

* I-IV: THE KINGDOM PRODUCES THE CHURCH

- I. **The church today is Christ's increase in life, but the eternal kingdom of God is Christ's increase in administration**—Dan. 2:34-35; Mark 4:26-29:
 - A. In life Christ increases to become the church; in administration Christ increases to become the kingdom—John 3:15, 29a, 30a; Dan. 2:34-35, 44.
 - B. Christ is not only the church but also the kingdom of God; both the church and the kingdom are His increase—1 Cor. 12:12; Luke 17:21; Mark 4:26-29.

- II. **The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church; the presence of the kingdom produces the church**—Matt. 4:23; 16:18-19:
 - A. The life of God is the kingdom of God; the divine life is the kingdom, and this life produces the church—John 3:3, 5; Matt. 7:14, 21; 19:17, 29; 25:46:
 - The kingdom is the realm of life for life to move, rule, and govern so that life may accomplish its purpose, and this realm is the kingdom.
 - The gospel brings in the divine life, and this life has its realm, which is the kingdom; the divine life with its realm produces the church—2 Tim. 1:10.
 - The gospel of the kingdom brings forth the church because the kingdom is the life itself, and the church is the issue of life—Matt. 4:23; Acts 8:12.
 - B. The kingdom is the reality of the church; therefore, apart from the kingdom life, we cannot live the church life—Matt. 5:3; 16:18-19; Rev. 1:4-6, 9:
 - The reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5—7) is the content of the church life; without the reality of the kingdom, the church is empty—Matt. 5—7.
 - Since the kingdom life issues in the church life, as we live corporately in the kingdom life, we spontaneously live the church life—Rom. 14:17..
 - A believer who does not live in the reality of the kingdom cannot be built into the structure of the church—Eph. 2:22.
 - C. Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up—Matt. 16:18-19:
 - The church is brought into being through the authority of the kingdom.
 - The keys of the kingdom are given to make the building of the church possible—Matt. 16:19; 18:18; cf. John 20:23.
 - When the kingdom of the heavens is able to assert its authority over a company of believers, those believers can be built up into the church—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.

- III. **The genuine church is the kingdom of God in this age; today the believers live the kingdom life in the church**—Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; 13:44-46; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; Eph. 2:19; Col. 4:11; Rev. 1:4-6:
 - A. Each time the Lord Jesus spoke of the church, He mentioned it in relation to the kingdom; this indicates how intimately the kingdom and the church are related—Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18:
 - Romans 14:17 proves that the church in this age is the kingdom of God.
 - *The kingdom of God* in 1 Corinthians 4:20 refers to the church life, implying that in the sense of authority, the church in this age is the kingdom of God—1 Cor. 4:17.
 - The term *fellow citizens* in Ephesians 2:19 indicates the kingdom of God, the sphere wherein God exercises His authority.
 - What Paul and his fellow workers were doing in the gospel work for the establishing of the churches was for the kingdom of God—Col. 4:11.
 - The word *kingdom* in Revelation 1:6 reveals that where the church is, there the kingdom of God is; the church represents the kingdom.
 - B. In the Lord's recovery, at the same time we are both in the kingdom and in the church, in the treasure and in the pearl—Matt. 13:44-46.

IV. In the church as the kingdom, we are under the kingdom's rule, government, discipline, and exercise—1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5:

- A. Although the church today is God's kingdom, we are in the kingdom in reality only when we live, walk, and have our being in the spirit, not in our natural man—Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 25.
- B. As those who are under the dispensing of the Divine Trinity, we need to live a kingdom life in the church, growing and developing in the divine life until we reach maturity—2 Cor. 13:14; Rom. 14:17; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

*** V-VII: THE CHURCH BRINGS IN THE KINGDOM**

V. The church brings in the kingdom—Matt. 6:10; 12:22-29; Rev. 11:15; 12:10:

- A. The church was brought into being for the purpose of bringing in the kingdom—Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; Rev. 1:6, 9; 11:15
 - The church's responsibility is to perpetuate Christ's victory and to bring in God's kingdom—Rev. 12:10-11; 11:15.
 - The work of the church on earth is to bring in the kingdom of God; all the work of the church is governed by the principle of the kingdom of God.
 - The church is responsible for bringing heaven's will down to earth and for carrying it out on earth—Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 12:50.
- B. The church, which comes into being under the rule of heaven, by reason of her submission to the heavenly rule, deals with God's enemy—Matt. 16:18-19; Eph. 6:10-18:
 - In order for the kingdom of the heavens to be established, there is the need of spiritual fighting—Matt. 12:22-29.
 - The responsibility of the church is to continue the warfare Christ fought on earth; the church must continue the victorious work that Christ has carried out against Satan—Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8b; Col. 2:15; Psa. 149:5-9.

VI. The church should pray to bring in the kingdom of God—Matt. 6:10:

- A. Although the kingdom is here in the church life today, the manifestation of the kingdom is yet to come.
- B. The coming of the kingdom is not automatic; if there is no prayer, the kingdom cannot come; thus, we must pray for the coming of the kingdom.
- C. The prayer of the church is the most effective means of conquering Satan—Matt. 16:19; 18:18.
- D. The church must be the outlet of heaven, allowing heaven's authority to be expressed on earth—Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18.
- E. Genuine prayer is a joint labor with God to bring His kingdom to the earth and to carry out His will on earth; hence, prayer is a spiritual battle—Matt. 6:10; 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12.

VII. 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.

- I. **The church today is Christ's increase in life, but the eternal kingdom of God is Christ's increase in administration**
 - Christ is the church and also the kingdom of God; they are both Christ's increase. [Dan. 2:34-35] ...a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image at its feet of iron and clay and crushed them...And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.
- II. **The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church; the presence of the kingdom produces the church**
 - The divine life of God is the kingdom of God, the realm of life for this life to move, rule, and govern that it may accomplish its purpose of producing the church, the issue of life. The gospel brings in the divine life, and this life has its realm, which is the kingdom; the divine life with its realm produces the church. Apart from the kingdom life, we cannot live the church life. When we live corporately in the kingdom life, we spontaneously live the church life. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5—7) is the content of the church life; without which the church is empty and cannot be built up. Those who do not live in the reality of the kingdom cannot be built into the structure of the church. The keys of the kingdom are given to the church for building it through asserting the authority of the kingdom over a company of believers who can be built up into the church. [Matt. 4:23] And Jesus went about in all of Galilee,... and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom... [Eph. 2:22] In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit. [Matt. 16:18-19] ...and upon this rock I will build My church,... I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens... [Col. 2:19] ...holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, ... grows with the growth of God.
- III. **The genuine church is the kingdom of God in this age; today the believers live the kingdom life in the church**
 - Each time the Lord Jesus spoke of the church, He mentioned it in relation to the kingdom; the epistles also imply that in the sense of authority, the church in this age is the kingdom of God wherein God exercises His authority. Paul and his fellow workers' gospel work of establishing the churches was for the kingdom of God. Revelation 1:6 reveals that where the church is, there the kingdom of God is; the church represents the kingdom. In the Lord's recovery, we are both in the kingdom and in the church simultaneously. [Rom. 14:17] For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- IV. **In the church as the kingdom, we are under the kingdom's rule, government, discipline, and exercise**
 - Although the church today is God's kingdom, we are in the kingdom in reality only when we live, walk, and have our being in the spirit, not in our natural man. As we are under the dispensing of the Divine Trinity, we need to live a kingdom life in the church, growing and developing in the divine life until we reach maturity. [Rom. 8:4] That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in who... according to the spirit. [Gal. 5:25] If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. .
- V. **The church brings in the kingdom**
 - For the kingdom of the heavens to be established, there is the need of spiritual fighting. The church was brought into being for the purpose of perpetuating Christ's victorious work on earth to bring in God's kingdom, bringing heaven's will down for carrying it out on earth. All the work of the church is governed by the principle of the kingdom of God. The church, which comes into being under the rule of heaven, by reason of her submission to the heavenly rule, deals with God's enemy. [Rev. 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. [Eph. 6:12] For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.
- VI. **The church should pray to bring in the kingdom of God**
 - Although the kingdom is here in the church life today, the manifestation of the kingdom is yet to come. The kingdom cannot come without prayer as the prayer of the church is the most effective means of conquering Satan. Thus, we must pray for the coming of the kingdom. The church must be the outlet of heaven, allowing heaven's authority to be expressed on earth. Genuine prayer is a joint labor with God to bring His kingdom to the earth and to carry out His will on earth; hence, prayer is a spiritual battle. [Matt. 6:10] Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
- VII. **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**

If only He could secure a band of men on the earth who would let Him wield dominion over them, then He could accomplish His purpose concerning Christ in and through them. It was for this reason that God needed the church. He wanted to have the church in order to bring His kingdom from heaven to earth.

The Scriptures present this far more profound aspect—that the church has been secured through the sovereign rule of heaven. Because the kingdom of heaven is able to assert its authority over a company of men, that company of men can be built up into a church.

Do not imagine that by our salvation alone we become the church. We who are saved are in the church, but our salvation alone does not constitute us the church. The church is a Body; therefore, there is need of relatedness and there is the need of building up.

< Excerpts from “The Kingdom and the Church”, Chapter 3, “The relation between the kingdom and the church” >

During the past two thousand years one of the greatest hindrances to the purpose of God, and the main reason why our Lord has had to delay His return, is the lack of Christians who have been built together.

Brothers and sisters, there is a condition to be fulfilled if there is to be a building. The one indispensable condition is submission to the authority of the kingdom. Our Savior has been exalted to be Head of the universe, and all authority has been given Him in heaven and on earth. God has put all things under His feet and has made Him Head over all things to the church. In the first place this implies that the church must come under His headship.

Get subjection to the authority of the Head, and you get the building up of the Body. Where the government of heaven is secured, there the church is secured. The extent to which the church is built up in our midst will depend entirely upon the place given in our midst to the church's Head.

Only through those who come under the control of the Head can the building of the church be secured. So the question as to whether or not the church will be built up becomes a question of whether or not you and I can accept the authority of the kingdom.

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