

Message Eleven

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

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

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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.

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.
- 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.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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3. Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up—Matt. 16:18-19:
 - 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.
 - 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.

EXODUS (1)

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- 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.
- 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.