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The kingdom of God

Although we see in these three sections a complete view concerning the gospel, we do not see the intrinsic essence of the gospel. Neither do we see in these sections of Mark the purpose of the gospel and its issue. We do not yet see what the gospel is for. This is the reason that in chapter four the record of this Gospel comes to the matter of the kingdom of God.

In 1:15 we have the first utterance of the Lord Jesus in His gospel preaching: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near. Repent and believe in the gospel!" This verse indicates clearly that the gospel is for the kingdom, and this kingdom is neither the kingdom of man nor the kingdom of Israel, but the kingdom of God.

What is the kingdom of God? It is not easy to define the kingdom. In order to understand what the kingdom of God is, we need to consider the entire Old Testament, for in the Old Testament we have a clear view of the kingdom.

We may say that a kingdom is a sphere, or a realm, where a person accomplishes something. Sometimes we say that a certain person has his own kingdom. This means that he has a realm, a sphere, where he can work to reach his goal or fulfill his plan. Hence, a kingdom is a realm where a person does what he wants to do. According to the Old Testament, there is a realm called the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is a sphere, a realm, for God to work out His eternal purpose and accomplish His goal.

After creating the heavens, the earth, and billions of items, God created man. According to the book of Genesis, God created man for a twofold purpose. On the positive side, God created man in His image so that man may express Him. On the negative side, God gave man His dominion over all created things. Dominion means authority in a particular realm or sphere. Dominion, therefore, is related to God's kingdom. In Genesis 1 we see that with man we have God's image and God's dominion. God's image is for His expression, and God's dominion is for His kingdom.

God in His creation wanted man to express Him. In order to have such an expression, God needs a sphere, and this

sphere is a kingdom, a realm where God can exercise His authority. God gave His authority to man and established man as the head of all created things. By this we see that immediately after the creation of man, God set up a kingdom on earth. The kingdom of God, therefore, can be seen in the first chapter of Genesis.

Eventually, after the fall of man, God called Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The book of Genesis records the experiences of these patriarchs and of the children of Israel and their sojourn in Egypt. According to the record in Exodus, God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. Exodus 19:6 reveals God's purpose in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." The Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt in order to make them a kingdom of priests, a kingdom in which everyone would be a priest, one who serves God. Hence, God's goal was to have a priestly kingdom.

From Exodus 19 until the end of the Old Testament we have the record of the history of a kingdom. We should not regard this kingdom merely as the kingdom of Israel. Rather, this was the kingdom of God expressed in the kingdom of Israel.

As we study the Old Testament, we see that God was not able to accomplish His purpose with Adam, Noah, or the nation of Israel. Although the kingdom of God was expressed in the kingdom of Israel, God was not able to reach His goal through the children of Israel. Therefore, eventually God Himself came through the way of incarnation.

Not being able to fulfill His purpose through the first Adam and his descendants, God came through incarnation as the last Adam. As God incarnate, the Lord Jesus came to establish the kingdom of God, to establish a realm in which God can carry out His purpose through the exercise of His authority. This was the reason the Lord taught His disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom (Matt. 6:10). This was also the reason the Lord Jesus in His preaching of the gospel told people to repent for the kingdom of God. The Lord declared that the kingdom of God had drawn near and that

people must repent in order to enter into the kingdom. Those who repent because the kingdom of God has drawn near will be able to participate in the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose.

The goal and issue of the gospel

In the preaching of the gospel, the kingdom of God is often neglected. Much of today's gospel preaching gives people the impression that the gospel is only for soul winning, for transferring people out of hell into heaven, for helping people have peace, joy, and eternal blessing. In the New Testament, however, we have a different impression concerning the gospel. When the Lord Jesus preached the gospel, He spoke concerning the kingdom of God, and He told them to repent for the kingdom.

One day, in His training of His disciples, the Lord brought them to Caesarea Philippi, which is in the northern part of the Holy Land, close to the border, at the foot of Mount Hermon. Then the Lord began to ask His disciples concerning Himself: "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?...But you, who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:13, 15). Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). Peter recognized the Lord as the Christ, the Son of the living God. This means that the Son of the living God was appointed to be God's anointed One, the Christ. After Peter received this revelation concerning the Lord, the Lord went on to say, "On this rock I will build My church....I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens..." (vv. 18-19). In these verses the words "church" and "kingdom" are used interchangeably. First the Lord said, "I will build My church," and then, "I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens." This indicates that in order for the church to be built, the kingdom needs to be opened. In other words, opening the kingdom is the way to begin the building of the church.

We need to see the crucial matter that the intrinsic essence of the gospel is the kingdom. The gospel is preached for the kingdom, and the kingdom is a divine sphere for God to work out His plan, a realm where God can exercise His authority to accomplish what He intends. The only way for God to reach His goal is through the kingdom. Therefore, there is a section in the gospel of Mark revealing the purpose of the gospel. The purpose of the gospel is to have the kingdom. The kingdom of God is the goal of the gospel.

The kingdom of God is not only the goal of the gospel, but also the issue of the gospel. When the gospel is preached, what will be the outcome? What will be the issue of the gospel? This outcome, this issue, is the kingdom. The preaching of the gospel is to bring forth the kingdom.

It is only in the Gospel of Matthew that the Lord speaks of the church. There is no mention of the church in Mark, Luke, or John. We need to realize, however, that in the Lord's mind the church and the kingdom are one matter. The church is the kingdom and the kingdom is the church.

(Excerpts from Life- Studies of Mark Message #13)

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Burdens for Church Prayer

- 2026 Targets, # of baptized:22; # of prayer meeting attendance:35; average Lord's Day and small group attendance:10% increase
- Spread the kingdom of God by preaching the gospel on the WVC campus and in the community.
- Multiply the number of small groups for the increase and building up of the Body of Christ
- Perfect young working saints with shepherding families as containers for the next generation.
- Practice PSRP, BNPB, and vital small groups.
- Blending in the Body, by participating in conferences and trainings
- Establish and strengthen the church services, including children, YP, ushering, etc.
- Establish a prayer life individually and corporately
- Pursuing the truth and growth in life to live in the reality of the kingdom.

Announcements

- Life-study of Mark MSG 13, 14
- HWMR: 2025 Fall ITERO Week 9
- 2/3 (Tue) 7:45pm, Prayer meeting at meeting hall
- 3/1 Truth Sets US Free <https://www.tsuf.us/participate>
- 2/20-3/13 7th term FSCC Corporate Pursuit class, 9:30am -12pm.
- 3/14, 10am. Lessons on small groups with br Minoru on Zoom.
- 4/3-5 NorCal Spring YP conference held at FSCC
- 4/10-11 FSCC. NorCal Chinese speaking saints blending conference.
- 7/29-8/2 FSCC. North America Chinese speaking perfecting training, west coast session.
- 9/4-6 NorCal Labor Day Conference held at Burlingame Hyatt
- Financial Giving:
 - PayPal/Zelle: churchincampbell@gmail.com
 - Venmo @Churchin-Campbell
 - Church in Campbell bookroom account (PayPal/Zelle)
 - churchincampbellbooks@gmail.com