

Message Three

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Scripture Reading: Matt. 12:28; 24:14; 28:18-19; Mark 1:14-15; John 3:3, 5; Col. 1:13

I. The kingdom of God is a divine sphere for God to work out His plan; it is a realm where God can exercise His authority to accomplish what He intends—Mark 1:15; John 3:3, 5; Matt. 12:28; Rev. 11:15:

- A. The kingdom of God is the ruling, the reigning, of God with all its blessing and enjoyment—Mark 1:15; Col. 1:13.
- B. The kingdom of God is not only God's reign over the universe in a general way by His authority and power but also God's reign in a particular way in the sense of life—John 3:5, 15; Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11, 14.
- C. As God incarnate, the Lord Jesus came to establish the kingdom of God, to establish a realm in which God can carry out His purpose through the exercise of His authority—John 1:1, 14; 3:3, 5; 18:36; Mark 4:3, 26-29; Matt. 12:28.
- D. From God's point of view, the kingdom is the development of God Himself as the seed of life; from the point of view of God's enemy, the kingdom is the subduing of rebellion—Mark 4:26-27; Matt. 12:28.

II. The fundamental problem in the universe is rebellion against the authority of God—Isa. 14:12-14:

- A. Satan intends to violate God's sovereignty, usurp God's authority, overthrow God's throne, and establish his own kingdom—Matt. 12:26; Eph. 2:2.
- B. When man fell, he rebelled against God, put God's authority aside, denied God's authority, and rejected God's rule—Gen. 3:6, 11; Rom. 5:12; 1 John 3:4.

III. Through the gospel of the kingdom, God brings people under the ruling of the heavenly authority so that they may become His kingdom, those who are ruled by His authority—Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:5-6:

- A. The New Testament preaches the gospel in the way of the kingdom; because the kingdom of God is the real gospel, to know the gospel requires that we know the kingdom—Mark 1:14-15; Acts 8:12.
- B. The gospel is for the kingdom, and the gospel is proclaimed so that rebellious sinners might be saved, qualified, and equipped to enter into the kingdom of God—Mark 1:14-15; Matt. 4:17; Acts 8:12:
 - 1. The gospel of life, the gospel of grace, and the gospel of salvation are all for the kingdom; the kingdom is the center, the hub—John 3:16; Acts 20:24; 4:12.
 - 2. The gospel of the kingdom brings people not only into God's salvation but also into the kingdom; the emphasis of the gospel of the kingdom is on the heavenly ruling of God and the authority of the Lord—Matt. 24:14.
 - 3. The gospel of the kingdom brings the believers into the realm of the divine ruling so that they may participate in the blessings of the divine life in the divine kingdom—1 Thes. 2:12.

- C. In Matthew the goal of the gospel of the kingdom is to set up the kingdom of the heavens by putting people into the Triune God, making them citizens of the kingdom of the heavens—28:19; Rom. 14:17.

IV. God commands everyone to repent for the kingdom—Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Acts 17:30:

- A. To repent means that originally we were rebellious and against God, but now we turn back to the Lord in submission—Matt. 3:2; 4:17.
- B. To repent is to have a change of mind issuing in regret, to have a turn in purpose—Luke 3:3, 8; 5:32; 17:3; Acts 17:30-31.
- C. Repentance is mainly for us to enter into the kingdom of God; unless we repent—that is, have a change of concept—we cannot enter into the kingdom—Mark 1:15; Matt. 3:2; 4:17.

V. As believers in Christ, we have been regenerated to enter into the kingdom of God as the realm of the divine species to live under the rule of God in life, light, and love—John 3:3, 5, 15-16; Col. 1:12-13:

- A. The kingdom of God is a divine realm to be entered into, a realm that requires the divine life; hence, the unique way to enter into the kingdom of God is to receive God as life and to gain God Himself; this is regeneration—John 3:3, 5, 15; 1 John 5:11-12.
- B. We have been born into the kingdom of God, and now the divine life in our spirit knows the kingdom of God—John 3:5-6.
- C. The kingdom of God into which we have entered through regeneration is a realm of the divine species; we have entered into this divine realm by being born of God to become children of God, God-men, who have the life and nature of God—1:12-13; 3:3, 5.
- D. Through regeneration we have been transferred into the delightful kingdom of the Son of God's love—a realm where we are ruled in love with life; the kingdom in which we find ourselves today is a realm full of life, light, and love—Col. 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 2:9.

VI. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations before the end of this age—Matt. 24:14:

- A. This preaching, signified by the white horse of the first seal in Revelation 6:1-2, will be a sign of the consummation of this age.
- B. The gospel of the kingdom must be brought to the whole inhabited earth through the churches in the Lord's recovery—Matt. 24:14; 1 Thes. 1:8.

VII. Because all authority has been given to the resurrected Christ, He sent His disciples to disciple all the nations; they go with His authority—Matt. 28:18-19:

- A. To disciple the nations is to make the heathen the kingdom people for the establishing of His kingdom, which is the church, even today, on this earth—1 Thes. 1:9; 2:12; Rev. 1:5-6, 9; 5:9-10.
- B. The intrinsic purpose of our preaching the gospel is to bring people of the nations into the Triune God in order to make them the citizens of the kingdom of the heavens—Matt. 24:14; 28:18-19.

- C. According to Matthew, being baptized into the reality of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is for the constituting of the kingdom of the heavens—v. 19:
1. Unlike an earthly society, the heavenly kingdom cannot be formed with human beings of flesh and blood—1 Cor. 15:50.
 2. God's heavenly kingdom can be constituted only with people who have been immersed into the union with the Triune God and who have been established and built up with the Triune God, who has been wrought into them—Rom. 6:3-4; 14:17; Gal. 3:26-27; 4:19; 5:21; Eph. 3:14-19; 5:5.