



# The End of the Age and the Kingdom

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**W**e 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.

**T**he 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

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this is not all that necessary. If our readers think that there should be such a distinction, we can say that the gospel of grace is particularly for the sinners, whereas the gospel of the kingdom is particularly to deal with the demons. The gospel of grace refers to sin and blessing, whereas the gospel of the kingdom refers to the oppression of Satan.

There are many ideas today about the kingdom. Let us look at what the Lord Jesus said: "If I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt. 12:28). The kingdom means many things, but what the Lord says here is the most important meaning.

**T**he kingdom has a great deal to do with Hades. The Lord Jesus said that the kingdom is the casting out of the demons, that is, the activity of the Spirit of God in casting out the demons. This is the proper meaning of the kingdom. One big lack in the present-day Bible expositions is the negligence concerning Hades. The church, in its position, work, thought, and speaking, has often forgotten that its unique enemy is Satan. It does not realize that God has chosen the church for the purpose of *oppos-*

and authorities are judged. The power of Hades will be destroyed at the time of the kingdom. At the time of the kingdom, the "sons" under Satan's hand, who are the beast and the "spirit," the false prophet, will be thrown into the lake of fire. All the other countless evil spirits will be driven out of the world and will be imprisoned. Satan himself will be openly put to shame and spend one thousand years in a life of darkness in the abyss. That will be the time of disintegration for the household of Satan. It will be the time of the kingdom. It will also be the time for God's children to be vindicated, the time when the cross of God will gain the total victory. It will be the time when God's purpose concerning Satan, which was purposed in eternity past, will be fulfilled. It will be the time for Isaiah 14 to be fulfilled. That will be the time of the kingdom. In this kingdom Satan will have no more power.

**T**he gospel of the kingdom of heaven is nothing but God (who rules in heaven today) ruling the earth and completely casting away the ruler of this present world together with his messengers and evil spirits, so that man (that is, Christ and the church) can rule on God's behalf.

The gospel of the kingdom of heaven is aimed particularly toward the power of darkness. When the Lord Jesus first preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, all His works were aimed at dealing with the power of darkness. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

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*ing Satan and bringing in the kingdom of God.* This is why the first time the church is mentioned in the New Testament, it is linked with Hades (see Matthew 16).

The time of the kingdom will be for a thousand years. What does this one thousand years have to do with Satan? The first few verses in Revelation 20 tell us that this will be the time when Satan himself will be bound in the abyss (vv. 1-3). This will be the time when Satan is disgraced the most.

"Do you not know that we will judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:3). Those who have not sinned need not be judged. Only those who have sinned need be judged. In the future the church will judge the angels who have sinned. These angels who have sinned joined Satan to rebel against God. They are the rulers and authorities today, the princes of the kingdom in Daniel 10:13. God said that we will judge them. When will we judge them? We will judge them when Christ comes again to set up His kingdom (Rev. 20:4).

This is the kingdom. The kingdom is the time when Satan is in the abyss. The kingdom is the time when the rulers

works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). He healed the sick and cast out the demons. The casting out of the demons is surely an annulling of the power of darkness. But what about healing the sick? The apostle gave us a footnote to healing: "Healing all those who were being oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38). If we study the Gospels carefully, we will see that throughout His life, the Lord Jesus was destroying the work of the devil. Hence, His work in this world produced more effect on the demons than on men.

The Lord Jesus said that at the end time, some of His children will rise up to bear this testimony. We thank the Lord that during the past few years, quite a number of God's children have risen up to wage war against Satan. Spiritual warfare is no longer merely a term; it has become a reality that is experienced by many believers. Truly we are at the end of this age.

Brothers, if we want to see God's kingdom come, so that God's rule is manifested in this world, and the devil and his government cast out, we have to stand up to testify for the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. In other words, we

have to bear testimony to the victory of the cross of Christ. We should declare that Christ has judged the prince of this world, that He is fully victorious, that the kingdom, glory, and power are all His, and that Satan, who has no further place in this present age, is occupying it illegally. Everyone who has accepted the Lord Jesus has been delivered from the power of darkness and has entered the kingdom of His beloved. We should preach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, the gospel of the casting out of the demons, the gospel of the defeat of Satan, and the gospel of the destruction of Hades. This kind of testimony will bring this age to a close. This age is the age of the church because the church appears only in this age. But at the same time, the Bible calls this age “an evil and adulterous generation” (Matt. 12:39), an “unbelieving and perverted generation” (17:17), and “a crooked and perverted generation” (Phil. 2:15). God’s purpose is to draw this age to an end. God desires that the end of this age come quickly so that His kingdom can follow. However, God’s children have a duty to perform. God’s children should work together with God to bring this age to a close. Prayer is one way, but testimony is also indispensable. Dear ones, we should stand up in an unprecedented way for the kingliness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we should testify in an unprecedented way for His government. The kingdom of Antichrist will come before the kingdom of Christ. We should testify for the kingdom of Christ before the coming of the kingdom of Antichrist. We should bring this age to its end.

This is not a new gospel but one that has been neglected by the church. The apostles preached this gospel—Acts 14:22 and 28:23 testify to this. Furthermore, after the Lord Jesus resurrected, He preached this topic to them. If we want to be the true successors to the apostles, we have to bear the testimony that the apostles bore. The church has forgotten about the victory, majesty, and kingship of Christ. Those who dare to testify that only Christ is the king and that Satan is not the king are the ones who are truly preaching the gospel of the kingdom of heaven.

**B**rothers, we should not be ones who have fallen behind in this age. There is only one gospel today that matches this age. We are not saying that we should not preach anything else; we are merely saying that God wants us to pay special attention to this. We must catch up with all that God has ordained for this age. God’s emphasis in this age is the expatriation of Satan and the triumph of His Son. If we are not one with God in this matter and do not pay attention to what God pays attention to, we are not

accomplishing God’s eternal will, no matter how much work we have done. We are too far off from God’s best. What we need today are Christians who match this age. God needs to gain a group of people who will sympathize with Him, who will work with Him, who will bring this age to a close, and who will bring God’s kingdom in. If Christians think that their highest responsibility in this world is to save souls—which is a glorious work, and we have no intention to despise it—and they merely save souls for the sake of saving souls, they have not accomplished God’s highest goal. They have to realize that they have a greater responsibility in this world than saving souls, which is to bring this age to an end and to usher in God’s kingdom. Their greatest responsibility lies in the destruction of God’s enemy together with all the powers of darkness. They must see that all their work should have this as their final goal. Prayer is not for prayer alone; it is to inflict a loss on Satan. Saving souls is not for saving souls alone; it is for the infliction of loss on Satan. Whatever we do, it is done with a view to inflict a loss on Satan. We do not despise the work of saving souls, but we should not lose sight of the kingdom in saving souls.

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Those who always put God’s kingdom before them—that which touches God’s will and His enemy—are the most useful workers in the hands of God.

**W**hy will the end come when God’s children testify for the kingdom of heaven in this way? Here again we see the cooperation between God and man. God desires that the end come. But unless God’s children work together with Him to oppose this age and insist on the coming of God’s age (the kingdom), God would rather delay. When His children truly hate the condition of this age and truly seek for His termination of this age and His giving of the kingdom, He will rise up to work. When God’s children rise up to testify for the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, they will want what God wants and hate what God hates; their will will become one with God’s will, and God will rise up to work. We should never think that the end will come by itself. If we reject God’s will, it is possible to hinder His will. God is waiting for those who are one with Him and who will work with Him so that He can bring this age to an end. Who is willing to participate in such a great work? **LFC**