

THIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM



by Dale Rumble
revised 1990

PREFACE

The church today is entering into a final great visitation of the Holy Spirit, the era of a last spiritual awakening before the Lord returns.

Historical outpourings of the Spirit have touched the church in the past, primarily through the vision and ministry of various reformers. Thus, truth has been restored over the years beginning with the doctrine of “justification by faith” through Martin Luther, and continuing on until today.

These moves of God have also given birth to several spiritual awakenings where hearts of the saints were touched by divine fire to pray and evangelize, bringing many to Christ. It has **always** been the Lord’s will that His people have a burden to win the lost; it should be the life style of every believer. Over the years various missionary and evangelistic endeavors have emerged as fruit of these moves of God. Although there have been individuals who willingly laid down everything, including their own lives in some cases, to take the gospel to those dying without Christ in foreign lands, there has not yet been a demonstration of the gospel that can compare to what is to come.

What lies ahead for the church during this final awakening will be **much greater** in scope, for it is destined to touch the entire world. It will be **far more** comprehensive in its impact upon mankind. New dimensions of the power of God will be seen in spiritual warfare. World wide economic conditions, tribulations, and persecutions will be unlike anything seen before. The true church will be delivered from the bonds and structures that have tied her to the world. Human mythologies in ministry will be replaced by anointings of the Spirit. The brittle, inflexible structures of denominations will soften into flexible bonds of spiritual life and fellowship. There will be a great harvest of souls, primarily from among the poor, those deeply afflicted in the streets of sin, and from nations that have been closed to the gospel in the past. At the same time, there will occur a falling away of many in nominal Christendom. The days ahead will **not** be like times of the past, and believers **must** prepare for them!

Over the years, human traditions and legalism have often been mixed with the gospel. This has diluted its message and power. A primary mark of this last move of God will be restoration of the gospel of the kingdom. It is the message by which the Lord will establish His kingdom in the Church. To this end, He has begun to judge and purify His

people, for the present level of commitment and holiness are **not adequate** for the power that is to come. The fire of God is shaking and testing the quality of what exists in traditional Christianity; and it is found to be wanting (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Hebrews 13:25-29). The smell of smoke will become common place! God can only use humble, broken men. The church that is to emerge in the years ahead will be marked by godly integrity, accountable relationships and humility. And the glory of God will rest upon her! It will not only be a church with restored truth, but it will also be a church with great compassion and a burden to see lost souls brought to Christ. This age will close with a restored church ministering a restored gospel: the gospel of the kingdom!

THE BEGINNING AND THE END

The particular period of time in which we live today, referred to as the church age, began when, empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus commenced His earthly ministry by preaching the gospel of the kingdom (MT. 9:35).

*And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the **gospel of the kingdom**, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. (Matthew 4:23)*

The gospel He preached became the commission He later gave to His disciples (Matthew 10:5-10; Mark 16:15-18). It was also the gospel preached by the early church (Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31; Romans 15:18-19).

In fact, the gospel of the kingdom is the **only** gospel ever given to the church. There is not one gospel for the unsaved and another gospel for the church; everyone is called to come under the government of God. It is as simple as that, for the gospel of the kingdom is designed to establish God's government on earth, beginning in the church.

Scripture declares that there is one Spirit, one body, one faith and one hope of our calling (Ephesians 4:4-5). This statement is true because there is **only one gospel!** However, over nineteen centuries the church has become fragmented into many bodies with individual groups emphasizing some distinct aspect of the gospel. The following are current examples of such "gospels": the social gospel, dispensationalism, the full gospel, liberation theology, dominion theology, faith and prosperity, the gospel of liturgy, etc. Each emphasis is a focus on some doctrine or need

that was viewed as essential truth. However, the gospel of the kingdom has but one objective: to accomplish the purpose of God by establishing His government in men's lives. As this is accomplished, the needs of those who respond will be met. They shall be abundantly satisfied, but within the context of His government in their lives.

In these days of church restoration, as she is being prepared for tribulation, conflict and a great, final ingathering of souls, the Lord is once again bringing the gospel of His kingdom into focus. It is the ministry and message destined to **close this age of grace, even as it opened it.**

*And this **gospel of the kingdom** shall be preached in the whole world for a witness **to all the nations**, and then the end shall come. (Matthew 24:14)*

Let us examine the relationship that exists between the church and the kingdom of God.

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The following five observations, reveal the relationship of the church to the kingdom of God and how they are distinct from one another.

1. God's kingdom exists wherever He reigns. Thus, the kingdom of heaven is also the kingdom of God. When the Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," is answered, the earth will also be a part of the kingdom of God.

2. The kingdom of God has **always** existed. It has no beginning or end for it represents the sphere of God's dominion. On the other hand, the church began on the day of Pentecost.

3. The kingdom of God is **perfect** since God and His government are perfect. The kingdom is not being built, it is being extended as men submit to His government. In contrast, the church today is imperfect, but is growing into a future perfection as she is being built by the Lord.

4. The gospel is the gospel of the kingdom, not of the church; the church is God's instrument to minister the gospel.

5. The present ministry of the Holy Spirit will continue until **all** enemies are under His feet, and the Lord Jesus has come to have first **place in everything** in His church. At that time, the bride of Christ will have made herself ready (Revelation 19:7-9). The Lord Jesus will return to judge the earth, and later He will dwell among His people in the holy

city, the New Jerusalem, His chosen place of rest (Revelation 21:1-3). Thus, the **future center of the kingdom** from where His government will go forth to all creation, the Zion of God, will be made up of the overcomers from among His people. They will be those who have fully come under His government and who have been conformed into the image of Jesus (2 Timothy 2:11-12; Revelation 2:26-27; 3:12, 21; 20:4-6; 21:7; 22:3-5). All creation is eagerly awaiting this unveiling of God's sons, which will be a climactic consequence of the gospel of the kingdom (Romans 8:18-23).

Let us examine in detail what makes up the gospel of the kingdom.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM?

To most people, the gospel is God's good news of His provision to forgive them of all sin and bring them into His kingdom. However, the gospel of the kingdom is more comprehensive than that. It is to bring us into His kingdom **and** to build us together on the foundation of His Son so that we become an expression of His kingdom upon the earth. In other words, we are **brought into** the kingdom to **become established** under His government. The gospel concerns the **purpose** of God as well as the needs of sinful men.

God is not looking for numbers in the sense of an organization; He wants us to **know** Him as our Father; one whose arms are outstretched toward us in love, whose heart's desire is that we become established in Jesus and share His glory (Ephesians 3:17-19).

*Now to Him who is able to **establish you** according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ... (Romans 16:25)*

*And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you might **gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.** (2 Thessalonians 2:14)*

If the intent in preaching the gospel is only to save men from hell, the message will be limited. However, the lost are not only invited to be justified by faith and freed **from sin and judgment**; but they are also **called to inherit the life of God!**

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ... and we exult **in hope of the glory of God.** (Romans 5:1-2)*

The following **nine** statements characterize the gospel of the kingdom. Although each statement does not carry equal importance, all are necessary to accurately express the heart and purpose of God through the gospel.

1. THERE CAN BE NO GOSPEL APART FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

Scripture reveals that the gospel involves three major works of the Holy Spirit in those who fully respond and embrace its message.

1. The forgiveness of sins and restoration of a personal relationship with God through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
2. Victory over Satan and his hosts in spiritual warfare.
3. A victorious, fruitful life as a living stone in the house of God in matters pertaining to character, relationship and service. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. To enter, one must be born of the Spirit (John 3:5-6). Clearly, the gospel message and the ears of hearers must be spiritually anointed for this to take place.

Jesus did not begin to preach the gospel until He had **first** received fullness of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17; Luke 3:21-22).

The early disciples were charged by Jesus not to begin their ministry of witness **until** they were baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8).

The emphasis of the Holy Spirit in the gospel, as in all ministry, is to glorify and exalt the Lord Jesus, pointing hearers to His finished work on the cross. The gospel is referred to in scripture as the “gospel of the glory of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:4). It is when men lose sight of the centrality of Jesus that they begin to preach other gospels.

Some would limit the anointing of the Spirit to quickening gospel messages on repentance, the new birth and to performing attesting signs to confirm the spoken word. However, when we examine the ministry of Jesus, and the anointing that rested upon Him, we realize that it encompassed much more.

Isaiah speaks of His anointing as follows:

*The Spirit of the Lord is **upon me**, because the Lord has **anointed me to bring good news...** (Isaiah 61:1)*

*And the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon Him, the spirit of **wisdom and understanding**, the spirit of **counsel and strength** (might), the spirit of **knowledge** and the **fear of the Lord**. (Isaiah 11:2)*

When one considers the above **six** distinct characteristics of the anointing resting upon Jesus, it becomes quite apparent that the gospel He preached was more than sermons on repentance and the forgiveness of sins. It also included a personal demonstration of God's love and grace ministered with divine wisdom, understanding, counsel, power and knowledge. He sought to bring lost men into a **full** and **complete** salvation that included His lordship over their lives. He wanted them free in body, soul and spirit from all other dominions to belong **totally** to Him. We need the same anointing to be effective in preaching the gospel today.

One can recognize examples of these six aspects of His anointing from scripture.

- The spirit of wisdom — When the woman taken in the act of adultery was brought before Jesus, there were witnesses of her sin. Because of these witnesses, Jesus was unable to minister mercy to her. Therefore, He said nothing and waited for the Spirit of God to give Him a word of wisdom.

He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. (John 8:7)

Through divine wisdom, Jesus was then able to minister mercy and forgiveness to her; it became a doorway for the gospel.

- The spirit of understanding — This is seen most clearly in His understanding of **who** He was and **why** He had come into the world. **Everything** that He did came forth out of understanding the purpose of His Father. The gospel He ministered and the life He lived were based on principles of the cross even though His words looked forward to Calvary. We also have a cross.

And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it. (Matthew 10:38-39)

- The spirit of counsel — Whenever Jesus gave counsel or advice, either to individuals or to groups, He presented truth so that **only** those whose hearts were open and receptive would respond. Others would simply not understand. The parables He taught are a good example of this (Matthew 13:3-17, 34-35; John 8:43). Jesus never ministered situation ethics or general principles; His words were spirit and life directly into the hearts of those whom He

spoke to. His words were God's "KEUGMA"; God's message that was not negotiable, nor could it be debated.

- The spirit of strength — The spirit of strength is clearly manifest by His mighty miracles; especially in His power over death (1 John 3:8).
- The spirit of knowledge — This anointing was evident in the many instances, when by a word of knowledge, He acted according to what was in the hearts of men. His words and actions were **always** directed by what He saw in the hearts of His audience. Jesus recognized that the gateway for the gospel was the human heart, and it is no different today.
- The spirit of the fear of the Lord — Jesus demonstrated an explicit humility by speaking and doing **only** those things He was commanded to by His Father. He did **nothing** on His own initiative. To mix one's own strategy, doctrine or emphasis with the gospel will dilute and weaken it. The fear of God would keep this from happening; not fear of His judgment, but fear of displeasing and misrepresenting Him. Jesus **always** honored and pleased His Father.

These six aspects of the anointing upon Jesus make it abundantly clear that one cannot preach the gospel of the kingdom apart from the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, if spiritual manifestations of power, discernment, knowledge, wisdom and humility are not present, one's ministry would be greatly limited in revealing Christ to men; and our ministry must **truly** represent Him.

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. He is the **only** door to eternal life. He came, first of all, to reveal the Father to mankind; and second, He came to lay down His life to reconcile men back to the Father. This is what He was anointed to accomplish. His gospel was far more than "the right words". It included **all** that took place, both word and deed, in His relationship with men, women and children. Thus, it is the **total** record of His life, His teaching and acts, including the cross, that makes up the gospel He ministered.

For this reason, the beatitudes provide a significant portion of the gospel, for they are not only words of truth, they also express the very essence of kingdom life. They point to the way of the cross as the basis for life and government in God's kingdom. Thus, the following are vital excerpts from the gospel of the kingdom:

- Blessed are the poor in spirit
- Blessed are the meek
- Blessed are the merciful
- Blessed are the pure in heart
- Blessed are the peacemakers
- Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may ... glorify your Father who is in heaven.
- Love your enemies and pray for them who persecute you.
- Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
- Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant.
- For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.

Each of the above reflects life, relationship and government in the kingdom.

For too long, we have disassociated such verses from the gospel. However, they represent the very truths that makes our witness become “the light of the world and the salt of the earth”. These spiritual laws and principles should be visibly present in the lives of those preaching the gospel of the kingdom. For they reflect the government of God. We are called to be witnesses of Christ; what we stand for must be both **heard** and **seen**.

The Holy Spirit is a Person, and one cannot accept His acts without also accepting His character and priorities. For too long, believers have sought to have His deeds of power among them but have not equally desired to walk in the integrity of His ways; and this has limited the gospel.

2. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM IS A PROCLAMATION OF DIVINE SIMPLICITY

The gospel is corrupted when it is made complicated and difficult to understand. It must not be added to or subtracted from, and it should always be transparent to culture, race or social status.

The heart of the gospel is not a message of reformation nor does it define righteous conduct. It is an invitation to eternal life in the kingdom of God.

The gospel proclaims God's **unconditional** love for lost mankind, and it proclaims the **total, complete** and **absolute** victory of the Lord Jesus over Satan, sin and death through His death and resurrection. It is a proclamation that **everything** necessary to bring the lowest sinner from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved Son has been provided in the all sufficient work of the cross. Furthermore, **all** that a convert requires to walk in victory over sin is available **through faith** in what Christ has purchased by His death, burial and resurrection.

The **two** conditions that men must meet to receive eternal life are: **faith** and **repentance**. The power of the gospel is hindered whenever the need for repentance is not emphasized or when simplicity in the gospel message is lost. Because it is simple, the gospel can be understood in the heart of a child, or one whom the world would consider to be a fool (Isaiah 35:8; 1 Corinthians 1:26-28).

3. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM BRINGS A DIVINE THREEFOLD WITNESS OF HIS LIFE.

Salvation is both an experience of passing from death into life, **and receiving a witness** that the life of the Son, which has been received will enable one to overcome the world.

*And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the **water** and with the **blood**. And it is the **Spirit** who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are **three** that bear witness, the **Spirit** and the **water** and the **blood**; and these three are in agreement The one who believes in the Son of God has the **witness in himself** ... and the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in the Son. (1 John 5:5-11)*

First, the Spirit bears witness that the blood of Christ has cleansed away all sin. Second, He bears witness that our sinful, carnal nature was crucified with Christ on the cross and has been cut away by spiritual circumcision and buried in the waters of baptism.

I have been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)

*Therefore we have been **buried** with Him **through baptism** into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in **newness of life** Knowing this, that our **old self was crucified** with Him, that our body of sin **might be done away with**, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. (Romans 6:4, 6)*

*And in Him you were also **circumcised** with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; **having been buried with Him in baptism** (Colossians 2:11-12)*

Third, the Holy Spirit bears witness that we have been raised up from the waters of baptism with power to walk in newness of life because of His abiding presence in us; a life in the Spirit that overcomes the world.

By faith, I reckon that through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, because of my identification with Him through His blood, water baptism and the Spirit, I am now dead to sin. I simply **do not have to sin!** I have, by faith, exchanged my old sinful life for His glorious life, a life which He now lives within me (Galatians 2:20).

This is the basis of kingdom life. It is how converts are to be brought into the kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). It is how the government of God is introduced into the life of new believers.

The pattern of salvation is pictured in the exodus of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 12-14). First, the **blood** was placed on the door posts. Second, the Egyptian army and oppressors of the Lord's people were swallowed up in the **waters** of the Red Sea; and thirdly, the Israelites were then led by the **pillar of cloud and fire** toward the promised land. Blood, water and spirit!

The first sermon preached in the early church pointed to this three fold witness. It took place on the day of Pentecost after the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the first disciples (Acts 2:1-38). To explain what happened, Peter preached to the multitude of onlookers explaining who Jesus was and why He had died a substitutionary death for them. The people believed his words, and being pierced to the heart, they asked what they should do in response. Peter's answer to them pointed to God's witness:

Repent (i.e. because you have **believed**), and let each one of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the **Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38)

God's witness to the gospel is greatly hindered, or eliminated altogether, when ministers are not faithful to preach the **whole** truth. For example, when the blood of Christ is not properly emphasized; or when water baptism is presented as an option instead of a command so that there is no faith for immediate immersion; or by baptizing without expecting anything to take place in the heart of the candidate; or when converts are put on probation to see if their salvation is valid before water baptism; and finally, when converts are not exhorted to be baptized in the Holy Spirit as soon as they have repented and believed the gospel. The threefold witness is a **vital support** and **foundation** to all who repent and believe the gospel of the kingdom.

4. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM IS A GOSPEL OF GOD'S GRACE

It is by grace that God apprehends individuals to be ambassadors of His grace and to proclaim the gospel of His kingdom. Paul is an example of this (1 Corinthians 15:10).

*But I (Paul) do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the **gospel of the grace** of God. (Acts 20:24)*

By grace, the gospel of grace is proclaimed, so that sinners can be saved by the grace of God. There is absolutely **nothing** that one can contribute to their salvation except to believe and repent (even faith is a gift of God). It is altogether a matter of grace! (John 1:16; Romans 3:23-25; Romans 5:20-21; Ephesians 1:3-7; 2:4-9)

*For if by the transgression of the one (i.e. Adam), death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the **abundance of grace** and the **gift of righteousness** will reign in life through the One Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17)*

*For the wages of sin is death, but the **free gift** of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*

God has foreknown **all** details of our lives **long before** we were born. Therefore, He knows the measure of grace we will need as believers to fulfill our call in Him. This grace, which has been prepared from

the beginning of time, is made available to us when we are born of His Spirit, and it is **sufficient** for every need that we have regardless of our past.

*... who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to **His own purpose and grace** which was granted us in Christ Jesus **from all eternity**. (2 Timothy 1:9)*

We are **not** to be preoccupied with any failures and mistakes of our past life before we came to Christ. Our eyes are to be upon Him and on the grace He extends to us, for that is sufficient for us to fulfill our call, regardless of misguided decisions in the past. Neither are we to see ourselves limited in our call by physical handicaps. We are called with a holy calling, one that is accompanied by **all** the grace we will ever need; grace that surpasses failures of the past and weaknesses of the present. His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

... My grace is sufficient for you, for (My) power is perfected in weakness! Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

We are His workmanship, created in Christ for works prepared beforehand for us to walk in, and for which grace has been provided for us (Ephesians 2:10). We are always to be **faithful** and **obedient**, but the victory is **never** a question of our ability; it is altogether a matter of His anointing and grace (Romans 12:6; Ephesians 4:7, 11). God seeks to be seen and glorified in our lives and ministry. He builds His house with warped boards and bent nails! He uses what society discards. Our handicaps and weaknesses become the basis of His grace in our lives. All must then recognize that it truly is God who does the work, and He receives the glory. This is the reason why not many noble, or strong, or wise in the eyes of the world become partakers of God's grace. They do not see their need. The key virtue is **humility**; as long as we are small in our own eyes God can and will use us. We **cannot and** we must **not ever** depend upon our own strength; we are to be strong in the grace of God and rest in Him!

There is an aspect of God's grace that relates to time and place. For example, the grace of God visited the nation of Israel when Jesus began His ministry of the gospel of the kingdom. After His ascension, the grace of God was then extended to gentile nations. In periods of revival

there have been significant manifestations of grace in various localities and nations. However, the coming ministry of the gospel of the kingdom over all the world will demonstrate the **greatest** measure of God's grace ever to be seen on earth! This is what many current prophetic words on restoration of the church and world evangelism are pointing to; this will be the time when the bride of Christ prepares herself for Her Lord's return, and when a number from Israel will come into the church by God's grace. Our eyes and hearts are to be focused on **Him** as He reveals His Person and purpose for these last days. Peter expressed it well:

*Therefore, gird up your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope **completely on the grace** to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:13)*

We cannot **look** at past visitations and conditions to understand what lies ahead, for the future will involve new dimensions of God's power and grace, as well as great manifestations of evil and tribulation. It will be unlike anything ever seen on earth before (Matthew 24:4-14, 21-24; Isaiah 60:1-5; Haggai 2:6-9; Joel 2:30-32; 3:13-17). All things are under the control of our Lord, and He will do a new thing in the earth. Therefore, our eyes must be **on Him** and upon the grace He extends to us. We are not to anticipate the future on the basis of what has happened in the past (Isaiah 43:18-21). We must be like Noah, who built for unheard of times and conditions which he had never before seen or experienced. Like Noah, we are to move in obedient faith. Grace teaches us how to live in the present and look to the future (Titus 2:11-14).

5. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM REVEALS THE HEART OF GOD

The fact that one might speak the same words that Jesus used under similar circumstances does not necessarily mean that he is preaching the gospel of the kingdom. The words of Jesus came from a heart moved by love and compassion for the state of lost men. He wept over the needs of His people. The gospel is not only correct words and doctrine but words and acts rooted in mercy and compassion. Those to whom the gospel is preached can sense what is rooted in the spirit and motive of a minister. There must be an empathy in both heart and message that expresses the heart of God. This is why prayer is so essential; only God can touch us so that we will experience His love and burden for the lost.

A human mind set on evangelism is to count decisions for Christ; a divine unction, on the other hand, will be to seek out the most unlovely

in society, those in the deepest depths of sin, poverty and oppression. To win such as these to Christ reveals the glory and power of God. It is the poor and helpless in the world who are richer in faith and more likely to come to Him. This is where the gospel of the kingdom is to focus!

This fact is seen by the manner Jesus verified His ministry to John the Baptist when John was in prison.

*... Go and report to John what you **hear** and **see**; the **blind** receive sight and the **lame** walk, the **lepers** are cleansed and the **deaf** hear, and the **dead** are raised up, and the **poor** have the gospel preached to them. (Matthew 11:4-5)*

The gospel of the kingdom is **socially relevant!** Because this has not always been true in gospels presented over the centuries, much of what should be a responsibility of the church today in caring for the poor and afflicted has been taken over by secular governments. This should not be the case.

We must ask ourselves this question, “*how can I preach the gospel of the kingdom if my heart is not broken with compassion for the awesome needs of those in the streets of sin?*”. (For example, children of the homeless; especially those of drug addicted mothers.) Not only must one’s mind be prepared to preach, but our hearts must also be changed to reveal the mercy of God. Mercy expresses the magnificent dimensions of His love, supply and condescension to meet the needs of sinful men who are incapable of helping themselves. Mercy is a vital ingredient in the gospel of the kingdom, for without it the good news would never be taken to regions of great poverty or persecution (i.e. Islamic nations), privation (i.e. prisons), ignorance or demonic influence. Mercy is seen both in the message of the cross and in those who lay down their lives to take the gospel.

The harvest to be gathered in will require great mercy and compassion, for much of this harvest is destined to come from those in great need (Luke 14:16-24).

*... Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the **poor** and **crippled** and **blind** and **lame**. (Luke 14:21)*

The question arises, “how can I become more merciful?”. The only place to find mercy is at the throne of grace where it is dispensed (Hebrews 4:16). This may require many trips and much time in His presence. One thing that will take place there is that we will develop a greater

appreciation of the grace of God in our own life. However, we must begin to show mercy and kindness to those around us who are in need.

Jesus did not work miracles of healing and deliverance simply to prove who He was. He was moved with compassion and acted out of mercy and love for the afflicted (Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:30-34). And so must we.

It is those who go forth with weeping, sowing the gospel in tears, who will reap souls with joy (Psalms 126:5-6).

6. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM DEMONSTRATES THE POWER OF GOD.

*... the kingdom of God does not consist in words **but in power.** (1 Corinthians 4:20)*

Jesus did not come to earth just to give us His words; He came to give us Himself. Christ in us, through the Holy Spirit, is our credential and power to preach Him to the world. Thus, to minister the gospel is to minister the “Lord of the word” as well as the word of the Lord. It is Jesus who is to be seen and heard! The gospel is God speaking to mankind in His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). It is not like Old Testament prophets who spoke for God; the Son Himself must be **seen** and **heard** through our gospel. He, not words about Him, is the power of God.

First, the message of the **cross of Christ** is the power of God **for salvation** to everyone who truly repents and believes.

Second, the Holy Spirit attests to the authority of Jesus over sickness and satanic oppression by working signs and wonders through the preaching of the gospel. . . as Paul testified:

*... In the power of **signs and wonders**, in the power of the Spirit, that from Jerusalem and round as far as Illyricum, **I have fully preached the gospel**.... (Romans 15:18-19)*

The same demonstration of power was true for other ministries preaching the gospel of the kingdom in the early church.

*But Peter said, ‘I do not possess silver and gold, but **what I do have I give to you:** in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene - walk!’ And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up, and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. And with a leap, he stood upright and began to walk (Acts 3:6-8)*

*And Stephen, full of grace and **power**, was performing **great wonders and signs among the people.** (Acts 6:8)*

*And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. And multitudes with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they **heard and saw the signs** he was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. Acts 8:5-7)*

The same signs and wonders are to follow the gospel of the kingdom today. Our heart, vision, and commitment must be rooted in faith that the power of Christ will be seen in the gospel we preach (1 Corinthians 2:5; Ephesians 6:12; Mark 16:17).

How can we do this? First, consider the commission given to Adam to cultivate and care for the garden, to name all the creatures and to rule over them. Second, consider the commission given by Jesus to His disciples: "... preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, freely give." (Matthew 10:7-8)

In both instances, these commissions could only be carried out from a **position of rest**. Adam had nothing to do with creating the animal and plant life he ruled over and was responsible for. The disciples had no ability within themselves to perform the spiritual miracles they were asked to do. God was responsible for all natural life in the first instance, and for all spiritual life in the second. In both cases, they were required to have **faith** and be obedient, trustfully resting in God to do the work. We also are to minister out of a position of faith and rest (Hebrews 4:10). There is no other way.

We do need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, but without purity and humility, the grace and power of the Holy Spirit will not abide in us; and without faith and being at rest in Him, the grace and power will not be released through us to those in need. The gospel of the kingdom is not a message of passive innocence, but of **active, militant, dynamic righteousness!** We are called to take back that which has been usurped from God's people by the enemy. This is the purpose for ministering the gospel in the power of the Spirit (Luke 13:16).

Spiritual warfare is a conflict between two kingdoms. The days ahead will see great power in lying signs and wonders by Satan in the

New Age Movement. Through the deception of witchcraft and sorcery, he will seek to turn men away from the government of God, and to control them by manipulation, intimidation or domination. The battleground will be the mind (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Romans 12: 1-2). However, he will **NOT** be able to stand against the army of the Lord with the gospel of the kingdom.

7. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHES THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD

The authority that Jesus possesses as Head over the church, and as Lord of Lords, was given Him because He was willing and obedient to lay down His life at Calvary. The cross became the basis of His authority (Philippians 2:5-11). He has been given authority to abolish **all** other rule, power and dominion so that He alone rules in the kingdom represented by the earth and its heavens. When this takes place, it will then become part of His Father's kingdom (Ephesians 1:20-22; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Hebrews 1:13). He is now sitting at the right hand of His Father. From here, He will rule until **all** enemies are under His feet. The task of bringing these enemies into subjection is a work He will do through the church. And this task begins with us, for His enemies include all who are enemies of His cross (Philippians 3:17-18). We must come to the place where we are totally under His government, and He has first place in **all areas of our lives**, before He will use us to restore His rightful place in the earth and heavens. The government of God is not simply one of external commandments, but of inner relationship between a loving Father and obedient sons.

He is also Head of the body, the church, — so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. (Colossians 1:18)

Some ministers have made merchandise of the gospel; there have been dishonest and impure motives behind some who preach the gospel. However, this will cease. God will **never** compromise His holiness or character for the sake of ministry. He will no longer tolerate hypocrisy or hidden sin in the church, nor will He allow men to control what the Spirit is doing, or to build personal kingdoms for their ministry. He is committed to destroy the pride of man and works of the flesh in His church. He will establish His government in the church **first of all**, and then He will work through her to bring down and destroy the dominions of darkness.

What do these things mean to us? First of all, we do now have authority over **all** the power of Satan and his hosts. Greater is He who is

in us than he who is in the world. As believers, we are **never** to be subject in any way to Satan. Second, we also have authority to proclaim the gospel, to win men to Christ and to disciple them.

It is a third area where the Lord's authority and government in His Church is lacking. The kingdom of God is not made up of individual believers living isolated independent lives under the Lordship of Christ. The heart of Jesus is to bring His body forth as **one new mighty man of the Spirit** of which He is the head (Ephesians 2:15; 4:13-16). All members being knit together in unity so as to move as one man. His government is expressed by the obedient response of each individual member to the Head, and also how they relate to one another. His kingdom is not represented by individuals doing their own thing independently of the rest of His body; it is members loving, forgiving, helping, honoring and submitting to one another in an environment of love, encouragement, trust and fellowship that link all together in a united expression of His government. This is what the Lord will bring forth in the days ahead, both in and between local churches.

Those who preach the gospel of the kingdom must **not** be satisfied to see converts simply baptized in water and in the Spirit. They are committed to see them integrated into the life of a local church where they can come into their place of service under the Lordship of Christ. The gospel is not only to bring us out of darkness, but to see us fully **established** under the government of Christ. This is not brought about through heavy handed authority by leaders, but by their words and life that promotes the Lordship of Christ. Paul saw himself, not only as a preacher of the gospel of the kingdom, but also as a bondservant serving those who responded to the gospel until they were properly established in a local church. Paul's personal life, as well as his ministry, exemplified the message of the cross. He laid his life down for the sake of the gospel and for those who believed (1 Thessalonians 1:5;2:4-13).

For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus' sake. (2 Corinthians 4:5)

Thus, evangelism should be an **accountable** outreach of a local church, where the gospel message **will not** be hindered by the poor character and vision of the one bringing the message. His commitment must be both to the lost and to the local church. The Lord would not harvest His grain without first building barns to put it in. And the barn of safety, nurture, service and government in a corporate sense, is the local church.

As the church is restored and the gospel of the kingdom proclaimed, the government of God among His people will become visible to leaders of cities and nations of the world. The strongholds of evil will be brought down from the heavens, and the kingdom of God will be established in the church. It is not a time to set in spiritual armories polishing our weapons; the church is to rise up, united and militant, and take the gospel out to the afflicted of the world.

If a local church has been unable to equip its saints for service today, bringing them into the maturity which belongs to the fullness of Christ, how can it ever minister to the multitudes of drug afflicted, crippled and oppressed converts that will be coming from the streets of sin in the days ahead? A mighty work of the Holy Spirit is needed to develop scripturally sound local bodies of believers where **each** member is equipped for service, and where **all ministries** and **gifts** of the Spirit are present. The Lord's house is to be a great armory, but it must also be a spiritual hospital for the afflicted and weak. The key for this to take place is to see the government of Christ restored to **all** lives and ministries of the church, to see accountable relationships established, to develop leaders with hearts of bondservants, and **every** member equipped to serve. Finally, it must be clear that the kingdom of God has to be established in the church before it can be established in the earth.

8. JOY, PRAISE AND WORSHIP ARE FRUITS OF THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Every individual who has bent his knees in repentance to receive forgiveness of sins, can testify of the joy that became his. First, the great relief and gladness that arose in their heart from realizing that their sins were buried forever in the sea of God's forgetfulness, never to be remembered again. Then, the wonder and worship of Jesus whose love had led Him to death on the cross. This aspect of worship will always grow, for to know Him better is to love Him more.

All of this has been true wherever the gospel has been proclaimed over the centuries. It has always brought joy and gladness to those who receive its message, and sorrow and darkness to those who reject it.

However, there is a greater dimension in the response of joy that is to be manifested as this age comes to a close. When the prophet Isaiah described the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus would preach, both at His first advent (Isaiah 61:1-2), and later through His body at the close of this age, it was his reference to the latter that contained these words:

*To comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a **garland** instead of ashes, the **oil of gladness** instead of mourning, the **mantle of praise** instead of a spirit of fainting. (Isaiah 61:2-3)*

There will be something uniquely different in responses to the gospel in the days ahead. It is not a matter of being saved; after all, if one is saved, this can't be improved upon. In essence, the difference we can expect to see will be based on three things:

- The depths of deception and lawlessness will exceed in their influence, anything previously experienced on earth (Matthew 24:9-24). Those who are converted will have great appreciation of the depths from which they have been delivered.
- Decisions for Christ will be more difficult to make, for there shall exist great persecution of the righteous. It will be evident that there can be no third option; one must be committed to either Christ or the antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Revelation 13:7-8). Converts will make a full, complete surrender to Christ in their conversion or they will not be able to stand. Every one will be forced to make a decision, either for eternal life or for eternal judgment.
- There will be times of tremendous spiritual warfare between the Lord's army and forces of darkness for the souls of men (Joel 2:1-11, 28-32). A key to the strength of the Lord's army will be the spiritual songs, the praises and worship of minstrels who lead the Lord's people into battle. Great miracles will take place during these times of the high praises of God. The place of rest in spiritual warfare will be found in worship, praise and thanksgiving, for the battle is the Lord's. We enter into His victory. Worship is a universal language of spiritual warfare! The oil of gladness and mantle of praise spoken of by Isaiah will arise from hearts of those who recognize the great depths of darkness and destruction they have been delivered from. It will be heard in songs of the Lord given to them by the Spirit. These songs will be new, songs never heard before on earth. God will do a new thing in revealing His glory as He chooses young people from the deepest pits of sin and transforms them into minstrels to sing the song of the Lord. Glory and worship will be the mantle of His army. There is good worship and praise today, but it is only a taste of what is to come.

9. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM IS A MESSAGE OF PROPHETIC INSIGHT.

A gospel that did not bring revelation of God's purpose for that day would be incomplete. The gospel of the kingdom preached by Jesus was centered in the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. His message and deeds revealed the purpose and blessing of God for His covenant people, Israel. His advent was God's day of visitation to them. His coming was prepared and announced by John the Baptist, upon whom the spirit of Elijah rested. John's message, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," was a word of prophetic insight. Jesus came unto His own, for it was God's year of favor to Israel. Isaiah the prophet foretold this of Jesus:

*To proclaim the **favorable year of the Lord** (Isaiah 61:2)*

Today, as the Lord once more ministers the gospel of the kingdom, He again has a strategy to bless His covenant people. He plans to raise up His body as a mighty, united army and bring all enemies under His feet through a time of spiritual warfare and evangelism, after which He will return to judge the world. During this time of testing and conflict His bride will be prepared, tares will be gathered out from the wheat, a great harvest will be gathered in, Satan will be vanquished and the purpose of God for this age will be established.

The Lord's strategy to bless the church is by using her to accomplish His purpose. What He does will be manifest through His people.

*...what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the **manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church** to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:9-11)*

The spirit of Elijah is once again relevant to the Lord's strategy. This spirit rested only upon John the Baptist at the Lord's first advent; this time, it is to rest upon many spiritual fathers in the church.

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse. (Malachi 4:5-6)

*And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' And He answered and said, '**Elijah is coming and will restore all things**; but I say to you, that Elijah already came (i.e. John the Baptist), and they did not recognize him (Matthew 17:10-12)*

In the history of the church there has never been an instance of spiritual fathers bringing forth a succeeding generation of sons who surpassed them in spiritual excellence of character and ministry. As men of God have been raised up over the history of the church to lead the way into restoration of new truth, revival would break forth only to fade away in succeeding generations.

A change is coming! The Lord is bringing forth a new generation of bondservants to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, and to lead His people with prophetic insight into His purpose for these days. They will be men like Elijah with hearts and vision to raise up spiritual sons to take up their mantle and excel them in ministry and spiritual stature.

The greatest miracle Elijah accomplished took place in the years after he fled from Jezebel in fear of his life. He disciplined Elisha and imparted to him desire for the ministry and vision God had given him. He created in Elisha a godly hunger to receive the anointing that rested upon him, along with understanding on how to avoid the weaknesses he displayed in his conflict with Jezebel (i.e. fear, discouragement and self pity). The fruit of this miracle became evident later when Elisha performed miracles similar to those of Elijah, but twice as many and without any evidence of fear or discouragement.

This principle of excellence is at the heart of the Lord's strategy to bless His people and prepare them for the glory of the days ahead. The grace and power of God upon believers at the end of this age, as well as the forces against them, will be greater than in any previous generation. The church that is being raised up will **not** be like traditional churches today. In that day the saints will be wholly committed to the Lord and move as a disciplined army under His command. The youth are destined to play a significant role in the Lord's army. This is apparent from the following translations of Psalms 110:1-3.

The Lord says to My Lord; 'sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.' The Lord will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying, 'rule in the midst of Thine enemies'. Thy people will volunteer freely (literally: Thy people

will be free will offerings) in the day of Thy power (literally: of Thy army); In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Thy youth are to Thee as the dew. (NAS.)

... Your people will offer themselves willingly in the day of Your power, in the beauty of holiness and in holy array out of the womb of the morning; to You will spring forth Your young men who are as the dew. (AMPLIFIED)

... Your people will offer themselves freely on the day You lead your host From the womb of the morning like dew Your youth will come to You. (RSV)

Restoration of the church goes hand in hand with restoration of the gospel of the kingdom. Both are necessary in the purpose of God. The church requires leaders with prophetic insight similar to what Elijah displayed in discipling Elisha. They must see the need for a generation of leaders having graces of the fivefold ministries of Ephesians 4:11 in order to equip and prepare the army of the Lord.

The Lord's heart is that there not be a fading away of fathers as strong, young ministries emerge, but that **both** the young and the old go forth together in His army. Wisdom and experience of age combined with the zeal and strength of youth! Just as Caleb and Joshua went into the promised land together, so fathers are to join hands and hearts with the youth and go forth together. This is the strategy that makes the era ahead become the favorable year of the Lord for His people. It is a key to the victory that lies ahead.

Isaiah spoke of an additional prophetic insight in the gospel of the kingdom that is also pertinent to these last days.

*To proclaim — the day of **vengeance of our God.** (Isaiah 61:2)*

Satan too, has his counter strategy of evil by which he seeks to frustrate the purpose of God. Central in his strategy is the New Age Movement; in concert with its deception, Satan has targeted the youth of this generation for destruction, just as he sought to do when Moses and Jesus were born. He is also attempting to destroy godly leadership in homes and churches through the spirit of Jezebel, the dominant evil authority he has placed over this land. A **major** and **important** thrust in spiritual warfare facing the church today is to discern and cast out this manipulating spirit of Jezebel from the lives of individuals, families and churches.

All people will be brought to a place of choosing between good and evil, for there will be two gods: the true God and the god of this world (or Christ and the antichrist); there will be two seeds: the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Genesis 3:5); there will be two women: the bride of Christ and the whore; there will be two cities: the New Jerusalem and Babylon; there will be two harvests: the souls of the redeemed and the tares; there will be two options: a regenerated heart or an “enlightened” mind; and finally, there will be two destinies: life or death.

In this conflict, God foreknows all that Satan will be allowed to do, and He will even use it for His purpose (Proverbs 16:4). He will cause all who refuse to love the truth that they might be saved, to believe Satan’s lie and be lost (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). This is how He will separate the tares.

When the purpose of God is completed He will execute His vengeance upon Satan, and upon all who love evil and lawlessness. It will be the day of His vengeance.

The gospel of the kingdom would be incomplete if it did not reveal the strategy of the evil one we are to overcome, as well as make known the purpose and plan of God for His church. Prophetic insight serves as a beacon of light so that the day of the Lord not overtake us like a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:1-5).

CONCLUSION

The following is a summary of what I believe the Lord is saying today to the church.

- The world is tired of hearing “words on religion”; people are looking for reality. They want to see truth in action, in the life as well as the message of preachers. People are looking for answers to the great and growing problems that are enveloping society all over the world. The answer to **all** needs is the Lord Jesus Himself. He is calling His people to pay the price of commitment, to throw off the mantle of apathy, and take the gospel of the kingdom to the streets, a gospel that is characterized by the above nine statements. He wants to reach out through hearts filled with compassion and mercy, and through hands extended to the poor, the crippled and the homeless. The word of the Lord to churches is to take down

their walls of isolation, go out into their communities to redeem the poor and afflicted and bring them into His house.

- Evangelism should be established as an accountable ministry of outreach from local churches. The gospel of the kingdom cannot **be** separated from the life, covering and vision of a local church, for both are necessary to fulfill the purpose of God. In regions where evangelism breaks out in a spontaneous fashion, foundational ministries should be sent to establish converts in to local churches (Acts 8:14; 11:22). Evangelism has **always** been the life style intended by the Lord for His people. However, traditional methods and messages fall short of the gospel of the kingdom. This is true, in part, because the church itself has departed from being a spiritual organism of body life into religious institutions and para church organizations. Thus, restoration of the church and restoration of the gospel of the kingdom is the same work of the Spirit.
- The Lord is judging and purging His people, especially leaders, to prepare the church for the future. Bonds that hold her to the world are being broken. The goals and structures devised over centuries where the visibility of man, numbers and facilities are important will be shaken by the Lord; religious kingdoms that promote man's control will begin to fail. Biblical order and structure from the life of Christ will become apparent in local churches. The ministry of apostles and prophets will become commonplace. The Lord will establish His government in the church.
- The church is being mobilized as a mighty army of the Spirit to bring back to the kingdom of God what Satan has usurped. Worship, praise and all spiritual gifts and ministries will be essential to demonstrate the power of God and to overcome the forces of evil. The vision of the Lord will be made clear through prophetic ministry so that His army will move as one man. As churches embrace what the Lord is doing, much of what contributes to division today in the body of Christ will cease to exist. The issue is not doctrine, but the government of God. The very conditions of distress (economics, persecution, etc.) will serve to draw churches together. The kingdom of God will be established in the church!

The field of harvest is the **entire world**. There is an acceleration in the events taking place; how quickly the sovereignty of God has opened

the door for the gospel in communist nations! We require new dimensions of faith for the grace and resources necessary to accomplish the task before us.

Finally, restoration of truth to the church began with the technology of literature and the printing press that emerged from the Renaissance. In a similar manner, this last move of the Spirit will use the information technologies of communication, computer, video and printing to help carry the gospel into all nations on earth. *To Him be the glory!*



FOUNTAIN OF LIFE PUBLICATIONS

*No copyright restrictions. Tracts may be copied.
Offerings will be gratefully appreciated..*

71 Old Kings Highway • Lake Katrine, NY 12449
(845) 336-7333

For this tract and others download from
www.thefountain.org