acknowledge the lordship of Christ and gladly surrender to God's rule in their hearts are part of the kingdom of God. In this sense, the kingdom of God is spiritual and that is why Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36) and He preached that repentance is necessary to be a part of the kingdom of God (Matthew 4:17). He also says in John 3:5-7, one must born again (baptism) to enter the kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God in the Bible: The kingdom of God is not only one of the central themes of the entire Bible but it was the prominent and explicit teaching and ministry of Jesus Christ. The phrase "the kingdom of God" does not occur in the Old Testament writings (although "kingdom of the Lord" does appear in 2 Chro 13:8; Dan 6:26). However, the concept of God's kingship is present throughout the Old Testament and it is very important to make sense of Jesus' preaching about the kingdom of God and his kingship.

God is king over all his creation. Is 37:16: "*O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth.*" He began His kingdom program at creation. He is Ruler. He rules over everything.

God is king over Israel in a very special way. In 1 Samuel 12 the prophet Samuel rebukes Israel when they asked for a king as the Israelites were surrounded by many kings. We read in 1 Sam 12:12-13: "*The Lord sent Jerubbaal and Barak and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety. And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the Lord your God was your king.*" Israel's desire for a powerful earthly king came out of fear for the enemies. They failed to accept that God was their king.

Kings of the United Kingdom of Israel (1025- 925 BC)

King Saul was the first king of Israel and for a time was a good king, even prophesying (1st Sam 10:11-13) but God rejected him because of his disobedience to God. He never fully obeyed God and David was chosen to be the next king

King David is the favorite of all kings for the Jews and in his lineage of course is Jesus Christ (Matt 1:6-17). Even though he committed adultery and conspired to have Bathsheba's husband murdered, he repented (Psalm 51) and became Israel's greatest earthly king and one of the most prolific writers in the Bible with the Book of Psalms.

King Solomon was the third king of Israel and as the son of David and became the heir to the throne. He later married foreign wives who led his heart away from the Lord and into idolatry but he would later repent and wrote the greatest book of wisdom ever written; the Book of Proverbs as well as the wisdom literature of the Book of Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

Divided Israel and their kings: after Solomon, the nation of Israel split and there were two lines of kings and Jesus' saying proved to be true; a house divided against itself cannot stand (Mark 3:25). After Israel divided into two separate nations, they would eventually fall and be taken into captivity. The nation of Israel (northern kingdom) fell into the hands of the Assyrian Empire and became captives. The nation of Judah (Southern Kingdom) survived much longer, but in time they too fell into idolatry and disobedience and they became captives in the Babylonian Empire for seventy years.

The Kings of Israel (925 BC to 721 BC)

King Jeroboam
King Nadab
King Baasha
King Elah
King Zimri
King Omri
King Ahab
King Ahaziah
King Jehoram
King Jehu (neither bad nor good)
King Jehoahaz
King Joash
King Jeroboam II
King Zachariah
King Shallum
King Menaham
King Pekahiah
King Pekah
King Hoshea
Those with * are the good kings and the rest are bad guys

The kings of Judah (925 BC- 586 BC)

King Abijam
King Asa*
King Jehoshaphat*
King Jehoram
King Ahaziah
King Athaliah
King Joash
King Amaziah
King Uzziah*
King Jotham*
King Ahaz
King Hezekiah*
King Manasseh
King Amon
King Josiah*
King Jehoahaz
King Jehoiakim
King Jehoiachin
King Zedekiah

Reflection on the kings: God prospered the people of Israel. However they forgot God and His laws, fell into idolatry, being taken into captivity, repented, restored to the land and then prosperity again only to start the vicious cycle all over again. It was as if Israel never learned her lesson but many nations are falling into this same trap today. Once a nation is prosperous, they tend to forget the God Who brought them that prosperity. Perhaps we might see some nations

with this type of life and attitude, cycling through times of prosperity, idolatry (might be money or possessions), troubles, repentance, restoration, prosperity, and then back into forgetting God again. What about us as believers? We often repeat history because we have failed to learn from it. Any nation that turns their back on God will have God turn His back on them and pay for that in a substantial way.

The kingdom of God in the NT: This phrase appears more than 80 times in the Gospels. It is good news proclaimed by Jesus and his disciples. Jesus (Matt 4:17) and John the Baptist (Matt 3:2) began their ministry with this phrase, Repent, the kingdom of God is at hand. What did they mean by saying that the kingdom God is at hand? They meant God's messianic kingdom, ruled by Jesus, God's appointed Messiah, who will be not just the Redeemer of His people, but their King as well. While teaching the apostles to pray, he taught them to pray, "Thy kingdom come". During His earthly ministry, Jesus made comments such as, "If I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Luke 11:20). Similarly, when Jesus sent out seventy disciples on a preaching mission, He instructed them to tell the unrepentant cities that "The kingdom of God has come near you" (Luke 10:11). How? The kingdom of God was near to them because the King of the kingdom was there. When He came, He inaugurated God's kingdom.

When Pilate asked, "Are you king of the Jews?" He said, "My kingdom is not of this world," meaning his kingdom was a spiritual kingdom against the OT concept of kingdom. And when He ascended into heaven, He went there for His coronation as the Lord of lords and the King of kings. He is in the seat of the highest cosmic authority. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to God's anointed Son (Matt. 28:18). At the end of Jesus' life, just as He was about to depart from this earth, His disciples had the opportunity to ask Him one last question. They asked, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Jesus gave a patient and gentle answer. He said: " It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:7-8).

Kingdom Parables: Matthew 13 has the largest collection of kingdom parables. Several times Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is like..." and then he would tell a story. Let us make an attempt to learn the meaning behind the kingdom metaphors. They are rich in meaning and deeply insightful.

1. Parable of the Sower (13:1-23)
2. Parable of the weeds among the wheat (13:24-30)
3. Parable of the mustard seed (13:31-32)
4. Parable of the yeast (13:33)
5. Parable of the treasure in a field (13:44)
6. Parable of the fine pearls (13:45-46)
7. Parable of the fishing net (13:47-50)

Parable of the sower (Mt 13:3-9) *A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.*

The Parable of the Sower is also known as the Parable of the Four Soils. It is found in Matt 13:3-9; Mark 4:2-9; and Luke 8:4-8. After presenting this parable to the multitude, Jesus interprets it for His disciples in Matt 13:18-23; Mark 4:13-20; and Luke 8:11-15.

Explanation of the parable of the the Sower, the Seed and the Soil: The Sower is the Father who scatters seed all over the field even in the places places where we would not expect to get a result (path, rock, thorn). This is because the sower is generous and does not ever give up on anybody. The Seed is the Word of God. Jesus beautifully brings out our response to God's word by listing our four types of images and environments namely **Path, Rock, Thorns and Good Soil**.

Seeds on the path represent the people who don't care for the word of God. They may listen in one ear and out the other. There is no spiritual growth in them because they lack connection with the ground and they become birds' food, in other words, they are spiritually dead without God's grace.

Seeds on the rock represent the people who know the Word of God but they easily collapse because they have no root. They are not planted deep enough in the soil. God's Word has not truly become their foundation. Theirs is a superficial faith that springs up when times are good. But when the heat comes, they wither for lack of soil and water.

Seeds among the thorns: They represent the people who hear the word but they can be easily trapped by the external things like riches, pleasures and prosperities of the world. These things can easily choke them and take them from God.

Seed on the rich soil represent people who are prosperous and successful in their personal and family life because they delight in the word of God, meditate on it when they read and hear. They are like trees planted by streams of water, yielding fruits in seasons and they don't easily wither and they always prosper. They are very much connected to God in prayer, sacraments and faith commitments. They are concerned about their eternal life. They always depend upon God. When success comes, they count it God's blessing. When failure presses them on, they find shelter in God. They are not easily blown away by the winds of life. Wherever they are, they bear fruit some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. They grow and blossom in the garden of God. They don't sit with the wicked and they dislike the company of bad people. Read Psalm 1

Now it's our turn to ask ourselves. The Seed has been sown into our ears from the day we began going to go to mass mainly by priests, nuns, catechists, religious education teachers, parents and teachers. The Word of God continues to be sown in us. How do we receive the words and how do we act upon them? What type of soil are we? When we make an honest assessment of our lives, we will accept the traits and types of all the four soils in our life. There were times we took God for granted and surrendered ourselves to some human forces. There were times we have been very shallow in our faith. There were times in our life failures, frustrations, disappointments and other problems have tempted us to abandon God. Unfortunately, often

times our lives seem to be governed and controlled more by our fears, doubt, unbelief, wrong emotions and bad feelings than the word of God and its promises like comfort, strength, hope, wisdom, knowledge, joy, power, and purpose. There were also times we joyfully received the word of God in our life, producing a big harvest personally, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

One thing we must always remember, that despite our poor results, God continues to sow his word. As He is not discouraged in sowing His seeds, Let us not get discouraged in the ups and downs of our spiritual life instead let us allow the word of God to take root and germinate in our life because His life giving word can work in unexpected ways, transform in unknown places and bear fruits in unexplored areas.

Parable of the Weeds among the Wheat (13:24-30): Jesus told them another parable: *The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?" "An enemy did this," he replied. The servants asked him, "Do you want us to go and pull them up?" "No," he answered, "because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."*

Explanation: Jesus explains this parable in verses 37-43. Jesus presents the wisdom and patience of God in allowing the good and the evil to co-exist in the world so that the evil ones may come to conversion before their time ends. "Let the wheat and the weeds grow together till the harvest time." why? The reason is that God is the creator of the universe and in His creation, we find both good and bad elements living together. Since God is all good, he wants to be good not only to the good people but also to evil people who are also His children and He wants to give ample time to sinners to repent and change their sinful lives. So, He calls us to be patient with them as we tolerate our sinful lives and tendencies.

Exegesis on Weeds: our experience tells that in our garden and lawn, we find the plants as well as the weeds. Sometimes the weeds look like plants and therefore it is difficult to distinguish the weeds from the plants when they grow together. And often times they are so intertwined and as a result it is really hard to separate the weeds from the wheat because if we do so, there is a danger of plucking the wheat plant. Whereas if we wait for the harvest time, we can easily remove the weeds and save the wheat in the barn.

The presence of weeds seems appearing more than wheat: The gentleman politics in the world seems lost its relevance in political arena. Authoritarian politics, power mongers, insensitive leaders, divisive, unethical and immoral life style of the leaders is really discouraging. In society too, we find more and more weeds like vandalism, intolerance, religious fundamentalism and extremism, the growth of crimes and criminal activities. In many catholic families, we find the results of moral relativism and secularism, living a carefree life with no religion, faith, moral and respect for families and so on. The church leadership is no exception to this weeding syndrome. Among the church leaders, there are weeds with secular mindsets and

scandalous lifestyles. Thus, weed elements seem more visible than wheat elements and none of us can deny this factor. In our helplessness and in the midst of these weeds, we are forced to ask: Why does good and powerful God permit evil to triumph so often in this world? Why the wicked are allowed prospering?

Jesus answers these questions in the parable. 1. The triumph and prosperity of the wicked are short-lived whereas the good people who suffer the wickedness will receive their due reward in God's time for their faithfulness. 2. God uses every wickedness and injustice of evildoers to perfect His children to grow more and closer to Him. Archbishop Fulton Sheen said in one of his radio speeches: *“The history of the world would have been different if the Christian authorities had shown compassion, patience and mercy instead of expelling Hitler and Mussolini from the schools and Stalin from the seminary in disgrace as ‘weeds’”*.

How to apply this parable to our personal and spiritual life? 1. First of all, we should not treat others as “weeds”. Because each one of us is a combination of wheat and weeds. In each of us there are elements of the Kingdom of God and elements of the kingdom of evil. Let us look at our own life first and find ways and means to correct the wrongs in our life. 2. The time for judgment has not yet come because there will be a separation of “weeds” from wheat, good from bad fish (13:47-50) and sheep from goats (25:31-46). But this "harvest" will take place on God's time-table not ours. Hence, instead of asking why God allows evil to exist let us ask what God expects from us. Let us patiently and lovingly treat the “weeds” among us and do all in our power to put them back on the right road to Heaven, especially by our good example. 3. Should we pluck the weeds out in the garden? Jesus said ‘No’. Why? In plucking the weeds, we may by mistake pluck the wheat as well because they look alike in the garden. Our negativity towards these weeds could easily hurt them and their family members and as a result, we might become responsible for their loss. We need more sensitivities to weeds. There is another thing to think about. Sometimes the “weeds” change their minds and become wheat in God's time (Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future). We sow seeds and water the plants but God alone gives the growth. What we need to do is to live out our faith the best we can, without being overly concerned about the sinful lives of weeds. 5. We need to pray for the conversion of “weeds” to wheat. We are called to recognize evil and give it to God in prayer so He can take care of it, the way the farmer in the parable told his servants that he would take care of the weeds.

Parable of the mustard seed (13:31-32): *“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”*

Here Jesus described the kingdom not just as a seed, but as the ***smallest*** seed. He is describing a kingdom that begins very small. The birth and the growth of the kingdom of God is slow, steady and mysterious. The kingdom of God is small in the beginning like mustard seed but grows immensely later on (EWTN Mother Angelica). The mustard seed is very small but within days leafs emerge, and within months mature plants with numerous branches and leaves come up. Who is responsible? It is God's initiative to give us growth making use of our labor. And for that we need to be patient and not give up, because sometimes growth takes longer than we

expect. God works in ways that we don't understand. What we need to do is scattering the seed, but the growth is up to God. As God's children, we can plant tiny seeds wherever possible.

Parable of the yeast (Matthew 13:33): Jesus compares the kingdom to a small amount of yeast. Again he asked, *“What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.*

Yeast is a very small amount but When it is first mixed into bread dough, this small amount of yeast eventually produces a large result. Yeast is microscopic in size and only a little is kneaded into the dough. Yet, given time, the yeast will spread through all the dough. The nature of yeast is to grow and to change whatever it contacts. In the same way, Jesus' domain started with twelve men in an obscure corner of Galilee but it has spread throughout the world. The gospel makes progress. The kingdom begins small and inconspicuous, but it grows large. The small beginning of the kingdom would have surprised Jesus' listeners. They were hoping that a Messiah would lead the Jewish people to a great victory over the Romans. They were hoping to become an independent nation, with the power of David's kingdom and the wealth of Solomon's. But Jesus was announcing that the kingdom must begin in a very small way. When we accept Christ, His grace grows in our hearts and changes us from the inside out. As the gospel transforms lives, it exerts a pervasive influence in the world at large

Parable of the treasure in a field and fine pearls (Matthew 13:44-46): *The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it*

The parables of the **treasure and fine pearls** teach the same lesson. The kingdom of heaven is of inestimable value. In the first story the Kingdom of God is likened to a treasure which a person happens upon in a field. In the Biblical times, the items of great value were oftentimes buried during times of war, crisis and insurrection by the people and they moved out in course of time. When Someone found this valuable field, he sold all his wealth to buy this valuable land that he must possess it. The kingdom is more valuable than anything else.

In the second story the Kingdom of God is likened to a pearl. In this story the merchant knows exactly what he is searching for: fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of such extraordinary beauty, he sells all that he has his entire inventory of valuables in order to have this very costly pearl like the man in the field. The treasure and the pearl represent Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers. And while we cannot pay for salvation by selling all our worldly goods, once we have found the prize, we are willing to give up everything to possess it. But what is attained in exchange is so much more valuable and incomparable (Phil 3:7-9). We notice the merchant stopped seeking pearls when he found the pearl of great price. Eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance and the love of God through Christ constitute the pearl which, once found, makes further searching unnecessary. Christ fulfills our greatest needs, satisfies our longings, makes us whole before God, calms and quiets our hearts and gives us hope for the future.

The Parable of the fishing net (Matt 13: 47-50) *Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

In the parable, **the fishing** net is cast into the sea and pulled onto shore full of all kinds of fish. Then the fishermen sat down to the business of sorting the fish into the “good” and the “bad.” The good fish were gathered into containers, but the rest were tossed away. Jesus then interprets the parable for His disciples: *“This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (verses 49-50). This parable is similar to the parable of the weeds among the wheat (13:36-43). Both parables concern an end-times sorting, aided by angels, when believers will be separated from unbelievers once and for all.

Just as the net gathered all types of fish, regardless of their value, so the gospel attracts all kinds of people. The kingdom of God captures both good and bad people. The message is given to both. They live together and are given a chance to change and grow. Eventually the time comes when judgment is made, and God keeps the good. He loves the bad, he seeks the bad, he wants the bad, but he does not want them to stay bad. Those who choose to be bad is really helpless. God gives each person time, but eventually there is a judgment. That is what the kingdom of God is like. The sobering main point of the parable can be stated thus: “A day of reckoning will come in which God will separate the true believers from mere pretenders, and those found to be false will be cast into hell.

The kingdom of God is among you in Luke 17:21. What is the meaning? There are three popular interpretations of Jesus’ words that the kingdom of God is among you 1) the kingdom of God is essentially inward, within one’s heart; 2) the kingdom is within our reach if we make the right choices; and 3) the kingdom of God is in our midst in the person and presence of Jesus. The best of these interpretations is perhaps the third.

The kingdom of God is among you: We may say like this: The fullness of the Kingdom is among us when we live in that perfect world that God had intended us to live in without any social, economic, ethnic discrimination, with total trust in God and His providence, where all people operate with selfless love of others, where truth, love, justice become everyone’s hallmark. When the clergy are totally dedicated and committed to the parishioners in bring the presence of Jesus liturgically, feeding them biblically, serving them pastorally and walking with them spiritually, the clergy present and represent the kingdom of God in the midst of the people. When the parishioners visit homes (not at this time of course) to offer comfort and healing where the loved ones are dead and gone, there is the kingdom of God among us. When married couples come forward to help prepare engaged couples for marriage, When our ministers to the elderly and the sick visit home bringing love, compassion, company, and Eucharist, When our liturgical and music ministers work so hard to provide beautiful liturgies, When our pro-life ministers work to protect life at all stages, When our religious education ministers assist parents in building a solid foundation of faith for their children, When the members of the Knights of

Columbus and food pantry bring assistance to families in need of financial assistance, food or clothing, we see a glimpse of the kingdom of God. When we do all the above, then the words of Jesus “The kingdom of God is among you” become a reality.

What is the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven? First of all we need to understand that both phrases are referring to the same thing. The phrase “kingdom of God” occurs 68 times in 10 different New Testament books, while “kingdom of heaven” occurs only 32 times, and only in the Gospel of Matthew. For example, speaking to the rich young ruler, Christ uses “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God” interchangeably. “Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven’” (Matthew 19:23). In the very next verse, Christ proclaims, “Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (verse 24). Jesus makes no distinction between the two terms but seems to consider them synonymous. The two kingdoms are identical. The kingdom of Heaven obviously emphasizes our future life in heaven and the kingdom of God emphasizes that God the Father owns the kingdom.

What does it mean to seek first the kingdom of God in Matthew 6:33? We are to seek the things of God as our priority over the things of the world for our salvation. Does this mean that we should neglect our family and earthly commitments? Certainly not. There should be a difference in our attitude toward the heavenly and the earthly. If we take care of God’s business as our priority, working for our salvation, living in obedience to Him and sharing the good news of the kingdom with others—then He will take care of our business as He promised. But how do we know if we are truly seeking God’s kingdom first? There are questions we can ask ourselves. Where do I primarily spend my energies? Is all my time and money spent on goods and activities that will certainly perish, or in the services of God - the results of which live on for eternity?” Believers who have learned to truly put God first may then rest in this holy dynamic: “...and all these things will be given to you as well.”

How is Jesus the King of kings and the Lord of lords?

In the Old Testament; The book of Isaiah 9:6-7 reads "A child has been born for us; a son given to us. Authority rests upon his shoulders and he is named wonderful counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace. He will rule with justice and righteousness**".

In the New Testament we have very clear proofs for Jesus’ kingship.

1) In the Annunciation (Lk 13:2-33), we read: "The Lord God will make him a King like David and He will be the King of the descendants of Jacob forever and His Kingdom will never end."

2) The Magi from the Far East came to Jerusalem and asked the question:(Mt. 2:2) "**Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews?** And they offered Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. There is a symbolic meaning behind presenting Gold. In the ancient world, Gold was a gift for the kings. So, they saw baby Jesus as their king.

3) Jesus' public ministry centered on theme of *the Kingdom of God*. The phrase "*kingdom of God*" occurs 122 times in the Gospels and of which 90 instances are used by Jesus himself.

4) During the royal reception given to Jesus in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Jews shouted: (Lk.19: 38) "*Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord*" He went to Jerusalem to be enthroned as their king. He was riding on a donkey. There is a symbolic meaning behind the donkey ride. Donkey is a symbol of peace. So, Jesus came as *the king of peace*.

5) During the trial of Jesus, Pilate asked the question: (Jn.18: 33): "*Are you the king of the Jews?*" Jesus replied: "*You say that I am a king*". I was born and came into this world for this one purpose, to bear witness to the Truth."

6) The signboard hung over Jesus' head on the cross read: INRI Latin: "*Iēsus Nazarēnus, Rēx Iūdaeōrum*" Which means "*Jesus the Nazarene, king of the Jews*."

7) Before his ascension into heaven, Jesus declared: (Mt. 28:18): "*I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth*."

Why Jesus is called “King of kings and Lord of lords?” Because, in the end, all other rulers will be conquered or abolished and He alone will reign supreme as King and Lord of all the earth. There is no power, no king, and no lord who can oppose Him and win.

Anecdote: A blacksmith who was working very hard. It was time for him to die. God sent the angel to him. He refused to go with angel and pleaded with the angel to make his case before God that he was the only blacksmith in the area and it was time for all his neighbors to begin their agriculture and so he was needed. So the angel pleaded his case before God saying that the man was glad to have a place in the kingdom but wanted to spend sometime helping his neighbors. So God left him to live some more time. About two years later the angel came back again with the same message that the Lord was ready to share the kingdom with him. Again he made some reservations saying “A neighbor of mine is seriously ill, and it’s time for the harvest. A number of us are trying to save his crops so that his family won’t become destitute. Please come back later.” And the angel went off. Likewise every time the angel came, the blacksmith had one excuse or another. Finally, the blacksmith grew very old, weary and tired. He decided that it was time to go and so he prayed: “God, if you’d like to send your angel again, I’d be glad to come home now.” Immediately the angel appeared. The blacksmith said: “If you want to take me home, I’m ready to live forever in the kingdom of heaven.” And the angel laughed and looked at the blacksmith in delight and surprise and said: “Don’t you know that all these years you have been in the kingdom of heaven?” and He was home. The kingdom of Heaven is not possible if we don’t create heaven on earth. *The Kingdom is not a thing, it is not a geographical dominion like worldly kingdoms. It is a person (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI)*. If we have the right relationship with CHRIST THE KING in prayer, if his will becomes our will, if his priorities and values becomes our priorities and values, then we will not only be enter his kingdom but also become messengers of his kingdom on earth by our sincere love and commitment for the humanity.