

WEEK 8

Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and Discipling All the Nations for the Spread and Development of the Kingdom of God

Scripture Reading: Matt. 24:14; 28:18-20; Mark 1:14-15; 1 Thes. 2:12

OUTLINE

« DAY 1 »

- I. “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations” (Matt. 24:14):
 - A. 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).
 - B. The fundamental problem in the universe is rebellion against the authority of God (Isa. 14:12-14):
 1. 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).
 2. 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).

« DAY 2 »

- C. 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 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).
 2. 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):
 - a. 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).
 - b. 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).

- c. 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).

« DAY 3 »

D. God commands everyone to repent for the kingdom (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Acts 17:30):

1. 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).
2. 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).
3. 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).

E. 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 (24:14):

1. 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.
2. 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).

« DAY 4 »

II. “Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19):

A. In His divinity, as the only begotten Son of God, the Lord had authority over all; however, in His humanity, as the Son of Man and the King of the heavenly kingdom, authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him after His resurrection (vv. 1-10, 18).

B. Because all authority has been given to the resurrected Christ, He sent His disciples to disciple all the nations; they go with His authority (vv. 18-19):

1. We have been sent by the Lord not only to bring people to salvation but also to disciple the nations; this is a matter of the kingdom.
2. 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 the earth (1 Thes. 1:9; 2:12; Rev. 1:5-6, 9; 5:9-10).
3. 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).

« DAY 5 »

C. After Christ as the last Adam had accomplished His ministry on earth, passed through the process of crucifixion, entered into the realm of resurrection, and had become the life-giving Spirit, He came back to His disciples in the atmosphere and reality of His resurrection to charge them to make the heathen the kingdom people by baptizing them into the name, the person, the reality, of the Divine Trinity (v. 19):

1. Into in Matthew 28:19 indicates union; to baptize people into the name of the Triune God is to bring them into spiritual and mystical union with Him.
2. There is one name for the Divine Trinity (v. 19):
 - a. The name is the sum total of the Divine Being, equivalent to His person.
 - b. To baptize someone into the name of the Triune God is to immerse him into all that the Triune God is.

« DAY 6 »

D. 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).

E. In Matthew 28:20 the Lord charged us to teach the newly baptized ones to observe all that He has commanded us; this is for the discipling of all the nations (v. 19).

F. "Behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age" (v. 20):

1. The heavenly King is Emmanuel, God with us (1:23).
2. He has promised us that in His resurrection He will be with us all the days, with all authority, until the end of this age (28:20).
3. Whenever we are gathered into His name, He is in our midst (18:20).

G. In His resurrection the Lord is present, and we have His authority, commission, and position to disciple the nations for the spread and development of the kingdom of God (6:10, 33; 13:18-23; 28:18-20).

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 1 >>

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.

12:26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

28 But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

In the preaching of the gospel, the kingdom of God is often neglected. Much of today's gospel preaching gives people the impression that the gospel is only for soul winning, for transferring people out of hell into heaven, for helping people have peace, joy, and eternal blessing. In the New Testament, however, we have a different impression concerning the gospel. When the Lord Jesus preached the gospel, He spoke concerning the kingdom of God, and He told them to repent for the kingdom.

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. Therefore, there is a section in the Gospel of Mark revealing the purpose of the gospel. 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 not only the goal of the gospel, but also the issue of the gospel....This outcome, this issue, is the kingdom. The preaching of the gospel is to bring forth the kingdom. (Life-study of Mark, pp. 119-121)

Today's Reading

In Revelation 1:9 John testified that he and the other saints were in the kingdom of God: "I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus."...The fact that John was in the kingdom...proves that the kingdom has not been suspended. (Life-study of Mark, p. 123)

The Bible clearly shows that the only thing Satan wants to do in the universe is to overthrow God's throne. Isaiah 14 reveals that Satan wanted to exalt his throne to be equal with God (v. 13). This means that Satan intends to violate God's sovereignty, usurp God's authority, and overthrow God's throne; he intends to establish his own kingdom in the universe. In Matthew 12 the Lord Jesus spoke of two kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. He said, "If I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (v. 28). He also said, "If Satan casts out Satan,...how then will his kingdom stand?" (v. 26). This shows that there are two kingdoms in the universe. One is God's kingdom, and the other is Satan's kingdom. One is God's exercise of His authority, and the other is Satan's usurpation of God's authority. One is God's establishing of His throne for the exercise of His authority, and the other is Satan's overthrowing of God's throne for the setting up of his own authority.

The matter of authority is mentioned in the very beginning of the Bible. Genesis 1 shows that God gave man the authority to have dominion over all the living things in the sea, in the air, and on the earth (v. 26). The way Satan stole man away from God was to seduce man to rebel against God, to usurp God's authority. When man sinned, he did not merely violate a rule; even more, he revolted against God, rebelled against God, and put God's authority aside, denying God's authority and rejecting God's rule. Just as Satan rebelled against God, man also rebelled against God. The first creatures God created were the angels, among whom the archangel led many to rebel. Later, God created man, who also rebelled. One can say that man and Satan acted as a team to rebel against God. (CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "What the Kingdom Is to the Believers," pp. 426-427)

Further Reading: Life-study of Matthew, msg. 61; Life-study of Mark, msgs. 13, 17; Life-study of Luke, msgs. 11, 22; CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "What the Kingdom Is to the Believers," chs. 2-3; CWWL, 1972, vol. 2, "The Kingdom," chs. 7-9

<< WEEK 8 — 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.

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

Logically, since all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to the Lord (Matt. 28:18), He should reign. However, people on earth rebel against Him; few submit to His authority. This is the reason that the Lord sent His disciples to preach the gospel in all the earth and to disciple all the nations (v. 19).

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.

Matthew reveals the gospel of the kingdom (24:14)...The Lord desires to rule and reign, but there are few on earth who are willing to be ruled by Him. Hence, He has sent out His disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom. (CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "What the Kingdom Is to the Believers," pp. 467-468)

Today's Reading

The way to bring others out of the world and into the kingdom of the heavens is not by today's superficial gospel but by the gospel of the kingdom of the heavens....The gospel of the kingdom includes not only forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47) and the impartation of life (John 20:31) but also the kingdom of the heavens with the power of the coming age (Heb. 6:5) to cast out demons and heal diseases (Isa. 35:5-6; Matt. 10:1). Both forgiveness of sins and the imparting of life are for the kingdom.

The gospel of the kingdom, which also includes the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24), not only brings people into God's salvation but also into the kingdom of the heavens (Rev. 1:9). The emphasis of the gospel of grace is on forgiveness of sin, God's redemption, and eternal life, whereas the emphasis of the gospel of the kingdom is on the heavenly ruling of God and the authority of the Lord.

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 the spokes, which 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....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. This 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 comes. The inhabited earth means every place inhabited by man. I believe that the churches in the Lord's recovery will bear the burden to bring this gospel to all the inhabited earth. The gospel of grace has been preached in every continent but not the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of grace is the lower gospel, but the gospel of the kingdom is the higher gospel. This higher gospel must be brought to every continent through the churches in the Lord's recovery. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 1156-1157)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msgs. 107, 240, 244; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 4, "Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John," ch. 12; CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "What the Kingdom Is to the Believers," ch. 4; Life-study of 1 Thessalonians, msgs. 11-12; Life-study of 2 Thessalonians, msg. 1

« WEEK 8 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 3:2 And saying, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near. Repent and believe in the gospel.

To repent is to have a change of mind issuing in regret, to have a turn in purpose. (Matt. 3:2, footnote 1)

In John the Baptist's preaching, repentance, as the opening of God's New Testament economy, involved making a turn for the kingdom of the heavens. This indicates that God's New Testament economy is focused on His kingdom. For this we should repent, change our mind, make a turn in our life-pursuit. The goal of our pursuing has been other things; now our pursuing must turn toward God and His kingdom, which in Matthew (cf. Mark 1:15) is specifically and purposefully called "the kingdom of the heavens" [Matt. 3:2]. According to the Gospel of Matthew as a whole, the kingdom of the heavens is different from the Messianic kingdom. The Messianic kingdom will be the restored kingdom of David (the rebuilt tabernacle of David—Acts 15:16), made up of the children of Israel, and will be earthly and physical in nature, whereas the kingdom of the heavens is constituted of regenerated believers and is heavenly and spiritual. (Matt. 3:2, footnote 2)

Today's Reading

The Greek word [translated "repent" in Mark 1:15] means "have a change of mind." To repent is to have a change of mind with regret for the past and a turn for the future. On the negative side, to repent before God is not only to repent of sins and wrongdoings but also to repent of the world and its corruption, which usurp and corrupt people whom God created for Himself, and to repent of our God-forsaking life in the past. On the positive side, it is to turn to God in every way and in everything for the fulfillment of His purpose in creating man. It is a "repentance unto God," and is to "repent and turn to God" (Acts 20:21; 26:20). (Mark 1:15, footnote 2)

The first thing mentioned concerning the gospel is the need to repent (Matt. 3:2; 4:17). What does it mean to repent? To repent means that originally we were rebellious and against God, but then a voice of love asked us to return, to turn back, to God. Hence, to repent is to turn back in submission to the Lord and receive Him as our Savior. When we receive Him as our Savior, He comes into us. He enters into us not only in the status of a Savior but also in the status of the King of kings. Today He is no longer the Christ nailed to the cross; He is the King on the throne. When we repent, turn to Him, and receive Him as our Savior, He is the King on the throne. Therefore, we have received not only the Savior but also the King of kings, the Lord of lords. When the King of kings comes into us, His throne simultaneously comes into us. His desire is to establish His kingdom in us in order to make us rebellious ones His kingdom.

Revelation 1 and 5 reveal that the Lord has purchased us with His blood to make us His kingdom (1:5-6; 5:9-10). What is His purpose in making us His kingdom? His purpose is to rule, to reign, to accomplish His will on earth, and to gain a group of people on earth to be under His authority. This is the result that has been produced by the gospel during the last two thousand years. (CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "What the Kingdom Is to the Believers," pp. 457-458)

The gospel of the kingdom, which includes the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24), brings people not only into God's salvation but also into the kingdom of the heavens (Rev. 1:9). The gospel of grace emphasizes forgiveness of sin, God's redemption, and eternal life, whereas the gospel of the kingdom emphasizes the heavenly ruling of God and the authority of the Lord. This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole earth for a testimony to all the nations before the end of this age. Hence, that 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. (Matt. 24:14, footnote 1)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1972, vol. 2, "The Kingdom," chs. 1, 3; CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "What the Kingdom Is to the Believers," ch. 5; CWWL, 1957, vol. 3, "The Kingdom and the Church," ch. 1

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 28:18-19 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In His divinity as the only begotten Son of God, the Lord had authority over all. However, in His humanity as the Son of Man to be the King of the heavenly kingdom, all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him after His resurrection. (Life-study of Matthew, p. 826)

Today's Reading

Matthew's account of the resurrection is very different from John's. According to John's record, after His resurrection the Lord met with His disciples in a room where the doors had been shut (John 20:19). The disciples were frightened, being afraid of the Jews. Because they needed to be strengthened by life, the Lord came to them as life, breathed upon them, and told them to receive the holy breath (John 20:22). How different is Matthew's account! According to Matthew, the Lord charged the disciples to go to a mountain in Galilee. Surely He met with them on that mountain during the day, not during the night. Furthermore, when He met with them on the mountain, He did not breathe upon them and tell them to receive the holy breath. Instead, He said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." In Matthew it is not a matter of breath, but a matter of authority. John's concern was for life, and life requires breath. But Matthew's concern was for the kingdom, and the kingdom requires authority. The Gospel of John reveals that we need life to care for the little lambs and to feed the Lord's flock. But in Matthew 28 there is no word about feeding the lambs. In Matthew the Lord commands the disciples to disciple all the nations (v. 19) to make all the nations part of the kingdom. This requires authority. Therefore, in John resurrection is a matter of life, power, breath, and shepherding. However, in Matthew it is a matter of righteousness, authority, and discipling the nations.

Verse 19 says, "Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Because all authority had been given to Him, the heavenly King sent His disciples to go and disciple all the nations. They go with His authority. To disciple the nations is to cause the heathen to become the kingdom people for the establishment of His kingdom, which is the church, even today on this earth.

Notice that the Lord did not charge the disciples to preach the gospel, but to disciple the nations. The difference between preaching the gospel and discipling the nations is that to preach the gospel is simply to bring sinners to salvation, but to disciple the nations is to cause the Gentiles to become the kingdom people. We have been sent by the Lord not only to bring people to salvation, but also to disciple the nations. This is a matter of the kingdom. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 826-828)

The word disciple is a strong word. A number of messages would be needed to explain this word thoroughly. The disciples were to disciple the unbelieving nations by baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This means that discipling includes baptizing. We have to disciple people by baptizing them, putting them into a person, the Triune God. When they get into this person, they are disciplined. We should not preach the gospel to people without baptizing them. That is not scriptural. We should baptize people immediately after they have believed in the Lord. To disciple them by baptizing them is to make them the very citizens of the kingdom of the heavens. If we do not put them into the Triune God, we cannot bring them into the kingdom of God. We must put them into God Himself. Then we place them into the kingdom of God. (CWWL, 1988, vol. 1, "Living in and with the Divine Trinity," pp. 311-312)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1988, vol. 1, "Living in and with the Divine Trinity," ch. 5; CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "What the Kingdom Is to the Believers," ch. 6

« WEEK 8 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 28:19 Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

Baptism is to bring the repentant people out of their old state into a new one, by terminating their old life and germinating them with the new life of Christ, that they may become the kingdom people. John the Baptist's recommending ministry began with the preliminary baptism by water only. Now, after the heavenly King accomplished His ministry on earth, passed through the process of death and resurrection, and became the life-giving Spirit, He charged His disciples to baptize the disciplined people into the Triune God. This baptism has two aspects: the visible aspect by water and the invisible aspect by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 41; 10:44-48). The visible aspect is the expression, the testimony, of the invisible aspect; whereas the invisible aspect is the reality of the visible aspect. Without the invisible aspect by the Spirit, the visible aspect by water is vain; and without the visible aspect by water, the invisible aspect by the Spirit is abstract and impractical. (Life-study of Matthew, p. 828)

Today's Reading

Not long after the Lord charged the disciples with this baptism, He baptized them and the entire church in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:4) and in the house of Cornelius (Acts 11:15-17). Then, based upon this, the disciples baptized the new converts (Acts 2:38), not only visibly into water, but also invisibly into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), into Christ Himself (Gal. 3:27), into the Triune God (Matt. 28:19), and into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). The water, signifying the death of Christ with His burial, may be considered as a tomb to terminate the old history of the baptized ones. Since the death of Christ is included in Christ, since Christ is the very embodiment of the Triune God, and since the Triune God is one with the Body of Christ, so to baptize new believers into the death of Christ, into Christ Himself, into the Triune God, and into the Body of Christ is to do just one thing: on the negative side to terminate their old life, and on the positive side to germinate them with a new life, the eternal life of the Triune God, for the Body of Christ. Hence, the baptism ordained by the Lord here is to baptize people out of their life into the Body life for the kingdom of the heavens.

The word into in Matthew 28:19 indicates union....To baptize people into the name of the Triune God is to bring them into spiritual and mystical union with Him.

There is one name for the Trinity. The name is the sum total of the Divine Being, equivalent to His person. To baptize anyone into the name of the Trinity is to immerse him into all the Triune God is.

Matthew discloses the reality of the Trinity in the one name for all three, for the constitution of the kingdom. In the opening chapter of Matthew, the Holy Spirit (v. 18), Christ (the Son—v. 18), and God (the Father—v. 23) are upon the scene for the producing of the man Jesus (v. 21), who, as Jehovah the Savior and God with us, is the very embodiment of the Triune God. In chapter 3 Matthew presents a picture of the Son standing in the water of baptism under the open heaven, the Spirit as a dove descending upon the Son, and the Father out of the heavens speaking to the Son (vv. 16-17). In chapter 12, the Son, in the person of man, cast out demons by the Spirit to bring in the kingdom of God the Father (v. 28)....In the closing chapter, after Christ, as the last Adam, had passed through the process of crucifixion, entered into the realm of resurrection, and become the life-giving Spirit, He came back to His disciples, in the atmosphere and reality of His resurrection, to charge them to cause the heathen to become the kingdom people by baptizing them into the name, the person, the reality, of the Trinity. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 828-830)

Further Reading: Life-study of Matthew, msg. 72; CWWL, 1972, vol. 2, "The Kingdom," ch. 20

<< WEEK 8 — DAY 6 >>

Morning Nourishment

Acts 19:5 And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Gal. 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Rom. 6:3 Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

In the Acts and the Epistles, it is disclosed that to baptize people into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit is to baptize them into the name of Christ (Acts 8:16; 19:5), and that to baptize them into the name of Christ is to baptize them into Christ the person (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3), for Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God, and He, as the life-giving Spirit, is available any time and any place for people to be baptized into Him. Such a baptism into the reality of the Father, Son, and Spirit, according to Matthew, is for the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens. The heavenly kingdom cannot be organized with human beings of flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15:50) as an earthly society; it can only be constituted with people who are immersed into the union with the Triune God and who are established and built up with the Triune God who is wrought into them. (Life-study of Matthew, p. 830)

Today's Reading

In Matthew 28:20 the Lord told His disciples, "Behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age." The heavenly King is Emmanuel, God with us (1:23). Here He promised to be with us in His resurrection with all authority all the days until the consummation of the age, that is, until the end of this age. Hence, wherever we are gathered into His name, He is in our midst (18:20).

In the four Gospels, the Lord's ascension is recorded only in Mark (16:19) and Luke (24:51). John testifies that the Lord, as the Son of God, even God Himself, is life to His believers. As such, He can never leave them and would never leave them. Matthew proves that He, as Emmanuel, is the heavenly King who is with His people continually until He comes back.

As the King in the kingdom with the kingdom people, the Lord is with us all the days until the consummation of the age. Today is included in all the days....Not one day will be an exception. He will be with us until the consummation of the age. This refers to the end of this age, which will be the time of the Lord's parousia, the Lord's coming. The consummation of the age, the end of the age, will be the great tribulation. We do not want to be here during that time. Rather, we prefer to be raptured into the Lord's parousia, into His presence. This is a matter of the kingdom.

In the Lord's resurrection with His righteousness the kingdom is present, and we have the authority, commission, and position to disciple the nations. In this way the kingdom is spreading. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 830-831)

On the one hand, the Gospel of Matthew speaks about the gospel of the kingdom, Christ being the King, and the reality, appearance, and manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens, telling us that if we live in this reality today, it will be our reward in the future. On the other hand, Matthew tells us about the Triune God being processed. It reveals that He entered into a virgin's womb and was born as a man to be Jehovah our Savior, God with us. Then He went through death and resurrection and eventually sent His disciples to "go," bringing Him with them, to transmit and dispense Him into all the nations. Whoever would believe into and receive such a transmitting and dispensing One would be baptized into the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. In this way they would become the reproduction, duplication, multiplication, and increase of the Triune God. This is the mystery of the Divine Trinity revealed in the Gospel of Matthew. (CWWL, 1986, vol. 2, "The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity," p. 414)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1986, vol. 2, "The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity," ch. 8; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," ch. 5; CWWN, vol. 8, pp. 15-21

<< WEEK 8 — HYMN >>

Hymns, #919

1

He shall reign o'er all the earth,
He who wore the crown of thorn,
Whom they deemed of little worth,
Whom they met with hate and scorn;
Send the tidings forth, that all
Humbly at His feet may fall.

2

Long His heritage hath lain
'Neath the false usurper's sway;
He will claim it back again,
Rout the foes and win the day.
Send the tidings forth, that all
Humbly at His feet may fall.

3

Then, beneath His rule of peace
Heav'n shall smile, and earth shall sing,
Ever yielding rich increase
To the honor of her King.
Send the tidings forth, that all
Humbly at His feet may fall.

4

Hasten, Lord, the wondrous hour,
Bid it strike from shore to shore,
Thine the kingdom and the pow'r,
Thine the glory evermore.
Bow each rebel heart, that all
At Thy feet adoring fall.