

Message Twelve

Living an Overcoming Life by Reigning in Life to Become the New Jerusalem as the City of Life

Scripture Reading: Rom. 5:10, 17, 21; 14:17-18; Mark 4:26-29; Luke 17:21; Matt. 24:14

I. The genuine Christian life is the life of an overcomer, and all the overcomers in the New Testament should be kings who have received the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness to reign in life—Rom. 5:17:

- A. As the God-ordained prophets and priests, we are also kings to allow God to rule in us and through us over all His enemies; the believers in the New Testament should be the fulfillment of the typology of the kings, priests, and prophets in God's economy:
 - 1. In the New Testament all the believers are saved to be kings and priests; when the priests speak for God, they become God's spokesmen, God's mouthpiece, and these are the prophets—1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 20:6; 22:3-5; 1 Cor. 14:12, 24-25, 31.
 - 2. Prophesying (speaking Christ into people) makes us overcomers; prophesying is the function of the overcomers—v. 4b; 1 Pet. 4:10-11; Acts 5:20 and footnote 2.
- B. If we have not reached the level of a king in our Christian life, we are still below the proper standard; we may say that we enjoy Christ, but to what degree, to what extent, do we enjoy Christ?
- C. Our enjoyment of Christ may be only "one-inch high," but Christ is unlimited; our enjoyment of Christ should come up to the kingship level; we need to receive grace upon grace to such an extent that grace reigns in us so that we can be good stewards of the varied grace of God—Phil. 3:13; John 1:16; Rom. 5:21; 1 Pet. 4:10; Eph. 3:2.
- D. God's complete salvation is for us to be saved in the life of Christ to reign in this life by the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:10, 17, 21); the gift of righteousness is God's judicial redemption applied to us in a practical way; grace is God Himself as our all-sufficient supply for our organic salvation.

II. Revelation, the last book of the Bible, is a book concerning the overcomers; in chapters 2 and 3, the Lord gives a sevenfold call to us, His believers, the spiritual descendants of our great father Abraham to be His overcomers (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21), those who conquer all the satanic chaos (cf. Col. 1:17b, 18b, 10) and triumph in the divine economy (Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 2:14):

- A. From God's viewpoint there are four major races of people: the race of Adam, the race of Abraham according to the flesh (Gen. 13:16), the race of Abraham according to the Spirit (15:5; Gal. 3:7, 29), and the race of the overcomers; we should declare by exercising our spirit of faith that we belong to the race of the overcomers (2 Cor. 4:13).
- B. The book of Revelation shows us that without the overcomers Christ has no way to come back; we know that Christ is our way (John 14:6a), but from deep within His heart, Christ would tell the overcomers that they are His way; the overcomers are the very way for Christ to come back (Rev. 19:7-9; Psa. 45:13-14).
- C. Let God bless you to make you an overcomer today, living a life that is the life to reign; this unique blessing is the eternal blessing of the Triune God dispensing Himself into us for our enjoyment—Num. 6:22-27; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:14.

III. In order for us to reign in life to be the Lord's overcomers, we need to see that we have been regenerated with a divine, spiritual, heavenly, kingly, and royal life; the Lord said, "So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth"—Mark 4:26; 1 John 3:9:

- A. This seed is the seed of the divine life (v. 9; 1 Pet. 1:23) sown into the believers, indicating that the kingdom of God, which is the issue and goal of the Lord's gospel, and the church in this age (Rom. 14:17) are a matter of life, the life of God, which sprouts, grows, bears fruit, matures, and produces a harvest (1 Cor. 3:6-9; Rev. 14:4, 15-16).
- B. The kingdom of God is Christ Himself (Luke 17:21); as the Triune God in humanity (Col. 2:9), He is the seed, "the gene," of the kingdom of God to be sown into God's chosen people that He might grow in them, live in them, and be expressed from within them to develop into God's ruling realm (Mark 4:26-29; 1 Cor. 3:9).
- C. The intrinsic element of the entire teaching of the New Testament is that the Triune God has been incarnated in order to be sown into His chosen people and develop within them into a kingdom; God's goal is the full development of the kingdom of God:
 1. In the Gospels we have the sowing of the seed, the gene, of the kingdom—Mark 4:3, 14; Matt. 9:35.
 2. In the Acts we have the propagation and spreading of this sowing by thousands of sowers who had received the seed, the gene, of the kingdom—6:7; 12:24; 19:20.
 3. In the Epistles we see the growing of the seed, the gene, of the kingdom—1 Cor. 3:6, 9b; 2 Pet. 1:3, 11.
 4. The harvest of this seed is found in the book of Revelation with the reaping of the firstfruits and the harvest—14:4, 15-16; Mark 4:29; Matt. 13:39.
 5. The millennial kingdom will be the uttermost development of the seed, the gene, of the kingdom with the Son as the King and all the overcomers as His co-kings, the "kingdom-gene people"—Rev. 20:6.
 6. The New Jerusalem, God's eternal kingdom, is the fullest development of the kingdom seed, the gene, sown by Jesus the Nazarene in the four Gospels—Rev. 21:2; 22:1, 3, 5; 5:10; 3:12; 11:15; 19:6; 20:6; Psa. 146:10.
 7. We need to be one with the Lord to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth for the propagation and development of the seed, the gene, of the kingdom to consummate this age—Matt. 24:14.

IV. In experience, to reign in life means to be under the ruling of the divine life:

- A. Christ is a pattern of reigning in life by being under the ruling of the divine life of the Father—cf. 8:5-13.
- B. Paul is an example of one who, in his life and ministry, was under the ruling of the divine life—2 Cor. 2:12-14.
- C. There is the need for all the believers who have received the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness to practice the restriction and limitation in the divine life; a life under the kingdom's rule is a life of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit; to live in this way is to serve Christ as a slave, and such a life is well pleasing to God and approved by men—Rom. 14:17-18; cf. 1 Cor. 12:3.

V. Deuteronomy reveals that a proper king first had to be instructed, governed, ruled, and controlled by the word of God (17:14-15, 18-20); this principle should be the same with the elders in the churches and with all of us who aspire to reign in life (2 Tim. 3:14-17):

- A. In order to administrate, to manage, the church, the elders must be reconstituted with the word of God (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17); as a result, they will be under God's government, under God's rule and control.
- B. Then spontaneously, God will be in their decisions, and the elders will represent God to manage the affairs of the church; this kind of management is theocracy.

- C. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, the returned people of Israel were collectively reconstituted by and with God through His word to be a nation as God's testimony; to reconstitute the people of God is to educate them by putting them into the Word of God that they may be saturated with the word—Neh. 8:1-18.
- D. The word of God is one with the Spirit (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17); through our daily reading of the divine Word, the word of God works within us, and the Spirit, through the word, spontaneously dispenses God's nature with God's element into our being, causing us to be constituted with God.

VI. In order to reign in life, we also need to be under the rulership of the Spirit; the record of Joseph's life is a revelation of the rulership of the Spirit, for the rulership of the Spirit is the reigning aspect of a mature saint; it is a life of reigning in life, being under the restriction and limitation of the divine life in the reality of God's kingdom, and it is higher than any other aspect of the Spirit—Rom. 5:17, 21; 14:17-18; 1 Cor. 2:15-16; 2 Cor. 2:13-14; 3:17-18; 2 Tim. 4:22; Rev. 4:1-3:

- A. Joseph, a "master of dreams" (Gen. 37:19), dreamed that according to God's view, His people are sheaves of wheat full of life and heavenly bodies full of light (vv. 5-11); Joseph's two dreams (vv. 7, 9), both from God, unveiled to him God's divine view concerning the nature, position, function, and goal of God's people on earth.
- B. Joseph's dreams controlled his life and directed his behavior; he behaved so excellently and marvelously because he was directed by the vision that he saw in his dreams (cf. Acts 26:19); his brothers vented their anger (Gen. 37:18-31) and indulged in their lust (38:15-18), but Joseph subdued his anger and conquered his lust (39:7-23), behaving as a sheaf full of life and conducting himself like a heavenly star shining in the darkness.
- C. Joseph's life under the heavenly vision was the life of the kingdom of the heavens described in Matthew 5—7; by living such a life, he was fully prepared to reign as a king; according to the constitution of the heavenly kingdom revealed in these chapters in Matthew, our anger must be subdued, and our lust must be conquered (5:21-32).
- D. As the representative of the reigning aspect of the mature life, Joseph enjoyed the presence of the Lord and with it the Lord's authority, prosperity, and blessing—Gen. 39:2-5, 21, 23; Acts 7:9.
- E. Although Joseph was full of human feelings and sentiments toward his brothers, he kept himself with all his feelings under the rulership of the Spirit; he denied himself and placed himself absolutely under God's sovereign leading, conducting himself wholly for the interest of God and His people—Gen. 42:9, 24; 43:30-31; 45:1-2, 24.
- F. Joseph is a living illustration of what is revealed in the New Testament; he was a self-denying person who had no self-interest, self-enjoyment, self-feeling, self-ambition, or self-goal; everything was for God and for God's people; Joseph's self-denial, his restriction under God's sovereign hand, was the key to the practice of the kingdom life—Gen. 45:24; Matt. 16:24; 2 Chron. 1:10; Isa. 30:15a; Phil. 1:9; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; 1 Thes. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thes. 1:3; Rom. 12:10; 1 John 4:9; Heb. 13:1.
- G. Joseph's realization was that it was God who sent him to Egypt; in Genesis 50:20 he said to his brothers, "Even though you intended evil against me, God intended it for good" (45:5, 7; 50:19-21; cf. 41:51-52); this is the reality of Paul's word in Romans 8:28-29; Joseph received as from God all that his brothers had done to him, and he comforted those who had offended him (Gen. 45:5-8; 50:15-21); what grace, and what an excellent spirit, he had!
- H. We have to use the "divine telescope" to see through time and behold the New Jerusalem, where there is nothing but sheaves full of life and stars full of light; the more

mature in life we become, the less we will speak negatively concerning the saints or the church—cf. 38:27-30; Matt. 7:1-5; 1 Pet. 3:8-9.

VII. We need to see and arrive at the goal of reigning in life; when we are reigning in life, living under the ruling of the divine life, the issue is the real and practical Body life expressed in the church life—Rom. 12:1-4, 9-12, 15-18; 14:1-9; 15:1-13:

- A. As those who have believed into Christ, we have been transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God's love, and in the church life, love prevails (Col. 1:12-13); the Body builds itself up in love (1 Cor. 8:1; Eph. 1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15-16; 5:2), and love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and do anything for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:31b; 13:4-8a).
- B. If we do not have Christ as love, all our speaking is like "sounding brass" and a "clanging cymbal," which give sounds without life—v. 1.
- C. The church life is not a police station or a law court but a loving home to raise up spiritual children, a hospital to heal and recover the sick ones, and a school to teach others in love—Matt. 9:12; 2 Cor. 11:29a; John 8:7, 10-11; 1 Cor. 9:22; Luke 15:1-7.

VIII. When we are reigning in life, we are allowing the indwelling Christ as grace to reign within us "unto eternal life"; this is the consummation of reigning in life—Heb. 4:16; Rom. 5:17, 21:

- A. John 4:14b says, "The water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life."
- B. *Into* (*unto* in Romans 5:21) speaks of destination; the eternal life is the destination of the flowing Triune God; *into* also means "to become" or "to be."
- C. By enjoying the flowing Triune God—the Father as the fountain of life, the Son as the spring of life, and the Spirit as the river of life—we are receiving the abundance of grace to become the New Jerusalem as the totality of the life of God, the city of life; thus, the issue and consummation of our reigning in life should be uniquely and ultimately the goal of God's eternal economy—the New Jerusalem.