

# WEEK 11 — OUTLINE

## A Portrait of the Kingdom of God

Scripture Reading: Exo. 18; Mark 1:14-15; Matt. 6:10, 13; John 3:3, 5; Rom. 14:17; Col. 1:13

### «DAY 1»

#### **I. The kingdom of God is a divine sphere for God to work out His plan according to the good pleasure of His will (Mark 1:15; Eph. 1:5):**

- A. The kingdom of God is a realm where God can exercise His authority to accomplish what He intends (Matt. 6:10).
- B. The kingdom of God is the ruling, the reigning, of God with all its blessing and enjoyment (Num. 6:23-27; Col. 1:13).

#### **II. Exodus 18 presents a portrait, a type, of the kingdom of God, in which the tabernacle, God's dwelling place, was built:**

- A. The fact that this portrait is presented after the war against Amalek signifies that when the flesh as God's enemy is dealt with, the kingdom with the kingship immediately comes in (cf. Gal. 5:17-25), and the church as the Body of Christ is built up (cf. 1 Kings 1—8):
  - 1. In order to realize the kingdom with the building up of the church, we must utterly repudiate the flesh in both its good and evil aspects (cf. Phil. 3:3-10).
  - 2. Saul lost his kingship because he did not utterly destroy Amalek but spared the best of what was to be destroyed (1 Sam. 15:9 and footnote 1).
  - 3. In the experience of God's full salvation, the kingdom comes after God's people have been delivered from Satan (Pharaoh) and the world (Egypt) and after the flesh (Amalek) has been defeated and subdued.
  - 4. After the defeat of Amalek, the kingdom is needed as the sphere, the environment, for the building up of God's dwelling place on earth.
- B. Jethro, a priest of Midian, represents the Gentiles who turn to God and become seekers of God in the kingdom (Exo. 18:1, 5, 10-12; Zech. 8:20-23).
- C. Zipporah, the Gentile wife of Moses secured by him during his period of rejection by Israel (Exo. 2:13-22), typifies the Gentile church gained by Christ as His wife during the time of His rejection by the children of Israel (Rom. 11:11-25; cf. Gen. 41:45, footnote 2); when the kingdom comes, the overcomers in the church will participate in the kingdom as the ruling authority in the kingdom (Rev. 2:26-27; 20:4, 6).
- D. Exodus 18:13-26 portrays the authority and order of the kingdom; Christ, signified by Moses, is the Head of authority, and under the headship of

Christ everything is kept in a proper order.

## <<DAY 2>>

### **III. For the building up of God's dwelling place on earth, we need to live a kingdom life in the church as the kingdom of God (Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17):**

- A. 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):
1. The kingdom of God is the gospel; thus, to know the gospel requires that we know the kingdom (Mark 1:14-15; Acts 8:12).
  2. The gospel is proclaimed so that rebellious sinners might be saved, qualified, and equipped to enter into the kingdom of God (Matt. 4:17).
  3. The gospel of the kingdom brings the believers into the realm of the divine ruling in order that they may participate in the blessings of the divine life in the divine kingdom (1 Thes. 2:12).

## <<DAY 3>>

- B. The New Testament first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church; the presence of the kingdom produces the church (Matt. 4:23; 16:18-19):
1. The gospel of the kingdom brings forth the church because the kingdom is the life itself, and the church is the issue of this life (4:23; Acts 8:12).
  2. The kingdom is the reality of the church; therefore, apart from the kingdom life, we cannot live the church life (Matt. 5:3; 16:18-19; Rev. 1:5-6, 9):
    - a. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5—7) is the content of the church life; without the reality of the kingdom, the church is empty.
    - b. Since the kingdom life issues in the church life, as we live corporately in the kingdom life, we spontaneously live the church life (Rom. 14:17).
  3. Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up (Matt. 16:18-19):

## <<DAY 4>>

- a. The church is brought into being through the authority of the kingdom; when the kingdom is able to assert its authority over a company of believers, those believers can be built up into the church (Col. 1:13; 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16).
- b. The keys of the kingdom are given to make the building of the church possible (Matt. 16:18-19; 18:18; cf. John 20:23).
- c. A believer who does not live in the reality of the kingdom cannot be built into the

structure of the church (Eph. 2:22).

4. The church as the kingdom of God is the kingdom of the Son of God's love, a most pleasant and delightful place where we are ruled in life, light, and love (Col. 1:12-13).
- C. The kingdom of God is a divine realm to be entered into—a realm that requires the divine life (John 3:3, 5-6, 15):
1. The kingdom is not only the reign of God but also the realm of the divine life (vv. 3, 5-6, 15-16; 18:36):
    - a. In actuality, God's reigning over us is not an outward matter but a matter of the innate ability of the divine life (Rom. 8:2).
    - b. The kingdom of God is an organism constituted with God's life as the realm of life for His ruling, in which He reigns by His life and expresses Himself as the Divine Trinity in the divine life (John 3:5; 15:1-8, 16, 26).

### «DAY 5»

- c. The unique way to enter into the kingdom of God is to receive God in Christ as life and gain God Himself; this is regeneration (3:5, 15; 1 John 5:11-12).
  - d. We have been born into the kingdom of God, and now the divine life in our regenerated spirit knows the kingdom of God (John 3:5-6).
  - e. We live in the kingdom of God as the realm of the divine life by the sense of life (Rom. 8:6).
2. The kingdom of God is a realm of light (John 3:5; 8:12):
    - a. The divine life shines in the divine light (1:4; 8:12).
    - b. Light is God's shining, God's expression; when God is expressed, the nature of that expression is light (1 John 1:5).
  3. The kingdom of God is a realm of truth (John 8:32; 14:6; 18:37):
    - a. Truth is the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—with the Word of God (14:6, 16-17; 15:26; 16:13-15; 17:17; 1 John 5:6).
    - b. Truthfulness is the revealed divine reality becoming our genuineness and sincerity so that we may live a life that corresponds to the divine light (2 John 1; 3 John 1; John 4:23-24).

### «DAY 6»

4. The kingdom of God is a realm of grace (1:14, 16-17):
  - a. Grace is the Triune God in His incarnation to be dispensed into the believers by the Father as the source, by the Son as the element, and by the Spirit as the application (2 Cor. 13:14).
  - b. Grace is God becoming our enjoyment; grace means that God is everything, God does everything, and God gives everything (John 1:14; 1 Pet. 5:10).

5. The kingdom of God is a realm of shepherding (John 10:10-11, 15-17; 21:15-17):
    - a. The Lord shepherds us by feeding us with Himself and in Himself as the pasture, by being life to us and by living in us; His living within us is actually His shepherding (10:9; 11:25; Col. 3:4).
    - b. In the kingdom of God as the realm of the divine life, we live a life of shepherding (John 21:15-17).
  6. The kingdom of God is a realm of glory (1:14, 18; 17:22-24):
    - a. Glory is the expression of God, God expressed in splendor (12:41).
    - b. God's glory goes with His kingdom; the kingdom is a realm in which God exercises His authority so that He can express His glory (Matt. 6:13; 1 Thes. 2:12).
- D. As we live a kingdom life in the church as the kingdom of God, we are “being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

## « WEEK 11 — DAY 1 »

### Morning Nourishment

**Mark 1:14-15** And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near. Repent and believe in the gospel.

We need to see the crucial matter that the intrinsic essence of the gospel is the kingdom. The gospel is preached for the kingdom, and the kingdom is a divine sphere for God to work out His plan, a realm where God can exercise His authority to accomplish what He intends. The only way for God to reach His goal is through the kingdom....The purpose of the gospel is to have the kingdom. The kingdom of God is the goal of the gospel.

The kingdom of God is the ruling, the reigning, of God with all its blessing and enjoyment. It is the goal of the gospel of God and of Jesus Christ. (Life-study of Mark, pp. 120, 48)

### Today's Reading

Exodus 18 presents a type, a portrait, of the kingdom of God, in which the tabernacle, God's dwelling place, was built. The fact that this portrait is presented after the war against Amalek signifies that when the flesh as God's enemy is dealt with, the kingdom with the kingship immediately comes in (cf. Gal. 5:17-25), and the church as the Body of Christ is built up (cf. 1 Kings 1—8). In order to realize the kingdom with the building of the church, we must utterly repudiate the flesh in both its good and evil aspects (cf. Phil. 3:3-10). Saul lost the kingship because he did not utterly destroy Amalek but spared the best of what was to be destroyed (1 Sam. 15 and footnotes).

According to historical sequence, the events described in Exodus 18 took place after the building of the tabernacle and not long before the children of Israel began their journey with the tabernacle toward the good land (Deut. 1:6-18). Under divine inspiration Moses inserted these events after Exodus 17 to show that in the experience of God's full salvation the kingdom comes after God's people have been delivered from Satan (Pharaoh) and the world (Egypt), and after the flesh (Amalek) has been defeated and subdued. After the defeat of Amalek, the kingdom is needed as the sphere, the environment, for the building up of God's dwelling place on earth. (Exo. 18:1, footnote 1)

Jethro, a priest of Midian (Exo. 18:1, 5, 10-12), represents the Gentiles who turn to God and become seekers of God in the kingdom (Isa. 2:2-3; Zech. 8:20-23). (Exo. 18:1, footnote 2)

Zipporah, the Gentile wife of Moses secured by him during his period of rejection by Israel (Exo. 2:13-22), typifies the Gentile church gained by Christ as His wife during the time of His rejection by the children of Israel (Rom. 11:11-25; cf. footnote 2 on Gen. 41:45). When the kingdom comes, the overcomers in the church participate in the kingdom as the ruling authority in the kingdom (Rev. 2:26-27; 20:4, 6). (Exo. 18:2, footnote 1)

Exodus 18:13-26 portrays the authority and order of the kingdom. Christ, signified by Moses, is the Head of authority, and under the headship of Christ everything is in a proper order. (Exo. 18:13, footnote 1)

We may apply the picture of Exodus 18 to our situation as Christians today. We know from our experience that when our flesh is defeated, the unbelievers will turn to us. It is good that all the churches are actively preaching the gospel. However, if we live in the flesh and fail to defeat Amalek, we may labor a great deal in preaching the gospel, but not many unbelievers will turn. But if we first defeat and subdue our flesh and then go forth to contact people and preach the gospel to them, Jethro will come to us. This means that the unbelievers will turn this way. When we preach the gospel by the living Spirit through the operating cross, killing the flesh, people will turn to us wherever we go. Furthermore, the church, signified by Zipporah, will become prevailing. Thus, the proper gospel preaching must be the kingdom. In the words of Matthew 24:14, the gospel of the kingdom must be preached to the whole inhabited earth. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 574-575)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 49; Life-study of Mark, msg. 13; The Basic Revelation in the Holy Scriptures, chs. 6-7

## « WEEK 11 — DAY 2 »

### Morning Nourishment

**Matt. 24:14** And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

**Acts 8:12** But when they believed Philip, who announced the gospel of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

As those who are under the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity, we need to live in the reality of the kingdom of the heavens today. We need to live a kingdom life in the church, developing ourselves in the divine life until we reach maturity. Then we shall have a rich entrance into the coming kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 1737)

### Today's Reading

When we believe in the Lord, we become believers. However, the Gospel of Matthew says that our believing in the Lord is for us to become His disciples. On one hand, the Bible reveals the gospel as the gospel of grace, which is for us to become believers through faith. On the other hand, the Bible says that the gospel is the gospel of the kingdom, which is for us to become the Lord's disciples, those who are trained, ruled, disciplined, and dealt with by the Lord's authority. According to the gospel of grace, God is pleased to freely grant us grace, and we can receive this grace simply by believing. However, this gospel is also the gospel of the kingdom through which God desires to bring us under the ruling of the heavenly authority so that we may become His kingdom, those who are ruled by God's authority. (What the Kingdom Is to the Believers, p. 88)

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 of 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. The kingdom is the real gospel. Our concept needs to be changed. Formerly, we may have thought that the gospel is the gospel and that the kingdom is something else. We realized we needed the gospel but probably relegated the kingdom to the future. This is absolutely wrong. The kingdom is the gospel. If we do not know the kingdom, we do not know the gospel in a full way. If we want to know the gospel in a full way, we must realize that the kingdom is the all-inclusive gospel. The Lord Jesus and His disciples preached the kingdom of God as the gospel. (The Kingdom, pp. 14-15)

The gospel is for the kingdom. The purpose of the preaching of the gospel is that men might enter into the kingdom. The gospel is proclaimed that people might be saved, qualified, and equipped to enter into the kingdom....The gospel of the kingdom brings the rebellious sinners into the church. But now we need to see what is the reality of the church. The reality of the church is the kingdom. If you have been saved, washed, and regenerated for the church, it means that you have experienced these things for the reality of the kingdom. (Life-study of Genesis, p. 471)

The gospel was planned, promised, and accomplished by God (Eph. 1:8-9; Acts 2:23; Rom. 1:2; 2 Cor. 5:21; Acts 3:15), and it is the power of God unto salvation to all believers (Rom. 1:16), that they may be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:19) and regenerated by Him (1 Pet. 1:3) to be His children (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:16) and enjoy all His riches and blessings as their inheritance (Eph. 1:14). Hence, it is the gospel of God. It brings the believers into the realm of the divine ruling that they may participate in the blessings of the divine life in the divine kingdom (1 Thes. 2:12). Hence, it is also the gospel of the kingdom of God. Therefore, its full contents are the same as that of the New Testament with all its bequests. When we believe in this gospel, we inherit the Triune God with His redemption, His salvation, and His divine life with its riches for our eternal portion. (Life-study of Mark, p. 50)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msgs. 157-159, 240-242

## « WEEK 11 — DAY 3 »

### Morning Nourishment

**Matt. 4:23** And Jesus went about in all of Galilee, teaching...and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom...

**16:18-19** ...Upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

In Matthew 16:18-19 the words church and kingdom are used interchangeably. First the Lord said, “I will build My church,” and then, “I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens.” This indicates that in order for the church to be built, the kingdom needs to be opened. In other words, opening the kingdom is the way to begin the building of the church. (Life-study of Mark, p. 120)

The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church. Where the kingdom of heaven is in authority, there a church will be built up. A church comes into being where a company of people accept the government of heaven. So it would appear to be the presence of the kingdom that produces the church. (The Kingdom and the Church, p. 33)

### Today's Reading

We have seen that any kind of life is a kingdom, so the kingdom is the life itself. The kingdom of God is the life of God, but the church is not the life, nor is the life the church. The church is the product of life. The divine life is the kingdom, and this life produces the church. The New Testament concept is that the gospel brings in the kingdom. The gospel does not bring in the church, but the gospel brings forth the church. Thus, the gospel brings in the kingdom of God, and the gospel also brings forth the church of God. This is why the gospel is called the gospel of the kingdom in the New Testament (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14). There is not a verse in the New Testament that tells us that the gospel is the gospel of the church. The gospel of the kingdom brings forth, produces, the church because the kingdom is the life itself and the church is the issue, the produce, of life. As you can see, the kingdom and the church are very closely related. The New Testament refers to the preaching of the gospel of peace (Eph. 2:17). This peace produces the church. No verse, however, tells us to preach the church. The Bible also tells us to preach forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47) and to preach the gospel of the kingdom, but never to preach the church because the church is the product of what is preached.

The Lord told Peter in Matthew 16:18-19 that He would build His church upon the revelation of Christ which Peter had received from the Father. Immediately after this the Lord said to Peter, “I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens” (v. 19). Without the kingdom as the reality of life, the church could never be produced or built up. To produce the church and to build up the church, we need the kingdom. The kingdom actually is the reality of the church. We cannot say, however, that the church is the reality of the kingdom. We can only say that the kingdom is the reality of the church.

In the church, we are the believers living, moving, and acting in the divine life. As a result, there is an expression of this divine life. The expression of this divine life is the kingdom, the practicality of this life, and the practicality of this divine life is in the church. Now we can see that the kingdom is the reality of the church life. As long as the divine life is here, the kingdom is here. As long as the divine life is being lived, the kingdom exists. (Elders' Training, Book 2: The Vision of the Lord's Recovery, pp. 43-44, 48-49)

It is crucial for us to see that we experience the dispensing of the Divine Trinity corporately by living in the kingdom. As we live corporately in the kingdom life, we spontaneously live the church life. The kingdom life issues in the church life. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 1743)

Further Reading: Elders' Training, Book 2: The Vision of the Lord's Recovery, ch. 4; What the Kingdom Is to the Believers, chs. 1-3

## « WEEK 11 — DAY 4 »

### Morning Nourishment

Col. 1:12-13 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light; who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

The church has been secured through the sovereign rule of heaven. Because the kingdom of heaven is able to assert its authority over a company of men, that company of men can be built up into a church. It is necessary at this point to recapitulate. Why was the church brought into being? For the purpose of bringing in the kingdom! How was the church brought into being? By means of the authority of the kingdom! God's purpose was to bring His heavenly dominion to the earth, and apart from the church, His goal could not be attained. He needed a people who would subject themselves to the dominion of heaven, so that under that dominion they might be built up into the church. (The Kingdom and the Church, pp. 36-37)

### Today's Reading

The keys of the kingdom are given to make the building of the church possible [Matt. 16:18-19]. Where the authority of the kingdom is absent, there the building of the church will be lacking. Anyone who refuses to submit to the authority of the kingdom can at best be a saved person; he will never be built into the structure of the church. (The Kingdom and the Church, pp. 32-33)

We have been transferred into a realm where we are ruled in love with life. Here, under the heavenly ruling and restriction, we have genuine freedom, the proper freedom in love, with life, and under light. This is what it means to be delivered out of the authority of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Here in this kingdom we enjoy Christ and have the church life. Here there is no opinion or division. (Life-study of Colossians, p. 35)

The kingdom of God is the reign of God. It is a divine realm to be entered into, a realm that requires the divine life. Only the divine life can realize the divine things. Hence, for one to see, or to enter into, the kingdom of God requires that he be regenerated with the divine life. This clearly demonstrates that the kingdom is a matter related to life.

The kingdom of God is not only the reign of God but also a divine realm or sphere. To participate in the reign of God and to be in the divine realm, we need the divine life. Only those who have the divine life can be in the divine realm and participate in the divine kingdom. Regardless of how good, clean, and pure our human life might be, it is not able to realize the things in the divine realm, and it is not qualified to enter into the divine kingdom. Only the divine life is qualified to be in the divine realm. (Truth Lessons—Level Three, vol. 4, pp. 7-8)

Our common understanding of God's reigning [may be] that every day there is a "whip" regulating us from outside. In actuality, God's reigning is not an outward matter but a matter of life. If a monkey could be regenerated, born again, to become a man and have the human life, this life would automatically regulate the monkey from within to live like a man. In this way, the monkey would automatically and naturally enter into the human kingdom. If this happened, then to try to make the monkey to live and walk like a monkey again would be a suffering to the monkey. Therefore, it is altogether a matter of the innate ability of life, not a matter of outward teaching and regulation. (The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity, p. 44)

The kingdom of God is an organism constituted with His divine life, and this kingdom becomes the realm of life for His ruling. He reigns in it by His divine life and expresses Himself in His divine life. It began with the Old Testament saints and is realized in the church in this age. It will be completed in the New Jerusalem in the millennium and ultimately consummated in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth. (Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 2, p. 171)

Further Reading: The Kingdom and the Church, chs. 1-3; Life-study of Colossians, msg. 4

## « WEEK 11 — DAY 5 »

### Morning Nourishment

**John 3:5** Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

**8:12** Again...Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The only way to enter into the kingdom of God is to receive God as life and to gain God Himself. This is regeneration. Therefore, to repent is to have a change in your concept. You have to change your concepts about Moses, your concepts about the law, and even your worldly, natural concepts about serving God. All these concepts need to be changed. Therefore, you must repent! (The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity, pp. 41-42)

### Today's Reading

When we called on the name of the Lord, the divine Spirit came into us, regenerating us and causing us to be born into the kingdom of God. Although you may know very little about the kingdom of God, your spirit within you knows about the kingdom. The divine life in your spirit knows the kingdom of God...We know because we have been born into the kingdom of God. (Life-study of John, p. 109)

If we want to live in God, we must live in the law of the Spirit of life. This requires us to live in spirit, for the law of the Spirit of life is in the spirit. This also requires us to live in the sense of life, for the sense of life is the sense of the law of the Spirit of life. If we obey the sense of life, we mind the spirit and live in the spirit. If we mind the spirit, we live in the law of the Spirit of life. When we live in the law of the Spirit of life, we live in God. Consequently, what we live out is God Himself. God is life; therefore, what we live out is life, and we become life-men. (The Knowledge of Life, p. 109)

As Paul testified..., he "saw...a light from heaven beyond the brightness of the sun" shining round about him (Acts 26:13). Furthermore, the Lord spoke to him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 26:14). Through the shining of this light and the Lord's speaking, Saul of Tarsus was delivered out of the authority of darkness and was transferred into another realm, a realm of light, which is the kingdom of the Son of God's love. (Life-study of Colossians, p. 38)

When the Word is heard and life is received, the life becomes the light shining within to enlighten us. When Christ, as the divine life, shines within us as the light of life, we are under His enlightening. Having been born of God by receiving the Word, we have the divine life, eternal life, and this life becomes the light shining within us. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 567)

As light is the nature of God in His expression, so darkness is the nature of Satan in his evil works (1 John 3:8). Thank God that He has delivered us out of the satanic darkness into the divine light (Acts 26:18; 1 Pet. 2:9). The divine light is the divine life in the Son operating in us. (1 John 1:5, footnote 4)

Reality is the Triune God (John 1:14, 17; 14:6; 1 John 5:6). Since the Triune God is contained and concealed in His word, His word is reality...We are sanctified in the reality of this word. (John 17:17, footnote 2)

The Father's word carries the reality of the Father with it. When God's word says, "God is light," it carries God as light in it. Hence, God's word is reality, the truth, unlike Satan's word, which is vanity, a lie (John 8:44). (John 17:17, footnote 3)

[Truthfulness in 2 John 1 is] the same as the Greek word for truth....Here it denotes the revealed divine reality—the Triune God dispensed into man in the Son, Jesus Christ—becoming man's genuineness and sincerity, that man may live a life that corresponds with the divine light (John 3:19-21) and worship God, as God seeks, according to what He is (John 4:23-24). (2 John 1, footnote 3)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msgs. 250-253; The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity, ch. 3

## Morning Nourishment

1 Thes. 2:12 So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1 Pet. 5:10 But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.

God came in the way of incarnation to us as grace. Hence, grace is the Triune God in His incarnation to be dispensed to the believers by the Father as the source, by the Son as the element, and by the Spirit as the application (2 Cor. 13:14). The source of grace, the element of grace, and the application of grace are of the three Persons of the Divine Trinity to be our everything.

Grace means “God is everything, God does everything, God gives everything.” What do we have, that we have not received? We have received everything. We receive grace upon grace, and this grace is God Himself. (Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans, pp. 205, 221-222)

## Today’s Reading

As the good Shepherd, Christ feeds His sheep with the divine life....Now the Lord shepherds us in life from within. Inwardly we have Him as our Shepherd, a Shepherd of life and in life. As our Shepherd, the living Christ not only gives us life—He is life to us. The living of the Lord within us is actually His shepherding. Christ shepherds us by being life to us and by living in us.

Glory is the expression of God, God expressed in splendor. God’s glory was a great attraction to Abraham, separating him from the world unto God. God’s glory was also a great encouragement and strength, enabling Abraham to follow God (Gen. 12:1, 4).

Second Peter 1:3 says that God has called us to, or by, His own glory. Furthermore, 1 Peter 5:10 says that God has called us into His eternal glory. According to 2 Timothy 2:10, God’s salvation is with eternal glory. This indicates that eternal glory is the ultimate goal of God’s salvation (Rom. 8:21). God’s salvation leads us into His glory (Heb. 2:10). (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 474, 111)

First Thessalonians 2:12 says, “That you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” God’s calling is according to His selection, and it follows His selection (1:4). As worshippers of idols (1:9), the believers were in the kingdom of Satan (Matt. 12:26). Now, through the salvation in Christ, they are called and have believed into the kingdom of God, which is the sphere for them to worship and enjoy God under the divine ruling with a view of entering into God’s glory. God’s glory goes with His kingdom.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:12 Paul exhorts the believers to walk in a manner worthy of God. If he himself had not walked in a manner worthy of God, how could he have exhorted others to do so? In this matter..., he set an example for the believers to follow. Verse 12 indicates that walking worthily of God is related to entering into His kingdom and being ushered into His glory. (Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, p. 104)

The kingdom of God is the sphere in which God exercises His authority so that He may express His glory for the fulfillment of His purpose. In such a kingdom, what matters is not eating and drinking but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Today the believers live the kingdom life in the church, for the church is the kingdom of God in this age (...1 Cor. 6:10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5). This is a very practical matter involving much exercise.

In Colossians 4:11 the apostle Paul, in his fellowship with the Colossian believers, told them that his fellow workers are the workers for the kingdom of God, indicating that what they were doing in the gospel work for the establishing and building up of the churches was for the kingdom of God today. This means the kingdom of God is actually the reality of the church today established and built by the apostle with his fellow workers. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2839-2840, 1727, 1729)

Further Reading: Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 2, Isn. 24; The Kingdom, chs. 3-6

Hymns, #942

1

God's Kingdom on the earth is now  
His sovereign government within;  
'Tis Christ Himself in us to live  
As Lord and King to rule and reign.

2

His life with His authority  
Enthrones Him now within our hearts  
To govern all our words and deeds  
And regulate our inward parts.

3

The Lord enthroned within our hearts  
His Kingdom doth establish there,  
Assuring His full right to reign  
And for God's purpose to prepare.

4

'Tis by His reign within our hearts  
That life to us He e'er supplies;  
When taking Him as Lord and King,  
His wealth our being satisfies.

5

'Tis by His ruling from within  
His fulness vast is testified;  
'Tis when His inner kingdom rules  
His Body's blessed and edified.

6

'Tis by His heav'nly rule within  
As heav'nly citizens we live;  
'Tis by submission to His rule  
Expression of His reign we give.

7

Here in this heav'nly realm we live,  
And with this heav'nly pow'r possessed  
We walk and fight in heav'nly light  
Until the Kingdom's manifest.