

A SHADOW OF THE KINGDOM

by Ron Kangas

The living of Noah and his family after the flood and outside the ark on a new earth signifies a life in resurrection. The ark, as a type of Christ, signifies passing through death in resurrection. In Christ, who is the resurrection life and power, we pass through the death waters and are conveyed into a realm of resurrection. After our baptism into Christ, into His death, and into the Body of Christ, we begin to have a life in resurrection. This life in resurrection enables us and even motivates us to live the church life.

The living of Noah and his family as a life in resurrection is also a shadow of the kingdom. With Noah God established human government. The government of man over man came into existence for the first time. This is not yet the kingdom of God; it is actually a human kingdom, but it is a shadow of what is to come, the eternal kingdom of God.

The Lord Opening the Scriptures, Opening Our Eyes to See, and Opening Our Minds to Understand

We need to be like the disciples in Luke 24 to experience the three openings mentioned in that chapter. First, the Lord opened the Scriptures. As He was walking with two disciples toward Emmaus, He “explained to them clearly in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (v. 27). Eventually, the two could testify, “Was not our heart burning within us...while He was opening to us the Scriptures?” (v. 32). We should not presume that with our natural intelligence we can understand, much less open, the Word of God. We need the resurrected Christ to open the Scriptures to us. Then the two disciples invited the Lord to stay with them. When they sat down at the table, He took the bread and broke it, and “their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him” (v. 31). First, the Scriptures were opened, and then, their eyes were opened to see the Lord. After the Lord disappeared,

the two returned to Jerusalem, where the others were gathered together. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the Lord Himself was among them and addressed them. He demonstrated to them that He was not a specter, a ghost, or a phantom but had a body of flesh and bones, although He was also the life-giving Spirit. Finally, “He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures” (v. 45).

According to the principle in Matthew 11:25-27, the Lord hides the revelation of the Father in His economy, and the Father conceals the revelation concerning the Son from those who are wise and intelligent in themselves. But the Father and the Son are revealed to infants—those who are simple and who can take in a new thought. Regarding the kingdom of God, the Lord Jesus said, “Unless you turn and become like little children, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens” (18:3). We need to be willing to receive mercy to humble ourselves or, if necessary, to be humbled and become like little children. We need the pictures in the Old Testament, and we need the New Testament, which gives the definitions, the captions, or the explanations for the pictures. When we see the picture with the explanation, we have the possibility of having the Scriptures opened, our eyes opened, and our minds opened to see the kingdom of God.

The Lord said in John 3:3 that unless one is born anew, or born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God may be all around us, but with the natural, human life, we cannot see it. We need to receive the life of the kingdom by being born of God. By receiving the divine life, we can see, behold, recognize, appreciate, and understand the kingdom. The Lord went on in verse 5 to say, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” In our experience we must have the negative aspect of being terminated in baptism, rejecting everything of the old realm

and dispensation, and the positive aspect of being born of the Spirit to have the life of God, which is the life of the kingdom of God. Then we will see, we will desire, we will live in, and we will fight for the kingdom of God.

Noah and His Family Living a Life in Resurrection, and This Life in Resurrection Being a Shadow of the Kingdom

Noah and his family lived a life in resurrection, and this life in resurrection was a shadow of the kingdom (Gen. 8:4, 18; 9:1-7). All the following points are based on the type, the picture, or the shadow, of the kingdom. The verses from Genesis 8 point to a type of resurrection—the ark rested on a mountain. Eight is a number signifying resurrection. Thus, the eight souls who came forth from the ark signify people in resurrection, in a realm of resurrection, living a life in resurrection (v. 18). Verse 1 of chapter 9 says, “God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” This word is related to Genesis 1:26-28, which shows that man was made in the image of God, was given dominion to represent God, and was blessed by God. Hence, the first thing that we need is God’s blessing.

In Genesis 9:6 God established human government, saying, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, / By man shall his blood be shed, / For in the image of God / He made man.” Prior to this, there had been no human government on earth. In the garden before the fall, the man and the woman lived by their intuition in fellowship with God. After they fell, their conscience was activated and functioned according to the knowledge of good and evil. Then for a long period of time, humankind was supposed to live according to the conscience. No one had just or righteous authority over anyone else. The result was the exercise of power, brute force, and violence, but that is not government; that is bestiality. Consequently, there was lawlessness, chaos, and man’s becoming flesh.

However, when God had another beginning with Noah and his family in resurrection, He instituted human government and designated Noah as the deputy authority of God. If necessary, this deputy authority could inflict the death penalty. Whoever shed man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed, not as a preventative measure but as an act of justice. If every murderer was caught, apprehended, tried, convicted, and executed

the next day, people would fear God and fear God’s government. Ecclesiastes 8:11 says, “Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the children of men is fully set within them to do evil.” However, through the church a kingdom of righteousness will eventually be brought to the earth. That kingdom is foreshadowed by Noah.

As the head of a new race after the flood, Noah was the deputy authority under God; this was a shadow of the kingdom of God, the reality of which is in the church life and the manifestation of which will be the kingdom in the millennium (Gen. 9:6; Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17).

The Ruling with God-given Authority among Men on the New Earth Signifying the Reigning of God’s Kingdom in Resurrection Life

The ruling with God-given authority among men on the new earth signifies the reigning of God’s kingdom in resurrection life (Gen. 9:6; Heb. 12:28). We need to realize that the problem God is facing in the universe, due to the rebellion of Satan and the fall of man, is not mainly a matter of time, a matter of when. Rather, it is mainly a matter of space, a mat-

ter of where. For this reason the Lord charges us to pray that the will of God would be done on earth even as it is done in heaven (Matt. 6:10). God’s will being done on earth and in heaven is a matter of dimension or space. Right now the will of God is done absolutely and without reservation in the heavens. But there is tremendous resistance to the Father’s will being done on the earth. To be for the kingdom is to be for the exercise of God-given authority on the earth so that God’s will would be carried out without frustration.

In God’s Government Noah Being a Good Example; Although He Made a Mistake and Had a Failure, His Nevertheless Being Strong to Represent God in Speaking Governmentally

In God’s government, Noah was a good example; although he made a mistake and had a failure, he nevertheless was strong to represent God in speaking governmentally. In Genesis 9:18-27 we see that the deputy authority made a mistake and had a failure. Verses 20 and 21 say, “Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted

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a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and became drunk. And he uncovered himself inside his tent." Noah made a mistake and had a failure, but he did not cease to be the deputy authority. His mistake, his failure, became a test to the people on the earth, even though it was a small number. One of Noah's sons, Ham, went into the tent and saw his father's situation. Verse 22 says, "Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside." He went and told his two brothers, Shem and Japheth. Ham's telling his brothers was a manifestation of rebellion. He saw, but he did nothing to cover. Instead, he talked about it to others.

Verse 23 says, "Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders, and they walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. And their faces were turned backward, so that they did not see their father's nakedness." Rebellious human beings especially love to see and expose the weaknesses, the failures, the mistakes, real or imagined, of the ones who represent God.

Then verse 24 says, "Noah awoke from his wine and learned what his youngest son had done to him." When Noah woke up and realized his situation, surely he felt embarrassed, shameful, and exposed. According to our natural psychology, the easiest thing for Noah to do would have been to call his sons and say, "Look, I'm no better than you. I'm just like you. I had this failure. I can't be the father anymore. I can't be the deputy anymore. I feel so bad." But Noah did not have that option. He had a responsibility to God. He had a responsibility to God's government. He was required by the government of God to address that situation. No matter how he felt about himself and how easy it would have been to lower himself, he spoke governmentally. When he spoke, the descendants of Ham received the curse, and the descendants of Shem and Japheth received the blessing (vv. 25-27). God's government is a decisive matter. It will either curse us or bless us, depending on our attitude, our response, to a mistake or a failure, either real or imagined. The rebellion in our flesh will come out the strongest when a representative of God has made a mistake or has had a failure. But Noah is a good example of a man representing God who did not stand with his feelings. He realized, "I'm still the father. I'm still the deputy authority of God. I will not exercise authority in an abusive way, but God has deputized me. I must and will speak to deal with this situation."

We do not know how long it will be before we meet the Lord or before the Lord comes back. May we receive mercy never to be a Ham but always to be a Shem or a Japheth. There may be an even heavier requirement placed upon some, not due to their own will but according to God's arrangement in His economy. When that time comes, they will have no choice but to speak, to minister, to present the Word, to teach the truth, and to

represent the Lord. No matter what their personal situation may be, God's government needs them and requires them to be faithful and to be strong.

Satan Usurping Man to Misuse Man's God-given Authority over Others to Form Nations

Satan usurped man to misuse man's God-given authority over others to form nations (10:8-10; 11:1-4). The previous point on Noah shows the positive side, but this point shows us the negative side. The institution of human government has been established; man rules over man. Now there arises the possibility for a powerful person, a capable person, such as Nimrod, a mighty hunter, who is stronger in his soul than us, to be able to subdue us, conquer us, hunt us down, talk us down, and subjugate us. Nimrod is the first type of Antichrist in the Bible. Genesis 10:8-10 says,

Cush begot Nimrod: He began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before Jehovah; therefore it is said, Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before Jehovah. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Akkad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-ir and Calah.

Nimrod built and governed many cities, but nothing he did was for God. Satan usurps man to misuse the God-given authority. This is the pathetic and pitiful situation on the earth today in the political sphere and in the religious sphere. Systems of authority were established by God, but Satan has instigated men to misuse this God-given authority to build up kingdoms for themselves. We need to consider who can represent God, who can be a deputy authority, and what kind of person in resurrection can be trusted by God to exercise authority on God's behalf. There must be such persons. Even the sisters, under the proper covering, may participate in exercising God's authority. Did God not create the human race male and female and give *them* authority? Sisters may not have the position of an elder or of some other office, but in the reality of the kingdom, they are being trained for kingship. The overcomers, who will all be sons of God and not given in marriage in the kingdom, will come from those who are brothers and sisters today. Then in the New Jerusalem, in the new heaven and the new earth, they will reign with Christ forever and ever.

The New Testament Being a Book of the Kingdom of God; the Entire New Testament Being on the Kingdom

The New Testament is a book of the kingdom of God; the entire New Testament is on the kingdom (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Rev. 11:15; 12:10). In Matthew 1:1 the chronology is reversed. It says, "The book of the generation of Jesus

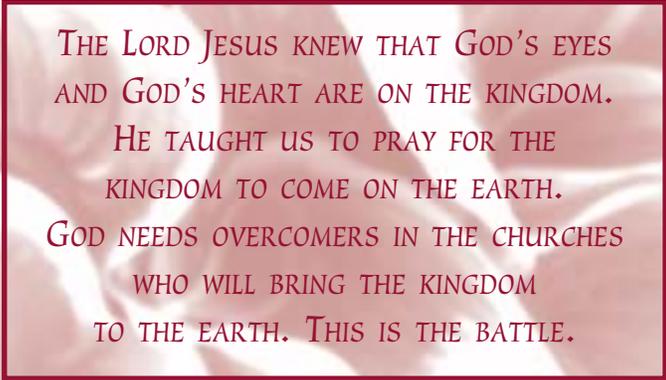
Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” It begins with the son of David because Christ is the King. Then all the way through the New Testament, we have this marvelous line of the kingdom until it is harvested with the city of God, the kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem.

In the *Life-study of Mark* there is a general definition, a generic definition, of a kingdom that is quite enlightening: “A kingdom is a realm where a person does what he wants to do” (Lee 118). So one’s personal kingdom—whether it is his car, his room, or his house—is a realm where a person does what he wants. This impulse to have a kingdom is in all of us. The motive is there because we were created by God to reign, but the impulse is there because we have been corrupted by Satan and utilized by him.

For a person to have his own kingdom means that he has a realm where he can work to achieve his goal or fulfill his plan. This is a kingdom. Do you think this struggle is beyond us? Surely not. A personal kingdom is a sphere where one works to reach his goal or to fulfill his plan. So a kingdom is a realm where a person accomplishes something. In a way, everyone on the earth wants a kingdom. We want a space, a territory, where we are in charge and can do whatever we want, where we can accomplish our goal and fulfill our plan. Behind it all is Satan, who has a kingdom where he can do whatever he wants and work very actively and aggressively to reach his goal and fulfill his plan.

God also desires a realm, a sphere, where His will is done without any hindrance. The kingdom of God is where the will of God is accomplished in an unhindered way. We need to ask ourselves, “How much of the kingdom is in our being? How much can God accomplish His will in an unhindered way in our own mind?” Sometimes we are flooded with emails out of the natural, unruly minds of men who have unruly thoughts. It is as if these ones have said, “Maybe outwardly I can’t have a sphere, but my inner being, my heart and my mind, is my sphere. This is where I rule.” So the kingdom must come inside of us. We must be born of God in our spirit, and this life needs to spread in us so that there is a kingdom in our being where God can do whatever He wills. Eventually, we all must mature and realize that it is not what we will, it is not what our parents will, it is not what others will, but it is what God wills. The kingdom is where God can do what He wills.

There is a progressive development in the establishment of the kingdom. First, the kingdom was established in the person of the Lord Jesus. When He came to the earth, He brought the kingdom to the earth. He was obedient unto death. He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. He did not speak His own word. He did not do His own work. He did not teach His own doctrine. He did not come in His own name. He did not seek His own will. He did not pursue His own glory. He obeyed the Father’s will unto the death of the cross. Thus, where He was, there was the kingdom of God. For this reason, in Luke 17:20-21 He could tell the Pharisees, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” This is a marvelous first stage, but the goal is for the kingdom that is in Jesus to become the kingdom over the whole actual, literal, and physical earth.



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To reach that final stage there is the need of an intermediate stage. The kingdom that is in Jesus must become the kingdom in the church. This is where the battle is today. We will see that the church life is the kingdom life. To practice the church life is to practice the kingdom life. It is by the gospel of the kingdom that we are brought to repentance and faith, are born

of God, enter into the kingdom, and live the church life. The battle is joined precisely at this point. Only the sovereign Lord knows to what degree His local churches on the earth are His kingdom in reality and practicality. There may be some co-workers in whom the sovereign Lord still does not have His kingdom. These ones are like Jeroboam, who, motivated by the desire to have his own kingdom and fearing that the kingdom would return to the line of David, set up his own system, his own priests, and his own feasts. There may be some elders and leading ones in the churches who have not yet been disciplined into the kingdom of God to be those who would never abuse authority, who would never presume to have authority, and who would never exercise control. Until the kingdom comes in the church, it cannot come to the earth.

The Lord Jesus knew that God’s eyes and God’s heart are on the kingdom. He taught us to pray for the kingdom to come on the earth. God needs overcomers in the churches who will bring the kingdom to the earth. This is the battle. The enemy destroyed the body of Jesus, but on the third day God resurrected the mystical Body of

Christ to be the enlargement of God's dwelling place. The church is the enlargement of Christ in life, whereas the kingdom is the enlargement of Christ in administration. The kingdom is the stone that became a great mountain in Daniel 2:31-35. That stone is the enlargement of Christ as the kingdom.

Now we come to a panoramic view of the development of what the kingdom is to God, what the kingdom is in Jesus, what the kingdom is in the church, what the kingdom will be in the millennium, and what the kingdom will be in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth. We must see this and pray the prayers of the kingdom:

Lord, Your kingdom come. I'm not here to have a sphere, a realm, where I can do whatever I want. Save me from being a Jeroboam. I am in the church life in resurrection with my whole being focused on the kingdom of God. I would like my living, my serving, and my church life to be a contribution to tip the scale to bring the kingdom to earth in its glorious manifestation.

Are we radical enough for this, not in a political sense but in the sense of touching the root issue? This is a battle of kingdoms. Wherever there is any kind of war politically, militarily, in the church, between husband and wife, in the family, or within oneself—that is a sign that the two kingdoms are struggling. But when the kingdom of God is established, there is righteousness, peace, and joy. Many of us do not have that much joy because too much of our being is still controlled by the self. The self is a joyless thing, a hellish thing.

The Kingdom of God Being a Divine Sphere for God to Work Out His Plan; It Being a Realm Where God Can Exercise His Authority to Accomplish What He Intends

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 (Matt. 6:10). To be radical is implied here. We need to turn this into a prayer: "Lord, make my being a divine sphere for You to work out Your plan." What the Lord desires is that we would present our being to be an inner sphere for Him to work out His plan. We need to pray, "Lord, what is in Your heart concerning me? Do You not have an intention regarding me as a member of Your Body—where I should live, what I should do, and whom I should marry? Lord, whatever is in Your heart concerning me, do that for the church as the kingdom of God. Whatever it is, do it, Lord."

The Kingdom of God Being the Ruling, the Reigning, of God with All Its Blessing and Enjoyment

The kingdom of God is the ruling, the reigning, of God

with all its blessing and enjoyment (v. 33; Luke 12:32; Col. 1:13). Luke 12:32 says, "Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father has been well pleased to give you the kingdom." It is pleasant, a pleasure, to be in God's kingdom. Satan lies to us, saying, "Oh, it is terrible to be under authority." This is because he wants to keep us under his hand. Colossians 1:13 says that God's kingdom is "the kingdom of the Son of His love." God delights in His Son, and God delights in the enlargement of His Son in administration to be the kingdom. God's kingdom is a lovely place.

As God Incarnate, the Lord Jesus Coming to Establish the Kingdom of God, to Establish a Realm in Which God Can Carry Out His Purpose through the Exercise of His Authority

As God incarnate, the Lord Jesus came to establish the kingdom of God, to establish a realm in which God can carry out His purpose through the exercise of His authority (John 1:1, 14; 3:3, 5; 18:36). John 1:14 says that the Word who is God became flesh. He is a God-man who taught us that we must be born again, born from above, born anew, to see the kingdom and born of water and of the Spirit to enter into the kingdom (3:3, 5). In chapter 18 He stood before a human authority and was submissive to that authority; He did not fight against it. Verses 36 and 37 say, "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My attendants would be struggling so that I would not be delivered to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not from here. Pilate said therefore to Him, So then You are a king? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

God's kingdom is not a kingdom like the Roman Empire. It is not a kingdom that we need to struggle for. It is a kingdom brought in through the death and resurrection of the Son of God. It is a divine and mystical realm, the realm of the divine species, the realm of the God-men, and the realm where we are saved in life and reign in life. Yet it is real, both inwardly in our being and practically in the church. May some of us be raptured and never see death to see the kingdom manifested in glory. But those who finish their course and go to the Lord as overcomers will rise up as the man-child and evict Satan from the heavens. Together the firstfruits, the man-child, and the late overcomers will be the bridal army, the great smiting stone, to smash human government. All forms of human government will be abolished, and the stone will become a mountain filling the whole earth. In order for there to be this corporate stone, there has to be the army. In order for the Lord to have the army, He must have the bride. In order for the Lord to have the bride, He must have the Body of Christ. The Body is an

organism absolutely under the headship of Christ. Stated in other terms, the battle is for the Body. Even if we say that the battle is for the kingdom, it is the same issue—whether or not we are living under the divine rule.

The New Testament Preaching the Gospel in the Way of the Kingdom; the Gospel Being for the Kingdom, and the Gospel Being Proclaimed So That Rebellious Sinners Might Be Saved, Qualified, and Equipped to Enter into the Kingdom

The New Testament preaches the gospel in the way of the kingdom; 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 (Matt. 4:17; Acts 8:12). This is indicated in Mark 1:14-15. Verse 14 speaks of the gospel of God, and verse 15 mentions the kingdom of God. Moreover, Matthew 4:17 says, “Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.” Here the Lord Jesus is repeating the words of John the Baptist. In essence He is saying, “Repent, for there is a kingdom at hand requiring you to repent. Change your mind. Where is your mind? In what realm is your mind? You must have a change.” The gospel is for the kingdom. We respect and we honor the preaching of the gospel of grace by the great evangelists. We honor and we respect the gospel preaching of our brother in Christ Jesus, Billy Graham. But there is a big missing all over the earth in the preaching of the gospel—the gospel of the kingdom. The Lord said in 24:14, “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.” Only those who are the kingdom and who are in the kingdom can preach the gospel of the kingdom.

If the Lord cannot get through with us, He will raise up another generation or another group. Eventually, He will gain a portable kingdom people who will “follow the Lamb wherever He may go” (Rev. 14:4). In John 21:20-22 when Peter heard that he was going to be martyred, he turned around to John and asked the Lord, in effect, “What about him? If I’m going to be martyred, shouldn’t he be martyred? Shouldn’t everybody be martyred? Isn’t Your will for me Your will for everybody?” The Lord in essence replied, “Peter, do not be so subjective. I’m the Lord. I may want him to remain until I come. If so, what

is that to you?” Some of us will be martyred and thereby glorify God, and some of us will remain with the “if.” With this blessed uncertainty, although we do not know how long “until” is, nevertheless, we should live in the reality of the kingdom moment by moment. Eventually, John breathed his last. Now he is with Peter in the Paradise “prayer meeting.” Many overcomers are also there praying, according to Revelation 6:9-11. Maybe they are praying for the kingdom. Maybe they are praying for us. They went to the Lord in glorious victory. We need to look at it from that point of view. Whether we will be part of the man-child, however, is pending.

The Eternal Kingdom of God Being the Increase of Christ in Administration

The eternal kingdom of God is the increase of Christ in administration (Mark 4:26-29; Dan. 2:34-35, 44). We see this in Mark 4:26-29 with the seed of the divine life that the Lord sows into us. This seed in us grows into the kingdom. We also see this in Daniel 2:34-35 with the stone cut without hands that strikes the image and then becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth.

The kingdom of God is the Lord Jesus as the seed of life sown into His believers and developing into a realm over which God can rule as His kingdom in His divine life (Luke 17:20-21; Mark 4:3, 26). In the last five years how much development have we had? How much growth has there been in our being? The seed cannot remain as a seed; it has to grow, develop, and become a realm over which God can rule as His kingdom in the divine life.

The Kingdom of God Being the Shining of the Reality of the Lord Jesus; Being under His Shining Is to Be in the Kingdom

The kingdom of God is the shining of the reality of the Lord Jesus; to be under His shining is to be in the kingdom (9:1-2). The Lord said, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those standing here who shall by no means taste death until they see the kingdom of God having come in power” (v. 1). Then He took three of them with Him to the top of a mountain, and He was transfigured before them. His face was shining like the sun. He showed them the kingdom. The kingdom is the Son of Man shining over

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us. The kingdom is Jesus shining over us and into us. To live in the kingdom is to live in this blessed light. Praise the Lord for the kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God Being a Realm Not Only of the Divine Dominion but Also of the Divine Species, in Which Are All the Divine Things

The kingdom of God is a realm not only of the divine dominion but also of the divine species, in which are all the divine things (John 3:3, 5). God became man to enter into the human species, and man becomes God in life and nature but not in the Godhead to enter into the divine species (1:12-14; Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4). To enter into the divine realm—the realm of the divine species—we need to be born of God to have the divine life and nature (John 1:12-13).

The Gospel of John is a divine and mystical gospel, which unveils the kingdom of God as the realm of the divine species. It is the realm produced by God becoming man and man becoming God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. Therefore, God became man to enter into the human species, and man becomes God in life and nature but not in the Godhead to be brought into the divine species.

The Kingdom Being the Church Life Today; Thus, to Practice the Church Life Being to Practice the Kingdom

The kingdom is the church life today; thus, to practice the church life is to practice the kingdom (Rom. 14:17). We should not be selective, saying,

I like the family life. I like John 12. I like the house in Bethany. I like the fragrance of the ointment. I like to be Mary, not doing anything but just loving the Lord and anointing Him. I like this kind of church life. Do not talk to me about the kingdom. That is hard. That is severe. I do not like that. Can't I have the church life on my terms?

We cannot have the church life on our terms. The church is the kingdom of God. It is not up to us to choose. It is God's house. We do not design it. We do not build it all by ourselves. God is the Architect. God is the Builder. It is the house of God, the kingdom of God, and the family of God. Here God rules in the divine life.

The Work of the Church Being to Bring In the Kingdom of God

The work of the church is to bring in the kingdom of God (Matt. 13:43; 6:10; 12:22-28; Rev. 11:15; 12:10). All these verses demonstrate that to bring in the kingdom of God is the work and the warfare of the church. Particularly, one of the great verses in the New Testament,

Revelation 11:15, says, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." No matter what human opinion says and no matter what the outward appearance is, the kingdom of God will in fact come to all the nations. It is spreading over the whole earth through the church. We will either be the way, or we will be the wall hindering the Lord. Let us be the way for the kingdom to come. The kingdom produces the church, the church brings in the kingdom, and the ultimate issue is the New Jerusalem—the kingdom of God in eternity in the new heaven and new earth (21:1-2, 10; 22:1, 5).

Those Who Always Put God's Kingdom before Them—That Which Touches God's Will and His Enemy—Being the Most Useful Workers in the Hands of God

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 (Matt. 6:33; 7:21; 25:21, 23; Col. 4:11). Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek first His kingdom," while 7:21 says, "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens." Then 25:21 and 23 say that those who are faithful to function according to the measure given to them will enter into the joy of the Lord. At that time the suffering in the soul at last will be over, and we will receive our soul-life, our enjoyment, with the Lord. When the Lord established the Lord's table, He told us, "I shall by no means drink of this product of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father" (26:29). We want to be in that Lord's table meeting when the Lord is no longer a Nazarite, no longer unable to drink wine, at which time He will rise up and gird Himself and serve His overcomers (Luke 12:37). We do not want to miss that feast, but the way to it is through the reality of the kingdom in life and through the practicality of the kingdom in the church.

According to Colossians 4:11, there were some like Paul and his company who were fellow workers for the kingdom of God. We are not fellow workers for anyone's kingdom or for anyone's empire. We need to be opened to see that there is one Body of Christ. As an illustration, I have a body. My one body does the work of my person. The different members, the different parts, have their own function, but they are all doing one work. Likewise, we, as the members of the Body of Christ, do one work because there is one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one redemption, one Word of God, one divine revelation, one divine life, and one Body of Christ.

However, there is not one work in an organizational sense of having a pope, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests,

and friars. We are all brothers without any rank. The Lord told us in Matthew 20:25-26, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant." As brothers doing one work, we do not lord it over others, but we become servants of one another.

A Proper Person Who Represents God with His Authority (a Deputy Authority) Having the Following Qualifications

What kind of person is a Noah? What kind of person can represent God? A person who represents God with His authority, a deputy authority, must have the following qualifications:

Submitting to Authority

He must submit to authority (8:8-9). The centurion could say to the Lord, "I also am a man under authority," realizing that he derived his authority by being under authority. We also need to learn to submit to authority.

Realizing That in Himself He Has No Authority

He must realize that in himself he has no authority (28:18; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10). Only the Lord has authority. In Matthew 28:18 the resurrected Christ declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." He did not say, "All authority has been given to Me and you because you're so important," but he said "to Me." Christ alone has all the authority. We have no authority. In 2 Corinthians 13:10 Paul speaks of "the authority which the Lord has given me." Such authority is really a kind of loan. In effect the Lord is saying, "Paul, represent Me. Be the acting God." Paul continues, "For building up and not for overthrowing." This authority given to Paul "is not for ruling over the believers but for building them up" (Recovery Version, 10:8, note 1).

Knowing God and God's Will

He must know God and God's will (Eph. 1:9; 5:17). The verses from Ephesians speak of God's will in the highest sense. We need to know the will of God spoken of in Revelation 4:11, in Ephesians 1:9, and in Romans 12:2. Those who know God's will are able to represent God.

Being One Who Denies the Self

He must be one who denies the self (Matt. 16:24). This is a strong qualification of a deputy authority.

Being One with the Lord and Living in Constant and Intimate Fellowship with Him

He must be one with the Lord and live in constant and intimate fellowship with Him (1 Cor. 6:17; 1:9; 1 John 1:3). A deputy authority must know the person he is representing. He must know how the Lord thinks, what the Lord desires, what the Lord intends, and how the Lord feels. He needs to live in fellowship with the Lord and be one with the Lord.

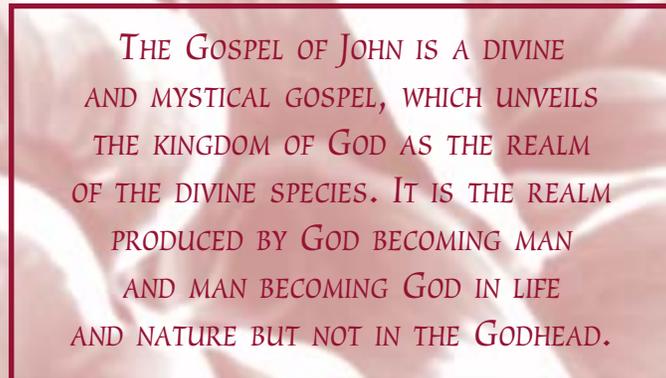
Not Being Subjective and Not Acting according to His Own Feeling

He must not be subjective and not act according to his own feeling (2 Cor. 3:5). In 2 Corinthians 3:5 Paul says, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." Some brothers measure everything by their private feeling and by their own, narrow view.

They say, "I have my view, which happens to be the correct one, and my feeling. I'm the center of everything. My feeling is what counts. I react to things according to how they make me feel." If we are like this, we are disqualified from being a Noah today. It is not a matter of how we feel, how we think, or how we view things; it must be a matter of God's feeling, God's thoughts, and God's view. We represent Him.

Being Kind and Gracious in Dealing with Others

He must be kind and gracious in dealing with others (Luke 6:35; cf. Rom. 5:15-16; 1 Cor. 2:12). Luke 6:35 says, "Love your enemies, and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the unthankful and evil." The Lord is kind to all the people on the earth. But some think that since they are representing authority, they should not be touched. They may react and say, "I will deliver you to Satan. I'll bind you. You touched my authority. You insulted my dignity. I will deal with you in strict righteousness." However, that is



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IS A DIVINE AND MYSTICAL GOSPEL, WHICH UNVEILS THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS THE REALM OF THE DIVINE SPECIES. IT IS THE REALM PRODUCED BY GOD BECOMING MAN AND MAN BECOMING GOD IN LIFE AND NATURE BUT NOT IN THE GODHEAD.

not a characteristic of God's deputy. God's deputy is gracious to others.

Being a Person in Resurrection, Living in the Resurrection Life of Christ

He must be a person in resurrection, living in the resurrection life of Christ (2 Cor. 1:9; 4:14; Num. 17:1-10). In 2 Corinthians 1:9 Paul says, "Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead." This will be a fundamental lesson for us to learn. When we learn it, we will not have to tell anyone anything. People will look at us, listen to us, and know that the Lord got through in us and that we do not trust ourselves any longer. Our rod will be budding with almonds and blossoms. We will not have a dead stick to beat others; rather, we will have a budding rod to feed others. Buds, blossoms, and almonds will exude out of our being. We may not even be aware of what is happening. People will not sense the rod; they will sense the fragrance of the blossoms, and they will taste the nourishment of almonds.

Taking a Lowly Place before God

He must take a lowly place before God (Num. 14:5; 16:3-4, 22, 45; Matt. 11:29; Rom. 12:16; Luke 14:7-11; 1 Pet. 5:5-6). In Numbers 14 when the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, they fell on their faces, literally. Moses and Aaron did not stand there and defy the opposers. Instead, they took a lowly place.

Being Able to Bear Offenses

He must be able to bear offenses (Exo. 16:7; Num. 14:2, 5, 9, 27; Matt. 6:14-15; 1 Cor. 4:6-13). This matter is quite eye-opening. A deputy authority should not be so quick to threaten people, to excommunicate them, to hand them over to Satan, or to discipline them. In 1 Corinthians 4:10-13 Paul is seemingly saying, "God has made us, the apostles, last—the offscouring, the scum of all things. We are a spectacle. We are the last act in the coliseum. We are the criminals condemned to death." "We are qualified only to be cast aside as waste. This was Paul's estimation of himself with respect to both the Jews and the Gentiles" (Lee, *1 Corinthians* 310). Our attitude should be that we are ambassadors of God representing Him. If we want to be honored, if we want to be glorified, and if we want to have a following, we are in the wrong realm. The world defies and dishonors the ambassadors. We need to be clear that outwardly, we are scum, we are nothing, we are refuse, we are the dregs, and we are criminals sentenced to death. However, inwardly, we live in the magnificent realm of the glorious kingdom of God in life. We need to choose when we want our glory. Do we want it now in the world? Do we want it now in

the church? Do we think that speaking from the podium is to have glory for ourself? Or will we take the way of the Lord Jesus, of the ministers of the new covenant, and of the overcomers in all the ages to go to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach?

Having a Consciousness of His Inability and Unsuitability

He must have a consciousness of his inability and unsuitability (Exo. 3:11; 4:6-7, 10; 2 Cor. 3:5; 1 Cor. 15:10). In the verses in Exodus, in effect Moses is saying, "I can't speak. I can't do anything. I can't do this. Forty years ago I had the strength, so I killed that Egyptian. Now I can't do it. I can't speak." And the Lord says, "Aaron will be your mouth. You will be God to him. Also, you need to bear a sign that you realize what you are. Put your hand in your bosom. Now pull it out, and it is leprous. You're a leper. I know you're a leper." There is no other kind of person on the earth other than ones in the flesh. If we do not trust ourself and if we are conscious of our inability and unsuitability, then we are able. The paradox is that when we are weak, then we are strong; when we cannot, then we can.

Being One Who Represents God Properly

He must be one who represents God properly (Num. 20:2-13; 2 Cor. 5:18, 20; Eph. 6:20). In Numbers 20:2-13 Moses had a failure. He was angry when God was not angry. He misrepresented God. Neither you nor I can represent God in the natural life. Regardless of how smart, how gifted, and how well trained we are, we cannot represent God properly. Only the Christ of resurrection is qualified to be this kind of person. However, in His economy, God is enlarging and reproducing the kingly Christ in all of us. At the latest in the new heaven and new earth and in the New Jerusalem, all of the redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, and glorified sons of God will be kings reigning forever and ever. This is our destiny. All of us, whether you are a sister in the flesh or a brother in the flesh, are bound for resurrection. Resurrection life makes us a new species, a God-man person, a citizen of the divine and mystical realm. This is the kingdom of God. May we allow the Lord to rule us, may we follow the Spirit, and may we live and enjoy the kingdom of God. **ATC**

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