

## The Gospel of the Kingdom The Kingdom of God/The Kingdom of Heaven

Studio Session 102

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There are no wasted words in scripture. So for example when the scriptures say the 'kingdom of God' and the 'kingdom of heaven' that's not a reference to the same thing twice. Though they sound quite similar, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven; they mean very, very significantly different things. Now often in scripture difference does not mean wrong or opposite or opposed, it just means a broader scope expressed by these very different things.

The word 'kingdom' is the word in the Greek 'basilica' and it means 'a foundation or basis of power or rule'. In other words, what is your authority to do the things you're doing, by what authority are you actually doing the things that you're doing? That's your basis of power and rule. Whatever you claim supports you by way of power, that's what your kingdom is based upon. The kingdom of God is based upon the authority of God. When there's a reference, however, to the kingdom of heaven; that's a description not so much of the foundation or basis for power and rule but the origin of this kingdom. Where did it come from? The kingdom of heaven comes from heaven.

But immediately we're aware of the fact then, that the kingdom of heaven is based upon the authority of God Almighty. So that which is of heaven, existing in the earth, is sustained in the earth by the authority of Gods throne; by the authority and power of the Most High. That shouldn't surprise us at all because that's exactly what Jesus claimed as the basis of His kingdom. In the book of Matthew 28 verse 18 Jesus says, "All authority (complete authority) has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." His 'basilica', His kingdom, the kingdom of Jesus Christ, over which He is the King; was established pursuant to a grant of authority from the Father to the Son by which the Son establishes His kingdom. The scope of that authority is plenary; it's all authority in heaven and on earth. So the kingdom of heaven exists in two places, two locations, two dimensions; the kingdom of heaven exists in heaven and it reaches all the way to the earth.

In the ancient scriptures, in the book of Genesis, the story is told of how Jacob, fleeing from the wrath of his brother, had a vision at a place call 'Bethel', 'the house of God'.

'Beth' is 'house'; 'El' is a reference to 'Elohim', 'God'. 'Bethel' is 'the house of God'. In this place called Bethel, Jacob had a dream, and in this dream he saw a ladder (or stairway) extending from the earth to heaven (or from heaven to earth). And upon this stairway and in his dream, Jacob saw angels ascending and descending upon this ladder. Almost two millennia later, Jesus would speak to Nathanael, and this is recorded in the first chapter of the gospel of Mark. He would speak to Nathanael and He would say in the first chapter of Mark, "Nathanael, I saw you under the fig tree," and Nathanael would say, "Lord, You weren't there when I was under the fig tree; You must be the Son of God." To which Jesus replied, "The day is coming Nathanael when you will see heaven open and see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

It's an interesting interpretation of Jacobs dream. In Jacobs dream there is a way, a stairway but nevertheless a way, between heaven and earth. Jesus would come and He would say, "I am the way and the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by Me." Jesus is claiming to be more than just a man from heaven; He's claiming to be the man from heaven who is the way to heaven. By that claim He is claiming to be the eternal, an eternal existence, in time. The kingdom of heaven is synonymous with the body of Christ. When Christ established the body of Christ, Himself as the Head; He was not creating a temporal entity which hopes to have an eternal future, He was establishing the eternal in time. And concerning His body He says this, "I am the resurrection and the life, if you believe in Me, although you were dead yet shall you live, and if you live in Me and if you believe in Me you will never die."

How could you make that promise? He's not saying our bodies will not physically expire, no, our bodies will expire. We are more than our bodies; our bodies are not WHO we are, our bodies are WHERE we are. And when our bodies sustain the life that is within them, which is our spirits and our souls, then we are in time. But while we are in our bodies, in time, our spirits may be assembled by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ.

Now this is simple, yet it sounds so profound. Here is the simplicity of it. Note I Corinthians chapter 12, at verse 12 it says, "Now the body (the human body) is comprised of many parts and though all its parts are many they form one body, and so it is with Christ. For you were all baptized by one Spirit into one body." The way we get into the body of Christ is by being baptized by the Spirit into the body. In other words, the first operation of the Holy Spirit is to assemble us into this corporate person known as the body of Christ of which Jesus Himself is the head; now this is a living reality, this is not a fiction. While you live in time, and while you live in these human bodies, these human bodies are not assembled into the corporate Christ. Why? Because that which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of spirit is spirit." "Flesh and blood (I Corinthian 15 tells us) cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

In other words it's not our bodies that are assembled into the body of Christ. If that were so, when our bodies died then that part of the body of Christ would die. But you are more than your body, your body is not WHO you are, your body is simply WHERE you are. In the current culture where so much emphasis is placed upon the body, it's hard for humans to back up and have an eternal view of our existence where all the emphasis in the current culture is put upon things to be put into the body, things to put onto the body and things in which you put your body; and the body beautiful is the rage of the current culture. In fact it's impossible without the discernment of the Holy Spirit for you to understand that these bodies are just shelters for our spirits while we live in the realm of time. But while you live in the realm of time your spirit may be assembled, by the Holy Spirit, into the body of Christ. In that sense, you are where God dwells. God dwells by His Spirit in you and you as a part of the whole body of Christ, you experience the corporate reality of Christ in the earth. That is, He dwells in you and at the same time He dwells in all of the others in whom He dwells.

This configuration is the dwelling place of God in the earth, this is the current 'Bethel', the house of God in time, the place where God dwells. And this is the place where the eternal meets with the natural, this is called the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is the reality that clothes the body of Christ. The glory of the eternal kingdom rests upon the shoulders of the body of Christ. What then is the identity of the kingdom of heaven? The kingdom of heaven, in time, is the body of Christ; but all things about the body of Christ are eternal. It is true that the circumstances of the body of Christ are natural, that is we live in the realm of time and space. But what is certainly true is that we're not of this world, we're of heaven. Whoever is born again is born from above and lives in the earth for, and with an eternal purpose. That eternal purpose is fully supported by the other aspect that we've spoken of, which is the kingdom of God.

So if you live as an eternal being in time, how is that maintained, how is your reality maintained? It's maintained by the power of God Himself. So when you refer to the kingdom of heaven, you're referring to the truth that we have eternal life, we're in the body of Christ, we are part of heaven while we are on the earth. And at the same time that entire existence is supported and maintained by heaven. What is the significance of that? The significance of that ranges across the board; from food and drink, to purpose and destiny. Man does not live on bread alone, he lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. What is the significance of this? It is that you have a spirit and your spirit needs to hear God. It is how you are instructed, it is how you are motivated, it is how you are empowered, it is what leads to the result.

The spirit being is from heaven; the origin of the human spirit (not coincidentally) came out of the person of God at the creation of man and vested in a fleshly form. The spirit is distinct from the body. The human as a spirit being is a distinct entity from the body. This body houses the spirit being, but everything else about the spirit being is heavenly.

This is what makes us a new creation. I understand perfectly that when I speak like this, I'm speaking against the skepticism of people who say, "Well you're so heavenly minded you're no earthly good." Well that's inane, that's the kind of unthinking that has lead the church into the mess (in some ways) in which we are. Because it's a failure to understand that God created us to be conformed to His image, to be heavenly beings in time.

Typically what that means and what people say you're so heavenly minded that you're no earthly good; what they mean is you can't function in the world. That's rubbish, because our functionality goes to the question of by the authority by which we are meant to function and the purpose for which we exist in the world. A person who insists upon being earthly minded is someone who has no vision of life, no vision for his human life, greater than the vision of a consumer. What happens then is that person readily bifurcates reality (separates reality) into components. Such a person thinks nothing of using sharp business practices or skirts the ethical lines in the pursuit of the goal which is to be great, to be important, to be successful. And such persons engage in the ultimate folly of having become important in the earth's eyes, in the eyes of the people of the earth; having become successful in the eyes of the people of the world, he then tends to offer this success in some limited fashion to God. And does not understand that God looks at this folly and says, "Depart from Me you worker of iniquity, I never knew you," it's like a child offering to God the things that are important to the child, irrespective of what God had to say. Now when you're a child in your understanding, God may accept that. When you should be an adult in your understanding, it is not any surprise that God will not.

It reminds me of a story from my own life. On one occasion my son Nicholas, when he was very young, was out in the backyard and I noted that he picked a handful of dandelions into the kitchen where his mother was preparing the evening meal. And she stopped what she was doing and took this fistful of dandelions, got a nice crystal vase down, and stuck these dandelions into that container and set it up and was so proud. For a moment I thought, "Well you know dandelions are a whole lot cheaper than roses, perhaps I ought to bring her a fistful of dandelions," well what she would of done of course is she would have thrown out my dandelions, but you would have thought that her sons dandelions where the prize roses.

God puts up with our foolishness while we are young because He knows our hearts but it is time for the body of Christ to grow up and stop offering the Lord dandelions. The thought that 'We are so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good' may be excused in children but not in adults. In adult Christians, by the time you ought to be teachers, by the time you ought to be instructors in the word, if you're still on milk, the Lord is not pleased with that distinction. He would have His children grow up and become who they are supposed to be in the Lord. It's time that we begin to understand that we have been put into the earth for heavenly purposes, not for earthly purposes exclusive. In fact the

earthly purposes are just the context in which the heavenly purposes are meant to be pursued more fully. Because at the apex of our existence is the fact that we are spiritual beings, created by God, put into time to live out purposes known in the mind of God before we were in our mothers' wombs.

Otherwise I tell you this, everyone who loudly trumpets the fact that you are heavenly minded but no earthly good; if they do not change when they become old and death faces them, they will be embarrassed and ashamed because nothing you do in the pursuit of earthly goals stands you in stead when it's time for you to leave this earth. We dipped, as it were, into this earth to learn obedience by the things we suffer, to learn the character of God, to learn to respond as God would respond to the circumstances of human life. But the intention of God in putting us into this envelope, as it were, called time, which is tucked into the folds of the eternal; the purpose of God is clear: we are meant to be conformed to the image and likeness of God. And the power that supports that reality comes from God Himself.

You have a destiny, an individual destiny, and you are part of a corporate destiny. Personally in your life there is a destiny that Gods put in you to be lived out. And this is the way that it pleases God to live through you. But you are also part of a greater eternal destiny and in your brief moment in time you cannot expect that your life is meant to be the fulfillment of all of the destiny of the whole body of Christ. All that you are, is in your moment in time, part of a continuing progression of the eternal through time, the history of which is the history of the body of Christ.

If you don't see these things then you'll never learn to live in an unfinished fashion. When you die you will finish YOUR course, but all things eternal will not have begun with you and will not end with you unless you live at the very end of the age, and even then you will be just a bit part player in the consummation of a great drama. These things you should know, these things we should have been taught. These are the bigger picture concepts that give meaning and purpose and definition to the daily struggles that we have. These things are the foundations of our faith but unfortunately they have not been taught, not often and not widely; these things have not been taught in our generation. I question the extent to which these things have been taught at all since the first century.

What would appear to me is the case is that men are obsessed with their own private pursuits which they're willing to make into godly pursuits, if they can; and they try to convince others that these are in fact the great pursuits. But truly, unless we find our places in the great order of things and pursue the unique destiny for which God has created us, we will not enjoy the support of the kingdom of God. What I mean by that is, we will not move by the power of God, we will not move by the direction of the Holy Spirit, and what we set out to do will not be God's glorious eternal purpose either personally in us and through us part of the corporate reality. And most of what we do,

though applauded by men, will be pointless to God.

The kingdom of heaven indicates that we are eternal beings in time and the kingdom of God indicates that our eternal existence in time enjoys the depths of support that comes from the very throne of God. Now, all of this should work to tell us this: That the kingdom of God, being described as an eternal reality in time and the intention of God to support this eternal reality in time; is a thing that began before the foundations of the world. Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ from the book of Matthew 23, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world," and this from the book of Ephesians the 1st chapter, "We were chosen in Christ from the foundations of the world to be conformed - to the praise of His glory." Here it is from Ephesians 1, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with His pleasure and will - to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves."

Now that tells us that the kingdom of God was ordained from the foundations of the world and those who would become sons of God, if you like those who would become members of the body of Christ, the eternal in time, the kingdom of heaven. All these are synonyms indicating where we've come from. Behind all of this was a predestined purpose. The only biblical predestination, the only predestination spoken of in the scriptures, is the predestination of being conformed to a destiny known in the mind of God before you were in your mother's womb. That's where I want to go in the next broadcast. I want to speak about the kingdom from the foundations of the world and there we will look at the reality of being the sons of God supported by the power of God representing an eternal reality in time.

You have to understand these things if you're going to preach the gospel of the kingdom because this is essentially the kingdom. We have not known these things so we preach the gospel of salvation, it's time that we preach the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus said it this way, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness and then the end will come." Do you suppose that we're hearing the gospel of the kingdom now?

I'm Sam Soleyn, join me in our continuing studies. I'll see you next time. Bye bye.