

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND THE CHURCH LIFE
UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD

Living under the Direct Rule of God

Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:3, 8; 6:33; John 3:3, 5-6, 15; Acts 24:16; Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor.
2:11

- I. As those who have been born of God to enter into the kingdom of God, we need to be recovered to the direct rule of God by the intuition in our spirit – Matt. 5:3; 1 Cor. 2:11; Mark 2:8:**
- A. In the dispensation of innocence we see the principle of God's rule; in the dispensation of conscience, the principle of self-rule; and in the dispensation of human government, the principle of man's rule:
 - 1. Before the fall man was ruled directly by God; he lived before God and was responsible to God – Gen. 2:16-17.
 - 2. From the time of Adam's expulsion from the garden of Eden to the time of Noah's departure from the ark, God established the conscience within man to represent Himself in ruling over man – Acts 24:16.
 - 3. After the flood, because man was subject neither to God's rule nor to self-rule, God authorized man to represent Himself in ruling over man – Gen. 9:6; Rom. 13:1.
 - B. From the point of view of government, man's fall was a fall from God's rule to self-rule and then from self-rule to man's rule.
 - C. Because man has been degraded from God's rule to human rule, God, in saving man, must recover him from human rule to divine rule so that once again man may live before God in simplicity and under His direct authority – Matt. 5:3, 8; 6:33.
 - D. In God's plan of recovery man must retrace his steps from human rule to God's rule passing through self-rule in between.
 - E. The final goal of dealing with the conscience is not merely to restore us to self-rule but to bring us back to God's rule and to recover us to God Himself and, thus, to live in the presence of God – 5:3.
 - F. There is a great difference between self-rule and God's rule:
 - 1. Self-rule means that we live by the feelings of our conscience, being responsible to our conscience – Acts 24:16.
 - 2. God's rule means that we live by the intuition of our spirit, being responsible to the intuition, that is, being responsible to God:
 - a. Within our spirit there is a function to have a direct sense, to realize, discern, and perceive things; this is the intuition in our spirit – 1 Cor. 2:11; Mark 2:8:
 - (1) Intuition is a direct sense of God and a direct knowledge of God.
 - (2) The intuition in our spirit is the feeling of God, and it accepts only that which is of God, of the Spirit, and of life – Rom. 8:2.

- b. When we live by our intuition and are controlled by our intuition, we are living in the presence of God and are ruled directly by Him.

II. When we are under God's rule, we live by the intuition of our spirit according to the sense of life – v. 6:

- A. The divine life is the highest life, with the richest, strongest, and keenest feeling (Eph. 4:18); this feeling is the sense of life.
- B. The sense of life makes us know whether we are living in the natural life or in the divine life, whether we are living in the flesh or in the spirit – Rom. 8:6.
- C. The sense of life guides, governs, controls, and directs us – v. 4.
- D. We live in the reality of the kingdom of God by the sense of life, with the positive feelings of peace, rest, strength, satisfaction, release, liveliness, watering, brightness, and comfort – v. 6.
- E. The divine life in our spirit knows the government of God in the kingdom of God – John 3:3, 5-6, 15.
- F. The government of God in the kingdom of God has its reality, and this reality is the living of the divine life under the direct rule of God – Matt. 5:3, 8, 20; 6:33; 7:21; Rom. 5:17.

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The Church as the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:18-19; 18:15-22; Rom. 14:17; Rev. 1:6; Col. 1:12-13

- I. **The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church; the presence of the kingdom produces the church – Matt. 4:23; 16:18-19.**
- II. **The kingdom is the reality of the church; therefore, apart from the kingdom life, we cannot live the church life – Matt. 5:3; 16:18-19; Rev. 1:4-6, 9:**
 - A. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5-7) is the content of the church life ; without the reality of the kingdom, the church is empty.
 - B. Since the kingdom life issues in the church life, as we live corporately in the kingdom life, we spontaneously live the church life – Rom. 14:17.
 - C. A believer who does not live in the reality of the kingdom cannot be built into the structure of the church – Eph. 2:22.
- III. **Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up – Matt. 16:18-19:**
 - A. The church is brought into being through the authority of the kingdom.
 - B. The keys of the kingdom are given to make the building of the church possible – v. 19; 18:18; cf. John 20:23.
 - C. When the kingdom of the heavens is able to assert its authority over a company of believers, those believers can be built up into the church – Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.
- IV. **The genuine church is the kingdom of God in this age; today the believers live the kingdom life in the church – 16:18-19; 18:17-18; 13:44-46; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; Eph. 2:19; Col. 4:11; Rev. 1:4-6:**
- V. **The Father has delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love – Col. 1:12-13:**
 - A. The kingdom of the Son of God's love comprises three ages: the present age, in which the church is, the coming age, in which the millennial kingdom will be; and the eternal age with the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth – v. 13.
 1. The stress in Colossians 1:13 is the kingdom of the Son of God's love in this age, which is the reality of the church.
 2. The church life today is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, which is as delightful to God the Father as the Son of God is – 4:15-16.
 - B. We need to understand the intrinsic significance of the church as the kingdom of the Son of God's love – 1:13:

1. The Son of God is the embodiment and expression of the divine life; hence, the kingdom of the Son is a realm of life – 1 John 5:11-12; John 1:4.
2. The kingdom into which we have been transferred is a realm is the kingdom of the Son of God's love; this realm of life is in love, not in fear – Col. 1:13.
3. The kingdom in which we find ourselves today is a realm full of life, light, and love – 1 Pet. 2:9.
4. The Son of the Father is the expression of the Father as the source of life – John 1:18, 4; 1 John 1:2:
 - a. The Son of the Father's love is the object of the Father's love to be the embodiment of life to us in the divine love with the authority in resurrection – Matt. 3:17
 - b. The Son, as the embodiment of the divine life, is the object of the Father's love – 17:5:
 - (1) The divine life embodied in the Son is given to us in the divine love – 1 John 5:11-12; John 3:16.
 - (2) The object of the divine love becomes to us the embodiment of life in the divine love with the authority in resurrection; this is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love.
5. To be transferred into the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is to be transferred into the Son, who is life to us – 1 John 5:11-12:
 - a. The Son in resurrection is now the life-giving Spirit, and He rules us in His resurrection life with love – 1 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 6:4-5; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
 - b. When we live by the Son as our life in resurrection, we are living in His kingdom, enjoying Him in the Father's love; here we have the church life – Col. 3:4; John 6:57.
 - c. Because the Father delights in His Son, the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is a pleasant thing, a matter of delight – Matt. 3:17; 17:5.