

Ch. 3. The Master Plan: From the Cross to the Eternal Purpose: II. CALLED

This section on the upward **call** of God is divided into the following 3 parts:

Part.1: Understanding the Kingdom

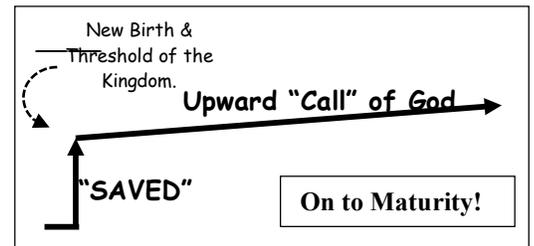
Part. 2. Understanding “Perfection” (Completion/Wholeness)

Part. 3. Understanding “Appointment” (Ministry and The Church)

Introduction: The Upward Call of God in Christ Jesus

Paul writes. *“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”* (1 Cor. 9:14) There are two very important points to be made here. One cannot even participate “in the race” unless he first qualifies and enters that race. Similarly, one enters the Kingdom by first crossing the *threshold of the kingdom* through the cross and new birth in Christ. Thus the race is not a running **for** salvation but a running **in** this new life. There is quite a difference. The **redemption** and being **saved** of which we spoke is not the prize, or the goal for fallen man. Nor is the prize a place in some mystical “pie in the sky” heaven. This falls woefully short of the true purposes of God.

Rather, the *seed*, also mentioned above (in 1 Pet. 1:23), must now, in the present, grow towards a state of maturity, not as in some afterlife, but as a foretaste to that eternal life. It is a progressive growth and transformation of the entirety of one’s being (soul and spirit) involving the thought process, emotions, character, and a reckoning that his old life has truly passed and a new and different life has begun. The last component of man, the body, will indeed find its transformation and fulfillment in the resurrection at that final **call** in the last day. You see, man will always be “man” spirit, soul, and body, but then as a fully transformed spiritual entity in His eternal kingdom. This thought will be addressed more fully later in this book.



II. CALLED

Part.1. Understanding “the Kingdom”

In terms of reigning and authority, the Kingdom of God is frequently referred to in scripture as: the Father’s, God’s, Christ and God’s, the Son’s. In terms of manifestation, Jesus said to the Pharisees, *“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is in your midst.”* (Lk. 18:20-21) I am convinced that this statement by Jesus meant that He was both ushering in the kingdom, and that He **is** the kingdom in manifestation. And, what He exactly meant by this is revealed in Matthew 16. Jesus asks the question to His disciples, *“Who do men say that I, the **Son of Man**, am?”* (vs. 13) It was Simon Peter that answered, *“You are the Christ, the **Son of the living God.**”* (vs. 16) To which Jesus assured Peter that this revelation was not by natural means of observation but was spiritually revealed to him by, *“My Father who is in heaven.”* (vs. 17)

Manifested as the **Son of Man**, Jesus was of the earth, born of woman. As such, He would experience all the emotions and needs of man to sustain one’s life. And of equal importance He could be observed naturally. He could be seen, heard and touched. And, with an anointment, especially a fragrant oil, He

could be smelled. It was absolutely necessary that the Son of Man come. How else could one bear witness to His words and deeds? How else could He be offered as a sacrifice as the Lamb of God and experience death on the cross? But something of the Kingdom is needed in addition to this natural observation. Jesus quoted Isaiah the prophet:

*“Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
For the heart of this people has grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their heart and turn,
So that I should heal them.”* (Mt. 13: 14-15)

What was needed was also ushered in by **Jesus Christ**. Though Jesus came in the natural flesh, He was also the Son of God. There is a heavenly spiritual dimension to Him. This aspect of His being one cannot be observed in the natural. It is spiritual and must be revealed by spiritual means. In this instance the Father revealed this truth to the heart of Peter. Thus is the absolute necessity for the sending of the Holy Spirit, to open understanding, to bring revelation and to open spiritual eyes and ears to “unobservable truths.” To this, Jesus both promised and assured His disciples,

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him or knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” (Jn. 14:16-17)

After Jesus’ crucifixion, death, and resurrection He appeared to His disciples and reassured them once more that something more of the Kingdom was needed in their lives, that the Kingdom was more than all they observe and understand naturally. He said,

“Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” (Lk. 24:29)

This is the Kingdom of God! It is manifested in **both** the natural and the spiritual realms. As Jesus was both the Son of Man and the Son of God, He remains this day the Son of Man resurrected and Son of God. For to this day this Son of Man yet has the nail wounds in His hands (as was shown to Thomas) and, as the Son, is seated at the right hand of His Father. **This** is the Kingdom that man is called to participate in, in the natural and the spiritual. It is a divine calling.

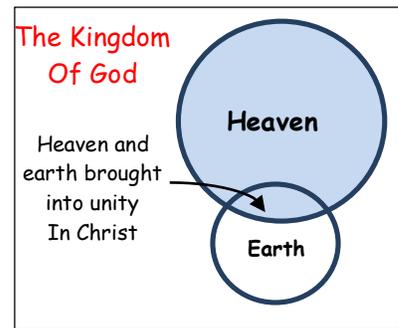
The Believer, the Church, and the Kingdom of God.

In crossing this *Threshold of the Kingdom*, one enters a new dimension of life. There are many aspects of our life that are of the earth, earthly. And, there are things which are of the spirit, heavenly. The former demands the use of all our physical senses and powers of reason to fully function within this earthly realm. The latter equally demands the use of spiritual senses and discernment in order to function in the spiritual realm. **The Kingdom is a very unique blending of heaven and earth, of the spirit and of the natural. It is a foretaste of the eternal Kingdom.** Take for instance Ephesians 1:22-23:

“And He (God) put all things under His (Christ Jesus) feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

Clearly Christ is seen seated in heaven at the right hand of God where, according to Ephesians 2:6, the believer **also** has been *“raised up together (with Christ) and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”* Is this not the “unseen” heavenly, spiritual dimension of the believer’s new life? It may not be evident to the physical senses but never-the-less it is a fact. The believer need not feel it, have to see it, or attain it through “positive thinking.” It is merely and substantially a fact to be reckoned upon, or simply considered as being so. Go ahead, in faith proclaim:

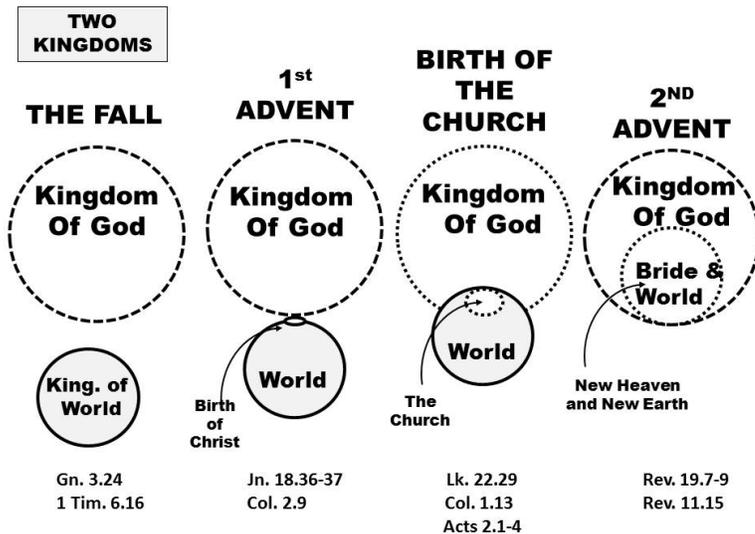
*“Though my feet are on this earth, and I am seated in this place, I am seated as well with Christ in the heavens. As I have a residency on this earth I **now** also have a dwelling in the heavens. I am no longer just of the earth, functioning only in the natural, but ‘of God I am in Christ Jesus’ (1 Cor. 1:30) functioning in the spiritual. I am a citizen of the Kingdom of God.”*



A Matter of Two Kingdoms.

This illustration clearly shows two distinct Biblical kingdoms. There exists the Kingdom of God, a realm ruled by God and the Lamb who sits at His right hand. It is an **eternal** kingdom of **life**.

The second kingdom is of this world. It is a realm ruled by man. He forms and designs all that is in this kingdom. It is a temporal kingdom governed by time and change. Things of this kingdom are not eternal but subject to decay and death. The progression of God’s master plan by which the kingdom of the world will become the Kingdom of God is summarized in the following four steps: (See illustration):



The Fall. When Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden, they became alienated from the Kingdom of God. (Gn. 3:24) Lost in sin, any religious relationship with God was centered on rituals of sacrifice and codes of behavior. God Himself, dwelling in all power, immortality and divine light, became unapproachable. (1 Tim. 6.16) In this realm, man having eaten of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, determines for himself his manner of life as he devises the total culture that surrounds him.

Unaware of another spiritual presence, man thinks he is in control. Is he really? At His time of temptation, the enemy of our God showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and, *“the devil said to Him, ‘I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.’”* (Lk. 4:6) And, according to 1 John 5:19, *“and the whole world is under the sway of the evil one.”* (1 Jn. 5.19) Quite subtly, mankind has been drawn under the influence of Satan. Is it not apparent? I need not go into further detail at this point.

The First Advent. With reference to Jesus, James encourages patience for the believer as he speaks of an “*early rain*” and a “*latter rain.*” (Jam. 5:7) This *early rain* addresses the first advent and the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. As Jesus stood in judgement before Pilate, He answered Pilate as a matter of fact, “*My kingdom is not of this world.*” (Jn. 18:36) He was in the world but His Kingdom was not of this world. He was sent by the Father to usher His kingdom into the world. He was/is the Kingdom of God. His first appearance in the world was the first appearance of God’s kingdom. The Kingdom of God was in the person of Jesus Christ alone... “*for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*” (Col. 2:9) When asked of the kingdom of God, Jesus told the Pharisees, “*nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst.*” (Lk. 17:21) He, of course, was speaking of Himself being in their midst. He was the sole manifestation of the Kingdom of God in all the world.

The Birth of the Church. At the last supper as Jesus gathered His disciples around Him for one last time, He made two distinct promises to them in one statement, “*And (1) I confer on you a kingdom, just as My Father conferred one on Me, (2) so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” (Lk. 22:29-30) The first promise was for the present time, the second promise was for a future time (at His second coming).

I believe most are familiar with the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost on which the first promise was fulfilled. Following the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, 120 disciples were gathered together in an upper room in Jerusalem. Redemption being fulfilled at the cross, the Holy Spirit was now sent from heaven to fill those believers. (See Acts 2:1-4) Being filled with the indwelling Holy Spirit they now became corporately what Jesus was singularly, the manifestation of the Kingdom of God upon the earth. What a mighty work of God, “*Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.*” (Col. 1:13) In this world of spiritual darkness comes the light of the Kingdom of God in His Church.

So now, there is a direct spiritual connection between Christ who is in heaven and the Church upon the earth. There is an enlargement of the Kingdom of God. Please read carefully the following scripture:

*“which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as **head** over all things to the **church**, 23which is **His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.* (Eph. 1:20-23)

The Church, which literally means “to call out” (God *calls out* of the world and into His eternal Kingdom), is in all actuality the mystical and realistic **Body of Christ**. Some do not like the term “mystical.” I do. It implies there is nothing of the natural in its origin. It is spiritual. It is something corporate that has come out of Christ even as Eve came out of the side of Adam. What is not of Christ is not a part of the Church. The Church only functions in response to its Head, even Jesus Christ. We must beware of the attempted works of man (the world) in the Church.

The Second Advent (Second Coming/Latter Rain) “*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him.*” (2 Thes. 2:1) This statement must not be confused with any sort of “rapture” devised by some. It is literally the *latter rain* spoken of in James 5.7. This represents the consummation of all things according to God’s master plan. Finality has come:

“Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.” (Rev. 11:15)

It is now the time when the **Church**, which is the earthly expression of Christ, is no longer known as “the Church.” It now becomes the **Bride of Christ**, which is its new position in the everlasting Kingdom of God. (See Rev. 19:7-9) It is the fulfillment of the second promise of Christ to His disciples in Lk. 22:30: “so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Perhaps there is no better way to end this **Part 1. Understanding the Kingdom of God** than to cite in entirety the following scripture:

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him. Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For He “has put everything under His feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under Him, it is clear that this does not include God Himself, who put everything under Christ. When He has done this, then the Son Himself will be made subject to Him who put everything under Him, so that God may be all in all.” (1 Cor. 15: 20-28)