

Revisiting "Kingdom" Part 1
Ruling and Reigning with Christ
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There are few biblical subjects that are as susceptible to the devil's subtle and crafty influence than the subject of the believer ruling and reigning with Christ. The idea of sharing rulership with Christ has become a veritable playground for the spirit of enmity (the "devil") against God, the spirit working within the dimension of the flesh (the five senses deluded into attempting to create a self-sufficient, independent self). That self is the basic unit of this present evil arrangement, within which most religious aspiration operates.

It very seductively invites an unholy union of the desire for deep spirituality with the ambition to be one of the top dogs, one of those who call the shots in the kingdom of God. The grossness of such an unholy union is often disguised by claims of pure motivation, but underneath the disguise the competitive drive for superiority runs rampant driven by the lust for spiritual recognition and for fraternal admiration.

Our Lord Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the perfect model of heavenly kingliness. What characterizes His kingship? By what mode does He bring to bear the power of God upon men and creation? We stand in amazement, in wonderment, when the realization fully comes upon us, that He rules as the Servant King, the One who came not to be ministered to, but to minister and give His life a ransom for many.

Has it escaped our understanding that ministry is service, and service is the business of servants? Has our incessant Bible study failed to uncover the truth that it is by God ministering His life to us in Christ by the Spirit that He causes His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven? It is mind-blowing to realize that the Kingdom of heaven doesn't really operate by anyone telling anyone else what to do, NOT EVEN GOD.

The kingdom of heaven operates by the dispensation of life.

God just keeps giving Himself to us in the broken body and shed blood of His Son.

In the kingdom, telling others what to do, is antithetical to the nature of the kingdom. God made that clear when He showed that it doesn't work that way by telling Adam and Eve not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

That, itself, set in motion the deviant dynamic that constitutes the kingdom of this world. That is the factor that has opposed (ultimately unsuccessfully) the prophetic word (ultimately successful), "be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth, and subdue it."

Dare we entertain the consideration that God, Himself, does not think of Himself as the Boss, but as the Great Servant who ministers His life to all His creation? Have we given sufficient consideration to the old testament lesson that Israel's insistence on having a king was an act of rebellion against the nature of God's true relationship with man?

Whenever God works within a/the system of hierarchal authority, He does so as a concession to our ignorant need to be told what to do and to seek a higher place within that system of sequential pseudo-authority.

Typical of its summarizing character, the Book of Revelation presents to us in rich symbolism the nature of God's rule. John was shown a throne, THE throne, from which the universe is ruled, and in the midst, or center of the throne was a Lamb. The inspiring Spirit of God did not capriciously choose that symbolism for the Son of God.

The Spirit of God chose the Lamb symbol specifically, and specifically did not choose any one of the other symbols or metaphors that apply to Christ, such as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, that to our minds might seem more appropriate. The Spirit of inspiration makes a dramatic and striking point: That which is central to the reign of God is the nature of a Lamb, that is, what rules in God's kingdom is that which is self-sacrificial, meek, conciliating and life-giving, as personified in our Lord Jesus.

I must share this pertinent observation, sort of in passing: Even as some of us have been broken of the propensity to tell others what they ought to do, and no longer look legalistically for some external

code to guide our own lives, we have assumed that hearing the voice of God inwardly giving us instruction about what to do or not to do as we face life's challenges is normal new covenant living.

Well, dear ones, I must tell you, it is not. Such experiences still indicate a concession on God's part to our spiritual immaturity.

Hearing His Father's voice from within telling Him what to do was not what characterized the life and ministry of Christ, and remember, Christ is OUR life. He testified that He did those things that He saw the Father do. That carefully worded testimony indicates a quite different life-dynamic than we think of as spiritually normative. The humanity that is intrinsic to our Lord's eternal Deity gives utterly spontaneous expression to the nature of God.

The picture that Jesus gave of the outworking of His life in us was not one of disciples marching to commands, but of the water of an artesian well springing up and becoming rivers of living water. The picture of the believer's procession from glory to glory given to us by St. Paul is not that of being disciplined to obedience to commands, even inward ones, but of being changed by beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The rule of God begins in eternity as God's Son beholds the radiant face of His Father, and comes to us from the heavenly Mount Zion radiating the light of God by His life, so that we, in turn, beholding and reflecting, as in a mirror, the Father's glory in His face, become participants in the out-shining glory-light of the family of God. If you desire to come under the rule of the kingdom of God, take time to behold the Lamb in the center of the throne, and you will be conquered, and go forth to conquer.

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