

THE KINGDOM REVEALED IN HEBREWS (I)

Now we need to see something concerning the kingdom from the book of Hebrews. With the exception of Matthew and Revelation, Hebrews has more related to the kingdom than any other book in the New Testament. **Most Christians have never considered that Hebrews is a book on the kingdom.** Many think that Hebrews is simply a book which tells that Christ is superior to all the main items of Judaism. While this is correct, **we must realize that Christ is superior to all the items of Judaism for the kingdom.** Christ is for the kingdom.

According to the revelation of the New Testament, Christ has come for the kingdom. The concept of most Christians is that Christ came only for our redemption. They never consider that Christ came for the kingdom. While it is true that Christ did come for redemption, redemption is not the goal. Redemption is a process toward the goal. **The goal is the kingdom. God's intention is to have a kingdom. God created man in His image so that man could have dominion over all things and express His glory. This means that God created man in His image so that He could have a kingdom.**

GOD'S GOAL

God's goal is the kingdom. Even the church is for the kingdom. Why does God need the church? **It is because through the church, by the church, with the church, and in the church, God can have a kingdom.** God has no other way to get a kingdom for expressing His glory except through the church. These two matters, the church and the kingdom, are closely related in **Matthew 16:18-19**. In **verse 18** the Lord Jesus said that He would build His church, and in the following verse He said that He would give the keys of the kingdom to Peter. The keys of the kingdom are related to the building of the church. The church is builded for the kingdom.

During these years which are near the end of the age, the Lord has burdened us with the matter of the kingdom. **We are not here merely for redemption, the gospel, salvation, sanctification, and other things.** We are here particularly for the church to bring in the kingdom. **We are here for the kingdom.** For such a long time, the Lord has been delayed. The Lord Jesus has been seeking the kingdom for over twenty centuries, but still it has not come. **The delay is not due to Him but due to us. The problem is that we do not have the adequate maturity of life.** For many years we have been stressing one thing: life and the maturity of life. The maturity of life is for the kingdom.

In Matthew **Christ is the seed to produce the kingdom.** In the first chapter there is such a wonderful One! He is the issue of forty-one generations mingled with the Triune God. His name is Jehovah-plus and God-plus. He is the seed to be worked into all of us. **This seed will eventually become the harvest. The seed is Christ, and the harvest is the kingdom.**

Please remember the vision in Daniel 2. In that chapter a stone is cut out without hands, which strikes all the Gentile world and eventually becomes a great mountain. **The stone in Daniel 2 signifies the Lord Jesus, and the great mountain signifies the kingdom.** The stone becomes the mountain, signifying that Christ becomes the kingdom. This indicates that the kingdom is just the enlargement of Christ. It may sound strange to hear that the kingdom is the enlargement of Christ, but according to Daniel 2, the stone became the great mountain. The stone signifies Christ, and the mountain signifies the kingdom.

OLD TESTAMENT TYPES

The Old Testament contains many types of the spiritual things revealed in the New Testament. In fact, nearly every spiritual thing in the New Testament has its type in the Old Testament. The greatest and most all-inclusive type in the Old Testament is the history of Israel. The nation of Israel as a type begins with the first chapter of Exodus and ends with the last book of the Old Testament. First, the nation of Israel experienced the passover in Egypt. We know that the passover in Exodus 12 is a type. Christ is actually our Passover. The passover lamb was slain for them, and its blood was sprinkled on the house. Then they passed through the Red Sea and went into the wilderness where they ate manna and drank the water out of the cleft rock. **All these different experiences are types. The passover lamb and even all the aspects of the passover are just Christ. The manna is Christ, and the rock that flowed with water is also Christ flowing as the life-giving Spirit. Moreover, even the produce of the land of Canaan is a rich type of the all-inclusive Christ. In addition, the whole land of Canaan is an all-inclusive type of Christ.**

The book of Hebrews does not tell us that the good land is Christ; instead, it tells us that the good land is a rest. In **Hebrews 3 and 4** the good land is revealed as **the rest to God's people**. They left Egypt, went through the wilderness, passed through the Jordan River, and entered into the good land. **Deuteronomy 12:9** calls the good land the rest. But the good land was not merely a rest. God's intention in bringing His people, Israel, into Canaan was not only for rest but for the building up of the kingdom. Not only did God's people need rest, but God Himself wanted a kingdom. **God's purpose in bringing His people into the good land of Canaan was to establish His kingdom on the earth**. There in the good land God built up a kingdom through, with, and among His people. That was the kingdom of God upon earth.

Before that time, God was the God of heaven (Neh. 1:4), and He was anxious and desirous to come down to earth to express Himself. However, there was a great lack of human coordination. Therefore, He was working, waiting, and expecting to have a group of people who would cooperate with Him. Eventually, He brought His people out from the dominion of Satan, out of Egypt, and through the wilderness into the good land. Ultimately, He defeated all the enemies in the good land through His people, who built the temple and a city. When the city and the temple were built, that was the building of the kingdom. After the temple was completed and at the time it was being dedicated, God's glory filled it. God's glory is just God Himself. God Himself came down from the heavens to get into His habitation. But He obtained not only a house to inhabit but also a city to contain the house. Because of the city, His habitation was accessible and preserved. The city, protecting His dwelling place, signifies the kingdom and authority. **God finally had a house upon earth within a city as a symbol of the kingdom in which He could dwell and express Himself**. So the good land was not only a type of Christ as rest to God's people but also a type of Christ as the kingdom.

The kingdom is simply the maturity of Christ as life. It is the consummation of our enjoyment of Christ. First, we enjoy Christ as the land, and eventually, what we enjoy of Christ will become the kingdom. When we were first saved, we simply enjoyed the Lord Jesus as a little lamb. At that time we probably ate only a small portion. From that time we began to eat more and more of the Lord Jesus until eventually we enjoy Him to the full all the time. The ultimate consummation of the enjoyment of Christ is the kingdom. We receive Christ into us as our life, and this life rules in us gradually—a little today and a little more tomorrow. He is so patient. We are growing with Him, and His life is growing with us. **One day we will have the maturity of His life, which will be the kingdom.**

THE KINGDOM IN HEBREWS

What a wonderful book Hebrews is! It reveals that Christ is superior to every item of Judaism. Such a Christ is eventually the kingdom. Hebrews is a book concerning the kingdom. How can we prove that Hebrews is a book related to the kingdom? Let us read **Hebrews 1:8**: **"Of the Son, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.'"** This verse says, "Of the Son, 'Your throne'" and "Your kingdom." It does not say Your redemption, Your salvation, Your love, or Your power. **The fact that it says "Your throne" and "Your kingdom" indicates the matter of the kingdom.**

Let us also read **Hebrews 12:28**: **"Therefore receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us have grace, through which we may serve God well-pleasingly with piety and fear."** Does it say that we are receiving salvation? Or redemption? Or peace? No! It says that we are receiving a kingdom. According to the pure word of the Lord, Hebrews is not merely a book on salvation but on the kingdom. What is the kingdom? **The kingdom is the maturity of Christ as life to us, and it is the ultimate consummation of the enjoyment of Christ.** Hebrews is a book on the enjoyment of Christ, and this enjoyment will consummate in the kingdom.

SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS

Hebrews surely shows that Christ is much better than all the items of Judaism. What are the main items of Judaism? First were the angels, through whom the law was given; next were the leaders such as Moses and Joshua; next were the priests such as Aaron; and last was the Old Testament, the old covenant. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the writer of Hebrews compares Christ with all these items, showing that Christ is superior to them. In the first two chapters Christ is compared with the angels. **He is much higher and much superior to the angels because He is both God and man.** He is the God-man. He created all things. He tasted

death for us, and He destroyed Satan and the authority of death. The Lord Jesus accomplished everything for us, was glorified, and is crowned in the heavens. Presently, He is working to impart Himself into us to make us His brothers. He is the Son of God, and He is making us also into sons of God as His brothers. Now He is bringing us into glory. He did everything for us—He suffered, He delivered, He saved. He is such a wonderful One!

How about the angels? The angels are simply ministering spirits. **They cannot compare with Christ.** He is such a wonderful One, and He is our salvation. Our salvation is not a “thing” but a wonderful person! Oh, how great a salvation! The writer was short of words to describe this great salvation, so he simply used the word so! How great a salvation! It is impossible to describe how great. But the writer says that if we neglect so great a salvation, we will surely suffer something (2:3).

Have you realized that the book of Hebrews was not written to unbelievers but to the Hebrew believers? All of them were saved. But there was a problem—**they were distracted from the enjoyment of Christ.** They were saved, and they had begun to participate in Christ, but they were in the dangerous position of being distracted away from Christ back to Judaism. If this were to happen, they would lose the enjoyment of Christ in the fullest way. This means that they would neglect so great a salvation. If they were distracted from Christ and should neglect so great a salvation, they would suffer a kind of punishment from the Lord. If we neglect so great a salvation, how can we escape some kind of punishment? Do not think, though, that this means we can lose our salvation. **No! Our salvation is for eternity. Once we have been saved, we can never be lost. Hebrews even calls our salvation “eternal salvation” (5:9).** But after we have been saved, we need to go on to enjoy Christ more and more until the consummation. **It is not a matter of being saved or lost. It is a matter of more and higher enjoyment of Christ.** If we neglect the enjoyment of so great a salvation, we will suffer some loss.

SUPERIOR TO MOSES AND JOSHUA

The second section of the book, which is mainly chapters 3 and 4, tells us that Christ is far superior to Moses and Joshua. **Both Moses and Joshua were sent by God to lead His people, but Christ is superior to both of them.** Moses was sent by God as an apostle, and Christ is also sent by God; He is our Apostle, our Leader. As such, He is superior to Moses. Moses was God’s house, but Christ is the Builder of the house. As the Builder of the house, Christ has more glory than the house itself.

Moses, however, did not bring God’s people into the rest. Rather, Joshua brought the people into the rest. Of course, Joshua is the Hebrew name for Jesus. Joshua was a type of Christ who brought the people into the good land. Eventually, both Joshua and the good land are just Christ. Christ as the rest becomes the kingdom.

However, Joshua did not bring the people into the good land by himself. He had a partner whose name was Caleb. According to **Hebrews 3:14, we are the Calebs to Christ. We are His partners and companions.** The Greek word used here not only means “partakers” but also “partners.” Joshua had only one partner, Caleb, but today Christ has many partners. All the members of His Body are His partners. We are partners with Christ in a great corporation. Although the Hebrew Christians had been made partners with Christ, **there was the danger that they might be distracted and not enter into the good land.** All the people of Israel should have been partners with Joshua, but only one actually went into the good land with Joshua, and that was Caleb. **If we are distracted from the enjoyment of Christ, we will no longer be His partners, and we will miss the reward of the manifestation of the kingdom.**

Enjoying Christ in Our Spirit

Hebrews 3 and 4 indicate that our progress is in three stages: **first we come out of Egypt, then we pass through the wilderness, and finally we enter into the good land.** When we arrive in the good land, we are in the rest. Eventually, that will be the kingdom. These three stages—Egypt, the wilderness, and the good land—correspond to the three parts of our entire being. **Our body corresponds to Egypt; our soul corresponds to the wilderness; and our spirit, with Christ in it, corresponds to the good land.** Before we were saved, we were in Egypt. Once we were saved, we began to wander in the wilderness of the soul. **If we will forget about our soul and take care of our spirit, we will enjoy Christ in our spirit as the good land.** There we will enjoy Christ as our rest. As we enjoy Him in our spirit, this enjoyment will become the kingdom.

Hebrews 4:12 is very strategic at this point. **Verse 11** says that **we need to be diligent to enter into the rest**, and **verse 12** tells us **how we may enter into the rest**. **The way to enter into the rest is to have our spirit discerned and divided from our soul**. Today's good land is Christ in our spirit. **If we remain in our mind, this means that we are wandering in the wilderness**. We must get out of our mind, out of our soul, and into our spirit where Christ is our rest. **This rest eventually becomes the kingdom**. We should not be in Egypt or in the wilderness. We all must be in the good land, that is, with Christ in our spirit. This means that **we should not simply live in our physical body according to the flesh, nor should we live according to our soul**. Praise the Lord! There is the possibility for us to get out of our soul and into our spirit. When we get into our spirit, Christ is there. We experience the good land, and we have the rest. We all have experienced that when we were wandering in our soul we had no rest. **But once we turned to our spirit, we immediately entered into the rest**. In the rest we enjoyed all the riches of the good land. Eventually, the temple will be built, and the city will be raised up. **The kingdom will be established, and God's glory will fill the house**. **This is the ultimate consummation of the enjoyment of Christ**.

The danger is ever present that we would be frustrated and distracted away from Christ. Some wind of teaching may take us away from the enjoyment of Christ. That danger was present with the Hebrew believers, and it is also present with us today. We may be distracted from turning to our spirit to enjoy Christ as our rest. It is in our spirit that we have the full enjoyment of Christ. **Many things today can be a distraction from the full enjoyment of Christ**. **Only when we have the full enjoyment of Christ is there the possibility of having the kingdom**. The full enjoyment of Christ will consummate in the kingdom.

An Example for Us

In **1 Corinthians 9** the apostle Paul compares the Christian life to a **race**. At the end of this race a prize awaits the winner. **Chapter 10** follows immediately **concerning the history of the children of Israel**. Of course, in the original text there was no chapter division, so this was one continuous account. According to Paul's concept, the whole nation of Israel was in the wilderness running the race. They all passed through the Red Sea; they all ate the same food; they all drank the same spiritual drink. **But not all of them entered into the good land; many of them died in the wilderness**. **First Corinthians 10:11** says that **"these things happened to them as an example."** Actually, the phrase as an example should be "typically," that is, related to a type. In other words, all the things that happened to the children of Israel were types. Their experience was a type to us. **Their crossing of the Red Sea was a type of our baptism**. **Their eating of manna was a type of our eating of Christ**. **Their drinking of the water out of the rock was a type of our drinking of the Spirit**.

Moreover, all were wandering in the wilderness, and only four entered into the good land. Two living ones of that generation, Joshua and Caleb, and two dead ones, Jacob and Joseph, entered the good land. This is also a type to us. This means that when the Lord Jesus comes back, some living saints and some dead saints, both of whom are overcomers, will enter into the manifestation of the kingdom. **Many Christians have passed through the Red Sea and are wandering in the wilderness, but according to the type, not many will cross over the Jordan River and enter into the rest**. **We must take this as a serious and sober warning**. This strongly admonishes us **not to stay in our mind but to turn to our spirit where we can enjoy Christ as our rest**. **In our spirit we can have the full enjoyment of the riches of Christ, which will consummate in the kingdom**.

(The Kingdom, Chapter 45)