

DELIVERED OUT OF THE AUTHORITY OF DARKNESS AND TRANSFERRED INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF GOD'S LOVE

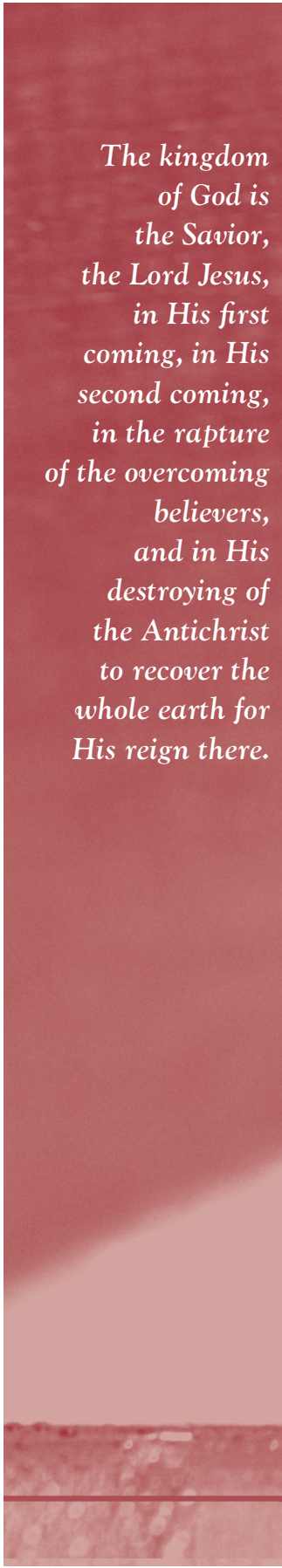
by Ron Kangas

The New Testament is a book on the kingdom of God; the entire New Testament concerns the kingdom (Matt. 6:33; Mark 1:14-15; 4:11; John 3:3, 5; Acts 1:3; Rom. 14:17; Rev. 11:15; 12:10). The kingdom of God is the reign of God, the rule of God, a divine sphere for God to work out His plan, a realm where God can exercise His authority to accomplish His will and intentions. The kingdom of God as the reign of God is indicated clearly in Revelation 11:15: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever." For God to have a kingdom is for Him to have a dominion: "Your kingdom is an eternal kingdom, / And Your dominion is throughout all generations" (Psa. 145:13). In this verse *Your kingdom* is the equivalent of *Your dominion*. The kingdom of God is God's reign over the entire universe and over everything and everyone. This means that God rules the heavens, the earth, and all the nations and peoples of humankind. It is accurate to say that the reign of God is coextensive with the existence of God. God's existence is from eternity to eternity, without beginning or ending, and God's kingdom, His universal and eternal reign, is likewise from eternity to eternity, without beginning or ending (Heb. 1:8; Dan. 4:3).

The kingdom of God is not only the reign of God over the universe but also a realm of the divine life (John 3:3, 5, 15-16; 18:36); this is a realm wherein the divine life—the eternal life in the Son of God, who is life (1 John 5:11-12; John 11:25; 14:6)—moves, works, rules, and governs so that God may fulfill His eternal purpose. This aspect of the kingdom of God is actually an organism constituted with God's life as the realm, the sphere, of life for His ruling, in which He reigns by His life and corporately expresses Himself as the Divine Trinity in Christ as our life and the church as the Body of Christ (Col. 3:4; Eph. 1:22-23). As created human beings, we were born into the kingdom of God as a physical realm, and as children of God, we have entered into the kingdom of God as a realm of life by being begotten of God, being born of the Spirit in our spirit (John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5-6).

Aspects of the Kingdom of God

The Gospel of Luke is rich in revelation concerning the kingdom of God. As God incarnate, the Lord Jesus came to establish the kingdom of God on earth as a realm in which God can carry out His purpose through the exercise of His authority. An angel spoke to Mary, the mother of Jesus, saying, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore also the holy thing which is born will be called the Son of God" (1:35). The angel also said, "The Lord God will give to Him the throne of David His father, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (vv. 32-33). Jesus will have the house of Jacob—the



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nation of Israel—as the center of His reign (Acts 1:6; 15:16), through which He will rule over the entire world as His kingdom (Rev. 11:15).

During the years of His ministry on earth, the Lord Jesus went from city to city, announcing the gospel of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43). While teaching and training His disciples, the Lord said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God” (8:10). God’s economy concerning the kingdom was a hidden mystery, which was unveiled to the apostles (Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:3). Because the nature and character of the kingdom of God are wholly divine and the elements through which it is brought forth are the divine life and the divine light, the kingdom of God in its reality is entirely a mystery to the natural man (1 Cor. 2:14). Divine revelation is required to understand the intrinsic significance of the kingdom of God.

Some of the most amazing words that the Lord spoke regarding God’s kingdom are recorded in Luke 17:20-21. When the Pharisees asked Him when the kingdom of God was coming, Jesus said, “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.” The Lord’s word indicates that the kingdom of God is not material—it is a person, the One who was standing in their midst. The kingdom of God is the Savior, the Lord Jesus, “in His first coming (vv. 21-22), in His second coming (vv. 23-30), in the rapture of the overcoming believers (vv. 31-36), and in His destroying of the Antichrist (v. 37) to recover the whole earth for His reign there (Rev. 11:15)” (Lee, *Recovery Version*, Luke 17:20, note 2). The kingdom of God is the Lord Jesus Himself, who was among the Pharisees but who, in His resurrection, is now within the believers (2 Cor. 13:5; Col. 1:27). May we receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation and may the eyes of our heart be enlightened (Eph. 1:17-18) so that we may see and realize that wherever the Lord Jesus is, there the kingdom of God is. The kingdom of God is with Him, and through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, He has brought the kingdom of God to us. The kingdom of God is the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit dwelling in us. Eventually, we will realize that the kingdom of God is in us because Christ is in us and that we are in the kingdom of God because we are in Christ, who is the kingdom.

“A certain man of noble birth went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return” (Luke 19:12). *A certain man of noble birth* signifies Jesus as the Son of God and Son of Man, who is “of the highest status—the God-man, both honorable in His deity and noble in His humanity” (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 12, note 1). *Went to a distant country* signifies the Lord’s going to heaven after His death and resurrection (24:51; 1 Pet. 3:22). *Return* signifies the Lord’s coming back with the kingdom (2 Tim. 4:1). In His ascension Christ as the Son of Man is before the throne of God to receive dominion and a kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14). After He receives the kingdom from God, He will come back to rule over the entire world (Luke 19:12, 15; Rev. 11:15). Christ’s coming again will terminate every form of human government on earth and bring in the eternal kingdom of God, not as a mystery but in its glorious manifestation.

During a period of forty days after His resurrection and before His ascension, Christ repeatedly appeared to the apostles and spoke “the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). This clearly indicates that the kingdom of God would be the main subject of the apostles’ preaching. While Philip was in the city of Samaria, he “announced the gospel of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ” (8:12). He announced the kingdom of God as the gospel just as the Lord Jesus had done (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43). In Acts 14:22 Paul entreated the believers who were continuing in the faith to realize that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God, because the whole world opposes our entrance into it. To enter into the kingdom of God is to enter into the full enjoyment of Christ as the kingdom. In Acts 19 we see Satan fighting against the spreading of God’s kingdom on earth (vv. 9, 23-41). The prevailing ministry for the propagation of Christ is a fight, a battle, for God’s kingdom. Paul’s proclaiming of

the kingdom of God in Acts 28:31 was the propagation of the resurrected, ascended, and all-inclusive Christ (v. 23). This is proved by the words *teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ*, which things go together with the kingdom of God. To teach concerning Christ is to spread the kingdom of God. Therefore, the kingdom of God is actually the propagation of the resurrected Christ, a process that continues to be carried out through believers today. "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" (Matt. 24:14).

The Kingdom in Paul's Epistles

In his Epistles the apostle Paul emphasized certain crucial aspects of the kingdom of God. Paul wrote to "the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," which was composed of new believers who had "turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God," telling them to "walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thes. 1:1, 9; 2:12). The kingdom of God is the realm for God to exercise His power so that He may express His glory (Rev. 5:10, 13). The kingdom of God is the sphere in which we worship God and enjoy God under God's ruling with a view of entering into God's glory (Matt. 6:13). First Thessalonians 2:12 indicates that we enter into the kingdom of God and into the glory of God simultaneously. Paul's work with these new believers nourished them, cherished them, and fostered them to walk in a manner worthy of God so that they might be able to enter into His kingdom and participate in His glory.

According to the Epistle to the Romans, all of those who have been begotten of God to live in the kingdom of God as a realm of the divine life need to see and realize that the kingdom of God requires righteousness, peace, and joy (14:17). Three succinct statements make this crystal clear. *The kingdom of God is righteousness.* According to the New Testament, righteousness has four main aspects. Righteousness is being right with persons, things, and matters according to God's strict requirements (Matt. 5:6; 6:33). Righteousness is the outward expression of the Christ who lives in us as the life-giving Spirit (2 Cor. 3:9, 18; 1 Cor. 15:45b). The Spirit is the essence of God living, moving, and acting within us, and righteousness is the essence of God manifested outwardly as God's image to express Him (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). The divine essence that is being inscribed into us by the Spirit will have a particular expression, and this expression is righteousness (2 Cor. 3:3, 9; Matt. 5:20). Righteousness is a matter of God's kingdom. According to Matthew 6:33, we must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. God's throne is established with righteousness as the foundation (Psa. 89:14; 97:2). Furthermore, righteousness issues from God for His administration and thus is intrinsically related to God's rule and government (Isa. 32:1). God's arrangement is that righteousness first issues in the image of God and then establishes the kingdom of God (Rom. 8:4, 29; 14:17). Righteousness is a matter of being right with God in our being (1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 5:21). To be right with God in our being is to have an inner being that is transparent, an inner being that is in the mind, will, and heart of God. If we are infused and saturated with the life-giving Spirit, our inner being will become transparent. Then we will be righteous persons, believers in Christ who are right with God, with others, and with themselves.

The kingdom of God is peace. Our Father is the God of peace, having a peaceful life with a peaceful nature (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Matt. 5:9; Heb. 12:14; James 3:18; 2 Thes. 3:16). The peace that is in Christ, that is Christ, that was made by Christ (Eph. 2:14), and that was announced by Christ as the gospel is the peace in the kingdom of God (v. 17). In living in the kingdom of God as a realm of life, we need to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace, letting the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts (4:3; Col. 3:15). As far as it depends on us, we should live in peace with everyone (Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14).

The kingdom of God is the realm for God to exercise His power so that He may express His glory. The kingdom of God is the sphere in which we worship God and enjoy God under God's ruling with a view of entering into God's glory.

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The kingdom of God is joy in the Holy Spirit. God wants us to enjoy Him and live for His purpose (Neh. 8:10; Eph. 3:11). Living the kingdom life in our daily life and church life requires that we live joyfully to God in the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 1:8; Matt. 5:11-12; Acts 5:41; 13:52; Phil. 2:17-18). If we live a life of righteousness and peace, we will live joyfully to God in His kingdom. The Triune God is a God of joy, and the apostles were fellow workers with the saints for their joy (Rom. 15:13; John 15:11; 17:13; Gal. 5:22; 2 Cor. 1:24; Phil. 1:25). We may experience the joy of the Lord's word being in our heart, and the joy of the Lord will be our strength (Jer. 15:16; Neh. 8:10). The secret to the Christian life in the kingdom of God is not how much we work for Him but how much we contact Him, receive His dispensing, absorb Him, and enjoy Him (John 15:4-5; Col. 2:6-7). We should "exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8).

All these aspects of the kingdom of God revealed throughout the New Testament enable us to understand the apostle Paul's marvelous words in Colossians 1:12-13: "Giving thanks to the Father,...who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."

The Authority of Darkness

When the resurrected and ascended Christ was revealed to Saul of Tarsus (later known as Paul), He gave him a commission, saying,

I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness of both the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you...to open their [the Gentiles'] eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God. (Acts 26:16, 18)

Paul was charged, through the preaching of the gospel, to open the eyes of those who were fallen and turn them from darkness to light so that they might see the divine things in the spiritual realm. Seeing divine things requires spiritual sight and divine light. To turn from darkness to light is to have a transfer from darkness into light, and to turn from the authority of Satan to God is to be transferred out of the authority of Satan into God. Darkness is a sign of sin and death; light is a sign of righteousness and life (John 1:14; 8:12). Darkness is actually the authority of Satan. Whenever we are in darkness (1 John 1:6; 2:9, 11), we are under satanic authority. When we are in the light, we are in God. Satan and darkness are one, and God and light are one. Before we believed in Christ the Son of God and were regenerated by the Spirit of God, born by the Spirit in our spirit, we were in darkness, under the authority of Satan. But by God's mercy and grace, we have been transferred out of darkness and the authority of Satan into light and God.

In Colossians 1:13 Paul puts the words *authority* and *darkness* together in one phrase. The authority of darkness is Satan's kingdom, which belongs to darkness; the authority of God is God's kingdom, which belongs to light (Matt. 12:26; Acts 26:18). Satan is the ruler of this world (John 12:31) and the ruler of the authority of the air (Eph. 2:2). He has angels, who are his subordinates as principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world (6:12). Hence, Satan has a kingdom, the authority of darkness. In order to live in the kingdom of God as a realm of life, we need to realize that there is a sphere and realm of light and a sphere and realm of darkness. These two realms are two kingdoms—a kingdom of darkness and a kingdom of light (1 Pet. 2:9). As believers in Christ, we have been transferred out of darkness into light and out of the authority of darkness into the kingdom of God as a realm of life and light. Darkness is the expressive sphere of Satan in death; light is the expressive sphere of God in life (1 John 1:5-7). God has transferred us out of Satan's death-realm of darkness under the authority of Satan into the life-realm of light under the authority of God.

Delivered from Satan's Authority over Us by the Victorious Christ

To be delivered out of the authority of darkness is to be delivered from the devil, Satan, who has the might of death (Heb. 2:14; John 17:15). We, believers in Christ and children of God, have been delivered from Satan and his kingdom by the death of Christ (Col. 2:15) and by the life of Christ in resurrection. God has delivered us from Satan's authority over us by the victorious Christ.

In His earthly ministry the victorious Christ defeated the devil and destroyed his works (Matt. 4:1-11; 1 John 3:8). For the Lord Jesus to accomplish His ministry for the kingdom of God, He had to defeat God's enemy, the devil, Satan (Matt. 4:1, 11). This the Lord had to do as a man, standing as a man to confront the enemy of God (vv. 3-4, 6-7). The devil's temptation of the first man, Adam, was a success, but his temptation of the second man, Christ, was an absolute failure (v. 11). In His ministry on earth after He defeated God's enemy in the wilderness, the Lord Jesus destroyed the works of the devil. In 1 John 3:8 the Greek word translated "destroy" may also be translated "undo" or "dissolve." The Son of God was manifested that He might undo and destroy the sinful deeds of the devil, that is, condemn, through His death on the cross in the flesh, sin initiated by the evil one, destroy the power of the sinful nature of the devil, and take away both sin and sins (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14; John 1:29).

In His crucifixion the victorious Christ cast out the ruler of the world, destroyed the devil, caused the rulers and authorities to be stripped off, and nullified death. In His work on the cross, Christ cast out the ruler of this world and judged the world (12:31). When Satan, the ruler of this world, was cast out by Christ's work in His death, the entire world system related to Satan was judged (1 John 5:19). The base of Satan's rebellion was shaken, and the strongholds of Satan's earthly kingdom were shaken (Matt. 27:51). While He was dying on the cross, Christ destroyed the devil. In Hebrews 2:14 the Greek word translated "destroy" can also be rendered as "bring to nought," "make of none effect," "do away with," "abolish," "discard." In His humanity the crucified Christ destroyed the devil (John 3:14). Colossians 2:15 speaks of God in Christ on the cross "stripping off the rulers and the authorities," saying that "He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it [the cross]." This verse portrays the warfare, the fighting, that took place during the time of Christ's crucifixion. Activities involving Christ, God, and the evil angelic powers and authorities were brought to focus on the cross; thus, the cross became God's unique way to deal with all the negative things in the universe. By His crucifixion Christ labored to accomplish redemption, and God the Father was working to judge sin and nail the law to the cross (v. 14). At the same time, the evil rulers and authorities were busy in their attempt to frustrate the work of God and Christ, pressing in close to God and Christ; therefore, a warfare was raging on the cross. But God openly made a display of the evil angelic rulers and authorities and triumphed over them in it, putting them to shame (v. 15). Simultaneously, through His devil-destroying death, Christ nullified death, making it of none effect (2 Tim. 1:10).

The resurrection of the victorious Christ declares that He is victorious over death (2:8; 1 Cor. 15:4, 20). It was not possible for Him to be held by death (Acts 2:24). The Lord Jesus is both God and resurrection, possessing an indestructible life (John 11:25; Heb. 7:16). Death cannot hold Him. The Lord Jesus defeated death and rose up from it. Now the resurrected Christ is "the living One," and He has "the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. 1:18). As the living One, the Lord became dead, but now He is "living forever and ever" (v. 18). The resurrected Christ has the keys of death and of Hades; death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control.

The victorious Christ ascended into the heavens and has "raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). We

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of God, and
because He was
also conceived in
and born of a
human virgin, He
is the Son of Man.
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He is the Son
of God; on the
human side, He is
the Son of Man.

need to realize that, as believers, we are now in the heavens, for when Christ ascended to the heavens, we were in the train of captives led by Him to “the height” (4:8). Christ has released us from the usurping hand of Satan and brought us to the heavens where we are now sitting, not as captives but as sons of God and members of Christ. In His ascension the victorious One has brought us to the highest place in the universe. Through the victorious Christ we have been delivered from the authority of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God’s love (Col. 1:13).

The Kingdom of the Son of God’s Love

In order to understand the expression *the kingdom of the Son of God’s love*, we need to know three aspects of the Son of God revealed in the New Testament—the only begotten Son, the Son of Man, and the firstborn Son. Christ is the only begotten Son of God (John 1:18), possessing the divine nature—divinity and deity—from eternity to eternity (Psa. 90:2; Rom. 9:5), as the second in the Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (Matt. 28:19). The only begotten Son coexists and coinheres with the Father in the immutable Godhead. The only begotten Son, the embodiment and expression of the Father (John 14:9-10; 12:45), is continually in the bosom of the Father to declare the Father and to bring us into the enjoyment of the Father (1:18). “In this the love of God was manifested among us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have life and live through Him” (1 John 4:9). God the Father sent His only begotten Son into the world of fallen human beings not only to be a propitiation for our sins so that we might be forgiven (v. 10) but also to be life—eternal life—to us so that we might have life and live through Him. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life” (John 3:16). In this verse *eternal life* does not refer to everlasting life in heaven; it means that those who believe into the only begotten Son of God will have the divine, uncreated, indestructible life, the life that is the Triune God Himself. “He who believes into the Son has eternal life” (v. 36). “Believing into the Lord is not the same as believing Him (6:30). To believe Him is to believe that He is true and real, but to believe into Him is to receive Him and be united with Him as one. The former is to acknowledge a fact objectively; the latter is to receive a life subjectively” (Lee, *Recovery Version*, 3:16, note 2).

God sent His only begotten Son through incarnation (1:1, 14, 18; Rom. 8:3). In His incarnation Christ is the Son of Man, a God-man (Matt. 16:13). Because the Lord Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit, He is the Son of God, and because He was also conceived in and born of a human virgin, He is the Son of Man. On the divine side, He is the Son of God; on the human side, He is the Son of Man. Since the Lord Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of Man, during His ministry on earth He indicated to some that He is the Son of God (John 5:25; 9:35, 37; 10:36), and He indicated to others that He is the Son of Man (1:51; 3:14; 5:27). God, sending “His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). Having received revelation concerning Christ directly from God and speaking of the Lord’s incarnation and human living, Paul wrote these remarkable words: “Emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross” (Phil. 2:7-8). To accomplish God’s purpose, save us from sin and death, conquer the enemy, and establish the kingdom of God on earth, it was necessary for the only begotten Son to become the Son of Man through incarnation. Without Christ as the Son of Man, God’s purpose cannot be carried out on earth, and God’s kingdom cannot be brought to the earth. Because Christ was obedient unto death—the death of a cross—“God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,” and the time will come when every tongue will “openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9, 11). The resurrected Lord Jesus ascended to heaven and has been enthroned as the Son of Man; for eternity He will be

not only the only begotten Son but also the gloried Son of Man. This is proved by the declaration of Stephen as he was being stoned to death: "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56).

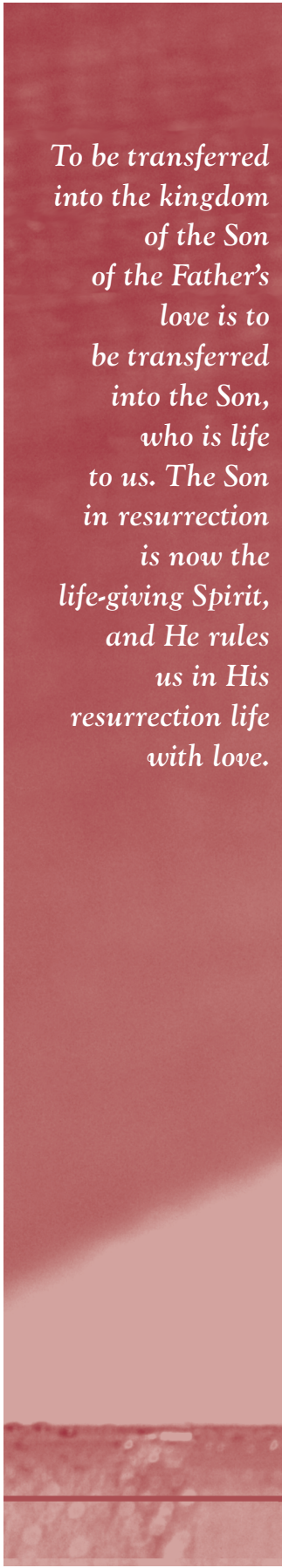
Christ's resurrection was His birth as God's firstborn Son (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 1:6). His becoming the firstborn Son of God with His humanity as well as with His divinity was a fulfillment of Psalm 2:7, which is quoted in Acts 13:33. In Acts 13 Paul said that from David's seed "God, according to promise, brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus" (v. 23) and that "God has fully fulfilled this promise...in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son; this day have I begotten You'" (v. 33). In verses 32 and 33 we see that Christ as the Firstborn of God was promised to the fathers, and God fulfilled this promise by raising up Jesus. "Resurrection was a birth to the man Jesus. He was begotten by God in His resurrection to be the Firstborn among many brothers (Rom. 8:29). He was the only begotten Son of God from eternity" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, Acts 13:33, note 1), and in eternity He will always be the unique Son of God in the Godhead. Through His resurrection He was begotten by God in His humanity to be God's firstborn Son. Paul was able to see the Lord's resurrection in Psalm 2:7: "You are My Son; / Today I have begotten You," applying the word *today* to the day of the Lord's resurrection. Jesus, the Son of Man, was born to be the Son of God through being raised up from the dead. Therefore, God's raising up Jesus from the dead was His begetting of Him to be His firstborn Son (Acts 13:33).

Through incarnation God's only begotten Son put on humanity and became a God-man (John 1:14, 18; Luke 1:35). Before incarnation God's only begotten Son did not have a human nature; He had only a divine nature. In resurrection God's firstborn Son has the human nature as well as the divine nature. We need to know Christ in His resurrection as the Son of God designated in power with His human nature (Rom. 1:3-4). Although Christ was the Son of God before His incarnation, He still needed to be designated the Son of God out of resurrection because by incarnation He put on human nature, which had nothing to do with divinity. By His resurrection Christ sanctified and uplifted His human nature, His humanity, and He was designated out of resurrection as the Son of God in His human nature. In this sense, He was begotten the Son of God in His resurrection and became the Son of God in a new way (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:3-4). As the designated Son of God, Christ has two natures—divinity and humanity. The humanity that He now has is not a natural humanity but a humanity uplifted through resurrection (v. 4). Even Christ's human nature has been designated the Son of God, for He has been designated the Son of God with both divinity and humanity.

The Intrinsic Significance of the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love

If we have a clear view, even a spiritual vision, of the kingdom of God as a realm of life and of this kingdom being embodied and expressed in the Son of God, who actually is the kingdom, we can focus on the meaning and significance of the apostle Paul's expression *the kingdom of the Son of God's love*. We have emphasized the fact that the Father delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. 1:13), a particular and exceedingly precious aspect of the kingdom of God in its totality. The kingdom of the Son is the authority of Christ, the only begotten Son and firstborn Son of God (Rev. 11:15; 12:10). The Son of God is the embodiment and expression of the divine life; hence, the kingdom of the Son is a realm of life (1 John 5:11-12; John 1:4). The kingdom into which we have been transferred by God through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the kingdom of the Son of His love—a kingdom as a realm of life in love, not in fear. It is of utmost importance that we realize that this kingdom in which we find ourselves today is a realm full of life, light, and love (1 Pet. 2:9). The beloved Son of the Father, in whom He has found His delight (Matt. 17:5), is the expression and manifestation of the Father as the source of

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with love.*

life (John 1:18, 4; 1 John 1:2). The Son of the Father's love is the object of the Father's love to be the embodiment of life to us in the divine love with the authority in resurrection (Matt. 3:17). The Son, as the embodiment of the divine life, is the object of the Father's love. The divine life embodied in the beloved Son of God the Father has been given to us in and through the divine love. Christ the Son, the object of the divine love, becomes to us the embodiment of life in the divine love with authority in resurrection. This is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, a mystical and mysterious realm in which faithful believers will live in the present age, the age of grace, of the church, and of mystery; in the coming age of the kingdom, the millennium; and, eternally, in and as the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth.

To be transferred into the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is to be transferred into the Son, who is life to us (1 John 5:12). The Son in resurrection is now the life-giving Spirit, and He rules us in His resurrection life with love (1 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 6:4-5; 1 Cor. 15:45b). When we live by the Son as our life in resurrection, we are living in His kingdom, enjoying Him in the Father's love; here we have the church life (Col. 3:4; John 6:57). Although the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love comprises the present age, the coming age, and the eternal age, the emphasis in Colossians 1:13 is on the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love in this age, the age of the church. Because the Father delights in His Son, the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is a pleasant realm of delight. The church life today is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, which is as delightful to God the Father as the Son of God is. God the Father loves the delightful part of the kingdom just as much as He loves His delightful Son.

The Father has transferred us into a realm where we are ruled in life with love. Here, under the heavenly inward ruling and restriction, we have genuine freedom in love, with life, and under light (Matt. 7:13-14). The more we live our Christian life in the kingdom, in the Son of God's love, the more we experience and enjoy the all-inclusive Christ and have the church life as ordained by God. May many earnest, seeking Christians be enlightened by this divinely revealed truth and begin to live in this blessed, delightful realm of love, life, and light, all of which are Christ, our Savior and our Lord.

The Kingdom of the Son of God's Love Being the Transfiguration of Jesus

In the kingdom of the Son of God's love, we are living under and are ruled by light, God Himself (1 John 1:5). God has delivered us out of the authority of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love, which is a realm of light. Light is a ruling power; it rules whenever it shines (Rev. 22:5). Light rules by enlightening; when the light of life shines and rules, it is a kingdom in reality (John 8:12; 18:36). Where there is the light of God, there is the ruling power, and in the kingdom of God, a realm of light, we are controlled by the power of the divine light. According to Ephesians 5:8, we were once darkness, but now we are light in the Lord and are learning to walk as children of light.

The kingdom of the Son of God's love is the transfiguration of Jesus—the shining of the reality of the Lord Jesus (Mark 9:1-9; Matt. 16:28—17:2). What is described in Mark 9:1-9 is a picture of the kingdom of God coming in power. The center of this picture is the glorified Jesus, and with Him are Moses and Elijah, representing the Old Testament saints, and Peter, James, and John, representing the New Testament saints (vv. 2-4). For the Lord Jesus to be transfigured meant that His humanity was saturated and permeated with His divinity, and this transfiguration, which was His glorification, was equal to His coming in His kingdom in glory. The Lord's word about the kingdom of God coming in power was fulfilled by His transfiguration on the mountain (vv. 1-3). The transfiguration was the realization and manifestation of what He is. When we are growing in the life of God and walking by the Spirit, Christ is transfigured within us; His transfiguration becomes the kingdom of God ruling over everything in our life. The kingdom is the

shining of the reality of the Lord Jesus, and the more we are under His shining, the more we are living in the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

Christ has been sown into our heart as a seed of the kingdom of God in life, and this seed will grow and develop until it blossoms and is manifested in glory (4:26-29; Col. 3:3-4). The One whom we have received as the seed of the kingdom of God needs to grow in us and causes us to be transformed from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18) until He blossoms from within us. This blossoming—the glorious expression of the indwelling Christ—will be the transfiguration of the Lord in us in an experiential way. When Christ is transfigured within us, that transfiguration becomes the ruling over us. The kingdom of the Son of God's love is the spreading of the Lord Jesus by His shining within us. Hopefully, we will be led by the glorious, reigning Christ into the fulfillment of Matthew 13:43: "The righteous will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

The Kingdom of the Son of God's Love as the Realm Where God's Will Is Done

God is a God of purpose, having a will of His good pleasure, and He created all things for His will so that He might accomplish and fulfill His purpose (Rev. 4:11; Eph. 3:9-11; Col. 1:9). God's will is God's wish; God's will is what He wants to do (Eph. 1:9). God's good pleasure is of God's will; His good pleasure is embodied in His will (v. 5).

God's will is His determination for the carrying out of His purpose (v. 11; 1 Cor. 1:1). God has made known to us the mystery of His will through His revelation in Christ, that is, through Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension (Eph. 1:9; 3:9). God works all things according to the counsel of His will; God's will is His intention, and His counsel is His consideration of the way to accomplish His will (1:1).

Colossians is a book concerning the great, eternal will of God (1:9; 4:12). The will of God mentioned in this book is not His will in small matters—it is the eternal will of God, the great will of God. Colossians reveals what God's will is according to His desire and intention in the whole universe, in creation, in redemption, in the present age, in the coming age, and in eternity (Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 3:9-11; Matt. 16:18; Rev. 19:7-9; 11:15; 21:2). We need to be filled with the full knowledge of God's will. God's will in Colossians 1:9 is His will regarding His eternal purpose, regarding His economy concerning Christ (Eph. 1:5, 9, 11). To have the full knowledge of God's will is to have a revelation of God's plan so that we may know what God plans to do in the universe (Rev. 4:11). God's plan is to make Christ everything in the divine economy (Matt. 17:5; Col. 1:15-18; 3:10-11). The revelation of God's plan opens the way for us to have more experiences of Christ (2:16-17; 3:4, 15-16). To know and experience the all-inclusive, extensive Christ requires "all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (1:9). Spiritual wisdom and understanding are of the Spirit of God in our spirit (Eph. 1:17; 1 Cor. 2:11-12; 6:17; 1 John 5:20). "Wisdom is in our spirit and is for us to perceive God's eternal will; spiritual understanding is in our mind, renewed by the Spirit, and is for us to understand and interpret what we perceive in our spirit [(Eph. 1:17; 4:23)]" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, Col. 1:9, note 2). "Walking worthily of the Lord issues from having the full knowledge of God's will. Such a walk is one in which we live Christ [(Col. 1:10; Phil. 1:19-21)]" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, Col. 1:10, note 1). We need to stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God (4:12).

The will of God for us is that we know the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, experience Him, and live Him as our life (1:9, 15-18; 3:4). The will of God is in Christ, concentrated in Christ, and for Christ; Christ is everything in the will of God (1:9). The Christ unveiled in Colossians is the all-inclusive, extensive, preeminent One, the centrality and universality, the center and the circumference, of God's economy (1:15-18, 27; 2:16-17; 3:4, 10-11; Eph. 1:10; 3:11). Colossians reveals the all-inclusive Christ—the One

This blossoming—the glorious expression of the indwelling Christ—will be the transfiguration of the Lord in us in an experiential way. When Christ is transfigured within us, that transfiguration becomes the ruling over us.

*In Colossians 1:9
God's will refers to
Christ, for the will
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to our knowing,
experiencing,
and living in the
all-inclusive,
extensive Christ.
God's will is that
we would walk
in Him, that is,
live, act, behave,
and have our
being in Him.*

who is God, man, and the reality of every positive thing in the universe (2:9, 16-17). In God's economy Christ is everything; God wants Christ and Christ alone—the wonderful, preeminent, all-inclusive Christ, who is all in all (Matt. 17:5; Col. 3:10-11). The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the center of God's economy; God's dispensing is altogether related to Christ and focused on Him (Eph. 3:17). God's will, His intention, in His economy is to work the wonderful, all-inclusive, extensive Christ into our being as our life and everything so that we may become the corporate expression of the Triune God (Col. 1:27; 3:4, 10-11).

The will of God is that the all-inclusive, extensive Christ revealed in Colossians be our portion, our life, our constituent, and our peace (1:9, 12; 3:4, 10-11, 15). In Colossians 1:9 God's will refers to Christ, for the will of God is profound in relation to our knowing, experiencing, and living in the all-inclusive, extensive Christ. God's will for us is that we would know Christ, experience Christ, enjoy Christ, be saturated with Christ, and have Christ be our life and person (3:4, 10-11; Eph. 3:16-17). God's will is that we, having the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, would walk in Him, that is, live, act, behave, and have our being in Him (Col. 2:6-7).

The will of God is to have the church as the Body of Christ (1:9, 18; 2:19; 3:15). God's desire and intention are to obtain a Body for Christ to be His fullness, His corporate expression (Rom. 12:2, 5; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11, 22-23; 4:16). To live the Body life in a genuine local church is to "prove what the will of God is" (Rom. 12:2, 4-5; 16:1, 4, 16). If we are proper members of the Body of Christ, acting and functioning in the church life, we will be persons in the will of God (1 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; 5:17; Rom. 12:2, 4-5). Christ is the Head of the Body, and we are the members of the Body (Col. 1:18; 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16). To live in the Body is to live corporately with the members under the Head, Christ. If we sincerely desire to live the Body life, we need to be under the Head and take the Head as our life and the center of our whole being (Col. 1:18; 2:19).

The kingdom of the Son of God's love is a realm in which the will of God concerning Christ and the church as the Body of Christ is accomplished; in this marvelous realm the will of God is done, "as in heaven, so also on earth" (Matt. 6:10). As the kingdom people, those who are living in the kingdom of the Son of God's love, we are here on earth to do the Father's will (7:21; 12:50).

Living the Christian Life in the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love

The Christian life in the kingdom of the Son of God's love is a life of the cross and of experiencing and enjoying Christ. In the kingdom of the Son of God's love, there is only one person—the all-inclusive Christ—and one way—the cross (Col. 2:9, 14-15). The one person, Christ, is the center, the focal point, of the universe (1:15-17). God's intention is not to give us many items; His intention is to give us one person, the all-inclusive Christ, through the cross (2:10-11). The cross is the center of God's government (vv. 14-15). By the cross God has dealt with all the negative things in the universe. God governs everything by the cross and deals with everything by the cross.

In our Christian life in the kingdom of the Son of God's love, we experience and enjoy Christ in His all-inclusiveness (1:12, 27; 2:9, 16-17; 3:1, 4, 11). Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God, the One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (2:9). Christ is our allotted portion, our good land—the divine inheritance for our enjoyment (1:12). Christ is the reality of every positive thing in the universe (2:16-17). Christ is the One sitting at the right hand of God (3:1). Christ dwells in us as our hope of glory (1:27). Christ is our life (3:4). Christ is the constituent of the one new man (vv. 10-11).

The Christian life in the kingdom of the Son of God's love is a life of faith and love (1:4, 8; 2:2, 5, 7; 3:14).

Faith and love are two inseparable, excellent virtues of the believers in Christ [(1 Tim. 1:14; 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:13; Gal. 5:6)]. Faith is given to us by God...that by it we may receive Christ..., the embodiment of the Triune God, and thereby enter into the Triune God and be joined to Him as one, having Him as our life, our life supply, and our everything [(2 Pet. 1:1-2; John 1:12; 1 Cor. 6:17)]. Love issues out of such a wonderful faith and enables us to live out all the riches of the Triune God in Christ with those who have believed into Christ with us, that the Triune God...may have a glorious expression. Faith is for appreciating, substantiating, and receiving the unlimited riches of the Triune God; love is for experiencing, enjoying, and living out the immeasurably rich Triune God. Faith is for the believers to be joined to the Triune God, who is everything to them; love is for the believers to minister and transmit the Triune God to their fellow believers so that, in such a wonderful and powerful faith, all the believers may love one another with divine, transcendent love and live a corporate life in Christ. (Lee, *Recovery Version*, Titus 3:15, note 1)

In the church, which is the Body of Christ and the one new man, the basic need is love (Col. 2:19; 3:10-11, 14). For us to experience Christ as the Head of the Body, we must have a love that is toward all the saints (1:4). Only love unites, and only love makes all of us one new man (3:14). We need a love toward all kinds of people from all kinds of cultures; the Spirit is the source, the element, the essence, and the sphere of such a love (1:8). If we live in the all-inclusive Spirit, He will be the universal love that causes us to love all the believers.

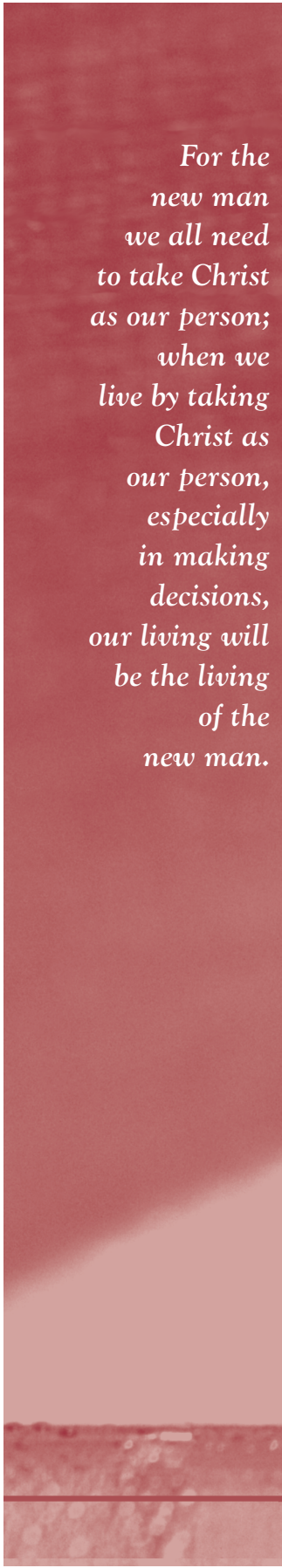
The Christian life in the kingdom of the Son of God's love is a life in union with Christ (3:12—4:6). To live in union with Christ means that in our living we are not apart from Christ; rather, in our living we are identified with Him and are one with Him (John 15:4-5). To say that in the one new man Christ is all and in all indicates that we are one with Christ and that Christ is one with us (Col. 3:10-11). We need to be one with the Lord Jesus just as He is one with the Father (John 14:10). The Father and the Son have one life and one living (6:57). The life of the Father is the life of the Son, and the living of the Son is the living of the Father. The Father's life is the Son's life, and the Son's living is the Father's living; in this way the Father and the Son have one life and one living. Today we and Christ have one life and one living (14:19; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:4; Phil. 1:21). The Son's life becomes our life, and our living becomes His living; this is a life in union with Christ (John 15:4). In a very practical sense, in such a union Christ becomes us and we become Christ; this is the normal Christian living. If we live in union with Christ, we will let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts, and we will let the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. 3:15-16). If we live in union with Christ, we will do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, and we will express Christ in our human life (v. 17—4:1). In order to live in union with Christ, we need to persevere in prayer (vv. 2-3). The more we live in union with Christ, the more we will receive grace, which enables us to experience the all-inclusive Christ for the reality and practicality of the universal one new man (3:16; 4:6, 18).

Living in the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love as the Reality of the Church

The kingdom of the Son of God's love is the reality of the church. In the church as the kingdom of the Son of God's love, the will of God is carried out (1:9; 4:12). The Father's eternal will is to build up the church upon Christ the Son as the rock (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16). As mentioned above, the will of God is to obtain a Body for Christ to be His fullness, His expression. The kingdom is absolutely a matter of God's will and completely fulfills His will; in fact, the kingdom is God's will (Matt. 6:10). As the kingdom people, those who are living in the kingdom of the Son of God's love, we are here on earth to do the Father's will (7:21; 12:50).

In the kingdom of the Son of God's love, we have the practice of the local church life

Faith is for appreciating, substantiating, and receiving the unlimited riches of the Triune God; love is for experiencing, enjoying, and living out the immeasurably rich Triune God. Faith is for the believers to be joined to the Triune God, who is everything to them.



*For the
new man
we all need
to take Christ
as our person;
when we
live by taking
Christ as
our person,
especially
in making
decisions,
our living will
be the living
of the
new man.*

(Col. 1:2; 4:15-16). The believers live in churches that are in their localities respectively (Acts 8:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thes. 1:1). The church has two aspects—the universal and the local (Matt. 16:18; 18:17). The universal aspect refers to the constitution, nature, and content of the church; the local aspect refers to the expression and practicality of the church in a specific locality. The church revealed in Matthew 16:18 is the universal church, the unique Body of Christ. The church revealed in Matthew 18:17 is the local church, the expression of the unique Body of Christ in a certain locality. Without the universal aspect, the church has no content; without the local aspect, it is impossible for the church to have any expression and practice. Matthew 16 and 18 both indicate that the church represents the kingdom of the heavens, having the authority to bind and to loose.

In the kingdom of the Son of God's love, we have the reality and practicality of the organic Body of Christ (Col. 2:19). We are one Body in Christ, where we are members one of another (Rom. 12:4-5). *In Christ* implies the fact that we are organically one with Christ, that we have a life union with Him. The Body of Christ is altogether a matter of life that keeps us in an organic union with Him (v. 4). In Christ we have an organic union with the Body of Christ, and we are organic parts of the Body of Christ (v. 5). The actuality of the Body is in the organic union with Christ. If we remain in this organic union, we are in the Body, but if we do not remain in this union, we are out of the Body. The divine life unites us together not only with Christ but also with all the members of the Body of Christ. As we hold Christ as the Head, the Body grows with the growth of God, that is, with God growing and increasing in us, not in Himself (Col. 2:19). God's economy is to head up all things in Christ through His Body, the church, making Christ the center of all things (Eph. 1:10). The Body grows out from the Head, for all the supply comes from the Head (Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16). The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the increase of God's element, in the Body. In the kingdom of the Son of God's love, we have the reality and practicality of the universal, corporate one new man (2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10-11). The church, the Body of Christ, is the one new man to accomplish God's eternal purpose, expressing God and representing Him (Eph. 3:9; Gen. 1:26). As the Body of Christ, the church needs Christ as its life; as the one new man, the church needs Christ as its person. For the new man we all need to take Christ as our person; when we live by taking Christ as our person, especially in making decisions, our living will be the living of the new man (Eph. 3:17). In the one new man, Christ is all; there is no room for any natural person (Col. 3:10-11). In the one new man there is only one person—the all-inclusive Christ (2:17; 3:4, 11). In the one new man, Christ is all the members and in all the members (vv. 10-11). We need to practice the church life in the consciousness of the universal one new man (4:7-17). This we do by living in the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

The Preeminence of Christ in the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love

In every aspect of the kingdom of the Son of God's love, Christ must have the preeminence. Christ is "the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things" (1:18). For Christ to have the first place in all things, He must have the preeminence in every aspect of our Christian life and church life in the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Christ has the first place, the preeminence, in God's economy (Eph. 1:10). As the preeminent One, Christ has the first place in everything. Christ is preeminent in the triune Godhead (2 Cor. 13:14). Among the three in the Godhead, the preeminence always goes to the second, the Son. The first, the Father, exalts the Son, and the third, the Spirit, always testifies concerning the Son (Phil. 2:9; John 15:26). Christ is preeminent in God's exaltation of Him (Acts 2:33; Eph. 1:22). Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God in the third heaven. In God's exaltation of Christ, He has been given to be the Head over all things (v. 22). God has given Him the name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9). Both in the old creation and the new creation, both in the universe and in the church, Christ occupies the first place, the place of preeminence (Col. 1:15, 18). For Christ to

be the first means that He is all; since Christ is the first both in the universe and in the church, He must be preeminent in the universe and in the church (3:10-11).

The all-inclusive, extensive, preeminent Christ is the centrality and universality, the center and circumference, of God's economy (1:15-27; Eph. 1:10). In God's economy Christ is everything; God wants Christ and Christ alone—the wonderful, preeminent, all-inclusive Christ, who is all in all (Matt. 17:5; Col. 3:10-11). The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the center of God's economy; God's dispensing is altogether related to Christ and focused on Him (Eph. 3:17). God's intention in His economy is to work the wonderful, all-inclusive, extensive Christ into our being as our life and our everything so that we may become the corporate expression of the Triune God (Col. 1:27; 3:4, 10-11).

Christ must have the first place, the preeminence, in our personal universe (v. 17; 1 Cor. 10:31). God's purpose is to give Christ the preeminence in all things; thus, God's intention in His administration is to make Christ preeminent, to cause Him to have the first place in everything. For Christ to have the preeminence in all things, God needs a people; apart from God's having a people, there is no way for Christ to be made preeminent (Eph. 3:21; 1 Tim. 3:15). As those who have been chosen by God to be His people for Christ's preeminence, we are under His heavenly rule (Dan. 4:26; Matt. 5:3). Today Christ, the preeminent One, must be the centrality and universality in our church life, family life, and daily life. God is using the environment to make Christ the centrality (the first) and the universality (everything) to us. Under God's heavenly rule, everything is working together for our good; this is especially true of the things in our personal universe (Rom. 8:28). Our personal universe includes ourselves, our families, and the church. In our personal universe many things happen day by day for the purpose of making Christ preeminent; we need to realize this and be submissive to God's heavenly rule (Eph. 1:11; Rev. 4:11). If we have a vision of the preeminence of Christ, our living and our church life will be revolutionized, for we will realize that in all things Christ must have the first place.

Christ must have the first place, the preeminence, in our love.

Whatever one loves, his whole heart, even his whole being, is set on and occupied and possessed by [(1 Tim. 6:10; 2 Tim. 3:2-4; 4:8, 10; Titus 1:8)]...Whether there would be a day of glory in the church's victory or grievous days of the church's decline depends altogether on what kind of lover we are...The root of the church's decline was the loss of her first love toward the Lord (Rev. 2:4). To maintain the victorious standard of the church, we must be lovers of God and lovers of the good that pertains to God's economy [(2 Tim. 3:3-4)]. (Lee, *Recovery Version*, 2 Tim. 3:2, note 2)

Our love for the Lord must be absolute (Matt. 10:37). We should love nothing above Him; whatever we love more than the Lord and is more important to us than the Lord is an idol (1 John 5:21). He is the One most worthy of our love, and we must be worthy of Him.

To love God means to set our entire being—spirit, soul, and body, with the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)—absolutely on Him, that is, to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him, so that He becomes everything to us and we are one with Him practically in our daily life. (Lee, *Recovery Version*, 1 Cor. 2:9, note 3)

To love the Lord Jesus is to appreciate Him, to direct our being toward Him, to open to Him, to enjoy Him, to give Him the first place, to be one with Him, to live Him, and to become Him (Matt. 26:6-13; 2 Cor. 3:16; Mark 12:30; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 6:17; Phil. 1:20-21).

The all-inclusive Christ should have the preeminence in our tripartite being. "Christ in

Christ must have the first place, the preeminence, in our personal universe. God's purpose is to give Christ the preeminence in all things; thus, God's intention in His administration is to make Christ preeminent, to cause Him to have the first place in everything.

Christ should have
the preeminence,
the first place,
in all our spiritual
experiences.
The history of
Christ should be
the experience
of a Christian,
and the experience
of Christ should
be the history
of a Christian.
All our history
is the experience
of Christ.

you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). We worship the enthroned Christ in the heavens, but we experience, enjoy, and partake of the indwelling Christ in our spirit; we are one with Him in a very subjective way (3:1; 1 Cor. 6:17). Christ, who dwells in our spirit, is our hope of glory. When He comes, we will be glorified with Him (Col. 3:4). The indwelling Christ will saturate our entire being so that our physical body may be transfigured and conformed to the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21). The Christ who indwells us is not a small, limited Christ but the all-inclusive, extensive, preeminent Christ (Col. 1:15-16, 18-19). We need to be infused, saturated, and permeated with the all-inclusive, extensive, preeminent Christ until He is everything to us in our experience.

Christ is “our life” (3:4). The expression *our life* indicates that we are to experience the all-inclusive Christ. Because Christ is our life, all He has and all He has attained and obtained become subjective to us (Rom. 8:34, 10). Universally, Christ is extensive, but in our experience, He is our life, our being: To say that Christ is our life means that Christ becomes us. Our life is our being; hence, for Christ to be our life means that He becomes our being. For Christ to become our being is for Christ to become us. “Christ is all and in all” (Col. 3:11).

Christ should have the preeminence, the first place, in all our spiritual experiences (1:18, 27; 2:9-13, 20; 3:1-4). The history of Christ should be the experience of a Christian, and the experience of Christ should be the history of a Christian (1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 6:3-5; Eph. 2:5-6). All our history is the experience of Christ (John 14:19; Gal. 2:20). The history of Christ becomes our experience and our spiritual history. We do not have a history of our own; rather, we take His experience as our history. If we enter into His history, His experience, we have a history and we have an experience. In the organic union with Christ, whatever Christ passed through has become our history (John 15:1, 4-5). Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension are ours because we are in Him and are organically joined to Him (1 Cor. 1:30; 6:17). “Christ is the hope of glory; He is my history: / His life is my experience, for He is one with me” (*Hymns*, #949). If we would experience Christ, we need to see that the death, resurrection, ascension, and Spirit of Christ are one group (Rom. 8:3, 9, 11, 13). We cannot experience Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension as something separate and apart from Christ (Col. 2:20; Eph. 2:5-6). If we would know Christ in His death, His resurrection, His ascension, and His bountiful Spirit, we need to realize that these four things are one. The principles that govern all the stages of our spiritual life are Christ’s death, Christ’s resurrection, and our being heavenly, being divine (spiritual), and being a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

For Christians today, the kingdom of the Son of God’s love as it is revealed in Colossians through the apostle Paul should not be merely a doctrinal concept or the subject of a sermon. On the contrary, the kingdom of the Son of God’s love is real, experiential, and practical. As we are approaching the end of this age and awaiting the coming of the Lord Jesus, we need to realize that as we pray for the kingdom to come and for His will to be done on earth, the realm in which God’s will is carried out and the desire of God’s heart is fulfilled is not in an organized religious system but in the kingdom of the Son of God’s love. Faithful believers in Christ who are living in and practicing the church life in the kingdom of the Son of God’s love in the present age will be those who will live in and enjoy the kingdom of the Son of God’s love in the coming age, the age of the manifestation of the kingdom of God in glory. Soon there will be “a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come...the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ” (Rev. 12:10). **LFC**

Works Cited

Hymns. Living Stream Ministry, 1980.

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