

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Message One

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Scripture Reading: Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; Gen. 1:26, 28; Matt. 6:10, 13; 24:14; Luke 4:43; Acts 1:3; 28:31; Col. 1:13; Rev. 11:15; 22:1-2; Matt. 5:3; Acts 2:38; Dan. 4:26

I. The Bible reveals that the central, primary, and most important goal of the gospel of God is to save us into the kingdom of God—Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15:

- A. God's purpose, God's plan, and God's eternal goal are to bring His created ones, one by one, under His authority and ruling so that He may establish His kingdom in them—cf. Eph. 1:11; 4:15:
 - 1. God created man not only to express Himself with His image but also to represent Him by exercising His dominion over all things—Gen. 1:26, 28.
 - 2. God's intention in giving man dominion is (1) to subdue His enemy, Satan, who rebelled against God, (2) to recover the earth usurped by Satan, and (3) to exercise God's authority over the earth in order that the kingdom of God, the will of God, and the glory of God may be manifested on the earth—Matt. 6:10, 13b.
- B. We should have a deep impression that the gospel in the New Testament age is altogether related to the kingdom of God:
 - 1. In the New Testament age, the first sentence God spoke to man through John the Baptist was "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near"—Matt. 3:2.
 - 2. The Lord Jesus began His earthly ministry with the same words, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near" (Matt. 4:17), continued His ministry by going to all the cities and villages to preach the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 9:35; Luke 4:43), and, near the end of His earthly ministry, charged His disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom in the whole inhabited earth (Matt. 24:14).
 - 3. The book of Acts begins with the Lord Jesus speaking to His disciples concerning the kingdom of God for a period of forty days (Acts 1:3), proving that the kingdom of God would be the main subject of the apostles' preaching in their commission after Pentecost (Acts 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25), and ends with the apostle Paul "proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness" (Acts 28:31).
 - 4. The apostles Paul, James, Peter, and John wrote concerning the kingdom of God—cf. Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5; Col. 1:13; James 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:11; John 3:3, 5; Rev. 11:15; 20:4, 6; 22:5b.
- C. Our concept is that the gospel is merely the gospel of forgiveness or the gospel of life, but these different aspects of the gospel are for the kingdom; the reason that God forgives us of our sins, cleanses us, gives us life, sends His Spirit into us, and makes us cleansed and enlivened persons is to save us into His kingdom, to place us in His kingdom, that we may live in this kingdom—cf. 2 Tim. 4:18.

II. The kingdom of God is the ruling, the reigning, of God with all its blessing and enjoyment—Col. 1:13; Rev. 22:1-2:

- A. *The kingdom of God* (Matt. 12:28) is a general term that refers to God's reign (Matt. 6:10, 13b; Dan. 6:26b); its scope is unlimited, comprising eternity past, the patriarchs, the nation of Israel in the Old Testament (Matt. 21:43), the church in the New Testament (Rom. 14:17), the coming millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6), and the new heaven and new earth without end for eternity.
- B. *The kingdom of the heavens* (Matt. 5:3), a term used exclusively by Matthew, is a specific section within the kingdom of God, a section composed only of the church

EUROPEAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE—MAŁE CICHE

today and the heavenly part of the coming millennial kingdom; it began on the day of Pentecost when Christ poured out the Holy Spirit and established His church (Acts 2) and it will continue until the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:7).

- C. *The kingdom of the Son of God's love* (Col. 1:13) is a delightful realm full of life, light, and love into which all the believers have been transferred through regeneration (John 3:5); it comprises the present age of the church, the coming age of the millennial kingdom, and the eternal age with the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth.

III. We must repent for the sake of the kingdom—Matt. 3:2; 4:17:

- A. The kingdom of God is God's dominion, God's reign; before we repented, believed in the Lord, and were saved, we did not have God's authority in us and were therefore not under God's ruling—Mark 1:15.
- B. The gospel that the New Testament reveals is a gospel proclaimed to rebels—to men who have resisted God's authority, to men who have rejected His rule, to men who would not have Him to reign over them; the New Testament gospel cleanses such men and puts God's life within them so they can accept God's government and ruling—cf. Luke 19:14b; 1 Tim. 1:13-16.
- C. To repent means to have a change of mind with regret for the past and a turn for the future:
 - 1. On the negative side, to repent before God is not only to repent of sins and wrongdoings but also to repent of the world and its corruption, which usurp and corrupt people whom God has created for Himself—Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38.
 - 2. On the positive side, to repent is to turn to God in every way and in everything for the fulfillment of His purpose in creating man—Mark 1:15; Acts 14:15.
- D. We should repent not merely to obtain pardon, not merely to obtain peace, not merely to obtain life, but because there is a heavenly kingdom that requires our repentance; we must repent of not being subject to the authority of heaven and of not submitting to the sovereignty of God—1 Tim. 1:17; cf. Dan. 4:26.
- E. God's New Testament economy is focused on His kingdom; if we are not in the kingdom, if we are not living for the kingdom, we need to repent—Acts 20:21; 26:20.