

God's Rule in Life through Christ and the Church

The kingdom of God involves the eternal reign of God in the realm of His divine life. This life has been sown into redeemed and regenerated humanity as a seed of Christ, which is growing, developing, and being organically enlarged to express God's image and to exercise His dominion. Initially, the kingdom of God must be understood as the reign of God, the rule of God, the sphere wherein God exercises His governmental authority. The kingdom of God is coextensive with His existence, which is from eternity to eternity, without beginning or ending. The kingdom was established on earth through the incarnation of the Son, who expressed God's image and exercised God's dominion in His humanity. The kingdom is being enlarged in redeemed and regenerated humanity for the corporate expression of God's image and the corporate exercise of His dominion. Those who express and represent God in His kingdom submit to authority, realize that they have no authority in themselves, know God and His will, and deny their self. They are one with the Lord and live in constant and intimate fellowship with Him. They are not subjective nor do they act according to their own feelings. They are kind and gracious in dealing with others as persons who live in the resurrection life of Christ. They willingly take a lowly place before God and are able to bear offenses. Although they have a consciousness of their inability and unsuitability, they nevertheless represent God properly. Only the Christ of resurrection is qualified to be this kind of person. However, God is reproducing this kingly Christ through the dispensing of His resurrection life into redeemed and regenerated humanity.

Thus, the kingdom of God is also God's reign in the realm of the divine life. Those who have been born of God in spirit through regeneration have received the divine, eternal life, and they have entered into the realm of the divine life to live in the kingdom of God. They are ruled not only by God's power and authority outwardly but also by God's life and nature inwardly.

The kingdom of God is Christ as the seed of life, who has been sown into redeemed and regenerated humanity and who is growing, spreading, and maturing until there will be a full harvest—the manifestation of the kingdom. The Lord is both the Sower and the seed sown. As the Sower, the Lord sows Himself as the seed of life through His word. Entering into the kingdom of God is not a matter

of entering into a material realm outwardly but of Christ growing inwardly and being formed in the believers.

The growth of God's life is manifested in the church, and thus, the genuine and proper church life is also the kingdom of God. When believers allow the seed of the kingdom life to develop in them by receiving and applying the divine provisions of Christ's great salvation and His ongoing heavenly ministry, they will live in the reality of the kingdom in this age and inherit the manifestation of the kingdom in the next age. Hebrews unveils divine provisions that free us from the bondage of the fear of death, embolden us to come forward to serve the living God, and restore and shepherd our soul in sanctification unto a living that expresses the righteousness of the kingdom. When we hear the voice of the Lord in the midst of our weaknesses and do not harden our heart, faith enables us to come forward to the throne of grace, to enter the Holy of Holies, to endure, to accept discipline, and to come forward to live in Mount Zion, the reality of God's unshakable kingdom in this age.

The kingdom of God occupies a crucial place in the New Testament, and its prominence is highlighted in the book of Revelation, which shows that the kingdom of God is a realm in which God manifests His glory and exercises His authority through a corporate man possessing His life and nature. He accomplishes this by dispensing Himself as the eternal life into redeemed and regenerated humanity. Revelation unveils that the believers may reign in the church as the reality of the kingdom of God in the present age, that the overcoming believers will usher in and reign in the manifestation of the kingdom of God in the coming millennial age, and that all the believers will reign in the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem as the kingdom of God in eternity future. The desire of God's heart is to reproduce Christ in all His believers for the enlargement of His kingdom. According to the divine revelation in the New Testament, the enlargement of the kingdom of God through the reproduction of Christ takes places in three stages: in the current age of grace, in the coming age of the millennium, and in the eternal age. The believers become the duplication of Christ by participating in the divine life to manifest God and reign as kings in the proper church in the present age, in the millennial kingdom in the next age, and in the New Jerusalem in eternity. This is the kingdom of God. **AC**