



# The Coming Kingdom: The Realization and Manifestation of God's Image and God's Dominion

by John Pester

*You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified; Your kingdom come; Your will be done...For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*  
(Matt. 6:9-10, 13)

The Lord's prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is short, simple, and deep, but it is often repeated in a rote and ritualistic manner. This is indeed ironic since the Lord's teaching concerning prayer and His example of prayer were offered in contrast to the prayers of religious hypocrites who prayed with a multiplicity of empty words that were focused only on advancing their immediate needs, not the eternal interest of God. In contrast to prayers that address the passing nature of our personal needs and that can result only in a temporary reward of misplaced admiration (vv. 8, 5), the Lord taught His disciples to focus on matters that would result in a true reward (v. 6). Consequently, He uttered a prayer that was entirely focused on the fulfillment of the eternal purpose of the Triune God,<sup>1</sup> which was revealed in the creation of humanity: "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion" (Gen. 1:26). God's will ultimately pertains to image and dominion, and His image in humanity and His dominion through humanity on earth will be an eternal testimony of the scope and fulfillment of His purpose.

God's will is accomplished through the sanctification of His name and the coming of His kingdom because God's image is expressed through His name and God's dominion is exercised through His kingdom. The expression of God's image and the exercise of God's dominion are distinct, but not separable, elements of His will.<sup>2</sup> God's image is the basis for God's dominion; it is the source of the power that is displayed in the exercise of His dominion. Image produces dominion, and dominion substantiates image. The nexus of image and dominion in the divine economy is the kingdom, and in the coming kingdom both image and

dominion are realized and manifested. The kingdom is more than a physical realm involving the ruling and reigning of God. It is also a heavenly realm that derives its power from the divine life inherent in the image of God in order to express the dominion of God. As such, the kingdom is a matter of crucial focus in the divine economy.

The centrality of the kingdom in the divine economy is emphasized with great clarity in the New Testament. The coming of the kingdom was declared in the ministry of John the Baptist. It was demonstrated in the ministry and teachings of Jesus. And it was developed and continued through the ministry and teaching of the apostles so that it could be realized through the church in this age and manifested in the coming millennium. In the coming kingdom, God's eternal intention for humanity to bear His image and to exercise His dominion is being fulfilled. The coming kingdom has a heavenly and spiritual component that corresponds to the inner essence of God's being, God's image, and a practical and earthly component that corresponds to the practical representation and exercise of God's dominion. The heavenly and spiritual component is directly related to the life of the Triune God, which is imparted through regeneration and which grows like a seed to reproduce the divine image through its power to transform, renew, and conform the believers to the image of the Son. Although this aspect of the kingdom does not come with observation, there is a practical and earthly component related to the exercise of dominion involving the incarnation of Christ, the building up of the church in this age, and the joint ruling of Christ and the overcomers in the coming millennium. In the coming kingdom, there is a heavenly and earthly exercise of God's divine authority based on the spiritual and practical expression of God's divine image.

## The Coming Kingdom in the New Testament

The kingdom is coming; it is a developing reality. It is here