

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

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“He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit . . . does He do it out of the works of the law or out of the hearing of faith?” Galatians 3:5

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Dear Life-study Listener,

We hope you are enjoying *Life-study of Matthew*. By the time you read this, our daily program will be entering Matthew chapters five through seven where the Lord Jesus decrees the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens. Every nation has a constitution that governs it. We believers are the citizens of a heavenly commonwealth (Phil. 3:20). As kingdom people, it is important to know the contents of our constitution, the spiritual and heavenly principles of the kingdom of the heavens. Without seeing this, we cannot be ambassadors representing Christ's kingdom to a lost world. Please stay tuned. You will not want to miss any of these crucial programs.

We are grateful to the Lord for expanding *Life-study of the Bible with Witness Lee* overseas. As we announced in our December newsletter, we recently began broadcasting in London, England. The response from listeners of the program there has truly been remarkable. Some have begun to receive *The Hearing of Faith*. The positive response from so many has encouraged us to pray more for the Lord's move in Great Britain. May the Lord feed all His hungry seekers throughout that land through this ministry!

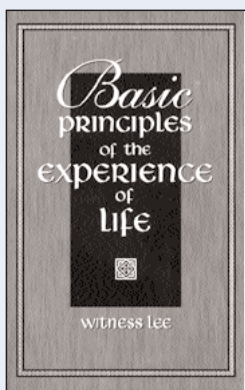
Living Stream Ministry

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM?

In a general sense, the kingdom is the sphere in which God exercises His authority so that He may express His glory. As revealed in the Bible, the kingdom of God is an eternal kingdom (Dan. 4:3); it existed in eternity past without beginning, and it continues throughout all time to eternity future without end.

In the first book of the Bible, God created man in His image and according to His likeness so that man might express God. He also gave man dominion over all created things and charged man to multiply and fill the earth and subdue it so that God might have a kingdom on earth in which to carry out His purpose in man (Gen. 1:26-28). However, man became corrupted and fallen to such an extent that God could no longer accomplish His purpose through the created race. Eventually, God called Abraham out of that race and promised to make of him a great nation, which is the kingdom of God (Gen. 12:2). Abraham's descendants fell into slavery in Egypt, but after 430 years God brought them out through Moses and told them that He would make them a kingdom of

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KINGDOM

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priests (Exo. 19:6). Thus, the nation of Israel was the kingdom of God in the Old Testament (Matt. 21:43).

At the beginning of the New Testament, the kingdom was the first thing preached as the gospel by both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, who told people to “Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near” (Matt. 3:1-2; 4:17). Those who hear the gospel, repent, believe in the Lord Jesus, and are baptized enter into the kingdom of God. In John 3:5 the Lord told Nicodemus that he had to be born of the Spirit in order to enter into the kingdom of God. This indicates that to enter into the kingdom, we must be born of God and receive the divine life, the life of God. Those who live in the divine kingdom must have the divine life, just as those in the animal kingdom possess the animal life. When we live by the divine life, not by our natural human life, we live in the reality of the kingdom of God. In Romans 14, in his word concerning the life of the church, the apostle Paul referred to the kingdom of God (v. 17), indicating that in the New Testament age, the kingdom of God is actually the church, composed of all the real believers in Christ (Matt. 16:18-19).

Although every believer is a member of the church and is thus included in the kingdom of God, there is still a need for believers to overcome every form of degradation (Rev. 2:7, 17, 26-29; 3:5-6, 12-13, 21-22). The overcomers are those who enjoy Christ and live Christ as the life of the kingdom, and in so doing they grow in the divine life unto maturity (2 Pet. 1:3-11). At Christ's second coming, the overcoming believers will inherit the kingdom in the millennium as a reward and will reign with Christ over the nations for 1000 years (Rev. 2:26-27; 20:4, 6). Eventually, the kingdom will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God, an eternal realm of the eternal blessing of God's eternal life, which all God's redeemed people will enjoy in the new heaven and new earth for eternity (Rev. 21:1-4; 22:1-5, 14).

For further reading on this subject, please see A Brief Definition of the Kingdom of the Heavens, by Witness Lee, published by Living Stream Ministry.

Excerpt from

THE KINGDOM

BY WITNESS LEE

The book The Kingdom contains messages given by Witness Lee in Los Angeles in 1972. The following excerpt is from chapter thirty-two entitled “The Reality of the Kingdom (1).”

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.” Matthew 5:3*

To be poor in our spirit means to empty all the things other than God out of our spirit. We all have to empty our spirit. Our spirit is only for God. This means we have to empty out everything else that may be within our spirit. We need to be empty in our spirit for God. Unfortunately, most of us have something other than God filling our spirit. Don't think that your knowledge remains only in your mind. Through your mind, your knowledge can enter into your spirit and occupy it. Don't think that your hatred remains only in your heart. The hatred can also enter into your spirit and occupy it. Don't think your human, natural, fleshly love remains only in your emotion. It too can get into your spirit and occupy it. Then your spirit will be filled up with knowledge, hatred, or love. Once your spirit is filled up, there is no room left for God.

When the kingdom comes, we need to be empty and poor in our spirit, so that we can take God into us. This, however, does not mean to have a poor spirit. Do not have a poor spirit, but be poor in your spirit. This means to have nothing in your spirit except God. When the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and high priests came to the Lord Jesus, they were all filled up in their spirit with all kinds of junk which they regarded as treasures. Their traditions, their religion, their rituals, their scriptural knowledge, their forms, and all their old religious Jewish practices had become so much junk filling up their spirit. Furthermore, their concepts and philosophical reasonings were filling up and occupying their spirit. They were completely filled up with all these things. When they came to the Lord Jesus they argued with Him because they were not poor in spirit. Therefore, in the opening word of His discourse on the mountain, the Lord said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.” If we are poor in our spirit, God can immediately come into us. We will then be in the kingdom of the heavens. This is the first condition of our inward parts. Our spirit has to be emptied. Don't keep any knowledge, tradition, form, religion or anything else other than God in your spirit. Let your spirit be emptied of other things and be absolutely and fully for God. This is what we need. Don't allow all the knowledge and the things you received from Christianity to occupy your spirit. They need to be emptied out. They may seem to be quite good, but compared to the Lord Jesus they are dung. In Philippians 3 Paul said that he counted all of his previous attainments and knowledge as dung or refuse. He counted all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Let us also be empty and poor in spirit on account of Christ.

*From The Kingdom, pp. 307-308, by Witness Lee,
published by Living Stream Ministry*

