

The Rule of God

It is significant to note that the phrases “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven” are not to be found in the Old Testament. They are strictly New Testament terms beginning with John the Baptist and Jesus. When Jesus came He did not preach a message called grace, or salvation, or justification, or sanctification, or regeneration, or even the Church. Could there be any more glorious message than the one that fell from His lips as He began His sonship ministry declaring, “The KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND!” From that time forward the great teaching of the Lord centered in the truth of THE KINGDOM. His gospel was the gospel (good news) of the Kingdom of God. He only lightly touched on the other subjects which today are considered the great doctrines of the Church and then only as they related to the Kingdom. All of these things are included within the Kingdom, but the Kingdom is none of them. The Kingdom is THE RULE OF GOD. It is the DOMINION OF GOD. That is exactly what it is. And Jesus came with just that message — the revelation of the RULE OF GOD within the hearts of men, and through men, over the earth, yea, over the whole vast universe! First He must reign completely in our lives. The Kingdom of God is God in Christ in the saints governing the creation of God. The rule of God begins in the hearts of His elect.

Jesus, after His resurrection, asked Peter three times if he loved Him. He then said to him: “When you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and Another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.” Commenting on these words, the Holy Spirit adds: “This Jesus said to show by what death Peter was to glorify God” (Jn. 21:18-19). The expressions when you were young and when you are old speak of two distinct periods in Peter’s life. They indicate His walk before and after entering the Kingdom. The reference to his past (when Peter was young) and to his future (when he would be old) is not a reference to age but to spiritual immaturity and maturity. Emphasis in the first statement is on the pronoun you (“you girded yourself, you walked where you would”). During this period, Peter’s walk with the Lord was a walk which centered on self — on where he wanted to go and what he wanted to do for the Lord. How impetuous was he in his desires! But the day would come when Peter, subject to Jesus as his King, would allow the Lord to do with him as He willed.

The words, another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go, succinctly describe the walk of the Kingdom. The “another” here refers to the Lord. The walk of the Kingdom is far from easy and unlike anything we have experienced in the past. Whereas the Lord tolerated and even overlooked the many inconsistencies in our walk when we were young (immature), He now subjects us to a discipline of fire until His image is formed in us (Mal. 3:2-3). Every part of our being — spirit, soul, and body — must come under His dominion. All our strongholds will be exposed and reduced to ashes, and every thought made captive to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:3-5). In the Kingdom we come to know God as an all-consuming fire — not to destroy but to purge and sanctify us (Heb. 12:29). “Who among us,” asks the prophet Isaiah, “can dwell with the devouring fire?” The answer: “He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gains of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and

shuts his eyes from looking upon evil, he will dwell on the heights...his bread will be given him, his water will be sure. Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will behold a land (the Kingdom) that stretches afar" (Isa. 33:14-17).

The epistle to the Hebrews was written to those who were following on to know the Lord. In the twelfth chapter the writer informs his readers that God wanted to wean them from their babyhood walk in God and that which appealed to their physical senses in order to introduce them to that which was real and lasting — the Kingdom. To experience the Kingdom, they would have to forsake the elementary principles which the whole church world glories in today, and go on to perfection. Jesus as King would become the living reality of their lives. But for this to happen, their earth and heavens first had to be shaken. That the earth in us (our humanity) must be shaken before we can enter into the Kingdom is a truth very few would deny. But that our heavens (religious experiences, concepts, understandings, ministries, activities) must also be shaken before we can receive the Kingdom is another matter. To realize all that God has for us as His sons in the walk of the Kingdom, our earth and heavens must give way to a new order — to a new earth and heaven. Not a new earth of mountains and valleys and streams and trees; not a new heavens of galaxies, solar systems, suns, planets and moons; but a **NEW HUMANITY AND NEW SPIRITUAL DIMENSION**. Only then can we know what the Kingdom really is and how to walk in it and minister it to creation. All religious activity apart from the realm of the Kingdom is naught but hay, wood, and stubble. It makes very impressive edifices, but it is not the Kingdom of God, and will disappear forever in the all-consuming fire of God.

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