

The Kingdom of God Now It's Function and Place

Introduction

We saw in our last lesson that Jesus told His followers that some standing with Him would not see death until they saw the Kingdom coming in power. After His resurrection He told His disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father, the Spirit of Truth. When the Holy Spirit came they would receive power. This all happened on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came bringing power and the Kingdom of God for the Kingdom is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.¹

As we have seen from previous lessons, God's purpose involves His Kingdom and its restoration to fullness. With the rebellion of Satan and his angels and the disobedience of Adam, the Kingdom was 'fractured' so that there now exists a group of beings that function outside of the Eternal Kingdom of God. Only those who do the will of the Father are a part of the Kingdom², which is one of the reasons that we are to pray "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done ..."³

We see the Kingdom of God in various manifestations. First is the Eternal Kingdom of God before the rebellion of the Devil. After the rebellion, we have the Kingdom in its 'fractured' condition. Then, we have the beginning of the restoration of the Kingdom of God back to its Eternal state through the purposes of God and the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was to destroy the works of the Devil⁴ and rescue us from the kingdom of darkness and transfer us to His Kingdom.⁵

When the Holy Spirit as the promise of the Father was poured forth at Pentecost, a beachhead of the Kingdom was established in the Holy Spirit. The Kingdom is now within us and among us in the form of the Holy Spirit. He is the administrator of the things of Jesus and the Kingdom of God. Through the Holy Spirit we learn to live in the Kingdom of God. Our character and conduct are changed into the proper character and conduct of a citizen of God's Kingdom.

The Kingdom Present Now

We have the Kingdom manifested now in a *spiritual form*. When Jesus returns, the Kingdom is established in *physical form* as the literal 1000 year reign of Christ, the Millennial Kingdom⁶. At the end of the Millennial Kingdom when the last enemy is conquered and death, itself, is put under the feet

1 Romans 14:17

2 Matthew 7:21

3 Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2

4 I John 3:8

5 Colossians 1:13

6 Revelation 20:4-6

of Jesus, He turns the Kingdom over to the Father with the result that the Eternal Kingdom is restored⁷. All 'fractures' have been dealt with so that all things conform to the will of the Father. This is the consummation or close of this age and God creates a new heaven and a new earth [*this could be a resurrection of the old heaven and earth—death and resurrection seem to be the main principle of God's restoration work.*] that will function as the headquarters of the rule of God forever.

We can see the restoration process a little clearer from this: the Kingdom moves from spiritual form to physical form to eternal form. God is not finished until the Eternal form is restored to its original purity and function.

We are currently living in the spiritual form of the Kingdom. However, just because it is spiritual does not mean that it is not real. The Kingdom of God is literal and real even in its spiritual form. It is the will of God brought to the earth where obedience overcomes disobedience by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our transition into the Kingdom is a process that involves our spirit, soul and body. We receive a new spirit which is born of the Spirit of Christ, which is the seed of the Kingdom in us. The Holy Spirit is poured forth on the seed as the water of Life and the seed begins to grow in us. It grows outward and begins to renew and sanctify our souls. The last aspect of our being to be transitioned is our bodies. We receive our new, resurrection bodies when the Lord returns, completing our transfer into the Kingdom of God.

It is important that we keep this process straight and clear in our minds. There was a movement in the 50's called the "Manifested Sons" which emphasized our sonship and the results on creation when our sonship was manifested or revealed to all. Error and deception entered this movement when they failed to separate in their thinking processes the spiritual form and the physical form of the Kingdom of God.

They began to teach that you could make a complete transition to the Kingdom of God now with the result that your body would never die, forgetting that flesh and blood does not inherit the Kingdom. Our natural bodies cannot transition to the Kingdom. We must have a resurrection body, a spiritual body. This form of teaching became known as "Kingdom Now" theology. It has created a number of problems among the people of God by confusing understanding of the True Kingdom with their false version.

We need to remember that the false does not negate the true, but, actually, validates it. If the true did not exist there would be no value to the false. Counterfeit money has value (deception value) because real money exists and has value. The existence of false kingdom teaching should only stir us to find the Truth—to seek the Kingdom of God.

The Jewish Deception

There are many commentators that only see the Kingdom of God as a Jewish issue with the Church being the path to God for the Gentiles. They divide Israel and the Church as separate dispensations of

⁷ I Corinthians 15:25-28

God in which He is doing different things according to His purpose for each separate group. They see the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Israel as the same thing, even to the point of saying that the Millennial Kingdom is primarily Jewish as part of the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. These commentators miss the purpose of God completely and are primarily responsible for the separation of a gospel of salvation from the full gospel of the Kingdom [*the next lesson will cover this in detail*].

However, the New Testament reveals to us that the Kingdom of God is bigger than Israel and that it is even bigger than the Church. Jesus and the apostles make it clear that the Kingdom of God includes all who do the will of the Father regardless of race, ethnicity, nation, culture or any other form of partiality. God is no respecter of persons. He is not partial. The Kingdom receives all who are willing to do the will of the Lord.

The Lord has only one people and they are the ones who are of the faith of Abraham⁸. The people of God are from The Seed, Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:16 NKJV Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "AND TO YOUR SEED," who is Christ.

All who are "in Christ" are partakers of the seed and the inheritance of Abraham. They are the citizens of the Kingdom of God.

The Olive Tree

Paul explains to us in the eleventh chapter of Romans some of the out working of God's purpose with His people. As we have seen in earlier lessons, God's unfolding purpose began to be revealed in time by His selection of Abraham. This is pictured in the Scriptures as the growing of a cultivated olive tree, which is rooted in Abraham with the tap root being the eternal purpose of God. As the olive tree grew, the people of Israel became branches of the tree. In God's purpose, Gentiles, as wild olive branches, have been grafted into the cultivated olive tree so as to become one with the cultivated olive tree in order to receive the blessing of the tree.

Romans 11:17-18 NKJV And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, (18) do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

The root is the faith of Abraham. Those who were the natural branches that did not partake of this faith but instead walked in unbelief have been broken off as branches of the tree and are no longer part of the natural olive tree nor partaker of the blessing of the tree.

Romans 11:19-22 NKJV You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." (20) Well *said*. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. (21) For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. (22) Therefore consider the

8 Galatians 3:7

goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

God's impartiality in his purpose should cause us to fear God and not be haughty concerning His choosing us. If we walk in unbelief, even though we have been grafted in, we will be cut off in the same manner as the natural branches.

Romans 11:23-24 NKJV And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. (24) For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are* natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

There is coming a time when those of the natural branches who turn from their unbelief will be grafted back in, re-attached, even though they were broken off. This will cause tremendous blessing to flow through the olive tree.

God has used their unbelief as an opportunity for Him to graft us gentiles into the olive tree. He has done this by showing us mercy.

Romans 11:28-32 NKJV Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. (29) For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. (30) For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, (31) even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. (32) For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

Since God is no respecter of persons, by showing us mercy He will extend that mercy to the natural branches, grafting them back into the olive tree.

The point of all of this is that God does not have a separate program for the Jews and the Church. He has One program and it is for the Olive Tree, which has natural and wild branches but is still One tree.

The Scriptures make it very clear that as this age is completed, all aspects of God's purpose is also brought to completion.

Ephesians 1:10 ALT (Analytical-Literal Translation) with respect to the administration of the fullness [*or, completion*] of the times, to gather together [*or, to unify*] all [*things*] in Christ, the [*things*] in the heavens and the things on the earth,

In the end there will be the One New Man, Christ Jesus as Head with a many-membered Body, one Temple as a dwelling place of the Spirit, and one family for the Father.

Ephesians 2:11-22 ALT (Analytical-Literal Translation) For this reason, be remembering that you* at one time [*were*] the Gentiles in [*the*] flesh, the ones called Uncircumcision by the ones called Circumcision, performed by human hands in the flesh- (12) that you* were at that time apart from [*or, without*] Christ, having been separated from [*or, a foreigner to*] the citizenship [*fig.,*

community] of Israel and strangers to [*fig., excluded from*] the covenants of the promise, having no hope [*or, confident expectation*] and without God in the world. (13) But now, in Christ Jesus, *you**, the ones at one time being far away, became near by the blood of Christ. (14) For He is our peace, the One having made them both one and having broken down the dividing wall of the fence [*fig., the separation*], (15) having done away with [*or, having annulled*] the hostility in His flesh, the law of the commandments in ordinances, so that from the two He should create in Himself into one new person [*or, humanity*], making peace, (16) and reconcile them both in one body to God by means of the cross, having put to death the hostility by it [*or, in Himself*]. (17) And having come, He Himself proclaimed the Gospel [*of*] peace to *you**, to the [*ones*] far away and to the [*ones*] near. (18) Because by means of Him we both have the access [*or, privilege to enter*] by one Spirit to the Father. (19) So, consequently, *you** are no longer strangers and foreigners, *but* fellow-citizens with the holy ones and [*members*] of the household of God, (20) having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being [*the*] cornerstone, (21) in whom [*the*] entire building having been joined together is growing into a holy temple in [*the*] Lord, (22) in whom also *you** are being built together into a habitation for God in the Spirit.

We gentiles were foreigners to the citizenship of Israel and since the covenants first came to Israel, we were also strangers to these covenants and far from God. However, now we are not longer foreigners and strangers but we are fellow citizens with the holy ones, not as a part of Israel but as citizens of the Kingdom of God.

The function of the Kingdom now in its spiritual form is to prepare us for the coming of the Kingdom in its physical form. Those who seek the Kingdom now and the power of the Holy Spirit have an opportunity to be changed into the image, the likeness, of Jesus. The citizens of the Kingdom are all family members and, as such, have a family resemblance to each other and to the Elder Brother and, of course, to the Father.

We are being taught to overcome even as He overcame. That is part of our training. We have received from Him a new nature. As the new nature grows in us, it produces a new character that is growing into the likeness of the character of Jesus. This is the fruit of the Spirit in us. As we begin to mature in character, the Lord provides circumstances for us to begin to develop the ability that is necessary to become a functioning citizen. Ability is developed through the training of the Holy Spirit. Those who overcome will rule, reign, with Him during the physical Kingdom.⁹

Those who rule *with* Him must rule *like* Him. We don't have the ability to do that until the Holy Spirit trains us. As we seek the Kingdom, His rule over us, we learn obedience and we do the will of the Father. We can only do this as we walk in the Spirit, for the Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. If we neglect the training of the Lord now, it will be too late later. The only ones who will rule in the physical Kingdom are those who have been trained to rule like Him.

9 II Timothy 2:12; Revelation 20:6; Revelation 22:5

The Holy Spirit continues the work of the Lord in bringing to completion the purposes of God. Part of His job is to teach us, first the things that Jesus said when He was on earth and then the things that He couldn't say to His disciples because they were not able to bear them at that time. Jesus reserved those words to the work of the Spirit.

John 16:12-13 NKJV "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. (13) However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

If we ignore or restrict the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we do away with any possibility of understanding the Kingdom of God because it can only be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

*The next lesson in this series will be
"The Gospel of the Kingdom" and its role
as the end time message.*