



The End of the Age and the Kingdom

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We deeply believe that we have come to the end of the age. We know that after the age of the church is the age of the kingdom. We have said in other places that God's eyes are turned to the kingdom and concentrated on the kingdom. If we understand correctly, we deeply believe that in His eternal purpose He is earnestly trying to bring in the kingdom. The church is for the kingdom.

After servants of God see the position the kingdom occupies in God's eternal purpose, how willing are we to see the kingdom come quickly, and how eager are we to see all of God's children working with God to bring in this kingdom quickly! By receiving more new light, we become even more zealous for God's kingdom. The one verse that we have received is Matthew 24:14, which says, "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." Here we see the relationship between the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom and the coming of the end. It is hard to understand all that this verse says, and in the past, among God's children, many contentions have arisen from this verse. I do not wish to debate about anything here, for we can never arrive at the same understanding anyway. However, we can speak about the clear light that we have received. "The end" refers to the end of this age. Strictly speaking, according to the study of prophecy, it refers to great trial. This short period of great trial, "the great tribulation," will end our present age. The age of the Holy Spirit, the age of the church, the age of grace, and the age of the gospel are the various names given to this age. The age designated by these names will be terminated by "the great tribulation," which is "the end."

Before we go on, we have to know that the rapture is not determined at "the end" time, for believers can be

raptured at any time. The great tribulation has to do with this *age*, but the great tribulation is not directly related to the church.

The church is responsible for working together with God to bring in His kingdom. At the same time, God's kingdom will appear physically only at the end time. For this reason, the church has to pay attention to the end time. The end has to come before the kingdom can come. Hence, in order for the kingdom to come, the end must first come. The end itself is not related to the church, but it has much to do with the work of the church.

The Lord Jesus said that only after the gospel of the kingdom has been preached will the end of this age come. In other words, the gospel of the kingdom must spread before the kingdom can come. The Lord Jesus was speaking of the condition that is necessary for this age to end quickly and the kingdom to come. He was also prophesying of the situation towards the end of this age and the coming of the kingdom. Indeed, if this age is to end, God's children must testify afresh for the gospel of the kingdom. At the end of this age, we must see the revival of the gospel of the kingdom.

The recent decades can be considered as a period of revival in the teaching concerning the kingdom. In particular, during the past few years, the Lord has turned His children in China to pay attention to the matter of God's kingdom. This is the best sign.

But what is God's kingdom, and what is the gospel of the kingdom? Our common understanding is that the kingdom is the time when Christ and the church reign. Actually, there is a deeper significance than this.

Many people want to make a distinction between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of grace. Actually