

The Kingdom and the Returning King

by H.J. Vine

The Kingdom of Heaven is a kingdom that was introduced by Jesus Christ, which will be fully established in the future when He returns as King.

Topics: "Kingdom Of God", "Second Coming"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the King and the Kingdom, focusing on the Kingdom of Heaven as presented in Matthew's Gospel. He discusses the different stages of faith growth - babes, young men, and fathers in Christ, emphasizing the importance of knowing Jesus personally. The sermon delves into the humble beginnings of the Kingdom, its current state of mixture and confusion, and its future glorious completion when the King will shine forth in His full glory. It highlights the significance of recognizing the present state of Christendom, staying true to the rejected King, and eagerly anticipating the return of Jesus to establish His Kingdom.

Transcript

Notes of an address in Edinburgh on Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 13:36-52; 16:28; 17:1-8

It may be well to commence with taking a wide view of the truths that belong to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and particularly of the kingdom as presented in Matthew's Gospel. In this gathering there will be present "babes" in Christ--those who have quite recently been brought to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ--the young in the faith. Then also there will doubtless be present those who have grown in the faith, spoken of in Scripture as "young men" in Christ--those who are strong and spiritually robust, as having received into their hearts the unfoldings of the word of God, made strong by feeding upon the Word which God has given to abide in them. Then there will be present, it may be, those who are still more advanced, spoken of as "fathers" in the faith. John has simply one thing to say concerning these, but he says it twice. It is this, "Ye have known Him that is from the beginning" (1 John 2:13-14). They know Jesus! and, my dear friends, to know Jesus, the Son of God, is to know all that you need to know. We begin by coming to Him as our own personal Saviour, and we grow by the Word of God in the wonderful things of God, and also deepen in the knowledge of the One whom God alone fully knows--for "no man knows the Son, but the Father," i.e., in all the impenetrable depths of His holy Person; the Father only comprehends Him thus; but, nevertheless, we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Himself increasingly.

So we purpose to speak for a few moments about the King and the Kingdom--the Kingdom as the kingdom of heaven--and to look at it in its commencement--its lowly beginning; also as it is today in a state of mixture and confusion; and then finally in its glorious completion when the King shall shine forth in His glory above the brightness of the sun.

Only in the Gospel of Matthew have we the Kingdom designated kingdom of heaven. John never speaks of it in that way, indeed only two or three times does he mention the Kingdom at all. Mark never speaks of the kingdom of heaven, nor does the Gospel of Luke, but it refers to the kingdom of God thirty-two times. Matthew alone terms it the kingdom of heaven, and he does so thirty-two times likewise; 4 times 8, suggestive of this new world-wide order which was to be brought about, that had never previously been seen, but which was Divinely introduced in view of certain things before the mind of God.

Matthew speaks much of the Lord Jesus as Son of Man, but introduces Him as the King first of all,--as the Son of David (1:1). As with the kingdom of heaven, Matthew speaks also thirty-two times of Jesus as the Son of Man. It is in Daniel we have the wonderful truth of the Kingdom in the form of the kingdom of heaven first indicated (2:44), and Daniel in his night visions (7:13) saw a Man,--one like unto the Son of man, brought to the Ancient of Days, and to Him is handed over all the marvellous splendour and glory connected with the dominion and the Kingdom that is yet to be brought out in its fullness and display in this world; to that Man was given dominion and glory and the Kingdom, that all peoples--not only Israel--but that all peoples and nations and languages should serve Him, and it was said, His dominion is an everlasting dominion and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Faith sees even now the One who is soon going to have publicly all that dominion and glory. We look to the throne of God and see Jesus crowned with glory and honour. We do not see the Kingdom and the glory brought in yet, but faith looks upward and says, Our Saviour is at the top! The One who has saved us is the One who is glorified on high, and the Man at the right hand of God who has redeemed us by His blood shall soon be supreme over all

But this Kingdom (yet to be displayed) had a very humble beginning. John the Baptist said, it had drawn nigh. He called on the people to repent for the kingdom of heaven was at hand. He said in regard to that, "There is One coming after me," and He pointed the people to Jesus. From his time began "the kingdom of the heavens," as it is more correctly translated (11:11, 13). Up to John's time was the law and the prophets; but now we see a lowly Man upon this earth--Jesus, the Son of Man, seed-sowing! And, oh! what wonderful seeds the words of the Son of man are! They outstrip the ken of the greatest scholars from that day to this! Though simple, yet they are infinitely profound, and their fruits are everlasting.

The King, this meek and lowly Son of Man, was first the Seed-sower. Daniel viewed Him coming in His splendour and glory, but when Matthew discloses Him to our gaze for the first time He had "not where to lay His head" (8:20). He came down into this world by the way of the manger and the stable, and He left it by a cross of shame: but meanwhile seed was sown in many hearts before His final rejection, and He committed to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven (not of the Church), and these he used in Acts 2 and 10.

Mark this, in chapter 13:37 it is said the Son of Man sows good seed. This refers to persons who have received the Word. It is not because of their intellectual abilities that they are the good seed of the kingdom of the heavens, but because of their moral and spiritual qualities produced by the Word in them. In this day of boasted intellectualism and loose living we need young men and women of true moral worth, with character formed according to the Word of God, who, when a false teacher comes and suggests

something that is a lie, will stand courageously for the truth of God, who will stand for the Word of God and witness to its Divine origin by word and work, lip and life, showing forth the fruits thereof in all meekness and lowliness.

Moreover, the Lord, knowing all, said to his disciples over and over again, The Son of Man must suffer. That was as necessary as the seed-sowing! How was a race of ruined sinners to be saved? How were we to be saved? The Son of Man came not only to set up the Kingdom in righteousness, but the Son of Man must suffer, and He suffered as none other did. He was spit upon, scourged, spitefully entreated, and put to death. It was an absolute necessity that He should die, if, on the one hand, the Kingdom was to be established, and, on the other, we were to be saved and all the blessing of eternal life was to be ours with the Father. He had to die, and blessed be His name, He went to that Cross and suffered for us. He never turned away back. He gave His back to the smiters. He hid not His face from shame and spitting, and there on Calvary's Cross the Son of Man was lifted up, and, my dear brethren, each believer can say, He died for me!

Truly He laid the foundation for the Kingdom; and having laid that foundation, and having sowed the good seed in His field, His enemy is at work now, as He foretold, sowing bad seed. Do not think so much of the devil as your enemy. He is that, but he is the enemy of your precious Saviour, as it says--the Son of Man's enemy came and invaded His field and sowed the bad seed. The good seed are the sons of the Kingdom, and the bad seed are the sons of the evil one. That is their nature and character. Satan sowed the bad amongst the good, and the Word says, "Let both grow together till the harvest"; but what a mixture, meanwhile, of real and unreal! This, it should be remembered, is in regard to the wide sphere of Christian profession called "the kingdom of the heavens," and not "the assembly" built by Christ within that sphere against which the gates of hell cannot prevail (16:18).

If I had time I would have liked to go through the parables. There are at least seven which show the mixture that is in the kingdom of the heavens at the present time; but this mixture, this apparent outward confusion, has by no means got beyond the control of our Lord Jesus Christ. You may depend on it, the confusion we see is no confusion to Him. He will see that all is eventually put right. It makes us all the more dependent on the Lord to recognize this. When we look around and see evil apparently going strong, let us remember He sees and knows all about it. And He says I will look after the final separation. My angels will attend to that (13:41). "Let both grow together till the harvest," He has said. Then He will send forth His angels and they shall gather the bad into bundles. Darnel (the tares spoken of) is exactly like the real thing at first, but by-and-by the true character is seen, and so at the end the bad are put into bundles! Who are going into these bundles for the burning? Take the great bundle of anti-Christian teaching, which is neither scientific nor Christian, but is miscalled Christian Science!--those who deny the Deity of Christ and His atoning work go into that bundle! Yes! that is a big bundle, and it is being gathered in the field of Christian profession--"the kingdom of the heavens." Presently all will be cast into the burning--that bundle and every other such system--and "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (13:42); but before that takes place Jesus will gather the wheat into His barn. True believers will be caught up to be for ever with the Lord!

All this is made known to us that we may be intelligent as to the present state of things. Do not lose heart at the confusion in Christendom, but let us be rallied rather to seek together to follow righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. This is the day when we have an exceptional opportunity of being true and loyal to the rejected King, to our absent Lord.

Having spoken of the past lowly beginning, and of present confusion, I would like to say just a little about the future glory. The Lord said, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." Afterwards Peter wrote, "We were eyewitnesses of His majesty." "We have not followed cunningly devised fables" (2 Peter 1:16). They saw His glory. He was transfigured before them, and there He gave in the holy mount a resplendent, living picture of the Kingdom in glory, as His face shone like the brightness of the sun, and His raiment became white and effulgent. The three honoured disciples who were taken apart by Jesus actually saw the coming glory, with God's beloved Son the Head and Centre of it all. Oh! that we may be so laid hold of that we may be taken up in Divine power and faith to behold His glory, and be led on in the excellency of the knowledge of the Lord! For this let us get much alone with Himself, and ask Him to prepare our hearts to receive what He has for us! What a glorious day it will be when He reigns as King over all the earth, and fills it with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea!

When that voice from the excellent glory declared, "This is my beloved Son in whom is all My delight," it also added, "Hear Him!" May God grant that we may hear Him! The voice which thus singled out for us the beloved Son of God was such a voice, there was no language could express its heavenliness. Peter says it was a voice from heaven--"Such a voice" (2 Peter 2:17). And when they looked around they saw "Jesus only"--Mark adds, "with themselves" (9:8). He has not yet returned to set up the kingdom and glory publicly. This He will do very soon, after He has gathered the wheat into His barn, after He has taken the assembly--His body and His bride--to be with Himself on high for ever, but even now we can sing:

"O blessed Saviour, Son of God,
Who hast redeemed us with Thy blood
From guilt, and death, and shame--
With glad rejoicing faith we see
The crown of glory worn by Thee,
And worthy Thee proclaim."

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