

## **The Kingdom in the New Testament**

According to Genesis 1, God created man in His own image and gave man His authority to rule over all the created things. In God's creation two things are very important to man. One is the divine image, and the other is the divine authority...In order to have the full image of God to express God and to realize the full authority of God to represent God in subduing His enemy, we must have God as life to us... We need to take in the divine life of God for two reasons: positively, so that we can express God; negatively, so that we can represent God to subdue His enemy. The authority of God is a matter of the kingdom. **Throughout the entire Scriptures there is a line of authority related to the kingdom.** According to Genesis 12:1-3, God chose Abraham with the intention of having a kingdom. God promised to make Abraham **a great nation**. This means that He would make of him a kingdom...This is how the people of Israel came into being. After the Lord brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, He said to them, *"You shall be to Me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**" (Exo. 19:6).*

**In the New Testament**, when **John the Baptist** came preaching, his first words were, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near" (Matt. 3:2). When **the Lord Jesus** went out to preach, He said the same thing: "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near" (4:17). When the Lord Jesus sent out **the twelve disciples** in Luke 9 and the **seventy disciples** in Luke 10, He told them to preach concerning the kingdom. Eventually, in the last book of the Scriptures, Revelation, we are told that "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever" (11:15). The Lord will reign as a King with all **His overcoming saints**. Thus, at the very end of the Scriptures we can see that God eventually will have a kingdom in which He can exercise His authority to the fullest extent in accomplishing His eternal purpose. Have you ever realized that there is such a line in the Scriptures? It is only through the kingdom that God can exercise His authority to accomplish His eternal purpose. **In nearly every book of the New Testament, from Matthew to Revelation, the kingdom is covered.** The kingdom is such a great matter in the Bible. After His resurrection the Lord Jesus spoke with the apostles for forty days concerning the kingdom (Acts 1:3). The apostle Paul spent three months in the synagogue at Ephesus reasoning and persuading concerning the kingdom of God (19:8).

### **"REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM"**

The first item in the New Testament preaching was the kingdom. The first preacher in the New Testament was **John the Baptist**, and the first word out of his mouth was, "Repent, for the kingdom" (Matt. 3:1-2). It is not merely a matter of being sinful, of going to hell, or of having peace and joy. It is not merely a matter of repenting so that we may have salvation. We must **repent** for the kingdom.

## THE PREACHING OF THE DISCIPLES

The Lord Jesus called some disciples, not only twelve but also at least seventy. He sent them out and charged them to preach the kingdom, saying, “The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near” (10:7; Luke 10:1, 9). Not only did the Lord Himself repeat and continue the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, but He also charged His disciples to repeat it.

According to Luke, a man came saying, “Lord, permit me to go first and bury my father.” The Lord responded, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and announce the kingdom of God everywhere” (9:59-60). The Lord seemed to be saying, “Let the dead ones do the dead things. If you want to be living, you must follow Me and preach the kingdom of God. Let the dead ones bury the dead, but the living ones must preach the gospel of the kingdom.” John the Baptist preached the kingdom, the Lord Jesus preached the kingdom, and all His disciples were charged to preach the kingdom. Even such a little disciple as was mentioned in Luke was told to preach the kingdom. This is wonderful!

## THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

When the Lord Jesus was preparing to leave His disciples, He prophesied that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached in the whole inhabited earth and to all the nations...Matthew 24:14 speaks of the “gospel of the kingdom,” not the gospel of grace or the gospel of salvation... The gospel of the kingdom must be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations. It will not only be preached to the Jews but to all the nations. In Greek the word translated “nations” is the same word that is elsewhere translated “Gentiles.” The gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all the Gentiles. Hallelujah! Most of us are Gentiles. We are all privileged to hear the gospel of the kingdom. This gospel must be preached to every corner of the inhabited earth. The Lord has opened up this matter to us so that wherever we go with the recovery of the church, the gospel of the kingdom will be preached.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS THE GOSPEL

In Luke 4:43 we have another term: *the gospel of the kingdom of God*. This verse says that the Lord Jesus and His disciples announced the kingdom of God as the gospel. Have you ever noticed that the preaching of the kingdom of God is just the preaching of the gospel? The kingdom is the gospel of the New Testament. The gospel of the New Testament is the kingdom. Some may argue that the New Testament speaks of the gospel of life, the gospel of grace, and the gospel of salvation. However, all these are different aspects of the kingdom. The kingdom is the center, the hub, and all the other items may be considered as the spokes. All the spokes are centered on the hub. The gospel of life is for the kingdom, the gospel of salvation is for the kingdom, and the gospel of forgiveness is for the kingdom. All these different aspects of the gospel are for the kingdom...

## **BORN AGAIN TO ENTER THE KINGDOM**

Let us consider John 3:3 and 5. Did the Lord Jesus say, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see heaven or enter into heaven”? No! Regeneration is not for the purpose of going to heaven, although I was definitely taught this when I was young. I was told that my sinful life was simply not good enough for me to go to heaven and that entering heaven required me to have a better life. I was told that heaven is bright, with nothing dark; it is holy, with nothing sinful; and it is good, with nothing evil. But I was told that I was evil, dark, and sinful—altogether unqualified to go to heaven. I was told that if I wanted to go to heaven, I needed **another life**. I needed to be born again. This is still the common concept today. Strictly speaking, regeneration is not for entering heaven; regeneration is for us to enter into the kingdom.

If we want to enter into a certain kind of kingdom, we need a certain kind of life. If we do not have the animal life, we can never enter the animal kingdom. If I could receive a dog’s life and become a dog, I would immediately find myself in the animal kingdom. Likewise, if we do not have the divine life, the life of God, we can never enter into the kingdom of God. If we are to enter into the kingdom of God, **we must have the life of God**. Therefore, regeneration is for us to enter into another kingdom, the kingdom of God. This is much more real than a mere dispensation. This is the kingdom of God, which we enter by being born again.

## **THE KINGDOM IN THE EPISTLES**

The kingdom is also revealed in the Epistles. Romans 14:17 says, “*The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*” According to the context of Romans 14, the kingdom is the church life. The reality of the church life is the kingdom. **The kingdom is not merely a dispensation or a sphere**; the kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God is something in the Holy Spirit. This is the church life. Later we will see that Romans 12 tells us about the Body life and that Romans 14 speaks of the kingdom life. In Romans the kingdom life is simply the reality of the Body life.

Now we come to Colossians 1:13: God has “*delivered us out of the authority of darkness.*” The authority of darkness is the kingdom of Satan. God has delivered us out of the kingdom of Satan and has “***transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.***” We all have been transferred. Once we were in the kingdom of Satan, but now we are in the kingdom of God’s Son. Hallelujah! Perhaps you have been told that the kingdom of God will come some day in the future and that today, the age of the church, has nothing to do with the kingdom. Perhaps you have heard that the church age is now and that the coming age, the millennium, will be the age of the kingdom. But here in Colossians 1:13 we are told that

**we have been transferred into the kingdom.** Are you sure that you have been transferred into the kingdom of God? If today is the church age and the kingdom has not yet come, how can you be in the kingdom now? Are you certain that you are in the kingdom now? I am very concerned that after you put this book down, you will start to doubt. You may begin to think that it is too much to say that we are presently in the kingdom of God. You may look at your wife and think, “Rebellious!” You may look at your husband and say, “No love!” You may look at your children and say, “Too sloppy, too loose!” Whether you believe we are in the kingdom or not, we have the pure Word. We have Colossians 1:13. Hallelujah! We have all been transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

### **THE KINGDOM IN REVELATION**

Revelation 1:9 says, “I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom.” John knew that **he was in the kingdom.** To him the kingdom was not merely a future dispensation; he was in the kingdom already. Therefore, he could say I am “your brother and fellow partaker in the...kingdom.”