

**PROPAGATING THE RESURRECTED,  
ASCENDED, AND ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST  
AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight

**The Development of the Kingdom of God**

RK Hymns: 942

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:3, 8-9; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31

- Acts 1:3 To whom also He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many irrefutable proofs, appearing to them through a period of forty days and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.
- Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
- Acts 1:9 And when He had said these things, while they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him away from their sight.
- 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.
- Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.
- Acts 19:8 And he entered into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them in the things concerning the kingdom of God.
- Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more.
- Acts 28:23 And once they had appointed a day for him, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he expounded these matters, solemnly testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.

**I. The Gospel of Luke is a narrative of the ministry of the incarnated Jesus as a record of the incarnated Jesus on earth; Acts is a record of the succeeding ministry of the resurrected and ascended Christ in heaven carried out through His believers on earth—1:8-9:**

- Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
- Acts 1:9 And when He had said these things, while they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him away from their sight.
- A. In the Gospels the Lord's ministry on earth, carried out by Himself, was sowing Himself as the seed of the kingdom into His believers, with no church built up yet—Luke 8:4-15.
- Luke 8:4 And while a great crowd was coming together and those from city to city were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable:
- Luke 8:5 The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some seed fell beside the way, and it was trampled underfoot, and the birds of heaven devoured it.
- Luke 8:6 And other seed fell on the rock, and as it grew, it withered because it had no moisture.
- Luke 8:7 And other seed fell in the midst of the thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it off.
- Luke 8:8 And other seed fell into the good earth, and when it grew, it produced fruit a hundredfold. When He had said these things, He called out, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
- Luke 8:9 And His disciples questioned Him as to what this parable might be.
- Luke 8:10 And He said, To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest they are in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.
- Luke 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

- Luke 8:12 And those beside the way are those who heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they would not believe and be saved.
- Luke 8:13 And those on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; yet these have no root, who believe only for a while, and in time of trial they draw back.
- Luke 8:14 And that which fell into the thorns, these are those who heard and, going away, are utterly choked by anxieties and riches and pleasures of this life, and do not bring any fruit to maturity.
- Luke 8:15 But that which is in the good earth, these are those who in a noble and good heart hear the word and hold it fast and bear fruit with endurance.

B. In Acts the Lord's ministry in heaven, carried out through His believers in His resurrection and ascension, spreads Him as the development of the kingdom of God for the building up of the church throughout the entire world to constitute His Body, His fullness, to express Him, even the fullness of God for God's expression—1:8; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:23; 3:19.

- Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
- 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.
- Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.
- Acts 19:8 And he entered into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them in the things concerning the kingdom of God.
- Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more.
- Acts 28:23 And once they had appointed a day for him, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he expounded these matters, solemnly testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

**II. The kingdom of God is the main subject of the apostles' preaching in Acts (8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31); this is indicated by the fact that the resurrected Christ, in His appearing to the apostles through a period of forty days, spoke to them concerning the kingdom of God (1:3):**

- 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.
- Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.
- Acts 19:8 And he entered into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them in the things concerning the kingdom of God.
- Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more.
- Acts 28:23 And once they had appointed a day for him, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he expounded these matters, solemnly testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.
- Acts 1:3 To whom also He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many irrefutable proofs, appearing to them through a period of forty days and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.

- A. In the Gospels the Lord Jesus Himself had announced the gospel of the kingdom—Luke 4:43:
- Luke 4:43 But He said to them, I must announce the gospel of the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this I was sent.
1. The kingdom of God is the Savior as the seed of life sown into His believers, God’s chosen people, and developing into a realm over which God can rule as His kingdom in His divine life—17:21; Mark 4:3, 26.
 

Luke 17:21 Nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

Mark 4:3 Listen! Behold, the sower went out to sow.

Mark 4:26 And He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth,
  2. The entrance into the kingdom of God is regeneration, and the development of the kingdom is the believers’ growth in the divine life—John 3:5; 2 Pet. 1:3-11.
 

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.

2 Pet 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,

2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

2 Pet 1:5 And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;

2 Pet 1:6 And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;

2 Pet 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.

2 Pet 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Pet 1:9 For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins.

2 Pet 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.

2 Pet 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.
  3. The kingdom of God is the church life today, in which the faithful believers live, and it will develop into the coming kingdom as a reward to be inherited by the overcoming saints in the millennium—Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 20:4, 6.
 

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Gal 5:21 Envyings, bouts of drunkenness, carousings, and things like these, of which I tell you beforehand, even as I have said before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph 5:5 For this you realize, knowing that every fornicator or unclean person or greedy person (who is an idolator) has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and of those who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.
  4. Eventually, the kingdom of God will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God, an eternal realm of the eternal blessing of God’s eternal life, which

all of God's redeemed will enjoy in the new heaven and new earth for eternity—21:1-4; 22:1-5, 14.

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.

Rev 21:4 And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death will be no more, nor will there be sorrow or crying or pain anymore; for the former things have passed away.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Rev 22:3 And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him;

Rev 22:4 And they will see His face, and His name will be on their forehead.

Rev 22:5 And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Rev 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

5. The kingdom of God is what the Savior announced as the gospel, the good news, to those who were alienated from the life of God—Eph. 4:18.

Eph 4:18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

6. The Lord's word in Luke 17:20-21 indicates that the kingdom of God is not material but spiritual; it is the Savior in His first coming (vv. 21-22), in His second coming (vv. 23-30), in the rapture of His overcoming believers (vv. 31-36), and in His destroying of the Antichrist (v. 37) to recover the whole earth for His reign there (Rev. 11:15).

Luke 17:20 And when He was questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation;

Luke 17:21 Nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

Luke 17:22 And He said to the disciples, The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.

Luke 17:23 And they will say to you, Behold, there! Behold, here! Do not go away, nor run after them.

Luke 17:24 For just as lightning flashing from one end of heaven shines to the other end of heaven, so will the Son of Man be in His day.

Luke 17:25 But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

Luke 17:26 And even as it happened in the days of Noah, so will it be also in the days of the Son of Man:

Luke 17:27 They were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day in which Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.

Luke 17:28 Likewise, even as it happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;

Luke 17:29 But on the day in which Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

Luke 17:30 It will be in the same way on the day in which the Son of Man is revealed.

- Luke 17:31 In that day, he who will be on the housetop and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and he who is in the field, likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind.
- Luke 17:32 Remember Lot's wife.
- Luke 17:33 Whoever seeks to preserve his soul-life will lose it, and whoever loses it will preserve it alive.
- Luke 17:34 I tell you, In that night there will be two on one bed; the one will be taken and the other will be left.
- Luke 17:35 There will be two women grinding together; the one will be taken but the other will be left.
- Luke 17:36 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.
- Luke 17:37 And they answered and said to Him, Where, Lord? And He said to them, Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered together.
- Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.
7. The kingdom of God is the Savior Himself, who was in the midst of the Pharisees but who is now within the believers—Luke 17:21; 2 Cor. 13:5; Col. 1:27:
- Luke 17:21 Nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.
- 2 Cor 13:5 Test yourselves whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Or do you not realize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are disapproved?
- Col 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,
- a. Wherever the Savior is, there the kingdom of God is; the kingdom of God is with Him, and He brings it to His disciples—Luke 4:43; 17:21.
 

Luke 4:43 But He said to them, I must announce the gospel of the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this I was sent.

Luke 17:21 Nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.
  - b. Christ is the seed of the kingdom of God to be sown into God's chosen people to develop into God's ruling realm—8:5, 10.
 

Luke 8:5 The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some seed fell beside the way, and it was trampled underfoot, and the birds of heaven devoured it.

Luke 8:10 And He said, To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest they are in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.
  - c. Since His resurrection He has been within His believers; hence, the kingdom of God is within the church—John 14:20; Rom. 8:10; 14:17.
 

John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

Rom 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- B. In Acts 1:3 the Lord Jesus as the One in resurrection must have helped the disciples to have such a proper realization concerning the kingdom of God:
- Acts 1:3 To whom also He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many irrefutable proofs, appearing to them through a period of forty days and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.
1. The disciples must have begun to see that the kingdom of God is the spreading of Christ as life in the believers, that it is the propagation of Christ as life in His believers to form a realm in which God rules in His life—John 3:3, 5.
 

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

- 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.
2. The disciples certainly must have understood that they were now part of the propagation, the spreading, of Christ, and thereby were part of the kingdom of God—Acts 1:8-9; 8:12; 20:25; 28:23, 31.
- Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
- Acts 1:9 And when He had said these things, while they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him away from their sight.
- 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.
- Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more.
- Acts 28:23 And once they had appointed a day for him, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he expounded these matters, solemnly testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.

### **III. The kingdom of God is the spreading of Christ as life into His believers to form a realm in which God rules in His life—2 Pet. 1:3-11:**

- 2 Pet 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- 2 Pet 1:5 And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;
- 2 Pet 1:6 And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;
- 2 Pet 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.
- 2 Pet 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pet 1:9 For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins.
- 2 Pet 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.
- 2 Pet 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.
- A. To enter into this kingdom, people need to repent of their sins and believe in the gospel so that their sins may be forgiven and so that they may be regenerated by God to have the divine life, which matches the divine nature of this kingdom—Mark 1:15; John 3:3, 5.
- Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near. Repent and believe in the gospel.
- John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
- 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.
- B. All the believers in Christ can share the kingdom in the church age for their enjoyment of God in His righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit—Rom. 14:17.
- Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- C. The kingdom of God will become the kingdom of Christ and of God for the overcoming believers to inherit and enjoy in the coming kingdom age so that they may reign with Christ

for a thousand years—1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 20:4, 6.

- 1 Cor 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be led astray; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor effeminate nor homosexuals
- 1 Cor 6:10 Nor thieves nor the covetous, not drunkards, not revilers, not the rapacious will inherit the kingdom of God.
- 1 Cor 6:11 And these things were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
- Gal 5:19 And the works of the flesh are manifest, which are such things as fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
- Gal 5:20 Idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, divisions, sects,
- Gal 5:21 Envyings, bouts of drunkenness, carousings, and things like these, of which I tell you beforehand, even as I have said before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- Eph 5:5 For this you realize, knowing that every fornicator or unclean person or greedy person (who is an idolator) has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and of those who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
- Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

D. As the eternal kingdom, the kingdom of God will be an eternal blessing of God's eternal life for all of God's redeemed to enjoy in the new heaven and new earth for eternity—21:1-4; 22:1-5, 14, 17.

- Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.
- Rev 21:4 And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death will be no more, nor will there be sorrow or crying or pain anymore; for the former things have passed away.
- Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- Rev 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.
- Rev 22:3 And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him;
- Rev 22:4 And they will see His face, and His name will be on their forehead.
- Rev 22:5 And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.
- Rev 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.
- Rev 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.

**IV. The churches and the kingdom of God go together; the churches produced by the propagation of the resurrected Christ are the kingdom of God on earth today—Acts 14:22; 20:25:**

- Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.
- Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more.

- A. The resurrected Christ, who is propagating Himself in His ascension, by the Spirit, and through the disciples, is the reality of the kingdom of God; the kingdom of God is His expansion—1:8; 8:12:

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

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.

1. The churches are the expansion of Christ, who came to sow Himself as the seed of the kingdom of God; this is revealed in the Gospels—Mark 4:3, 26.

Mark 4:3 Listen! Behold, the sower went out to sow.

Mark 4:26 And He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth,

2. In the Gospels Christ was the seed of the kingdom; in the book of Acts we have the propagation of this seed to produce the churches as the kingdom of God—8:1, 12; 13:1-4.

Acts 8:1 And Saul approved of his killing. And there occurred in that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

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.

Acts 13:1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Acts 13:2 And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

Acts 13:3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 13:4 They then, having been sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed away to Cyprus.

- B. We in the churches are the propagation of Christ and the expansion of Christ, and we are enlarging the kingdom of God—Rev. 1:9, 11.

Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

- V. In Acts 14:22 Paul entreated the believers who were continuing in the faith to realize that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God, because the whole world opposes our entering in; to enter into the kingdom of God is to enter into the full enjoyment of Christ as the kingdom.**

Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

- VI. In Acts 19 we see that Satan is fighting against God's spreading of His kingdom on earth; the prevailing ministry for the propagation of Christ is a fighting, a battle, for God's kingdom—vv. 9, 23-41.**

Acts 19 be omitted.

Acts 19:9 But when some were hardened and would not be persuaded, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Acts 19:23 And about that time no small disturbance took place concerning the Way.

Acts 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, afforded no little business to the craftsmen.



- Acts 19:25 These he assembled together with the workmen of similar trades as well and said, Men, you know that from this business we have our prosperity.
- Acts 19:26 And you observe and hear that not only at Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and perverted a considerable number, saying that the gods being made by hands are no gods at all.
- Acts 19:27 And not only is there danger that our trade will come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be counted as nothing and that the magnificence of her whom the whole of Asia and the inhabited earth worships will also be overthrown.
- Acts 19:28 And when they heard this, they became full of rage and began to cry out, saying, Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!
- Acts 19:29 And the city was filled with confusion; and they rushed with one accord into the theater, seizing Gaius and Aristarchus of Macedonia, Paul's traveling companions.
- Acts 19:30 And when Paul intended to enter into the populace, the disciples would not allow him.
- Acts 19:31 And some of the Asiarchs also, who were his friends, sent to him and entreated him not to venture into the theater himself.
- Acts 19:32 So then some were crying out one thing, and some another; for the assembly was in confusion, and the majority did not know for what cause they had come together.
- Acts 19:33 And they drew Alexander out of the crowd, the Jews having pushed him forward; and Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the populace.
- Acts 19:34 But when they realized that he was a Jew, one voice arose from all for about two hours, crying out, Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!
- Acts 19:35 And the town clerk, having quieted the crowd, said, Men of Ephesus, which of you men is there then who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the temple keeper of the great Artemis and of the image fallen from Zeus?
- Acts 19:36 Since these things therefore cannot be disputed, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash;
- Acts 19:37 For you have brought forth these men who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess.
- Acts 19:38 If then Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a matter against anyone, courts are being conducted and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges against one another.
- Acts 19:39 But if you seek after anything further, it shall be settled in the legal assembly.
- Acts 19:40 For indeed we are in danger of being charged with insurrection for today's affair, since there is no reason for it; and with reference to it we will not be able to give an account concerning this disorderly gathering.
- Acts 19:41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

## **VII. Paul's proclaiming the kingdom of God in 28:31 was the propagation of the resurrected, ascended, and all-inclusive Christ—vv. 23, 31:**

- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.
- Acts 28:23 And once they had appointed a day for him, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he expounded these matters, solemnly testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
- A. This is proved by the words *teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ*, which things go together with the kingdom of God—v. 23.
- Acts 28:23 And once they had appointed a day for him, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he expounded these matters, solemnly testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
- B. To teach concerning Christ is to spread the kingdom of God; therefore, the kingdom of God is actually the propagation of the resurrected Christ—a process that continues to be carried out through the believers today—v. 31.
- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.

## **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

### **CHRIST AS THE ONE IN RESURRECTION**

## **Speaking to the Disciples the Things concerning the Kingdom of God**

During these forty days, Christ as the One in resurrection...spoke to the disciples the things concerning the kingdom of God. Although we are not told in Acts what the Lord spoke concerning the kingdom, we may infer what He said by considering other portions of the Word. In the Gospels the Lord Jesus taught the disciples much concerning the kingdom. It is not likely that during the forty days after His resurrection, He gave the disciples something new concerning the kingdom. Rather, He may have repeated what He taught them in the Gospels. When the Lord spoke regarding the kingdom in the Gospels, the disciples were not able to understand what He was teaching them. They did not have the spiritual insight to understand the kingdom of God, because the Lord was not yet in them. But in John 20 they received the wonderful person of the resurrected Christ into them as the life-giving Spirit. As a result, in Acts 1 they were very different, for Christ, the life-giving Spirit, was now within them as their life and person. Because they had the life-giving Spirit within them, they were able to understand the Lord's speaking concerning the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is not a material kingdom visible to human sight; it is a kingdom of the divine life. The kingdom of God is the spreading of Christ as life into His believers to form a realm in which God rules in His life. 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. To enter into this kingdom, people need to repent of their sins and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15) so that their sins may be forgiven and that they may be regenerated by God to have the divine life, which matches the divine nature of this kingdom (John 3:3, 5).

The kingdom of God is actually Christ Himself (Luke 17:21) as the seed of life sown into His believers, God's chosen people (Mark 4:3, 26), and developing into a realm in which God may rule as His kingdom in His divine life. Regeneration is its entrance (John 3:5), and the growth of the divine life within the believers is its development (2 Pet. 1:3-11). The kingdom of God is the church life today, in which the faithful believers live (Rom. 14:17), and it will develop into the coming kingdom as an inheritance reward (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5) to the overcoming saints in the millennium. Eventually, it will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God and the eternal realm of the eternal blessing of God's eternal life for all of God's redeemed to enjoy in the new heaven and new earth.

In Acts 1:3 the Lord Jesus as the One in resurrection must have helped the disciples to have such a proper realization concerning the kingdom of God. The disciples must have begun to see that the kingdom of God is the spreading of Christ as life to His believers, that it is the propagation of Christ as life to His believers to form a realm in which God rules in His life. The disciples certainly must have understood that they were now part of the propagation, the spreading, of Christ and thereby were part of the kingdom of God. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2974-2975)

### **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

#### **God's Reign in a Particular Way**

##### *In the Sense of Life*

We have seen that God's kingdom is first His reign in a general way. In this way God rules His creation by authority and power. The kingdom of God is also God's reign in a particular way in the sense of life. God's reign in this way is by Himself as life. God's reign in this particular way does not involve that much exercise of authority and power.

In Adam's paradise the kingdom of God was there, ruling over Adam. However, with Adam in paradise we cannot see the kingdom of God in life. The same is true of the patriarchs and of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. The kingdom of God was present with them but not in the sense of life. However, with the coming of the New Testament dispensation, the kingdom of God turns from God's

reign in a general way to His reign in a particular way in the sense of life. Actually, this aspect of the kingdom of God is God Himself in Christ as life.

The Lord's word to Nicodemus in John 3 reveals God's reign in the sense of life. In verse 3 the Lord said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." To be born anew, to be regenerated, is to have a new birth that brings in a new life. Regeneration is simply to have a life other than the life we already have. We have received the human life from our parents; now we need to receive the divine life from God. Therefore, regeneration means to have the divine life, the life of God, in addition to the human life which we already possess. Regeneration, then, requires another birth in order to possess another life.

Every kingdom has a particular kind of life. The plants in the plant kingdom have the plant life, and the animals in the animal kingdom have the animal life. In the same principle, human beings in the human kingdom have a human life. From the Lord's word to Nicodemus we can see that, if we would know the things of the divine kingdom, we need another life, the divine life, God's life.

The kingdom of God as the reign of God is a divine realm to be entered into, a realm which requires the divine life. Only the divine life can realize the divine things. This was the reason the Lord said to Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (v. 5). Hence, to see, or to enter into, the kingdom of God requires regeneration with the divine life.

### *With Christ as the Seed of Life*

The fourth chapter of the Gospel of Mark reveals that the kingdom of God in the sense of life is with Christ as the seed of life. Verse 3 says, "Behold, the sower went out to sow." The sower here signifies the Lord Jesus (Matt. 13:37), who was the Son of God coming to sow Himself as the seed of life (Mark 4:26) in His word (v. 14) into men's hearts that He might grow and live in them and be expressed from within them. The kingdom of God is actually the God-man, Jesus Christ, sown as the seed of life into His believers. After this seed has been sown into them, it will grow in them and eventually develop into a kingdom.

During His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus sowed the seed of the kingdom into the human heart. In Mark 4 and Matthew 13 the human heart is likened to soil. Our heart is the field, the soil, into which the Lord Jesus has sown Himself as the seed of life. In the parable of the sower, the Lord Jesus is both the Sower and the seed sown. As the Sower, the Lord sows Himself as the seed of life through His word.

Jesus Christ is the seed of the kingdom of God, and this seed has been sown into those who believe in Him. Now this seed is growing and developing within the believers. Eventually, this growth and development will have an issue, and the issue will be the kingdom.

In the parable of the seed in Mark 4:26-29 we see the development of the kingdom seed. In verse 26 the Lord said, "So is the kingdom of God; as if a man cast seed on the earth." The "man" here is the Lord Jesus as the Sower, and the "seed" is the seed of the divine life (1 John 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:23) sown into the believers of Christ, indicating that the kingdom of God is a matter of life, the life of God, which sprouts, grows, bears fruit, matures, and produces a harvest.

In Mark 4:27 the Lord continued, "And sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and lengthens—how, he does not know." This illustrates the spontaneity of the growth of the seed.

In verses 28 and 29 the Lord went on to say, "The earth bears fruit by itself: first a blade, then an ear, then full grain in the ear. But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he sends forth the sickle, because the harvest has come." The "earth" is the good earth (v. 8), signifying the good heart created by God for His divine life to grow in man. Such a good heart works together with the seed of the divine life sown into it to grow and bear fruit spontaneously for the expression of God.

Mark 4:26-29 reveals that the kingdom of God in the sense of life is a seed that is sown into the earth and grows until it reaches maturity, at which time it is harvested. The seed is Christ, and we are

the soil into which He as the seed has been sown. The seed grows and eventually will produce the harvest, the full manifestation of the kingdom. Therefore, the kingdom is the Lord Jesus as the seed of life who has been sown into us and who grows in us until He reaches maturity at the time of harvest. When the crop is ripe, there will be the harvest, the full manifestation of the kingdom.

The growth of Christ as the seed of life within us is the process of the kingdom. On the one hand, we are in the kingdom; on the other hand, we are in the process of the kingdom. We may use the growth of wheat as an illustration. In a wheat field seeds are sown into the soil. The seed then grows until the tender young sprouts appear. The growth continues until the sprouts bring forth ears, fruit, and eventually are fully ripened. Then there is the harvest of the field. This is a picture of the process and manifestation of the kingdom. Now we are in the process of the kingdom, for today we have Christ as the seed of life growing within us. Eventually, this growth will bring us to the harvest, and that harvest will be the full manifestation of the kingdom.

### ***With Christ as Its Reality in Life***

The kingdom of God as God's reign in a particular way in the sense of life is with Christ as its reality in life. This is revealed in Luke 17.

In Luke 17:21 the Lord said to the Pharisees, "Behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." The word *you* here refers to the questioning Pharisees. The Lord Jesus as the reality of the kingdom in life was not within them but only in the midst of them.

In the Lord's answer to the Pharisees, there is the strong indication that the kingdom of God is actually Christ Himself. The Lord was actually telling the Pharisees that they could not see the kingdom of God, even though it was in the midst of them. Although the kingdom of God was present, they did not have the spiritual perception to see it. We need spiritual eyes to see the kingdom of God, which is actually the wonderful person of Christ Himself. The spiritual reality of Christ is actually the kingdom of God in the sense of life.

"When He was questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (vv. 20-21). The Lord's word that the kingdom of God "does not come with observation" indicates that the kingdom of God is not material but spiritual. Verses 22 through 24 prove that the kingdom of God is Christ Himself, who was in the midst of the Pharisees when He was asked by them regarding the kingdom. Wherever the Savior is, there is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is with Him, and He brings it to His disciples (v. 22). He is the seed of the kingdom of God sown into God's people and developing in them into God's ruling realm. Since His resurrection, He is within His believers (John 14:20; Rom. 8:10). Hence, the kingdom of God with Christ as its reality in life is within the church today (14:17). (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2550-2554)

## **THE REALITY OF THE KINGDOM**

### **Christ's Expansion as the Enlargement**

The kingdom's reality is also seen in Christ's expansion as the enlargement. Christ's expansion is His growth within us, and His expansion is His enlargement.

Revelation 1:6 tells us that we have been made the kingdom of God. Christ released us from our sins by His blood (v. 5) and made us a kingdom. The believers redeemed by the blood of Christ have not only been born of God into His kingdom (John 3:5) but have also been made a kingdom for God's economy, which is the church (Matt. 16:18-19). John, the writer of the book of Revelation, was in the kingdom (1:9), and all redeemed and reborn believers are also part of this kingdom (Rom. 14:17).

We are God's kingdom because we are the expansion of Christ, His enlargement. Luke 17:20-21 confirms this. "When He was questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will

they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” What does it mean to say that the kingdom of God does not come with observation? It means that the kingdom is invisible. The kingdom is something that cannot be observed by our natural ability. In particular, the kingdom cannot be observed by our natural thinking, which is completely useless in apprehending the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not material but spiritual. As a spiritual reality, it can be realized only by the Spirit in our regenerated spirit.

The kingdom in its reality today is the Lord Jesus as the Spirit. In Matthew 12:28 the Lord said, “If I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” This indicates that the kingdom is the reality of the Spirit of God, which is the reality of Christ. The Spirit is the reality of the Lord Jesus, for the Spirit is His person, and His person is His reality. The kingdom, therefore, is the spiritual realization of the Lord Jesus. When we realize Him spiritually, we have the kingdom in its reality.

In Luke 17:20-21 the Lord revealed that He Himself is the kingdom. As the One who is Himself the kingdom, He enters into His believers and grows in them to have an expansion, an enlargement, and this enlargement is the kingdom in its reality. Therefore, both the seed of the kingdom and the expansion of the kingdom are the reality of the kingdom.

### **The Enlargement Being the Realm of the Kingdom’s Ruling**

The kingdom of God is the Lord Jesus as the seed of life sown into His believers, God’s chosen people, and developing into a realm over which God can rule as His kingdom in His divine life. Its entrance is regeneration (John 3:5), and its development is the believers’ growth in the divine life (2 Pet. 1:3-11). It is the church today, in which the faithful believers live (Rom. 14:17), and it will develop into the coming kingdom as an inheritance reward (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5) to the overcoming saints in the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6). Eventually, it will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God, an eternal realm of the eternal blessing of God’s eternal life for all of God’s redeemed to enjoy in the new heaven and new earth for eternity (21:1-4; 22:1-5).

In eternity the New Jerusalem will be the totality of all the believers shining forth the processed Triune God. The new earth will be a realm in which God will rule over the nations. This ruling realm will be formed by the shining of the New Jerusalem. Hence, the shining of the New Jerusalem will produce a realm for God’s ruling. This is the kingdom of God. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2639-2640)