

Message Three
Entering into the Kingdom of the Heavens (1)

Scriptures reading: Matt. 5:20; 7:21; 18:3.

I. Meaning of entering into the kingdom of the heavens

- A. Entering the kingdom of the heavens being different from obtaining life in this age.
 - 1. All the verses from the Gospel of John speak of eternal life being obtained through faith—John 3:36; 5:24; 3:16; 6:47; 20:31.
 - 2. The verses from the Gospel of Matthew speak of entering the kingdom of the heavens based on righteous acts, doing the will of God, and having a changed living—Matt. 5:20; 7:21; 18:3.
- B. Entering the kingdom of the heavens being different from eternal salvation.
 - 1. While Eph. 2:8 and 2Tim. 1:9 shows that salvation is by grace on God's side and through faith on man's side, 2Tim. 4:8 shows that when the Lord comes the crown that we obtain will be based on righteousness.
 - 2. While Eph. 2:8-9 and 2Tim. 1:9 say that salvation is by God's grace and not by works, Matt. 7:21 tells us that we must do works that carry out the will of the Father in order to enter the kingdom of the heavens.
 - 3. Rom. 10:13 says that whoever call upon the name of the Lord will be saved; in contrast Matt. 7:21 says that not everyone who says "Lord, Lord," will enter into the kingdom of the heavens.
 - 4. 1Cor. 5:5 shows that a saved person, even after committing a terrible sin, will be saved in the future despite the destruction of his flesh in this age, but 1Cor. 6:9-10 says that they will not inherit the kingdom of the heavens.
- C. Entering the kingdom of the heavens being different from entering into the kingdom of God.
 - 1. In John 3:3 and 5 the Lord showed that entering into the kingdom of God is based on regeneration, but in Matt. 18:3 the Lord said that we must turn and become like little children in order to enter into the kingdom of the heavens.
 - 2. Entering into the kingdom of God is a matter related to *life*, and entering into the kingdom of the heavens is a matter related to *living*.
- D. Entering the kingdom of the heavens being to obtain eternal life in the coming age—Mark 10:29-30; Matt. 19:29; Luke 18:29-30.
 - 1. According to the Bible, we can obtain eternal life in three different time periods: in this age, in the coming age, and in eternity.
 - 2. To obtain eternal life in this age is to obtain the eternal life of God today, which we also will enjoy in the new heaven and new earth; but to obtain eternal life in the coming age means to enter into the realm of eternal life in the millennium kingdom and to reign together with the Lord.
- E. Entering the kingdom of the heavens being the salvation of the soul—Mark 8:35-38; Matt. 16:25-27; 10:37-39; Luke 21:19; John 12:25.
 - 1. According to Mark 8:35-38 and Matt. 16:25-27, whether our soul has been saved will be determined at the Lord's return; if our soul has been saved, we will enjoy the glory of the kingdom of the heavens together with Him.
 - 2. The salvation of our soul is related to our soul's future entrance into the glory of the Lord's kingdom to receive special privilege and enjoyment because we were willing to deny ourselves and lose soul-life today.
- F. Entering the kingdom of the heavens being to obtain the reward—
 - 1. Paul says he did one thing: he pursued toward the goal for the prize to which God called him—Phil. 3:13-14.
 - 2. In 1Cor. 9:24, he says that all believers are like runners on a racecourse who must run in a specific way to win the prize, and in 2Tim. 4:7-8, he says that

the Lord will reward him with a crown of righteousness because he had fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith.

- G. Entering the kingdom of the heavens being to reign with the Lord—2Tim. 2:12; Rev. 20:4, 6.
 - 1. Entering the kingdom of the heavens will be to reign with the Lord.
 - 2. The overcoming believers will enter into the kingdom of the heavens for the purpose of reigning with the Lord and ruling on the future earth with Him for a thousand year.
- H. Entering the kingdom of the heavens being to enjoy the church's birthright—Heb. 12:23, 16; 1Chron. 5:1-2; Gen. 49:3-4.
 - 1. The church is called the church of the firstborn and its birthright includes at least three blessings; the priesthood, the kingship, and the earth—1Pet. 2:9; 2Tim 2:12; Matt. 5:5.
 - 2. We must be warned not to lose our birthright—Heb. 12:16; 1Chron. 5:1-2; Gen. 49:3-4.
- I. Entering the kingdom of the heavens being to enter into the rest in the coming age—Heb. 4:9, 11, 1.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit in Heb. 3 and 4 compares the Israelite's entering into Canaan with the believer's entering into the coming kingdom.
 - 2. The believers' entering into the coming kingdom will be their entering into the rest of the coming age.
- J. Entering the kingdom of the heavens being to enjoy the Lord's complete salvation—1Pet. 2:9; Rev. 5:9-10; 2Tim. 4:18.
 - 1. If we only have salvation but are not priests and kings to God, we have not experienced God's complete salvation.
 - 2. Not until we enter the kingdom of the heavens can we ascend to the highest peak of God's salvation and enjoy its highest part.
 - 3. Paul was redeemed by the Lord and enjoyed many spiritual blessings, but at the end of his life he still had a deep aspiration that the Lord would save him into His heavenly kingdom.

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Reference Scripture Verses:

Matt. 5:20 For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means **enter into the kingdom of the heavens**.

Matt. 7:21 Not every one who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will **enter into the kingdom of the heavens**, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.

Matt. 18:3 And said, Truly I say to you, Unless you turn and become like little children, you shall by no means **enter into the kingdom of the heavens**.

I.

John 3:36 He who believes into the Son has eternal life; but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.

John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that every one who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

John 6:47 Truly, truly, I say to you, He who believes has eternal life.

John 20:31 But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name.

Eph. 2:8-9. **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God; **9** Not of works that no one should boast.

2Tim. 1:9 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages

Rom. 10:13 For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

1Cor. 5:5 To deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

1Cor. 6:9-10. **9** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be led astray; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor effeminate nor homosexuals **10** Nor thieves nor the covetous, not drunkards, not revilers, not the rapacious will inherit the kingdom of God.

Mark 10:29-30. **29** Jesus said, Truly I say to you, There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for My sake and for the gospel's sake, **30** But that he shall receive a hundred times as much now at this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions, and in the coming age, eternal life.

Matt. 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for My name's sake shall receive a hundred times as much and shall inherit eternal life.

Luke 18:29-30. **29** And He said to them, Truly I say to you that there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God, **30** Who shall not by all means receive back many times as much in this time, and in the coming age, eternal life.

Mark 8:35-38. **35** For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever will lose his soul-life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. **36** For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul-life? **37** For what could a man give in exchange for his soul-life? **38** For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

Matt. 16:25-27. **25** For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it. **26** For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life? **27** For the Son of Man is to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay each man according to his doings.

Matt. 10:37-39. **37** He who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me; **38** And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. **39** He who finds his soul-life shall lose it, and he who loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.

Luke 21:19 In your endurance you will possess your souls.

John 12:25 He who loves his soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life.

Phil. 3:13-14. **13** Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, **14** I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called *me* upward.

1Cor. 9:24 Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but one receives the prize? Run in this way, that you may lay hold.

2Tim. 4:7-8. **7** I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. **8** Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

2Tim. 2:12 If we endure, we will also reign with *Him*; if we deny *Him*, He also will deny us;

Rev. 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and of *those* who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Rev. 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Heb. 12:23 And to the church of the firstborn, who have been enrolled in the heavens; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the spirits of righteous men who have been made perfect;

Heb. 12:16 Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one meal gave up his own birthright.

1Chron. 5:1-2. **1** And the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn; but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; but he was not to be enrolled in

the genealogy according to the birthright, **2** For Judah prevailed among his brothers, and from him was the leader, but the birthright was Joseph's)

Gen. 49:3-4. **3** Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, Preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. **4** Boiling over like water, you will not have the preeminence, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it - he went up to my couch.

1Pet. 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Matt. 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Heb. 4:9 So then there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

Heb. 4:11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.

Heb. 4:1 Let us fear therefore, lest, a promise being left of entering into His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short *of it*.

Rev. 5:9-10. **9** And they sing a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain and have purchased for God by Your blood *men* out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, **10** And have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.

2Tim. 4:18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and will save me into His heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.