

**SECTION 4**

**GROWING IN**

**KINGDOM LIFE**

COLOSSIANS 1:1-6  
MATTHEW 13:33

Before we began the last teaching of the Parable of the Sower, I mentioned that we are **Kingdom People**, Citizens of the Kingdom of God!

*Colossians 1:13 says  
He has delivered us from the power of darkness  
and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of  
His love.*

Let's look deeper into **the way** we come to understand truth as it pertains to **who we are in Christ** and how we **grow in Kingdom life**.

Open your Bible to Colossians, we will be looking at Colossians 1:1-6. The **theme** of the book of Colossians is **The Sufficiency of Jesus Christ**. The key words in Colossians are: Fullness, Wisdom, Knowledge, and Mystery.

*Colossians 1*  
1) *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God  
and Timothy our brother,*  
2) *to the saints (or holy) and faithful brethren in  
Colosse.*

Holy, or saints, is the Greek word *hagios*. In the Old Testament it is ascribed not only to persons, but also places and things. This suggests that the "root" idea in "holy" or "saints" is not excellency of character, but dedication, the state of being set apart for the work and worship of God.

The word "faithful" in verse 2 is the Greek work *pistois*, and most commentaries believe it should be interpreted in the sense of believing. But it also has the secondary sense of **loyalty** to Christ. The Church was being persecuted at the time of Paul's writing and Her loyalty to Christ was being tested. Paul speaks to the believing ones, and those who remain loyal ... *"to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ."*

**In Christ** is a Kingdom term. **In Christ** is the expression that designates new life potential through the Gospel. The Gospel being defined as the sum total of salvation truth about Jesus Christ and who He is. New life potential that comes to us through the Gospel is:

***Christ in us, the Hope of Glory ... Colossians 1:27-28***

All hope of real Glory is in discovering who Christ is, and that His life is yours, and that He **is** your life. Christ the Messiah is King, and we being **in Christ** clearly places us in the circle of all that is represented and contained in the King: His salvation conquest, His personal rule. The essential "truth" to lay a hold of here is: Our Savior King **has come** and **In Him**, the rule of God.

Being ***In Christ*** means living in the King's Kingdom and brings a dual hope: 1) Eternity with Christ and 2) the Promise of Grace of power to **begin** reigning in Kingdom Life **now**. We have potential in Christ to live in the benefits of and by the power of King Jesus.

**But do we know it? And are we walking in that knowledge?**

*For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form and you have been given **that fullness** of the deity in Christ who is head over every angelic power and authority and having disarmed the powers and authorities He made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them **by the Cross** ... **Behold**, the scripture says, The Lion of the Tribe of Judah has triumphed.*

*Colossians 2:10, 15; Revelation 5:5*

*Colossians 1*

- 3) *We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you*
- 4) *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all the saints.*

**Faith in Christ Jesus** is pointing to Christ as the sphere in which faith operates. **In Christ** is a phrase used by Paul more than 160 times in various forms in his letters. One way to understand the significance of this term, is to contrast it with the term, "in Adam". In Adam, we were spiritually dead, under the power of sin, death, and the devil ... our flesh was in control. So, ***In Christ***, it is the opposite: we are alive unto God, our spirit has been re-born, we are under the power of God's grace, the power of sin, death, and the devil has been broken, and according to I John 4:17, as Christ is now, so are we now, in this earth. ***In Christ*** emphasizes the spiritual position of the believers, their "state of being".

- 5) *because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,*
- 6) *which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;*

The Gospel, the Word of God itself, is bringing forth fruit **in us**. The power of God's Word the Gospel itself, is a fruit bearing power whenever it is preached. "Producing fruit" translates "the inward energy of the Gospel in its adherents" (NIV Expositors Bible). Having mentioned the Gospel as the "source" from which the Colossians had heard of the Christian Hope, Paul is now led to **develop** the thought of **the progress** of the Gospel in the world (as well as in us).

The Gospel is a fruit bearing power wherever it is preached ... actually the Gospel had spread amazingly in the years between Pentecost and the time Paul wrote Colossians. The Gospel is essentially a reproductive organism, a plant, whose seed is in itself. **Growing** denotes the rapid spread of the Gospel, thus: **Producing Fruit** and **Growing** speak of the inner working and the outer extension of the Gospel. The Gospel is not like corn, which having born fruit, dies even at it's roots, but like a tree which bears fruit and at the same time continues to grow. The Greek tense of both verbs, **producing** and **growing** is present tense, suggesting constant and continuous action.

At this point you may be asking yourself how this truth in Colossians is foundational for the Parable of the Leaven? In Matthew 13:33

*Another parable He spoke to them: The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.*

In scripture, leaven usually symbolizes that which is evil or unclean, but **here** it is a symbol of **growth**. As leaven permeates a batch of dough, so the Kingdom of Heaven spreads through a person's life signifying the growth of the Kingdom. It takes place by the inner working of the Holy Spirit using God's Word. Our Lord uses word pictures to help show us what the Kingdom is like. The Kingdom is *an internal ruler ship unable to be seen by the natural eye*. Jesus said, *The Kingdom of God is within you.*" Luke 17:21

*The Kingdom of God is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.*

The scope of this parable is much the same as the parable of the grain of mustard seed. It is to show that the Gospel will be successful by **degrees**, 30, 60, 100 fold, and works silently and invisibly.

The preaching of the gospel is like leaven and works like leaven in the **hearts of those who receive it**. The woman **took** and **hid** it in 3 *measures* of meal ... who took the leaven? The Woman ... it was her **work**, it is *our* work. We need to leaven our hearts as well as every place we go with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The leaven was hidden in 3 measures of *meal*. Our heart must be as the "meal" or dough ... soft and pliable; it is the tender heart that is likely to profit by the Word. Matthew Henry comments: Leaven among corn that is not ground doesn't work, nor does the Gospel in souls that are unhumiliated and unbroken of sin ... The meal itself needs to be kneaded before it can receive the leaven ... our hearts must be broken and often times taken through much pain to prepare them for the Word ... to make them capable of receiving the impressions of it. The leaven must be **hid** in the heart.

*Your Word I have hidden in my heart that I might not  
sin against You. Psalm 119:11*

It's hidden not so much for secrecy (for it will show itself in power in time) but for safety. Our inward thought must be upon it ... we must be practicing *Beholding the Lord* in His Word ... we must lay it up as many laid up the words of Jesus (Luke 2:51).

**We must practice the inward discipline of *Beholding the Glory* of the Lord as we reflect on His Glory in the Word.**

When the woman hides the leaven in the meal, it is with the **expectation** that it will communicate it's taste and do it's work. We must with expectation count on the Holy Spirit to take that Word we have hid in our heart and progressively sanctify us by it (John 17:17). The leaven hides in the dough, and without a doubt **works** there, it **ferments**.

*For the Word of God is living and powerful and  
sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to  
the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and  
marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents  
of the heart. Hebrews 4:12*

*The Word of God accomplishes that which it is sent to do ... Isaiah 55:11*

The leaven works gradually, silently, but effectually. In Mark 4, Jesus says:

*A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he  
sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not  
know how all by itself the soil produces the grain. First the stalk,  
then the head then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain  
is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.*

*Mark 4:26-29*

It is the same for us in our hearts when the Gospel, the Word of God, is allowed to come into our hearts. It works a change, not in the substance; the dough is the same, but in the Quality. It also works a universal change; it diffuses itself into all the faculties of the soul: mind, affection, desires, will, perceptions, attitudes. It even alters the properties of the members of our body.  
Romans 6:13

This change is such that it makes the soul partake of the nature of the Word just like the dough does the leaven. We are delivered into it as a mold. As we behold the glory of the Lord, we ourselves are being transformed by His Spirit into the very image we are beholding of Him.

This quote from "Pursuit of Maturity" by Sanders is helpful at this point:

The Holy Spirit changes us into Christ's likeness. Here is the plain assertion that while we are spending time contemplating the glories and virtues of Christ, the Holy Spirit is progressively changing us into His likeness. We become like those we admire. As we look and long and pray to be more like Christ, without any conscious volition on our part, the Holy Spirit works into the fabric of our lives the very virtues and graces of the One we most admire and love- 'We are being changed into the same likeness.'

The process of digestion affords an interesting parallel. We ingest our food - and forget about it. Then, altogether apart from any conscious volition on our part, the digestive organs take over and change the food into blood and bone and tissue. In just the same way, while we spend time contemplating Christ in all His glory and graces, the Holy Spirit takes the very qualities we see and admire in Him and works them into the warp and woof of our spiritual lives. This 'likeness' has two parts. First, the objective vision of the glory of the Lord as it is revealed in all the Scriptures - His perfect manhood, flawless character, unique person, unconditional and undemanding love, **and above all His mediatorial work (in short, the moral excellence of His character and conduct)** - is progressively reproduced in us.

The objective vision then issues in a subjective transformation - 'We are being changes into the same likeness.' God is not satisfied with us as we are. Nor should we be satisfied with ourselves, for we have been predestined 'to be conformed to the likeness of His Son' (Romans 8:29), and we have a long way to go.

This will be achieved not by external imitation but by internal transformation. With what end in view? The word 'contemplate' in our text can also be rendered 'reflect.' We behold, contemplate His glory and then reflect it to others. 'Those who look to Him are radiant,' said the psalmist (Psalm 34:5).

Now, when the dough is leavened, into the oven it goes. Trials, and difficulties must attend this change in order for us to truly become

### **Bread for the Master's use**

... there is no other way. Through many tribulations we enter the Kingdom of God. But if we suffer with Him, we will also reign with Him ... for as He is, so we are in this world, and our Lord reigns in glory ...

Are you reigning with Christ in Kingdom Life?

*Do not fear little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Luke 12:32*

But seek ye **first** the God of your Salvation ...

**THE BIBLE  
THE WORD OF GOD**

**IN THE HEART**

Psalm 37:31 The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.

Psalm 40:8 I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy law is within my heart.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Jeremiah 32:40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

Romans 2:15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

Romans 7:22 For joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

I Corinthians 3:3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Hebrews 10:16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord; I will put My laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them,



## **CHRISTLIKENESS**

### **The Ultimate Aim of the Christian Life**

Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brothers. (I Corinthians 15:49)

II Corinthians 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever - increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Philippians 3:21 who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body. (Colossians 3:10)

II Peter 1:4 Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

I John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

**IN ADAM**

Born corruptible: Psalm 51:5  
 Child of wrath: Ephesians 2:3  
 Dead in sin: Ephesians 2:1b  
 Under sin: Galatians 3:22  
 Sold for nought: Isaiah 52:3  
 Blasphemous: Luke 22:65  
 Workers of iniquity: Proverbs 10:29  
 Abominable: Revelation 21:8  
 Entangled: Galatians 5:1  
 Cursed: Galatians 3:10  
 Condemned: John 3:18  
 Under God's wrath: John 3:36  
 Deceitful heart: Jeremiah 17:9  
 Enemy of the Cross: Philippians 3:18  
 Without Christ: Ephesians 2:12  
 Unthankful: II Timothy 3:2  
 Fulfills lust of the flesh: Eph 2:3  
 Prayerless: Job 21:15  
 Ungodly: Romans 5:6  
 Strangers: Ephesians 2:12  
 Without promise: Ephesians 2:12  
 Without hope: Ephesians 2:12  
 Without God: Ephesians 2:12  
 Child of disobedience: Ephesians 2:2  
 Understands not God: I Cor 2:14  
 Far from God: Ephesians 2:13  
 Blind: II Corinthians 4:4  
 Without strength: Romans 5:6  
 Taught of Satan: II Cor 11:13-15  
 Led captive by the devil: II Tim 2:26  
 Walks according to course of this world: Ephesians 2:2  
 No soundness: Isaiah 1:2-6  
 Destructive: Isaiah 59:7  
 Ignorant of God: Galatians 4:8  
 Not known by Jesus: Matthew 7:21-23  
 Loves pleasure: II Timothy 3:4  
 Boastful: Psalm 10:3  
 Awaits judgment: John 12:47-48  
 On road to destruction: Matthew 7:13  
 Shall perish: Psalm 1:6b  
 Go into everlasting fire:  
 Matthew 25:41; Revelation 21:8

**IN CHRIST**

Born again incorruptible: I Peter 1:23  
 Child of God: Romans 8:16-17  
 Alive unto God: Ephesians 2:5  
 Sins removed: Psalm 103:12  
 Bought with a price: I Peter 1:18-19  
 Fears God: Colossians 3:22  
 Performs good works: Ephesians 2:10  
 Blameless and harmless: Philippians 2:15  
 Free: John 8:32, 36; Romans 6:22  
 Redeemed from curse: Galatians 3:13  
 No condemnation: John 5:24  
 Saved from wrath: Romans 5:9  
 New heart: Ezekiel 36:26-27  
 At peace with God: Ephesians 2:13-14  
 Christ in us: Colossians 1:27  
 Thankful: II Corinthians 9:15  
 Makes no provision for flesh: Rom 13:14  
 Prayerful: Philippians 4:6  
 Godly: Psalm 4:3  
 Friends: John 15:14  
 Given promise: II Peter 1:4  
 With a hope: I Thessalonians 4:13-18  
 God in us: I John 4:15-16  
 Child of obedience: Romans 6:16-17  
 Understands God: I Corinthians 2:9-12  
 Made nigh God: Ephesians 2:13  
 Watchful: Luke 12:37  
 Strengthened: Ephesians 3:16  
 Taught of God: I John 2:27  
 Led by the Spirit: Romans 8:14  
 Walks in the light:  
 Ephesians 5:8  
 Sound mind: II Timothy 1:7  
 Constructive: Titus 2:14  
 Knowledge of Him: Ephesians 1:17  
 Known by Jesus: John 10:27  
 Loves God: I John 4:19  
 Humble: Psalm 34:2  
 Awaits rewards: I Corinthians 3:14  
 On narrow road: Matthew 7:14  
 Shall never perish: John 10:28  
 Inherit the kingdom; go into heaven:  
 Matthew 25:31, 34; John 14:3

**STUDY QUESTIONS**

1) Look up the following scriptures, and write the differences between being "In Adam" and "In Christ".

I Corinthians 15:22

In Adam \_\_\_\_\_

In Christ \_\_\_\_\_

I Corinthians 15:48-49

In Adam \_\_\_\_\_

In Christ \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 5:12, 17

In Adam \_\_\_\_\_

In Christ \_\_\_\_\_

Genesis 3:17-19, Galatians 3:10-14

In Adam \_\_\_\_\_

In Christ \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 2:1-3, 4-7, 10

In Adam \_\_\_\_\_

In Christ \_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 3:1-3

In Adam \_\_\_\_\_

In Christ \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 8:2, 6

In Adam \_\_\_\_\_

In Christ \_\_\_\_\_



5) Psalm 119:11 says, "Your Word I have hidden in my heart ..." What does it mean to "Hide the Word" in your heart? Also, **how** does one "hide" the Word?

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6) Who, according to Luke 2:19 and Luke 2:51 was one of the greatest examples of someone "hiding the Word" in her heart? \_\_\_\_\_

7) According to the Parable of the Leaven in Matthew 13, as well as our narrative, is the leavening instantaneous?

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8) What is God's work in the process, and what is **our** work?

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9) Go back to Question 6, and then look at John 2:5 ... according to this verse, what is a crucial part of the "leavening" process?

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10) What does "Beholding" mean to you?

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11) According to II Corinthians 3:16-18, what happens when we behold Jesus the Messiah?

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12) Look at II Corinthians 4:6; how does this connect with the last 2 questions?

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13) Since Jesus is the "Bread of Life" (John 6:48), and if the old phrase "you are what you eat" is true ... what, or who, should we be getting nourished from? (Also, see Job 23:12)

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14) According to John 21:15, what is one of the main reasons we are to be transformed into the likeness of the "Bread of Life"?

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15) Look at Job 23:8-12 ... write the similarities between what is said in these verses and the process of "leavening", or the process of growth.

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16) What does Psalm 34:5 have to say about Beholding the Lord?

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## KING

"King" is, in a sense, an archaic word. In these modern days of constitutional monarchy, we can sense little of the awesome power and responsibility of the kings of the ancient world.

Old Testament	1. King in the OT
	2. God as King
New Testament	3. Jesus the King

### Old Testament

#### 1. King in the Old Testament.

The Hebrew word is *melek*. It, along with other Hebrew words (words often translated "governor," "chief," or "prince"), indicates a person with civil authority. *Melek* does not suggest a specific office or form of government.

Nebuchadnezzar, head of the great Babylonian Empire, was called *melek*, but so also were the governors of sub provinces and even the leaders (mayors?) of the tiny city-states that dotted Palestine during the time of the Conquest. This is due to the fact that *melek* designates a ruling magistrate. In biblical times this was a person who was responsible for all the functions of modern government—the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. In essence, the *melek* provided whatever leadership and control were required to govern the people. Of course, the ancient kings ruled in harmony with the customs of their culture, as Israel's kings were to rule by, and be personally subject to, the Mosaic Law. But in ancient times, royal power was the power of life and death, and the king's word was final in civil matters. In Israel's long history, evil kings showed their influence by leading God's people to abandon Him, and good kings led revivals that called the people back to God. Thus, the chief ruler set the moral and religious tone for the nation.

In earliest Israel, civil authority was decentralized. It rested in local elders and tribal heads. During the age of the judges, charismatic leaders emerged in times of crisis and, after affecting deliverance, exercised civil authority during their lifetimes. But the hereditary monarchy was not introduced in Israel until about 1,100 B.C., in the days of Samuel, Saul, and David.

The ancient Book of Deuteronomy (c. 1450. B.C.) does speak of a monarchy for God's people (Deuteronomy 17:14-20), but the motives of the people who insisted that the last judge, Samuel, anoint them a king, were wrong. The people wanted a king to lead them so they could be like other nations. God, the invisible but true *melek* of Israel, was implicitly rejected (I Samuel 8). The first king, Saul, was seriously flawed. David, who succeeded him, was devout and

was highly successful. God established David's dynastic right to the throne of Israel forever (II Samuel 23:1-16; Psalm 89:3). Jesus, born in the family line of David, was destined to become King, in the fullest biblical sense of *melek*, over the entire earth.

## **2. God as King**

On the day that Samuel presented Saul to Israel as their first king, he recalled sadly, "You said to me, 'No, we want a king to rule over us' - even though the Lord your God was your king" (I Samuel 12:12). Samuel affirmed that God had committed Himself to personally provide the judicial, legislative, executive, and military leadership that His people needed. But God was invisible, and the enemies that surrounded Israel were all too visible. God was overtly rejected; Israel demanded a ruler they could see. They would rely on a human being rather than on the Lord.

Samuel warned against reliance on mere human leadership (I Samuel 8:10-20). And biblical history records recurrent tragedies, with evil and inept kings leading Israel into apostasy.

The prophets, many of whom lived in the days of the monarchy, called Israel back to its original vision of God. God was Israel's Creator, King, and Redeemer (Isaiah 43:15; 44:6). He had to be recognized as the great King (Malachi 1:14, cf. Zephaniah 3:15). But it is Zechariah who sums up most clearly Israel's future hope: "The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and His name the only name" (Zechariah 14:9). After God personally intervenes to destroy Israel's wicked enemies, He will be personally present on earth. "Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

Thus, in speaking of God as King, the OT sees both His invisible but real rule over the course of human events and a coming day when He will appear on earth to bring everything under His personal authority.

## **New Testament**

### **3. Jesus the King.**

After carefully tracing Jesus' genealogy, the introduction to Matthew's Gospel quotes or alluded to many OT passages. His purpose is to demonstrate that Jesus of Nazareth truly was Israel's promised Davidic King, the Messiah (Matthew 1:1-2:6).



In the Gospels, "king" is most often used of Jesus in the context of His trial and crucifixion. The very words "King of the Jews" were inscribed on the plaque attached to His cross (Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19, 21).

It was when Christ's enemies brought him to Pilate that they charged Him with claiming to be "the Christ: and added, for clarity, 'a king'" (Luke 23:2; cf John 19:12). Pilate's questioning focused on this issue; he asked Jesus, "are You king of the Jews?" (Matthew 27:1; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:2; John 18:33). The charge and the question are significant in historical context. The Jews charged that Jesus saw Himself as a king, one with supreme civil authority. Even though Jesus' explanation that His kingdom "is not of this world" (John 18:36) was not understood by Pilate, the Roman governor tried to free Him (John 18:38-19:16). Ultimately it was the political danger to himself that pressured Pilate to let Jesus be crucified. The danger to the Roman was real. The shout of the people was a threat: "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar" (John 19:12).

While the Gospels and the very title "Christ" establish Jesus as Israel's promised king, the full meaning of His rule is understood only by a study of the NT's teaching about the kingdom.

## KINGDOM

The New Testament tells us that Jesus came preaching a gospel of the kingdom. What was His good news? Was that early word of the kingdom only for Israel or does it have meaning for us today? Theologians differ on their answer. But the many references in the Gospels to the kingdom of heaven and to the kingdom of God make one thing clear: Jesus shares significant truth with us when He speaks of the kingdom.

Old Testament	1. "Kingdom" in the Old Testament
New Testament	2. "Kingdom" in the New Testament
	3. The gospel of the kingdom
	4. The present kingdom
	5. The coming kingdom
	6. Summary

### Old Testament

#### 1. "Kingdom" in the Old Testament.

Several Hebrews words are translated "kingdom" in the English versions. They come from the same root as *melek*, king: *mal'ku*, *mal'kut*, and *mamlakah*.

In modern thought, a kingdom is a specific geographical area, with national identity. In the Old Testament, however, "kingdom" is best expressed by the idea of reign or sovereignty. One's kingdom is the people or things over which he or she has authority or control.

In the OT, "kingdom" is most often used in the secular sense, to indicate the sphere of authority of human rulers. But the Bible does speak of God's kingdom, in two significant ways.

First, the entire universe is God's kingdom, for He exercises sovereign rule over all things at this present time. Psalm 103:19 affirms, "The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all." Similarly: "They will tell of the glory of Your kingdom and speak of Your might, so that all men may know of Your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of Your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures through all generations" (Psalm 145:11-13).

The same theme is developed in Nebuchadnezzar's praise after he recovered from a madness given as divine judgment: "How great are His (God's) signs, how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; His dominion endures from generation to generation" (Daniel 4:3). The overarching

sovereignty of God may not always be expressed in mighty acts. It also operates in quiet providence, as history marches toward God's intended end. But all is God's kingdom. And He is the ultimate ruler of all (II Chronicles 13:8; Daniel 4:17; 5:21; 6:26-27).

Second, the OT does look forward to a future expression of God's now-disguised sovereignty. Then the kingdom will have a visible, earthly form. Daniel speaks of a time when "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever" (Daniel 2:44). Essentially the same vision is repeated in Daniel 7, and the establishment of God's visible kingdom is again foretold. In fact, the OT prophecy uniformly and consistently pictures a time when earth will be ruled by the Messiah, when "the kingdom will be the Lord's" (Obadiah 21).

In the OT, therefore, God is seen as the present, though often unacknowledged, ruler of the universe. The universe and everything in it constitute His kingdom, for He exercises sovereign control over all beings. At the same time, the OT anticipates a day when God will establish a visible kingdom on earth. In that day His sovereignty will be recognized, all His authority will be acknowledged by all.

## **New Testament**

### **2. "Kingdom" in the New Testament.**

The import of "kingdom" (*basileia*) in the New Testament is derived from OT thought rather than from Greek culture. A kingdom is a realm in which a king exerts control and authority. The "kingdom of God," rather than being a place, is the realm in which God is in control

The OT draws attention to two aspects of God's kingdom. As king of the created universe, God is always at work, actively shaping history's flow according to His will. This expression of the kingdom of God is usually hidden. Only at times, as at the Exodus, has God visibly broken into time and space to set His unmistakable imprint on events. But the OT looks forward to a time when God's Messiah will step boldly into history. Then with raw power He will act to establish God's open rule over the whole earth. Then Israel's enemies will be shattered, the Davidic successor established on the throne in Jerusalem, and God will enforce peace on all peoples.

In Jesus' day, Palestine lay under Roman rule. Rome was only the latest in a centuries-long series of pagan overlords. Understandably, Israel longed for the kingdom the prophets foretold. No wonder Jesus was looked to at first as the one who would establish the prophesied kingdom. Jesus' own disciples, even late in His ministry and after His resurrection, expected Him to establish the

visible kingdom soon (Matthew 20:21-23; Acts 1:6-7). So when Jesus came, at first preaching the "gospel of the kingdom," it was natural that He was not understood. His listeners' perceptions were shaped by their vision of the kingdom to come, and they could not grasp the fact that Jesus actually spoke, not of one of the two OT forms of the kingdom, but of yet another expression of God's rule, yet another way in which God would act in human affairs.

In reading the NT it is important to remember the basic meaning of "kingdom." It refers to the realm in which a ruler acts to carry out his will. If we operate from this basic definition, Scripture will break down our stereotypes as well and reveal an exciting aspect of the kingdom of heaven that Christians too often miss.

### **3. The gospel of the kingdom.**

When it was time for Jesus to begin His public ministry, John the Baptist began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 3:2). God was about to break into history, to act in a bold, fresh way. This message, which was also the theme of Jesus' early ministry (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15), is "the good news of the kingdom" (Matthew 4:23).

Jesus' message was stronger than that of John. John said the kingdom was coming. Jesus announced that it had arrived! Confronting men who accused Him of doing His miracles by Satan's power, Jesus said, "If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28; cf. Luke 11:20). Most of Jesus' miracles belong to this time period, the time of His preaching the gospel of the kingdom. The king had come and had demonstrated His power to act, revealing His authority over every natural and supernatural power. In the NT, the kingdom and Jesus are inseparable, even as the concept of kingdom is meaningless apart from the person of the king.

In a significant sense, then, any announcement of the gospel of the kingdom must focus on the person of Jesus, promising that He is or soon will be present, able to act in all His sovereign power.

There seems to be two periods of time when this particular message is presented. The first is seen in Jesus' own historic announcement of His presence. Israel was called on to acknowledge the heavenly king and thus by faith step into that realm in which He would freely exercise His power for them (e.g., Matthew 3:2; 4:17, 23; 9:35; 10:7; Mark 1:15; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2, 11, 60; Luke 10:9, 11). Jesus summed up this era by saying, "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached" (Luke 16:16).

The second time will be just before Jesus' return. Matthew 24 records Jesus' answer to His disciples' questions about history's end. Jesus reviewed OT prophecy and said of that future time: "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). It is clear from the context that this preaching is not of the Christian gospel of salvation but is the announcement to all that Jesus is again about to appear on earth.

There are, of course, other NT references to preaching and teaching about the kingdom (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). Thus, the gospel of the kingdom—the good news that the king is at hand or is already present—is preached when Jesus personally is about to, or already has (at the First Advent), stepped into history.

The gospel of the kingdom may be a technical theological term with narrow focus. But the NT teaching about the kingdom itself has a broader significance and touches our lives today.

#### **4. The present kingdom.**

While He was on earth, Jesus taught much about an expression of the divine kingdom that was unrecognized in the OT. When it was clear that Israel would not accept Christ as Messiah/King, Jesus, began to speak of the kingdom in parables. And He began to speak of His death. When asked why He used parables, He told the disciples that "the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them" (Matthew 13:11). Matthew points out that Jesus' use of parables fulfilled the OT: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world" (Matthew 13:35; cf. Mark 4:10-13). It is best to take this "secret" as a previously unrevealed expression of the divine kingdom - a way in which God acts in man's world that is not known from the OT.

The NT has much to say about this form of the kingdom, for this is the kingdom in which you and I are called to live today.

#### **The present kingdom in the Epistles.**

Most of what the Epistles have to say about the Christian life does not mention the kingdom. Yet it is clear that believers have been rescued by the Father from the domain of darkness and have been brought "into the kingdom of the Son He loves" (Colossians 1:13). In Hebrews 12:28 the writer uses the present active participle to affirm, "We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken." A number of passages speak of inheriting the kingdom (I Corinthians 6:9-10; 15:50; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5; James 2:5). With the possible exception

of James 2:5, the matter of inheritance is viewed in the context of Roman law. At birth a child becomes an heir and has an established right to the possessions controlled by his father. Clearly, the NT presents another kingdom in addition to

- 1) the universal rule of God through providence and
- 2) the yet-future kingdom of prophecy (cf. Romans 14:17; I Corinthians 4:20; Colossians 1:12, 13; 4:11; I Thessalonians 2:12; II Thessalonians 1:5; Revelation 1:6; 5:10). Still, the Epistles say less than the synoptic Gospels do about this other kingdom, possibly because it was necessary for Jesus to speak in kingdom terms before the language of resurrection could be established by His death and coming to life again.

### **Kingdom lifestyle in the synoptic Gospels.**

A number of extended passages in the Gospels explore life in Jesus' present kingdom. Using Matthew's Gospel as a framework, we see these major teaching passages.

Matthew 5-7. The Sermon on the Mount has been interpreted in a number of ways. Is it a salvation message? Was it given to show Christians how they ought to live? Is it a picture of life in Jesus' future and coming kingdom? Is it a combination of the above? In view of the nature of the kingdom, it seems best to understand this Sermon as Jesus' statement of how people of every age live when they abandon themselves to God's will. This last view seems to best integrate the Sermon's many teachings with the NT's view of the kingdom.

The Beatitudes describe the values of a person living a kingdom lifestyle (Matthew 5:3-12). Jesus then gives a series of illustrations, showing how inner values find expression in lifestyle (Matthew 5:17-42). As king, Jesus acts to transform the character of His subjects. Jesus in the present kingdom is working in our inner selves to change our outward behavior. Jesus goes on to show how we can experience this transforming power. We focus on our "in secret" relationship with the Lord, not on visible piety (Matthew 6:1-18). We give priority to seeking God's kingdom and righteousness, and we trust our Father to supply our material needs (Matthew 6:19-33). We relate to other kingdom citizens as brothers and sisters and reject every claim of a right to judge or control them (Matthew 7:1-14). Instead of relying on human leaders, we rely on the simple words of Jesus and commit ourselves to obey them (Matthew 7:15-27).

Matthew 13. Jesus explained in parables how the present form of the kingdom compares with and differs from the expected, prophetic vision of God's direct rule on earth. The kingdom teaching of the parables is summarized as:

<b>The Parable</b>	<b>Expected Form</b>	<b>Unexpected Characteristic</b>
1) Sower 13:3-9, 18-23	Messiah turns Israel and all nations to himself.	Individuals respond differently to the gospel invitation.
2) Wheat/Tares 13:24-30, 36-43	The kingdom's righteous citizens rule over the world with the King	The kingdom's citizens are among the men of the world, growing together till God's harvest time.
3) Mustard Seed 13:31-32	The kingdom begins in majestic glory.	The kingdom begins in insignificance, its greatness comes as a surprise.
4) Leaven 13:33	Only righteousness enters the kingdom; other "raw material" is excluded.	The kingdom is implanted in a different "raw material" and grows to fill the whole personality with righteousness.
5) Hidden treasure 13:44	The kingdom is public and for all.	The hidden kingdom is for individual "purchase".
6) Priceless Pearl 13:45-46	The kingdom brings all valued things to men.	The kingdom demands abandonment of all other values.
7) Dragnet 13:47-50	The kingdom begins with initial separation of righteous and unrighteous.	The kingdom ends with final separation of the unrighteous from the righteous.

Matthew 18-20. Jesus explains how one becomes great in God's present kingdom.

There are other significant verses and insights. For instance, we read in the Lord's prayer: "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). In context, this is no prayer for the end of time. It is the believer's request that for the ability to do God's will now, here on earth, as it is done in heaven, so that God's kingdom may find expression in divine acts here and now. The kingdom is the realm in which the king acts with sovereign power. In Christ, you and I can experience that kingdom here and now. We can know

God's power at work in our own lives as we adopt the lifestyle of the kingdom over which Jesus rules.

**The theological basis for the present kingdom.**

It is clear that God's sovereign touch rules the universe, now and always. So the present kingdom of Jesus does not supersede or replace providence. Yet in speaking of the still - future kingdom over which Jesus will rule visibly, Scripture introduces a unique expression of the divine kingdom. God's providential supervision of the universe usually leaves Him hidden. In the future, however, His rule on earth will be unmistakable and visible. The NT's introduction of a kingdom currently ruled by Jesus presents another unique expression of the divine kingdom: a mode in which God has chosen to act and through which His control will be expressed.

The theological basis for Jesus' action in the present form of His kingdom is laid in the new birth. "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" and "no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:3, 5). The new birth gives entrance into the kingdom - the realm in which Jesus' sovereign power is translated into action on behalf of His people.

But why this stress on being born again? Perhaps because of the fact that when a person is born again, Jesus enters his or her life. And there He takes up permanent residence. Now and for all time Jesus is present in His people - in each believer and in the corporate body of Christ. In a mystical but real way, Jesus is present on earth in us. He is the key to release of the power needed to transform us and to shape the events that affect our lives according to His will.

The kingdom is here because Jesus is here. Because Jesus is here, the possibility of a new kind of life is laid open before us.

**5. The coming kingdom.**

The NT never rejects the OT's portrait of the future. There will be a kingdom on earth, and Jesus will rule over it in person. Although this is not a dominant theme in NT teaching, Jesus Himself confirms the OT vision of history's end (Matthew 8:11-12; 16:28; 25:1, 34; 26:29; Mark 11:10; 14:25; 15:43; Luke 13:28-29; 14:15; 21:31; Acts 1:6-7; cf. Matthew 20:21; Mark 11:10; 15:43; Luke 14:15; 17:20; 19:11; 23:43, 51).

**6. Summary.**

When we read the word "kingdom" in the Bible, we must not import modern notions of a geographical area. The word simply indicates a realm in which a king exercises his power to act and control. The OT knows two different forms of God's sovereign rule, or kingdom.



- 1) There is a universal kingdom. God controls all events in the universe but does so nearly always through providence, so that his rule is hidden.
- 2) There is to be a visible earthly kingdom. In the future, Jesus will return to earth to rule in person over the whole world.

The NT adds another, previously unknown, form of the divine kingdom. This form, like that of the prophetic kingdom, is intimately linked with Jesus, for He is its king. When Jesus was on earth, this kingdom existed here. Although Jesus did not take up earthly political power (John 18:36), the miracles He performed showed His authority over every competing power. But Jesus the king was rejected and crucified, as His enemies struggled to force His kingdom out of history.

But Jesus' death was not the end. During His days on earth, Jesus explained what life under His rule (i.e., in His kingdom) would be like. It is best to take most Gospel descriptions of the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God (which should be treated as synonyms) as explanations of life in Jesus' present kingdom. Here we are given powerful insights into how we can live today as Jesus' subjects and experience His power. Because the new birth brings us into union with Jesus and brings Jesus in a unique way into our experience here on earth, we live in a day in which the king is present, though still disguised. Because Jesus is present, the unmatched power of God can find supernatural expression in and through our lives.

## LAWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

### ✦ **What is the kingdom of God? (Luke 17:21)**

A kingdom is a place where a king rules. The kingdom of God is wherever God reigns over the lives of His subjects. The kingdom of God is not visible because God is not visible. It is a spiritual kingdom, not a visible one, Jesus Christ said, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

Jesus gave us, in the Lord's Prayer, a petition to God: "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). This prayer shows the priority Jesus gave to the kingdom of God. Can we not say that the kingdom of God will come on Earth when the will of God is as respected here as it is in heaven, when the visible world totally reflects the invisible world? I think we can. In the kingdom of God, everything is subject to God's power, instantly, with no question. In the visible world, there is resistance to God's will.

The kingdom of God is eternal. At the present time, it is an invisible kingdom here in our midst. Wherever there are those who honor Jesus Christ, the King, and wherever the Spirit of the King is, there is the kingdom of God. (See also Kingdom Dynamics: The Kingdom of God, beginning as Genesis 1:1).

### ✦ **What is the greatest virtue in the kingdom? (Matthew 18:1-4)**

If pride is the greatest sin - and it is - then humility must be the greatest virtue. It is humility that allows me to acknowledge that God has a claim on my life, that I am a fallible, mortal creature, and that God is the Master of the universe. It is humility that says, "I am a sinner, and I need to be saved." Humility is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 22:4). The truths of the kingdom are only perceived by those who are humble. No one who is proud will ever gain anything from God, because "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). Those who are humble receive the grace of God and are given the secrets of the kingdom, because they come as beggars. Jesus Christ said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

### ✦ **What is the greatest sin in the kingdom? (Matthew 23:2-12)**

The greatest sin is pride - for a number of reasons (Psalm 59:12, Proverbs 8:13, 16:18, 29:23). First, pride was the fundamental sin of Satan when he first sinned. Pride says, "I can do it better than God," and Satan thought he could do a better job of running the universe than God could (Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28:12-19)! Second, pride inevitably leads to the sin of rebellion. By proudly carrying on our plan for our lives and those around us, we necessarily come into

conflict with God's plan. That is why the Bible says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

There is no way of being neutral in the kingdom. One is either for Jesus or against Him. The proud are automatically against Him, because their life is not yielded to Him and to what He wants to accomplish.

Finally, pride leads to a sense of self-sufficiency, making us unwilling to learn or receive from God or man. Jesus said to be converted and become as little children (Matthew 18:3-4). Children are trusting and they are teachable. They always want to learn from the Father.

But once a person becomes proud he supposes self-sufficiency and cannot learn, while the good things of the kingdom of God are given to those who ask. If you do not ask, you do not receive.

God's name reveals this truth. He is "I AM" (Exodus 3:14). I am what? The answer - I am the supply of your need. I am healing, wisdom, sanctification, provision, victory, and salvation. His great power extends to His people like a blank check. We are to fill in the blank according to our need. It is only when you realize that you are needy that you can truly experience God. If we feel that we have no needs, if we are totally self-sufficient, then we have closed God out of our lives. That is why pride cuts off all of the blessings of the kingdom. By pride we sin against God and against ourselves.

In Old Testament times, when God desired to destroy the enemies of Israel, He sent division among them and caused them to fight themselves. Israel often did not have to go into battle to fight because the enemy destroyed itself. Any time an organization begins to fight itself, it will go down. Unless it moves in unity, there is absolutely nothing it can do - for good or evil. Think what God's people working in unity under His blessing can accomplish according to the laws of His kingdom!

✦ **How does one become great in the kingdom of God? (Luke 22:25-27)**

The Lord Jesus chose men - ordinary fallible human beings - to be His disciples. Like people everywhere, they wrestled with pride and ambition (Matthew 20:20-23). Realizing their striving, Jesus set a little child down in their midst, saying that in the kingdom, the great are like children - humble, trusting, and teachable (Matthew 18:4). Later, when their concern for status surfaced again, He elaborated this law, saying that the greatest is the servant of all (Luke 22:25-27). This standard works today! The great in our society are people who serve the sick, the needy, and the wounded. These are great because they have given themselves to serve others. Jesus Christ leads the list. He is the greatest of all because He gave Himself for the sins of the world (Phillipians 2:1-11).

There is a very practical outworking of the law of greatness in the everyday world. Those who do serve the most people may often become the most famous and prosperous. But this was not their motive; rather, recognition seems to be the inevitable fruit of self-giving, childlike service to mankind.

✦ **What sin particularly blocks the flow of kingdom power?**

**(Matthew 18:21-35)**

Lack of forgiveness blocks access to the kingdom and to its marvelous power. (see also Matthew 6:5-15, Mark 11:22-26).

The first person you probably have not forgiven is yourself. More people lack forgiveness toward themselves than toward anybody else. They are unwilling to forgive themselves and to recognize that God says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). If you are a believer, He has already cleansed your conscience from dead works so that you might serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). God cleanses us for service in order not to leave us with the guilt of past sin. That should be dead, buried, and forgotten.

"If our heart does not condemn us," the Bible says, "we have confidence toward God" (1 John 3:21). Obviously, we cannot have continuing sin in our lives and expect forgiveness. We have to be free from ongoing conscious sin and rebellion against God. But if we are walking in the light, and walking in forgiveness, then the blood of Jesus Christ is continuously cleansing us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

The second person we have to "forgive," if we have bitterness, is God Himself. There are people who blame God because a child died, because a husband ran away, because they have been sick, because they have not had enough money. Consciously or unconsciously they think all of these things are God's fault. There is deep-seated resentment; yet you cannot be resentful toward God and experience kingdom power flowing in your life; you have to rid yourself of any bitterness toward God. That may take some soul-searching. You must ask yourself, "Am I blaming God for my situation?"

The third person you may have to forgive is a member of your family. You have to get rid of resentment, especially toward those closest to you. The husbands, the wives, the children, and the parents - all must be forgiven when slights and resentments have built up in family situations. Many people say, "Well, I didn't think that counted. I thought that was just a family matter." All lack of forgiveness has to be eliminated, especially toward every family member.

Finally, there has to be forgiveness for anybody else who has ever done anything against you. It may be that your resentment is justified. The person

may have done a very evil, terrible thing to you. You may have every legal and intellectual right to hold a grudge and to hate that person. But if you want to see kingdom life and power flow in your life, it is absolutely imperative that you forgive.

Forgive them to the point where you actually feel yourself cleansed of resentment and bitterness and are actually praying for them. If you do not, the lack of forgiveness will make it impossible for God's power to be released to and in you. The miracle life depends 100 percent on your relationship to God the Father. That relationship is built strictly on the strength of His forgiveness of your sin.

Forgiveness is the key. Other sins can be present, and if your heart condemns you for something else, then of course you do not have confidence before God. But it is lack of forgiveness that most often comes between people and God.

**✦ What kingdom law underlies all personal and corporate development?  
(Matthew 25:14-30)**

This is called the "law of use." Jesus told about a rich man who was going away on a trip and distributed different resources to each of his servants (Matthew 25:14-30). Then he said, "Do business with these until I come back." Two servants invested what they were given, but the third did not. When the master came back, he asked for an accounting. The first two were praised and rewarded for their diligence, but when Jesus told this story, the ending seemed unfair. He took away from the man who did not invest and gave his talent to the most fruitful investor, firmly announcing this law of the kingdom: "To everyone who has, more will be given . . . but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away" (Matthew 25:29). In other words, if you use what is given to you, you will gain more. If you fail to use what is given to you, you will lose even what you think you have. Whether in physical, intellectual, financial, or relational dealings, whatever is given you, however small it is, use it. Use it diligently and use it on an ever-increasing scale. Set goals to increase whatever you do. This is the secret of the kingdom, which guarantees success to any Christian who applies it.

**✦ What kingdom law is at the heart of all relationships? (Matthew 7:12)**  
Jesus Christ gave a law that is so profound that it should be adopted by every society. It is the law of reciprocity. I use the term "law" because it is a universal principle: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12). How profound an effect this "golden rule" would have if applied at every level in our world!

You would not want a neighbor to steal your tools, so do not take his. You would not like to be struck by a reckless driver, so do not drive recklessly. You would want a helping hand in time of need, so help others in need. In industry, we would not want the person upstream from us polluting the river, so we should not do it to the person downstream from us. We would not want to breathe chemically polluted air, so we should not pollute someone else's air. In the workplace, we would not want to be oppressed, so we should not oppress our employees. If applied, this kingdom law would remove the need for armies, jails, and prisons; problems would be relieved, the burden of government reduced and the productive energies of all the people released. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," if put into practice, would revolutionize our society. This is the kingdom foundation for all social relationships.

✦ **What kingdom law is necessary for the laws of reciprocity and use to work? (Matthew 7:7-8)**

Jesus taught the law of constant prayer (to God) and steadfast persistence (in human endeavor): He said, "Ask, and keep on asking; seek and keep on seeking; and knock and keep on knocking" (Matthew 7:7-8, paraphrase). The Greek present tense emphasizes continuous action: Jesus was not saying knock once and stop, but keep on knocking until the door is opened. God, in His wonderful wisdom, has built the world in such a fashion that only those who are diligent and who persevere win the highest prizes. The person who is determined to achieve his God-given goal, despite all obstacles, will wind up a winner. Those who are fainthearted and faltering, whose minds are not made up about something, will always lose.

God makes us reach high for the better things. Only a few will strive hard enough to win them. Those who keep going in spite of problems, pain, difficulty will eventually overcome them.

It is necessary to keep at something long enough to let the laws of use and reciprocity work for you. The apostle Paul proudly declared, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:7). He wrote to the Galatians, "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9). In whatever task God places you, do not quit, but stay the course.

✦ **What law guarantees the possibility of accomplishing impossible things? (Mark 11:22-23)**

The law of miracles guarantees the performance of impossible things. Miracles take place in Jesus' name, with power flowing from the invisible world where God is, through the spirit of man, where the center of our being is, through the

mind of man, where doubts can arise, and out into the world around us through thoughts and the spoken word.

But a condition must be noted. Do not doubt in your heart (Mark 11:22-24). Those who are double-minded will not receive anything (James 1:6-8). Further, Jesus goes on to say, "Whenever you stand praying, and you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you" (Mark 11:25). The great hindrance to miracles is a lack of forgiveness. Whether or not the attitude is justified by the circumstances, there must be freedom from bitterness and resentment or these will be no mountain-moving miracles. There can be no resentment, no bitterness, no jealousy, no envy - none of these things. To see miracles, there must be forgiveness and love.

**✦ How is it possible that a kingdom can be destroyed? (Luke 11:17-18)**

Jesus said, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls" (Luke 11:17-18).

This is a universal truth. The best of all plans can be destroyed if we lack unity. When there is division, plans cannot succeed. This the reason Satan does everything he can to cause division among Christians. Because we are so divided, suspicious, and focused on each other's weak points, we are breaking the most important key for corporate success: unity.

Jesus said that the world would know that God had sent Him if His disciples were one (John 17:20-23). Unity is "exhibit A" to the world, showing the supernatural origins of the Christian church. "How these Christians love one another!" was the amazed observation of the people of the Roman Empire. With unity, the church can win the world. Without unity, the church is powerless. Even evil men can find success through unity. God looked down on the tower of Babel and said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language . . . now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them" (Genesis 11:6). This is God's own appraisal of mankind in unity. Unity brings incredible strength! Nothing is impossible for people working in unity.

Pat Robertson  
Spirit-Filled Life Bible

## Kingdom Dynamics Colossians 1:13

People of the Kingdom: The Message of the Kingdom

*He has delivered us from the power of  
darkness and transferred us into the kingdom  
of the Son of His love Colossians 1:13*

The "transference" of the believer, from under Satan's authority to Christ's, is described as movement into another "kingdom".

Ensuing verses describe Christ's redemption as bringing us to a place of "completeness," that is, of spiritual adequacy, authority, or ability to live victoriously over and above the invisible powers of darkness (Colossians 1:14-16, 2:6-10).

This becomes functionally true, as opposed to merely theoretically so, when we:

- 1) Live and love as citizens of the heavenly kingdom  
(Phillipians 3:20)
- 2) Utilize this kingdom's currency, which is of **irresistible value**  
*Acts 3:6* Then Peter said "silver and gold I do not have but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."  
*Colossians 1:14* In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins
- 3) Operate as ambassadors authorized to offer kingdom peace and reconciliation to those yet unrenewed in Christ  
(II Corinthians 5:20)
- 4) Serve as kingdom militia, girded for prayerful conflict against the dark powers controlling so much of this present world  
(Ephesians 6:10-20).

The terminology of "the kingdom" hold more than poetic pictures. It is practically applicable to all our living.

(Matthew 13/Luke 17:20, 21) J.W.H.  
Spirit-Filled Life Bible



## **Kingdom Dynamics Matthew 13:1-52**

### A Present and Future Kingdom: The Message of the Kingdom

In this chapter, Jesus **introduces** parables as a **means** of teaching "kingdom" truths (Matthew 13:10-11). Of the 40 parables Jesus gave, He made direct references to the kingdom in **19**. These stories clearly relate to different time frames.

Some impact the present, teaching

- 1) the need for kingdom people to have hearing ears (Matthew 13:3-23)
- 2) the breadth of the kingdom's spread (Matthew 13:31-35)
- 3) the cost of the kingdom's acquisition (Matthew 13:44-46).

Others relate to the future, teaching

- 1) the final disposing of the fruit of the Adversary's hindrance (Matthew 13:36-43)
- 2) the final disposition of the mixed ingathering from kingdom outreach (Matthew 13:47-51).

In mixing these two aspects of the "kingdom," Jesus helps us appreciate the kingdoms as both **present** and **prospective**. The message of the kingdom is two-edged and relates to two frames of time:

First, God in Christ, is now recovering man from his double loss-relationship with God and of rulership under God. He promised this at man's Fall, illustrated it in the patriarchs and Israel's history, and now the King has come to begin fully bringing it about. The kingdom is being realized presently, in partial and personal ways as it is spread through all the Earth by the Holy Spirit's power in the church.

Second, the kingdom will be realized finally in consummate and conclusive ways only at the return of Jesus Christ and by His reign over all the Earth. What we experience of His triumph now, in part, will then be fully manifest (I Corinthians 15:24, Revelation 11:15, I Corinthians 13:9-10). This complete view allows for our understanding and applying the **principles of "kingdom come"** without falling into the confusion of expecting **now** what the Bible says will only be **then**.

(John 3:1-5/Colossians 1:13) J.W.H.  
Spirit-Filled Life Bible

**SECTION 5**

**BREAK UP YOUR FALLOW GROUND ...  
IT IS TIME TO**

**BEHOLD YOUR GOD!**

HOSEA 10:12

II PETER 1:2

What is the purpose of all the teaching and preaching that goes on in the Church? Why does our Lord continually urge us in scripture to:

**Study, Reflect, Memorize,  
Contemplate, Meditate, and Pray over  
The Holy Word of God?**

Why such a strong exhortation to prioritize and sacrifice our time, and agonize over understanding the Word, and at all costs to "keep our Bibles open"? It means there is something that we don't know which is very important that we come to know ... but we are slow to learn ... and this knowledge does not come through our five natural senses, but by Divine revelation. We do not know God or ourselves, and apart from Scripture, it would be impossible to do so. As the Psalmist says:

*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are **mindful of Him** and the Son of man that You visit him. Psalm 8:3-4*

As we look deeper into Scripture we find that as Christians we have become partakers of **His** Divine nature (II Peter 1:4). We couldn't know that apart from the Word of God. We do not know our God as we ought, or all the spiritual blessings He desires to communicate to us through our coming to know Him, and all He has accomplished on our behalf.

Open your Bible to II Peter 1:1-2. Our recurring focus will be verse 2, as we look at various related passages:

- 1) *Simon Peter, a bondservant and Apostle of Jesus Christ to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.*
- 2) **Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.** (KJV, Wuest)

The **Grace** is sanctifying grace, the work of the Holy Spirit producing to the yielded believer his own fruit. This **Peace** is sanctifying peace, the tranquility of heart that is the result of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

**Knowledge** here is **epignosis**, a full, perfect, precise knowledge, as opposed to **gnosis**, imperfect, partial knowledge. *Epignosis* implies a more intimate and personal relationship than *gnosis*.

Grace and peace are multiplied in and through this more intimate heart knowledge of Jesus Christ in contrast to a mere barren *gnosis* knowledge. This grace and peace are in the sphere of this knowledge and is produced by it. *Epignosis* speaks of **experiential knowledge**, knowledge gained by experiencing. This knowledge of the Lord Jesus possessed by the believer therefore, is not a mere intellectual knowledge of the facts concerning Him, acquired by a study of Scripture, but a heart experience of what and who He is gained by study **plus** a personal association with Him by means of the Word and the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a person with personal knowledge through intimate fellowship and communion. As Paul said in Philippians 3:7-10:

*But what things were gain to me, these things I have counted loss yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge (epignosis) of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them rubbish, that I might gain Christ . . . that I might **know Him** and the power of His resurrection (to come to know by experiencing Him).*

Paul wants to come to know the Lord Jesus in that **fullness of experiential knowledge** ... he wants to **know in an experiential way** Christ and the power of Christ's resurrection. This expression "**gain**" does not refer to Paul's **acquisition** of Christ as Savior, but to Paul's appropriation into His life as a Christian. The perfections, graces, power, and fragrance of the Person of Christ, and this appropriation comes through **this** kind of knowledge.

By what means does this epignosis or experiential knowledge come about? Let's find the answer by looking deeper into the verse of our focus.

*Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through (or, "in the sphere of") and by the full knowledge of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.*

Let's glean from the original language at this point ... The name **Jesus** is the English spelling of the Greek word *iesous* ... this in turn is the Greek spelling of the Hebrew word, *Yeshua*, which means "**Jehovah saves**".

There are three cardinal (chief, important) doctrines of the Christian faith **in** the name of Jesus:

The Deity of the Lord Jesus  
Jesus Christ's Humanity  
Jesus' sacrificial Atonement

Jehovah could not save sinners except on the basis of **justice satisfied**. This had to be in order to maintain His righteous government. Justice to be satisfied demanded that sin be paid for, and only God could satisfy His own demands. So, in the Person of His Son, He stepped down from His judgment throne in Heaven, and **took upon Himself** the guilt and penalty of human sin. He couldn't do this except by the incarnation (by becoming man) and the cross (by dying).

Jehovah, our God and Savior Jesus the Messiah, wants us to know this about Him, He wants to reveal His glory. The name **Jehovah** is derived from the Hebrew verb *havah*, meaning "to be" or "being". The idea is that of existence, self-existence. Thus, Jehovah is the Eternal Self-Existent One, without beginning and without end.

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.  
Hebrews 13:8, Revelation 4:8*

There are some Hebrew scholars who see in the word *havah* part of the verb "to become", and a verb of becoming does not necessarily mean "coming into being", or coming into existence, but rather **becoming something** to someone. Our Lord Jesus Christ is "**The Becoming One**" in the sense that He becomes this or that to His people. **The significance of the name Jehovah is in the revelation of God, becoming to His people what they need in order to supply that need.**

There are many instances of Deity being ascribed to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, but none more clear and convincing than the fact that the Majestic Name of Jehovah, the Great I AM, is applied to Him.

In Exodus 17:2 & 7, we are told that the people tempted **Jehovah** in Rephidim. In I Corinthians 10:9, we learn that it was **Christ** that the Israelites tempted.

In Isaiah 6:1-5, the prophet saw **Jehovah**, sitting on a throne lifted up, yet that vision was actually the pre-incarnate Christ.

Isaiah also wrote:

*"The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare  
ye the way of the Lord (Jehovah) make straight in the  
desert a highway for our God. Isaiah 40:3*

John the Baptist quotes this passage introducing the Lord Jesus of Nazareth as Jehovah.

In Joel 2:32, we are told that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord (Jehovah) shall be saved. In Romans 10:13, we learn that it is the Lord Jesus who saves.

We are familiar with the Old Testament interpretation of Jehovah in the statement "**I AM THAT I AM**" (Exodus 3:14). Among the New Testament writers the Apostle John was divinely inspired to set forth our Lord Jesus as the great "**I AM**". The gospel according to John is particularly the gospel of deity. In this book the three great particular names of Deity: **Elohim, Jehovah, Adonai** are all ascribed to Jesus Christ.

To the Samaritan woman, Christ said, "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth . . ." The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ, when He is come, He will tell us all things". Jesus said unto her, "*I that speak unto thee AM HE ...*" John 4:24-26.

In your Bible you will notice that the last word "he" is in italics, meaning it was not in the original, so that our Lord really said was:

**"It is I AM that speaketh unto thee."**

When the disciples were crossing the storm tossed sea toward Capernaum, Jesus appeared walking on the water and said,

**"It is I AM; be not afraid".** John 6:20 AMP

And it was to the Pharisees that Jesus said,

*"For if ye believe not that I AM (He has been added), ye shall die in your sins".* John 8:24

In addition to these passages which show Jesus to be the "I AM", Jehovah of the Old Testament, John records eight sayings of Christ in which He compounded the name "I AM" with other descriptive terms:

**I AM** the Bread of Life John 6:35, 48, 51

**I AM** the Light of the World John 8:12, 9:5

**I AM** the Door John 10:7, 9

**I AM** the Son of God John 10:36

**I AM** the Good Shepherd John 10:11, 14

**I AM** the Resurrection and The Life John 11:25

**I AM** the True Vine John 15:1, 5

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

At this point you may ask, "What does having revelation (or experiential) knowledge of the name of Jehovah have to do with my practical walk in the Lord?" "How is grace and peace multiplied unto me through knowing this name?" "What does this kind of knowledge - intimate, full knowledge, of our Lord have to do with the title of this study, 'Break up your fallow ground for it is time to Behold your God!'"

The answers to these questions find their roots in a passage in Revelation 19:11-12 and is consummated in Revelation 2, where our Lord addresses the Church at Pergamos. To have "light" on this particular truth will be invaluable for the motivation for further studies on the names of God, and will challenge us to **walk in the Power of His Name.**

In Revelation 19 ... the Apostle John says:

- 11) *Now I **saw** heaven opened, and **behold**, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True and in righteousness He judges and makes war*
- 12) *His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He **had a name written that no one knew except Himself***
- 13) *He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood and His name is called **THE WORD OF GOD.***

This is the question that is vital for us to ask is this:

Why in verse 12 "A name written that no one knew except Him ..."

And here begins the unfolding of a hidden truth ...

**"Because so great is Christ's power that His name is known only by Himself"** (Expository Bible Commentary).

For you see, knowledge of the name is in Antiquity associated with the power of a "god". When a name becomes known, then the power is shared with those to whom the disclosure is made. In order to understand the depth of this truth, again I quote from Expository Bible Dictionary, which gives a backdrop for understanding the significance of a name revealed:

Pritchard cites an Egyptian text concerning the goddess Isis plotting to **learn the secret name** of the Supreme god RE to **gain his hidden power for herself**. The one who knew the hidden name received the power and status of the god who revealed it. Hence, the name was jealously guarded by the god.

Since the **Two Names** of Christ are revealed in the following verses in this vision: "The Word of God (verse 13) and "KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS" (verse 10), it may be concluded that the exclusive power of Christ over all creation is **now to be shared** with His faithful followers (Revelation 3:21, 5:10, 22:5).

For us practically the exalted, glorified Christ communicates through the Apostle John to us as he did to the Church at Pergamos. The Church of Pergamos was a compromising church, full of idolatry ... our Lord promises for those who overcome ... for those who return to Him and **come out of their idolatry, a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it ...**

To Christians tempted to compromise their **loyalty** to Christ to gain the favor of the pagan gods, Christ generously offers **Himself** and the **Power of His** name ... so that those who have faith **IN HIM** may overcome.

In their book, *Living and Praying in the Name of Jesus' Name*, Eastman & Hayford say .

**Living and praying in Jesus' name** means much more than merely voicing a three word expression at the end of prayer. It is to move **into Jesus' Name** through prayer; it is to step into each new day in the **power of Who He Is**.

Jehovah - our Lord Jesus Christ is the **Becoming One** ... The one who in the very nature of His name desires to **reveal Himself** to us, His covenant people, so that we might behold and partake of His glory.

In John 17, we are invited to behold an intimate time that Jesus had with the Father and by listening to His heart and prayer, we can be assured of His desires for us . . .

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me when I am, that they may BEHOLD My glory which You gave Me; for You have loved Me before the foundation of the world ...

Let our ambition be as holy as Paul's . . .

*but what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ . . .yet indeed, I also count all things loss for excellence of the knowledge (a revelation knowledge) of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, that I might **gain Christ** . . .that I might **know Him and the power of His resurrection** . *Philippians 3:7, 8, 10**



Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to BEHOLD YOUR GOD, and to walk in His glory.

The Lord says *"I will set him on High because he has **known** my name."*  
*Psalm 91:14*

. . . Grace and peace be multiplied unto you **through the knowledge** of our God and Savior Jesus Christ . . .

### **WHAT IS A NAME?**

Quote from Andrew Murray

What is a person's name? It is a word or expression in which a person is represented to us. When I mention or hear a name, it brings to mind the whole man, what I know of him, and also the impression he has made on me. The name of a king includes his honor, his power, his kingdom. His name is the symbol of his power. And so each name of God embodies and represents some part of the glory of the Unseen One. The name of Christ is the expression of everything He has done and everything He is and lives to do as our Mediator.

## FULLER REVELATION

Perseverance Hosea 6:3 Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge Him. As surely as the sun rises, He will appear; He will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."

Intimate Fellowship with Christ Matthew 13:11 He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the Kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.

Abiding in Christ's Words John 8:31 To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, "If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Will Come in Due Time John 13:7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

Through the Guidance of the Holy Spirit John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come.

Promised to the Disciples John 16:25 "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about My Father.

## GAIN THROUGH LOSS

Loss of Earthly Treasures secures Spiritual Matthew 19:21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me."

Self-sacrifice a Paying Investment Matthew 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for My sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.

A Spiritual Paradox Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it.

Humility leads to Exaltation Mark 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

Life comes out of Death John 12:24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

Paul gave up ALL, and won the Great Prize Philippians 3:8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

## DIVINE REVELATIONS

Daniel 2:22 He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with Him.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets.

John 15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from My Father I have made known to you (Romans 16:26).

I Corinthians 2:9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him"-

I Corinthians 2:10 but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

Ephesians 1:9 And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ,

Ephesians 1:10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. (Ephesians 3:5, Colossians 1:26).

## ENLIGHTENMENT

Psalms 18:28 For You will light my lamp; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.

Psalms 119:130 The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.

Proverbs 29:13 The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: The Lord gives light to the eyes of both.

Isaiah 29:18 In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.

Isaiah 60:19 The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory.

Acts 26:18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.

II Corinthians 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

I Peter 2:9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.

### **Three Degrees of Religious Knowledge**

In our knowledge of divine things three degrees may be distinguished: the knowledge furnished by reason, by faith and by spiritual experience respectively.

These three degrees of knowledge correspond to the departments of the tabernacle in the ancient Levitical order: the outer court, the holy place and the holy of holies.

Far in, beyond the "second veil," was the holiest of all, having as its lone piece of furniture the Ark of the Covenant with the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat. There between the outstretched wings dwelt in awesome splendor the fire of God's presence, the Shekinah. No light of nature reached that sacred place, only the pure radiance of Him who is light and in whom there is no darkness at all. To that solemn Presence no one could approach except the high priest once each year with blood of atonement.

Farther out, and separated by a heavy veil, was the holy place, a sacred place indeed but removed from the Presence and always accessible to the priests of Israel. Here also the light of sun and moon was excluded; light was furnished by the shining of seven golden candlesticks.

The court of the priests was farther still, a large enclosure in which were the brazen altar and the laver. This was open to the sky and received the normal light of nature.

All was of God and all was divine, but the quality of the worshipper's knowledge became surer and more sublime as he moved in from the outer court toward the mercy seat and the Presence, where at last he was permitted to gaze upon the cherubim of glory and the deep burning Fire that glowed between their outstretched wings.

All this illustrates if it does not typify the three degrees of knowledge possible to a Christian. It is not proper that we should press every detail in an effort to find in the beautiful Old Testament picture more than is actually there; but the most cautious expositor could hardly object to our using the earthly and external to throw into relief the internal and the heavenly.

Nature is a great teacher and at her feet we may learn much that is good and ennobling. The Bible itself teaches this: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night into night showeth knowledge." "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." "Behold the fowls of the air." "For the invisible things of

Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." Reason working on data furnished by observation of natural objects tells us a lot about God and spiritual things. This is too obvious to require proof. Everyone knows it.

But there is knowledge beyond and above that furnished by observation; it is knowledge received by faith. "In religion faith plays the part by experience in the things of the world." Divine revelation through the inspired Scriptures offers data which lie altogether outside of and above the power of the mind to discover. The mind can make its deductions after it has received these data by faith, but it cannot find them by itself. No technique is known to man by which he can learn, for instance, that God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth or that there are three Persons in the Godhead; that God is love or that Christ dies for sinners, or that He now sits at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. If we ever come to know these things it must be by receiving as true a body of doctrine which we have no way of verifying. This is the knowledge of faith.

There is yet a purer knowledge than this; it is knowledge by direct spiritual experience. About it there is an immediacy that places it beyond doubt. Since it was not acquired by reason operating on intellectual data, the possibility of error is eliminated. Through the indwelling Spirit the human spirit is brought into immediate contact with higher spiritual reality. It looks upon, tastes, feels and sees the powers of the world to come and has a conscious encounter with God invisible.

Let it be understood that such knowledge is experienced rather than acquired. It does not consist of findings about something; it is the thing itself. It is not a compound of religious truths. It is an element which cannot be separated into parts. One who enjoys this kind of knowledge is able to understand the exhortation in the Book of Job: "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be a peace." To such a man God is not a conclusion drawn from evidence nor is He the sum of what the Bible teaches about Him. He knows God in the last irreducible meaning of the word *know*. It may almost be said that *God happened to him*.

Maybe Christ said all this more simply in John 14:21; "I . . . will manifest Myself to him." For what have we been laboring here but the sublimely simple New Testament teaching that the Triune God wills to dwell in the redeemed man's heart, constantly making His presence known? What on earth or in heaven above can be a greater beatitude?

From: "Man: The Dwelling Place of God" by A.W. Tozer

**STUDY QUESTIONS**

If you can, please use scripture passages that you find to answer questions as well as your own thoughts.

1) Why is it impossible to know God or ourselves outside of Scripture?

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2) Why does God want us to keep our Bibles "open" at all costs?

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3) Through what means is "Grace and Peace multiplied unto you"?

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4) What does the name "Jesus" literally mean?

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5) What are the 3 cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith found in the name of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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10) What are the hindrances to pressing on to know God that the Lord has made known to you through these studies, and what have you learned that will help you be "un-hindered"?

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11) Is Jesus of Nazareth JEHOVAH? How do you know this, and if you do, what does it mean to you in your walk with God?

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12) What does it mean to be "in Christ"?

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## GENESIS 32 BEHOLDING THE LORD

Psalm 24:5-6 states that Jacob sought the face of the Lord, and thus received "The Blessing". It also says,

*This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,  
who seek Your face. Psalm 24:6*

Generation means "many descendants". This verse has also been translated as, "This is the generation of those who seek Him like Jacob did." To the one pursuing the Lord, one of the "generation" of them that seek Him, two questions come to mind:

- 1) How did Jacob seek God's face? and
- 2) What was "The Blessing" that he received?

The believer who is following hard after the Lord, and longing to see His face, belongs to that "generation" and spiritual lineage of Jacob, and may also receive everything that Jacob received.

This chapter in Genesis is a wonderfully complete picture of the process God takes us through in order to reveal Himself to us. Because He does not reveal Himself all at once, it is a cyclical process. As we continue to walk after him day by day, He takes us through this process in beholding Him layer by layer, as each veil is removed from our "eyes", thus seeing another aspect of His character, His name, His nature, and His glory.

This is a 3-step process:

- 1) The Word of God, or the WRITTEN Word
- 2) The PRESENCE of God, or the REVEALED Word
- 3) UNION with God, or the INDWELLING Word

The process of Beholding always begins with the WORD of God. Whether it is from personally reading in Scripture, or hearing God's promises through someone speaking His Scripture, we must first come to know there is Someone and Something to pursue, to go for, to seek after. Back in Genesis 28:13-15, Jacob heard the Word of God (directly from God) and then knew there was Someone and Something to seek. There is an essential ingredient to be added at this beginning point ... although it was God that initiated (God always initiates) Jacob had to believe ... Faith is the needed ingredient, as Hebrews 11:6 states:

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him (God),  
for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and  
that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Between Genesis 28 and Genesis 32 we find Jacob plugging along in his walk with God, walking by faith, having good times and hard times, just like us. We see that although he is walking with God, he still is depending upon his own strength, intellect, and conniving. In order for him to see more of God, to know Him more deeply, God will have to deal with him.

But God in His graciousness begins with a "heavenly vision", a glimpse behind the worldly veil into the realm of the spiritual in order to strengthen and draw us on. Jacob saw the angels of God encamping around him. He had no idea the intense struggle that lay ahead of him, but it was for this purpose that God allowed him to see physically the angels surrounding him and his family. If we receive visions or revelations, or gifting from the Lord, know that there will be an upcoming struggle to go through, and the deeper the vision or gift, the more intense the struggle will be. These things are to encourage our faith, and strengthen us in spirit, as Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, when angels came to minister to Him, before the Cross. These visions or gifting are also to awaken our thirst and desire for more of the Lord, that we continue on in beholding Him.

Right after this vision, God allows the circumstance that will be the tool used in this process of knowing God ... the circumstance of **big trouble** ... Esau! Esau was the older brother of Jacob that Jacob had cheated out of his blessing and inheritance twenty years earlier. Jacob receives this report from his servants:

*We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and 400 men with him ... Genesis 32:6*

Verse 7 tells us Jacob was "greatly afraid and distressed", and immediately begins working in the flesh to "fix" this problem. Yet, Jacob is a man of God, and is seeking the Lord, and in verses 9-12, we find him crying out to God for deliverance. Notice in verse 12, Jacob reminds God of His promised "Blessing" that God had given him way back in Genesis 28. This is acting on faith in God's Word. Seeking God in His Word, and holding Him to it by faith. The Lord is pleased with this kind of faith. Jacob was neither presumptuous nor irreverent, he threw himself on the mercy and Word of his God.

We see in verses 9-10 the self-revelation of one's own worthlessness and dependence upon God. That's what the Word should do in us, (if we let it) show us our need in ourselves, and point us to God, the only One who can help.

Next begins the "emptying", the progressive stripping away of all we have. This is not a one-time event, as we see in verse 16, "he delivered them ... every drove itself ... pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves". So also in verse 19, "so he commanded the second and the third, and all who followed the droves ..."

He piece by piece "delivered over" all he had, until we find in verses 22-23 he let go his most intimate and cherished things, his family. It says they crossed over the ford of Jabbok ... the name Jabbok literally means "he will empty out" (Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names). So we see in our beholding process an "emptying out", until like Jacob in verse 24, we are left alone.

When he was alone the Lord Himself (as the Angel of the Lord) came to struggle with Jacob. We would like to think that when we relinquish all we have, and find ourselves totally alone, that God would then reveal Himself, and we would be left "glorifying" in His Presence. No so. It isn't enough for a man to struggle with his things, his possessions, his dignity, his reputation, his family. One must then struggle with God Himself. This is the same God that says elsewhere in Scripture, "If you seek Me with all your heart and soul, I will let you find Me." As Jacob physically wrestled with God, so we too wrestle with the Lord in His Word. This is the first step. We seek Him in His Word, we think, ponder, meditate upon, reason, argue. In Isaiah 1:18 God calls to us,

*Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord.*

The word "reason" means:

... to reckon thoroughly, to deliberate by reflection or discussion, cast in mind, consider, dispute. It's root meaning is: to take inventory, estimate, count, number (Strongs #1260 & 3049).

We see in the fact that Jacob "wrestled" with God, another insight: The word "Wrestle" in Hebrew means "to make the dust fly" meaning their rolling around on the ground fighting caused much dust to fly, or cloud up. We, in our flesh are made of ... the dust of the earth. When we wrestle with God's Word, we find much "dust" or flesh rising up, in order for us to see it, acknowledge it as sin, confess it, and be cleansed.

In verse 24, we see that Jacob wrestled with "the Man" **until the breaking of day** (or the dawn). In beholding the Lord, one must continue this wrestling with the Lord in His Word until **light** comes, or **revelation**. This is the 2nd step in our process, the Presence of God or the Revealed Word. When the Lord saw that Jacob was so intent on holding onto Him, the Lord "struck his hip" and put his hip out of joint. (In the Hebrew *Tanakh*, it says the Lord wrenched his hip bone from the socket). This seems like a terrible thing for the Lord to do, but it was necessary to test Jacob, in order to prove that he would continue to "hold" on. We see this in our own lives, when we are holding onto the Lord, and He allows something that will stun us, and sap all our remaining strength. Yet, we continue to hold on, in spite of the pain.

Now, I believe that Jacob knew this whole time of struggle that he was struggling with the Lord, or else he wouldn't have held onto Him, and asked Him to bless him. (Verse 26, only God can bless, angels do not.) As the day was breaking, (revelation was coming, dawning on him), the Lord Himself asks him to "let go" of Him. I believe God was once more testing him. How often do we "let go" at the first sign of "the dawn", revelation? Instead, we are to be like Jacob, who not only wanted the revelation, but **also the Blessing**.

*Verse 26: And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks".  
But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"*

In the Lord asking Jacob his name, He was humbling him in order to exalt him ... by a change of name, and character. Jacob admits his humanity in his name, (in Scripture God uses the name Jacob at times to speak of our humanity, and uses the name Israel to speak of our spirit) as we must come to admit in the presence of God that we are but dust.

Then God changes his name. The name "Israel" has differing translations, one being, "the Strength of God", meaning, when Jacob wrestled with God, he held on until the end. Jacob was depleted of all his own strength, and in continuing to hold on, received the strength of God. The Lord must have empty vessels to fill with His own life.

Now Jacob asked the Lord **His** name. The words in verse 29 "tell me" are literally the word "**reveal**" (Pocket Interlinear Old Testament). I believe all through their struggle, Jacob was prevented from seeing "the Man's" face ... he knew it was God (in human form), but was now asking for a revelation of His name. I believe that God replied to him, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" because Jacob **knew**. I believe at this point the Lord showed His face in full revelation, and blessed him. This was such a dramatic event in Jacob's life, that he names that place "Peniel", which means "the face of God". Verse 31 says that just as he crossed over "the face of God", the sun rose on him ... Although Jacob's experience was a one-time event, in our lives this is a cyclical process. Each time the Lord reveals another aspect of Himself, of His Name, we too go through a "change of name", in a sense, a change, a transformation in our character, our person. Each successive "event" with the Lord in our lives will find us sapped of our own strength, in order to be filled and continue on in the strength of the Lord. We will press on and struggle until we see the face of God revelation by revelation.

The third step in our process is **union** with God, or God indwelling. We see in the next chapter of Genesis, 33:10-11, that as Jacob (now Israel) meets up with his brother Esau, the formally dreaded event was transformed into a heavenly one. Jacob tells his brother, "I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Please take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because **I have enough.**"

Before Jacob's revelation, he feared this meeting. Now, after the revelation and his subsequent transformation, he is able to see "the face of God" in this previously dreaded event. He is able to re-interpret everything around him according to his new vision and revelation. Enough so, that he can now pour out to his brother the blessing. This is where ministry begins in our life. We must first receive from the Lord, before we can begin to pour out to another. Too few Christians will suffer through this entire process in order to get the full revelation and transformation.

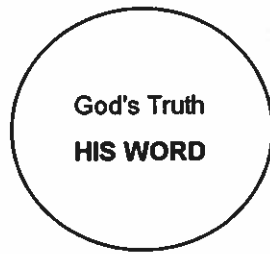
In the last verse of chapter 33 (verse 20) we see Jacob, now Israel calling His God by a new name as well ... ***El Elohe Israel*** ... which means,

### **GOD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL**

I believe the Blessing Jacob received was union with God. Jacob's name was changed, and so was the Lord's. Jacob received a new revelation of the Lord. He was previously known to him as "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" ... now, He was the God of Israel. This is very significant. Everything that God was in a sense, Israel now was (as far as this revelation).

So we see how we must seek after God as Jacob did, in all the process, and we see that the Blessing we receive is multi-faceted. We receive revelation and knowledge of God, we see His face, we know Him by his names, we become changed into His image in the process. We receive His strength, we are filled with Him, and share in all He is, and has.

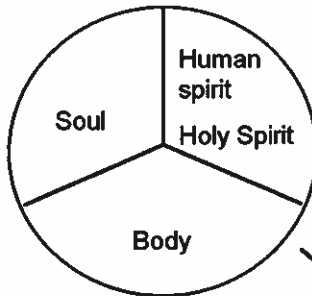
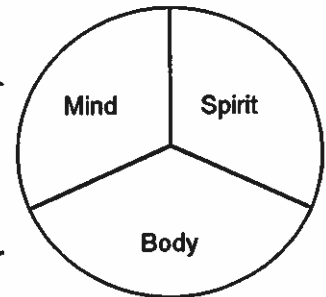
# RENEWING THE MIND



inner prosperity Joshua 1:8  
fruitfulness Ps 1:2-3; 49:3  
insight Ps 119:97-99  
satisfaction Ps 63:5-6  
peace Is 26:3  
change II Cor 3:18

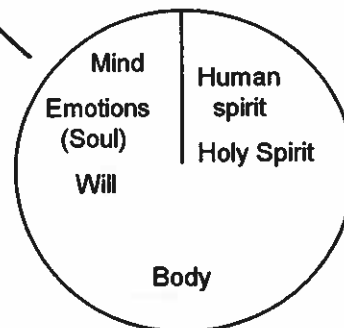
## MIND

(nous) primarily involved in ginoko  
(v): KNOWING to be taking in knowledge



## FULL KNOWLEDGE

EPI GINOSKO: full, exact knowledge. A more complete and special full perception of the thing or Person known.  
Union, participation involved.



The whole person is now involved.

## THE SPIRIT GLORIFYING CHRIST

*It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. John 16:7, 14*

There is a twofold glorifying of the Son of which Scripture speaks. The one is by the Father, the other by the Spirit: the one takes place in heaven, the other here on earth. By the one He is glorified "in God himself"; by the other, "in us" (John 13:32; 17:10). Of the former Jesus spake: "If God be glorified in him (the Son of Man), God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." And again, in the high-priestly prayer, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son . . . And now, O Father, glorify me with thyself." Of the latter He said: "The Spirit shall glorify me. I am glorified in them."

To glorify is to manifest the hidden excellence and worth of an object. Jesus, the Son of Man, was to be glorified when His human nature was admitted to the full participation of the power and glory in which God dwells. He entered into the perfect spirit-life of the heavenly world, of the divine being. All the angels worshipped Him as the Lamb on the throne. Of this heavenly, spiritual glory of Christ, the human mind cannot conceive or apprehend in truth. It can only be truly known by experience, by being communicated to and appropriated in the inner life. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of the glorified Christ. He comes down as the Spirit of glory and reveals the glory of Christ in us by dwelling and working in us, in the life and the power of that glory in which Christ dwells. He makes Christ glorious to us and in us. Likewise, He glorifies Him in us and through us in them who have eyes to see. The Son seeks not His own glory: the Father glorifies Him in heaven, the Spirit glorifies Him in our hearts.

But before this glorifying of Christ by the Spirit could take place, He first needed to go away from His disciples. They could not have Him in the flesh and in the Spirit too; His bodily presence would hinder the spiritual indwelling. They had to part with the Christ they had before they could receive the indwelling Christ glorified by the Holy Spirit. Christ himself had to give up the life He had before He could be glorified in heaven or in us. Even so, in union with Him, we must give up the Christ we have known, the measure of the life we had in Him, if we are indeed to have Him glorified to us and in us by the Holy Spirit.

I am persuaded that at this point many of God's dear children need the teaching: "It is expedient that I go away." Like His disciples, they have believed in Jesus; they love and obey Him; they have experienced much of the inexpressible blessedness of knowing and following Him. And yet they feel that the deep rest



and joy, the holy light and the divine power of His abiding indwelling, as they see it in Holy Scripture, is not yet theirs. Now in secret and then under the blessed influence of the fellowship of the saints, or the teaching of God's servants in church or conferences, they have been helped and wonderfully blessed. Christ has become very precious. And yet they see something still before them—promises not perfectly fulfilled; wants not fully satisfied. The only reason can be this: they have not yet fully inherited the promise "The Comforter shall abide with you, and he shall be in you. He shall glorify me." They do not fully understand the expediency of Christ's going away to come again glorified in the Spirit. They have not yet been able to say. "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we do not know Him as such."

"Knowing Christ after the flesh" must come to an end—we must make way for knowing Him in the power of the Spirit. After the flesh means in the power of the external, of words and thoughts, of efforts and feelings, of influences and aids coming from within, from men and means. The believer who has received the Holy Spirit but does not know fully what this implies, and so does not give up entirely to His indwelling and leading, still, to a great extent, has confidence in the flesh. Admitting that he can do nothing without the Spirit, he still labors and struggles vainly to believe and live as he knows he should. Confessing most heartily, and at times experiencing most blessedly, that Christ alone is his life and strength, it grieves and almost wearies him to think how often he fails in the maintenance of that attitude of trustful dependence in which Christ can live out His life in him. He tries to believe all there is to be believed of Christ's nearness and keeping and indwelling, and yet, somehow, there are still breaks and interruptions; it is as if faith is not what it should be—the substance of the things we had hoped for. The reason must be that the faith itself was still too much the work of the mind, in the power of the flesh, in the wisdom of man. There has indeed been a revelation of Christ the faithful keeper, the abiding friend, but that revelation has been, in part, taken hold of by the flesh and the fleshly mind. This has made it powerless. Christ, the Christ of glory, the doctrine of the indwelling Christ, has been received into the mixed life—partly flesh and partly spirit. It is only the Spirit that can glorify Christ. We must give up and cast away the old way of knowing and believing and having Christ. We must know Christ no more after the flesh. "The Spirit shall glorify me."

But what does it mean that the Spirit glorifies Christ? What is this glory of Christ that He reveals, and how does He do it? We learn from Scripture what the glory of Christ is. We read in Hebrews, "We see not yet all things made subject to him. But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor." To Him all things have been made subject. So our Lord connects His being glorified, in both the passages we have taken as our text, with all things being given to Him. "He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine. All things, whatsoever the Father hath, are mine; therefore, said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you." "All things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in

them." In exalting Him, above all rule and power and dominion, the Father has put all things in subjection under His feet: He gave unto Him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow. The kingdom and the power and the glory are ever one: Unto Him that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb in the midst of the throne, be the glory and the dominion for ever. It is as sitting on the throne of the divine glory, with all things put in subjection under His feet (Ephesians 1:20-22), that Jesus has been glorified in heaven.

When the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus in us, He reveals Him to us in His glory. He takes of the things of Christ and declares them to us. It is not that He gives us a thought, or image, or vision of that glory as it is above us in heaven; but He shows it to us as a personal experience and possession. He makes us partaker of it in our innermost being. He shows Christ as present in us. All the true, living knowledge we have of Christ is through the Spirit of God. When Christ comes into us as a weak infant; when He grows and increases and is formed within us; when we learn to trust and follow and serve Him-this is all of the Holy Spirit. All this, however, may consist, even as in the disciples, with much darkness and failure. But when the Holy Spirit does His perfect work and reveals the glorified Lord, the throne of His glory is set up on the heart and He rules over every enemy. Every power is brought into subjection, every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Through the whole of the renewed nature there rises the song, "Glory to Him that sitteth on the throne." Though the confession holds true to the end. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," the holy presence of Christ as ruler and governor so fills the heart and life that His dominion rules over all. Sin has no dominion. The law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

If this be the glorifying of Christ which the Spirit brings, it is easy to see the way that leads to it. The enthronement of Jesus in His glory can take place only in the heart that has promised implicit and unreserved obedience. It is in the heart that has had the courage to believe that He will take His power and reign, and in faith that expects that every enemy will be kept under His feet. It feels that it needs and it is willing to have; it claims and accepts Christ as Lord of all, with everything in life, great or small, taken possession of and guided by Him, through His Holy Spirit. It is in the loving, obedient disciple the Spirit is promised to dwell; in him the Spirit glorifies Christ.

This can take place only when the fullness of time has come to the believing soul. The history of the Church, as a whole, repeats itself in each individual. Until the time appointed of the Father, who has the times and seasons in His own hands, the heir is under guardians and stewards, and does not differ from a bondservant. When the fullness of time is come and faith is perfected, the Spirit of the glorified one enters in power and Christ dwells in the heart. Yes, the history of Christ himself repeats itself in the soul. In the temple there were two

holy places-one before the view, the other within the veil, the Most Holy. In His earthly life Christ dwelled and ministered in the Holy Place without the veil: the veil of the flesh kept Him out of the Most Holy. It was only when the veil of the flesh was rent, and He died to sin completely and forever, that He could enter the inner sanctuary of the full glory of the Spirit-life in heaven.

Likewise, the believer who longs to have Jesus glorified within by the Spirit, must, however blessed his life has been in the knowledge and service of his Lord, learn that there is something better. In him too, the veil of the flesh must be rent; he must enter into this special part of Christ's work through the new and living way into the Holiest of All. "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." The soul must see how completely Jesus has triumphed over the flesh, and entered with His flesh into the Spirit-life. It must realize how perfect, in virtue of that triumph, is His power over all in our flesh that could hinder and it must know also how perfect in the power of the Spirit the entrance and the indwelling of Jesus as keeper and king can be. The veil is taken away and the life before lived in the Holy Place is now one in the Most Holy, in the full presence of His glory.

This rending of the veil, this enthronement of Jesus as the glorified one in the heart, is not always with the sound of trumpet and shouting. It may be so at times, and with some, but in other cases it takes place amid the deep awe and trembling of a stillness where not a sound is heard. Zion's king still comes meek and lowly with the kingdom to the poor in spirit. Without form or comeliness He enters in, and when thought and feeling fail, the Holy Spirit glorifies Him to the faith that sees not but believes. The eye of flesh did not see Him on the throne; to the world it was a mystery; so, just when all within appears hopeless and empty, the Spirit secretly works the divine assurance, and then the blessed experience that Christ, the glorified, has taken up His abode within. The soul knows, in silent worship and adoration, that Jesus is near; that His throne in the heart is established in righteousness; that the promise is now fulfilled; "The Spirit shall glorify me."

Blessed Lord Jesus, I worship Thee in the glory which the Father has given Thee. I bless Thee for the promise that the glory shall be revealed in the hearts of Thy disciples to dwell in them and fill them. This is Thy glory, that all that the Father has is now Thine: of this Thy glory in its infinite fullness and power Thou hast said the Holy Spirit shall take to show it unto us. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. The hearts and lives of Thy beloved may be filled with it too. Lord, let it be so!

Blessed by Thy holy name for all in whom the rich beginnings of the fulfillment have already come! Lord, let it go on from glory to glory.

To this end teach us, we pray Thee, to maintain our separation to Thee unbroken: heart and life shall be Thine alone. To this end teach us to hold fast our confidence without wavering, that the Spirit who is within us will perfect His work. Above all, teach us to yield ourselves in ever-increasing dependence and emptiness to wait for the Spirit's teaching and leading. We do desire to have no confidence in the flesh, its wisdom, or its righteousness. We would bow ever lower and deeper before Thee in the holy fear and reverence of the truth that Thy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Thy glory, is within us to do His divine work. Blessed Lord! let Him rise in great power, and have dominion within us, that our heart may by Him be fully made the temple and the kingdom in which Thou alone are glorified, in which Thy glory fills all. Amen.

### **Summary**

1. It was the true Christ these disciples knew; and it was a true knowledge of Christ they had, as far as it went (Matthew 16). It was a knowledge that influenced them mightily, drawing them to follow and love Him. But it was not the full knowledge-the knowledge in Spirit and truth; nor yet the spiritual knowledge of Christ glorified and abiding in them through the Holy Spirit. This is the true second blessing: "If that which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory, by reason of the glory that surpasseth."
2. Oh, that God may teach us this lesson: the one great work of the Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, is to make the glorified Christ always present in us-not in thoughts or memory only but within us, in our innermost being, in our life and experience.
3. Can it be? Jesus, the glorified one, always present with us, dwelling in us? It can be. The Holy Spirit has been given by the Father for this one work. And He dwells in us. Let us believe; let us live in that wonderful indwelling.
4. Let us bow very low in submission to His leading, waiting for His teaching, reverently honoring His holy presence within us, even when we cannot see or feel. "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believest, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Andrew Murray: *The Spirit of Christ*

## VISION DOMINATES LIFE

### Looking Backward, arrests Progress

Lot's Wife Genesis 19:26 But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

### Looking Christward, Saves

Numbers 21:9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

### Looking at Difficulties, Depresses

Peter Sinks Matthew 14:29-30 So He said, "Come". And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

### Looking Heavenward, Glorifies

Acts 7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

## SPIRITUAL VISION

### Given in Answer to Prayer

II Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

### Afflictions Prepare for

Job 42:5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.

### Heart Purity Essential to

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

### Believers Alone Possess

John 14:19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

### The Holy Spirit the Author of

John 16:14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

John 16:15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

### Uses the Telescope of Faith

Hebrews 11:27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger, he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.

## LOOKING TO GOD

### For Inspiration and Help

Psalm 34:5 Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

Psalm 123:1 I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven (Isaiah 40:26, Daniel 4:34).

John 11:41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

John 17:1 After Jesus saith this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

Acts 1:10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

Acts 7:55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

## HEAVENLY VISION

### Beholds the Glory of Things to Come

Psalm 17:15 And I-in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness. (Isaiah 6:1)

Isaiah 33:17 Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar. (Ezekiel 1:1, 8:3)

John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world

1 Corinthians 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Revelation 22:4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

**BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD  
MATTHEW 5:8**

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↩ KNOW / KNOWLEDGE ↩

The word "know" has multiplies shades of meaning in English. We know the information that we need to pass a test. We know how to drive. We know our friends. We should not be surprised to find that in the Bible "knowing" carries the same wide range of meanings.

- |               |                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Old Testament | 1. The Hebrew concept of knowing |
|               | 2. Knowing God in the OT         |
| New Testament | 3. The Greek concept of knowing  |
|               | 4. Knowing God in the NT         |

### Old Testament

#### 1. The Hebrew concept of knowing.

The basic Hebrew word is *yada*, "to know". The root appears almost 950 times in the OT and is used in referring to all kinds of knowledge gained through the senses. *Yada* is used also to indicate a knowing of information and facts, the learning of skills, acquaintance with persons, and even the intimacy of sexual intercourse. Although Hebrew is not a philosophical or speculative language, it is clear that "to know" calls for more than direct experience. Knowing implies the process by which human beings structure experience—the process by which one recognizes, classifies, and systematizes the data gained from experience. Thus, the phrase "knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5, 22; cf Deuteronomy 1:39) focuses attention on the process of making moral distinctions and coming to conclusions about what is good and what is evil. To know, then, means far more than raw experience. It means to organize experience, experience and, from that organized experience, to develop a perception of the world that provides a basis for response to different life situations.

#### 2. Knowing God in the OT.

It is clear from reading the OT that "knowing" God incorporates every dimension of this human capacity. When Moses first confronted Pharaoh with God's demand to let Israel go, the Egyptian snorted in derision: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go" (Exodus 5:2). In a series of divine judgments, Pharaoh and the Egyptians experienced God's power. Reluctantly Pharaoh released Israel, only to change his mind. He sent his army to compel his slaves to return. But at the Red Sea, God announced that he would destroy the Egyptian army: "The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen" (Exodus 14:18).

Here we see a significant interplay of the factors involved in knowing. Pharaoh had no acquaintance with the Lord. Thus Yahweh played no part in his thinking or planning. Yahweh's acts provided the king with a direct experience of his power. Now Pharaoh was forced to revise his view of the world and take God into account. But Pharaoh would not accept a universe in which Yahweh was the ultimate reality. he acted against what he knew of God, and in the destruction of his army the Egyptian people saw clearly the result of a failure to truly "know" God.

Later Moses reviewed history and recounted for a new generation the record of God's mighty acts. Moses also shared the revealed meaning of these acts, and then he went on to review knowledge about God's moral nature revealed in the now-written Word. There is presently enough information available for all generations to hear about and come to know the Lord. So Moses went on to warn, "Acknowledge (*yada*) and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below" (Deuteronomy 4:39). The available information about God transmitted to each new generation must lead them to take his reality to heart and to let the vision of God shape their lives.

In the OT, a person's conduct gives evidence of whether or not that individual really knows God. Where God is not known, sins abound (e.g. Hoses 4:1-2). Where God is known in the full biblical sense (knowledge "taken to heart"), a person is moved to do justice and to help the poor and needy (Jeremiah 22:15-16).

### **New Testament**

#### **3. The Greek concept of knowing.**

A number of words are used to express the Greek concept. *Ginosko* and *oida* are the basic terms. Each indicates knowing and understanding. Each emphasized the organization of one's perceptions so as to grasp the true nature of an issue, concept, or thing. In Greek thought, knowledge comes through the senses, and that which is known can be verified by observation. Words in these two families contrast with words that mean raw perception (*aisthesis*, "experience") or a mere opinion (*dokeo*). Thus, traditionally in Greek culture, "knowing" meant intelligent comprehension, with the assumption that knowledge is a true assessment of reality insofar as reality can be known in this world. Despite distinctions suggested by some scholars, it is not really possible to show any significant difference in the way *ginosko* and *oida* were used in ordinary speech; so it is best to treat them as synonyms.



*Epiginosko* is also translated "know" in the NT. This is an intensive form of *ginosko* and implies a fuller or more nearly complete knowledge.

In ordinary speech, *ginosko* and *oida* carried most of the meanings found in English usage. Often translators of modern versions select an English equivalent that captures a particular shade of meaning. Thus, for instance, the word "knew" in Paul's statement that none of the princes of this world "knew God's secret wisdom" is translated in the NIV as "understood" (I Corinthians 2:8). The statement that Jesus "knew no sin" reads "him who had no sin" (II Corinthians 5:21). But ordinarily "know" is used, and it has the same breadth of meanings—from knowing facts to recognizing persons to enjoying a deep friendship with them.

There are, however, philosophical and theological dimensions to "know" in Greek thought that are not implied in ordinary speech. Often these philosophical issues are reflected in the NT. The ancient Greeks placed great reliance on human ability to understand the universe. By rational analysis of what they observed, they believed that mankind would ultimately arrive at an understanding of the universe. This view is rejected by Paul in I Corinthians 2.

But over the centuries, Greek culture itself had come to doubt the assumptions of the old philosophers. By NT times, Hellenistic culture questioned the possibility of arriving at truth about reality through rational processes. Now humanity was looking inward, convinced by its unease that the source of human existence must lie outside the material universe. Focusing on people rather than on the universe, moderns asked, Who are we? Where did we come from? and Where are we going? So by the time of the NT, a variety of answers were suggested, and a number of mystical and speculative beliefs about origins, salvation, and theology sprang up. The belief systems of these thinkers could not be verified by observation. They rested on claims of special knowledge (*gnosis*) from beyond the material world. The movement took its name from the Greek term: it is called the Gnostic movement. Its belief system is called Gnosticism.

There were several varieties of Gnosticism. Its supposed sources of knowledge ranges from mysticism and sacramentalism to magic and pseudo-philosophical speculation. But, basically, Gnosticism made a sharp distinction between the material and immaterial universes, between the physical and the spiritual. All matter was considered evil, while "good" was ascribed only to the unseen and spiritual realm. Human beings were viewed as "good" spirits trapped in bodies that, because they were physical, were necessarily evil. Inevitably, this dualism destroyed the basis for ethics laid down by earlier philosophers. The result was a variety of approaches to life, ranging from the strictly ascetic to the libertine. According to one view, if the flesh is evil, it must be crushed. According to

another view, if the flesh is evil but the "true" person good, why not permit the flesh its excesses? What else could be expected of it? It cannot corrupt the spirit.

Paul appears to deal directly with the Gnostic views that infected the early church in Colosse. In the Epistle to the Colossians, he insisted that reconciliation came "by Christ's physical body through death" (Colossians 1:22). His affirmation that "in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9) strikes directly against Gnostic dualism and the Gnostic view of the material. Paul also insists that true goodness is the practice of compassion, kindness, and love in daily life. Thus, morality is something that calls for holiness in the most ordinary aspects of our life on earth; it is emphatically not a matter of "self-imposes" religious practices (Colossians 2:9-23; 3:1-4:1).

Despite the claims of some to see Gnostic tendencies in the NT, Scripture rejects the Greek philosophical concepts of knowledge. Instead, it adopted the view of the OT. Knowledge is gained through the senses, but knowledge of God is based on a personal encounter with God through His historic acts and His inscripturated revelation of himself. To know God or spiritual truth in a biblical sense, one must perceive truth about God, let that truth shape one's understanding of life, and respond appropriately with faith and obedience. Knowledge of God that incorporates all of these aspects will shape our lives in time and in eternity.

Probably the best way to explore the nature of religious knowledge, particularly the nature of knowing God, is to look at key NT passages where the argument rests on a distinctly biblical view of knowing.

#### **4. Knowing God in the NT.**

John and Paul are the two NT writers who deal most significantly with the question of knowing God. A survey of their thought gives insight into how basic OT concepts of knowing are developed in the NT.

#### **JOHN**

The writings of John usually employ "to know" as a relational term. It is used when explaining the nature and the implications of a personal relationship with Jesus.

John 8:19, 31-47. The Jewish leaders saw the evidence of Jesus' miracles and heard his teachings but were "unable to hear" (verse 43) what he said. Their failure to respond to Jesus and to acknowledge him demonstrates their lack of a personal relationship with God. Jesus declared to them, "You do not know me or my Father" (verse 19). Instead, their antagonistic response to Jesus showed

that they were in the grip of sin, replicating the response of Satan to God rather than the response of Abraham, whom they claimed relationship with.

But here Jesus also spoke to those who did believe, calling on them to hold to (do) his teachings. Those who believe and obey will "know the truth, and the truth will set (them) free" (verse 32). The first "know" (verse 19) indicates a personal relationship; a recognition, acknowledgment, and believing response to God presented in Christ. The second (verse 32) indicates a personal experience. Only obedience will bring those who know Jesus personally into a full experience of all that the relationship promises.

John 10:4, 14-15. Jesus' relationship with believers is compared to that of a shepherd and his sheep. The sheep recognize the shepherd's voice and they respond to follow him. This is because an intimate relationship exists between sheep and shepherd, just as an intimate relationship exists between Jesus and the Father. Relational knowing is demonstrated by response: "My sheep listen to my voice" (verse 27).

I John. John's first letter is about fellowship. Here "knowing" expresses an intimate relationship of continual sharing that exists within the believing community and between the believer and God. Rather than indicating saving faith, in I John the idea of "knowing him" usually represents continuing fellowship.

About this aspect of knowing God, John says, "we know that we have come to know him" if we respond to his commands with obedience (2:3; 2:4-6, 29). Additional evidence is found in love for others in the Christian community, for "everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God (4:7).

Relationship with God comes only through Jesus. God's act of sending his only Son into the world is history's decisive act of self-revelation by God" If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us" (4:15-16).

John emphasizes the absolute importance of the Holy Spirit. It is through the work of the Spirit within that we who believe in Jesus have the ability to recognize, understand, and respond to God's words and actions (2:20-23; 3:24, 4:13).

At the end of I John there is a summary of truths that we know in and through our personal relationship with Jesus. These are truths that shape our perspective on reality and thus shape our lives. We know that anyone born of God does not continue in sin. We know that we are the children of God, while the world around us lies in the grip of Satan. We know that the Son of God has come to

make it possible for us to have a personal relationship with God. We know that we are in Jesus, the true God and source of eternal life (5:18-20).

For John, then, knowing God is a matter of

- 1) God's initiating acts of self revelation, particularly his act of sending Jesus;
- 2) the individual's recognition of these acts and subsequent acknowledgment of Jesus as God's Son and his Savior
- 3) the Spirit's inner testimony within the believer enabling him to recognize and grasp the meaning of truth; and
- 4) the individual's daily life of obedience and of love.

### **PAUL**

Paul's experience of the nature of knowledge includes the strong emphasis of John of personal relationship. But it ranges to include other issues as well.

Romans 1:18-32. Paul shows that God has revealed himself to humanity in creation. God's invisible qualities "have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made" (verse 20). The thought here is significant. Paul says both that creation reveals the Creator and that man's nature is such that this message is understood! But Paul adds, "Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him" (verse 21). This refusal to respond to God is culpable ignorance (cf. II Thessalonians 1:8). Humanity chooses not to acknowledge God. But failure to acknowledge and respond to God has consequences. Mankind's thinking has been distorted by refusal to fit God into its perception of the world, and this in turn had led to intellectual and moral folly. Although God has given mankind a nature that also recognized moral issues, man continues to act against that innate knowledge (verse 32).

Romans 7:7-25. God has also revealed himself to mankind in words. Thus, some revelation is natural revelation and some is special revelation. When God revealed his own moral standards in the words of the Mosaic Law, he intended to give man not only more knowledge about himself but also self-knowledge. Both in the Mosaic Law and in his own failure to keep it, Paul discovered the fact that he was a sinner. His perception of himself was reshaped when he observed his inner and outward reaction to the Mosaic Law and so came to the place of relying totally on Christ and not on his own moral potential.

I Corinthians 2. In this vital passage, Paul criticizes the philosopher's approach to knowledge. The Greek thinkers supposed that they could grasp the nature of reality by applying rational processes to evaluate the data they gained by observing the universe. Paul says that the shape of reality can be known only through revelation, for God's Spirit must communicate the things known only to

God. Some information about reality is simply not available to humanity through the senses, for "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (verse 9).

Often this statement is taken to be a paraphrase of Isaiah 64:4. But it seems better in context to see it as Paul's commentary on philosophy (the world's wisdom), picked up from Empedocles, who in the fifth century B.C. wrote the following: "Weak and narrow are the powers implanted in the limbs of man; many the woes that fall on them and blunt the edges of thought; short is the measure of the life in death through which they toil. Then are they borne away; like smoke they vanish into air; and what they dream they know is but the little that each has stumbled upon in wandering about the world. Yet they boast all that they have learned the whole. Vain fools! For what that is, no eye hath seen, no ear hath heard, nor can it be conceived by the mind of man." One cannot move from data obtained from the material universe to deduce the whole, for only God knows the reality beyond the material. It is wonderful that, as I Corinthians 2:10 makes clear, God has chosen to reveal reality, and himself, to us now!

I Corinthians 6. Again and again in this passage, Paul poses a question: "Do you not know . . .?" He expresses shock over what he saw the Corinthians doing. His point is that knowing such revealed truths as that "the saints will judge the world" (verse 2) and "the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God" (verse 9) has implications for one's lifestyle. If one truly "knows" such truths, one will see their relevance to daily life. Knowing changes perspective and thus changes one's response to ordinary situations.

I Corinthians 8. Paul examines a doctrinal dispute over whether or not it is right to eat meat previously offered to idols. Each side in the dispute based its case on revealed truths. Each made deductions from such truths and tried to apply them in a practical way.

Paul insisted that this approach to resolving doctrinal differences in the believing community is not adequate. Why? First, because the claim to superior knowledge puffs us up. Pride and arrogance then close us off from our fellow believers and dampen love. This is tragic, for love within the believing community is the key to future spiritual development. Second, "the man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know" (verse 2). Our knowledge even of revealed truths is incomplete. Thus we cannot claim to have all the perspective needed to make dogmatic statements. Paul's solution is unique: deal with the dispute on the basis of love. Differ is you must, but remain committed to love one another. While caring for each other and listening to each other, those involved in a dispute will grow spiritually and enrich their perspectives on the issue.

Ephesians 1:17-23; 3:14-19. Paul's prayers for the Ephesians focus on a personal relationship with God and on a right perspective of Him. Paul asks God to help the Ephesians "know (God) better." In each prayer, knowing God is linked with truth about God. With knowing God comes an opening of the eyes of the heart, "enlightened in order that you may know the hope which he has called you" (1:18). Paul knows that it is through relationships within the family of God that believers will experience God's love as a reality. Thus, they can "know this love that surpasses knowledge" (3:19).

Here rational process is set aside. It is never possible for us to encompass the nature of divine love, for it is beyond comprehension. Still, just as a little child cannot grasp the meaning of forgiveness but can experience it as his parents forgive him, so the believer will experience God's love within the family as Christ, through others, reaches out to touch that person.

Colossians 1:9-12. Paul's prayer for the Colossians shows more of the link between knowing truths about God and knowing God personally. Paul asked the Lord to fill the Colossians with a knowledge of what God had willed. That objectively revealed truth was to be processed with "all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (verse 9). The result would be a daily life marked by bearing fruit in every good work. This kind of life itself issues in growth in knowing God in a personal, experiential way.

Paul's teaching about knowledge of God and of spiritual truths reinforces the basic view of knowledge presented in the OT. There is no dichotomy between information about God and knowing God: the two are linked in human experience. God had acted to communicate with mankind. He has shown himself in creation, in his written Word, and in Jesus. Human beings are called on to acknowledge and respond appropriately to what God has revealed. It is in the interaction between revelation and response that a human being comes to know God personally and to grow in that personal relationship.

Each truth revealed by God calls for an appropriate human response. For instance, the appropriate response to God's revelation of Himself in nature is to glorify Him and give thanks. An appropriate response to God's revelation in the Mosaic Law is self-examination, with acknowledgment of one's sins. An appropriate response to the truth that "the saints will judge the world" (1 Corinthians 6:2) is for the church to take responsibility to settle worldly disputes between believers. And the appropriate response to the good news of Jesus is to trust Him as Savior and Lord.

Making an appropriate response calls for spiritual wisdom and insight. An appropriate response will also issue in a life of good works - that is, in bearing fruit to God. These responses to truths from God will have an exciting impact on

our personal relationship with the Lord. While never able to grasp the whole, we will grow to know God better and better in a personal, relational way.

It is knowing God in personal relationship that is, in fact, the goal on which the biblical view of knowledge focuses. This is the ultimate goal of God's self revelation. He lets us know about himself in revelation in order that we may respond appropriately and know him in a deeply personal way - in salvation and fellowship. No wonder, then, that Paul gladly threw away everything on which he had once based his hope of gain, looking instead only for the "surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus (his) Lord (Philippians 3:8).

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