

SEEING THE KINGDOM By Sam Fife

Joh 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

This man Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. He was a good man. The Bible says he was a ruler of the Jews. That means that he was a priest, a preacher, a teacher in the church of God, Israel was the only church God had at that time.

This Nicodemus was not like some of the other priests in Jerusalem, the Scribes and Pharisees. He did not ridicule Jesus. He was not following just a formalistic brand of religion. He was sincere in his heart. He recognized that Jesus was sent by God by the miracles He did, He believed in the Bible, God's word and was teaching it to the best of his ability. He was living up to the revelation God had given at that time. The only problem was, although he recognized Jesus was sent from God, he could not see the real purpose for which Jesus had come. Jesus was continually speaking in the spiritual, and Nicodemus being yet carnal, yet walking the fleshly way and literal letter of the word, could not see the kingdom of God Jesus was setting up.

Jesus said to him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." In our day the church has put great stress on the first few words of Jesus' statement, the fact that you must be born again. However, this is not the important truth that Jesus was trying to get over here. Jesus was not placing the emphasis on being born again although that is necessary. He was placing the emphasis on seeing the kingdom of God. The important thing is to see the kingdom of God. Being born again is a step toward the primary purpose of seeing the kingdom of God, and entering into the kingdom of God.

The first thing we need to understand is that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Heaven is the same thing. Matthew called it the kingdom of Heaven when writing to the Jews. Luke and John called it the kingdom of God. This kingdom is not the place Heaven. Ninety per cent of the Christians today who have read this phrase think that it is referring to some far off place called Heaven where they will go when they die or when Jesus comes back. This is far from the truth. The kingdom of God Jesus was speaking about is the invisible spiritual kingdom which God is setting up right here on earth. This is the kingdom Jesus was speaking about in the Lord's prayer when He said for us to pray for God's kingdom to come and God's will to be done here on earth as it is in the heavenly realm

In the book of Daniel God prophesied of the kingdom He would set up. Daniel 2 tells us that once King Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian Empire had a dream. When he woke the next morning he could not remember the dream and was troubled. He called his wise men together and asked them to tell him what he had dreamed and the interpretation. Of course, none could do it. They proclaimed the thing to be impossible. The king said that if they did not tell him the dream and interpretation, all the wise men in the kingdom would be put to death.

Because Daniel was listed as one of the wise men in the kingdom, soldiers came to arrest him. When he asked what the trouble was, the officer told him. Daniel told the officer to go back to the king and tell them to wait a little while, and he would tell the dream and the interpretation.

That night Daniel prayed to God, and He gave Daniel a vision of the dream and the interpretation. The next day Daniel told the king the dream. He said that in the dream the king had seen a great image in the form of a man. The head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the thighs and belly of brass, the legs of iron and his feet part of it was iron and part of clay. He said that as the king watched in the, dream, a

stone cut out of a mountain without hands smote the image and it crumbled into pieces. The stone cut out without hands became a great mountain which filled the whole earth. Then Daniel interpreted the king's dream.

Daniel said that this great image represented four great world empires or governments that would rule over the world. The Babylonian Empire was the head of gold as it was the richest and most powerful of any risen kingdom. The breast and arms of silver represented another kingdom that would rise up and overthrow the Babylonian Empire. Just as silver is inferior to gold so this next kingdom would be inferior to King Nebuchadnezzar's.

Sometime after Daniel's prophecy, the Medes and the Persians joined forces and the Media-Persia Empire ruled for awhile. The thighs and belly of brass represented a third kingdom which would overthrow the Media-Persia Empire and rule for awhile. This was fulfilled as after the Media-Persia Empire, Alexander the Great gained control over the people of Greece. He rose up with his armies and swept across the world conquering the other kingdoms.

The iron and clay kingdom represented a kingdom that would overthrow the brass kingdom. It would be very strong as of iron. The kingdom of Alexander the Great was overthrown by the Roman Empire. So the fourth part of the image was fulfilled by the Roman Empire which ruled the world.

The Roman Empire was the strongest that had ever risen. The fact that this kingdom, was of iron and clay was for a very definite reason. When the Romans conquered the world, they did not do it as Alexander had by sweeping with his armies crushing every opposing nation. The Romans were more democratic. They would say we are going to conquer and win. If you join us, you will be a part of the Roman Empire. If you refuse to do so, we will crush you anyway, and you will become a slave nation. Therefore, they joined them. The Roman Empire was not made up of one people like the Greeks but of many nations symbolizing iron and clay mixed.

The important thing in our study is that Daniel told the king in the dream that there was a stone cut without hands that would smite the image, and it would crumble. The stone cut without hands would become a great mountain and would fill all the earth. When interpreting this part of the dream, Daniel said and that in the days of the iron and clay kingdom, the Roman Empire, the God of Heaven would set up a kingdom in the earth which would stand forever. He said this kingdom would not be left in the hands of others, but would be ruled over by God. This kingdom would break all the other kingdoms in pieces and would stand forever. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to the other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Daniel 2:44.

The stone cut out of the mountain without hands was Jesus, born of a virgin without an earthly father. Jesus is the chief cornerstone in God's great kingdom that He is building. It was 'cut out without hands' in the sense that earthly human hands had nothing to do with His birth, with His coming into the world. Jesus Christ came. The fact that the stone cut out without hands smote the image and it crumbled signifies that Jesus, with His coming, would completely destroy the system of one world empire ruling over the world.

Jesus came in the days of the iron-clay kingdom. History makes it very clear that it was Jesus and the Christianity that He established in the world that caused the Roman Empire to crumble. The Romans gained great power and rulership over the world by the fact that they were so cruel and unmerciful.

Wherever they found resistance in any manner, they quickly stamped it out. As the Spirit of God began to move in the earth, the apostles went forth with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christianity began to leaven the Roman Empire, and not many years after that the Roman Empire became Christian. The gospel of love and peace has overruled the gospel of cruelty and power. The Roman Empire lost its strength and crumbled, smitten by Jesus the Son of God, just as Nebuchadnezzar saw Him smite the image. The whole system of world empires crumbled.

Since that time no world empire has ever ruled the world. Napoleon tried, and he failed. Hitler tried, and he failed. Every other government that seeks to overrule the world, every other instrument that Satan gets hold of and tries to rule the world is going to fail as Jesus Christ, the stone cut without hands, has smitten the image. In doing so Jesus Christ set up the kingdom which was spoken by Daniel, the kingdom that would not be left to other people but would be ruled over by God Himself, the kingdom that would become a great mountain and rule the world. The kingdom spoken of by Daniel is the kingdom of

God or kingdom of Heaven which Jesus set up when He came. This is the same kingdom of God Jesus was speaking of to Nicodemus when He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That was Nicodemus' real problem. He could not see the kingdom of God. He believed in the Bible, God's Word. He believed in the prophets, and like every other good Jew, he was waiting for the kingdom spoken by Daniel. He believed the stone cut out of the mountain without hands was a prophecy of the Messiah. The Jews had been waiting for centuries for the words of the prophet to be fulfilled. They were expecting the Messiah to come and smite all the world's enemies and for God to set up a kingdom that would stand forever.

The kingdom had come as Nicodemus stood talking to Jesus that night, but he could not see it and for a very good reason as we brought out early in this study. Nicodemus and every other Jew was expecting a carnal, literal, visible, physical, political kingdom and the kingdom that Jesus set up was a spiritual kingdom.

Therefore, they could not see it. Let me emphasize again, the Jews were all waiting and longing for the Messiah to come. They were expecting Him to set up a kingdom on earth, but they did not expect Him to do it as He did. They were expecting the Messiah to come down with great flashing power and literally and physically smite the ruling world government as the stone smote the image. They expected Him to gather a great army and with great supernatural power overthrow the Roman Empire then set up a visible political kingdom here on earth with the Messiah sitting on a visible literal throne and rule with the Jews beside Him.

The reason the Jews expected the Messiah to set up a carnal, fleshly, physical kingdom is because they were carnal, fleshly people. The carnal, literal and fleshly terms are the only terms in which they could think. Now Jesus had come, and the kingdom had come. It was not a carnal, visible, physical kingdom operating on carnal, visible, physical laws. It was an invisible spiritual kingdom operating on spiritual laws. Jesus set up this kingdom by spending three years of His ministry teaching the people the spiritual laws of the kingdom. Then He died on Calvary's cross, shed His blood to atone for our sins to make us clean vessels so that the Holy Spirit could enter into us and dwell in us. He could rule over each of us sitting on the throne of our hearts as our king. As each one accepts Jesus and his atoning blood, His Holy Spirit enters us, dwells within us and rules within our hearts and each one with our king ruling invisible are welded together into one body, making up the kingdom of God on earth.

For over 1900 years people have been accepting Jesus as their Saviour. He enters into their hearts, and they become citizens of the kingdom of God with our King ruling over us. Not from the outside on a visible throne but on the inside. We have on earth an invisible spiritual kingdom of God.

A political kingdom on earth operates on political laws made by the government. These are laws which all men can see. They were written for all to see. The kingdom of God being spiritual operates on invisible spiritual laws which can only be seen with the spiritual eye and when they are revealed by the Spirit of God. The kingdom as Jesus made clear to Nicodemus can only be seen when the Spirit of God births us again from a carnal being into a spiritual being so that he can reveal to us the kingdom.

When Jesus spent His three year ministry on earth, He was teaching spiritual laws by which the kingdom blessings come to us. Jesus said, "That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be cast into the sea: and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." He was not revealing a promise which originated with Jesus Himself. He was revealing and unveiling God's law of faith which has been since the foundation of the world. God created the earth and instituted many divine laws. There are physical laws, technical laws, medicinal laws and spiritual laws.

The reason doctors can help to get people well is simply because they have discovered divine laws of God which were since time began. There is a law which says if one kidney stops working, the doctor can remove it. The other kidney will take up the function, and the person can live normally. The doctors did not make this true, but only discovered that it was true. It is a law of God. Another kind of law says if you inject a certain drug in the blood stream, the nervous system will react in a certain way and pain will stop. Again the doctors did not make this true, but only discovered that it was true and has been true. It is another law of God and has been since time began. Sixty years ago the Wright brothers flew a plane over the Carolinas. They did it because they discovered a law of God which says if a propeller turns a

certain number of revolutions the plane will stay in the air. They did not make this true, it was a law of God since the foundation of the world.

God's highest law is the law that Jesus revealed. The law of faith says whatever you believe and pray to God doubting not that it will come to pass, even to the moving of a mountain, it shall be done. Jesus did not make this true but only revealed that it was true and had been true since the time began waiting for the Son of God to come to earth and reveal it.

The law of faith is God's highest law because it is all inclusive. Mark 11:24 "What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." The drug law can only stop pain. The kidney law can only stop kidney trouble. The law of faith can stop the pain, heal the kidney, and make airplanes fly. God's law of faith supersedes and overrules all the lesser ones.

Remember the story of Peter walking on the water to Jesus. The reason Peter could walk upon that water is because Jesus had taught him faith. As he saw Jesus walking on the water, he was inspired to meet the conditions of God's highest law, the law of faith. There was another law of God that said he would sink when he stepped on the water. This is a lesser law, the law of gravity. The law of faith superseded all of God's lesser laws just as the Supreme Court in our land can overrule our lesser courts. Peter walked on the water. When he saw the wind boisterous he became afraid, and fear replaced faith in his heart. No longer was he meeting God's condition for His law of faith, and he began to sink.

So here we have an illustrated example of Jesus teaching the spiritual laws by which the kingdom was to operate. His highest teaching was the law of faith. All the other teachings He gave were simply the revelation of the lesser laws of God.

When we walk and live in them meeting their conditions they enable us to attain to God's law of faith and experience the blessings of the kingdom, healing, miracles, even the moving of mountains.

When He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:3) He was teaching the lesser laws of the kingdom. They are step ladders to the law of faith. When He said to walk in love, and turn the other cheek, He was revealing the lesser laws. All of His other teachings or commandments are simply the revelation of the spiritual laws by which the kingdom of God operates leading up to attaining the law of faith. Just as you have to walk up every rung of a stepladder to get to the top so we must begin with the lesser laws not overlooking the teachings of Jesus to attain to the law of faith which brings victory, blessings, etc.

Jesus said, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." This means that he who is full of faith in the little things shall be ruler of the bigger things in the kingdom. However, we do not want to be full of faith in the little things. We like to skip over what we call the lesser teachings of Jesus. When someone speaks of turning the other cheek after being smitten, we say it is not practical. We like to revel in the great promises of Jesus like moving the mountain, casting out devils, speaking in new tongues, hearing the sick. Dear friend, until we are full of faith in the little things, and these spiritual laws leading up to the great promises of Jesus, we will never experience their blessings. That is why there is no power in the church of Jesus Christ today.

So we see that Nicodemus' problem was that he was expecting a visible political kingdom, not the spiritual kingdom that Jesus set up. The simple truth is that as he spoke to Jesus, the Kingdom of God was around him, but Nicodemus could not see it. Jesus had been teaching the spiritual laws by which the kingdom operated. The little people who believed and met the conditions with Jesus in the spiritual laws were reaping blessings. The lame were walking, the blind were seeing, lepers were cleansed, and the dumb were speaking. The kingdom of God was flowing all around Nicodemus, but he could not see it. Jesus said we must be born again of the Spirit of God. We have to be transformed from a carnal, physical, fleshly being into a spiritual being by the Spirit then we can see the spiritual kingdom,

Jesus also said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." When I was in theological seminary, I was told that the proper interpretation of this verse was that being born of water signified the first natural birth, because there is the bursting of the water when a child is born in the womb of the mother. As there is much water connected with the birth of a baby, they said being born of the water was the natural birth.

The second part of the statement was to represent the spiritual birth. This interpretation was given to me, because those who taught me were yet carnal Christians. They came to the scriptures with their carnal intellect and got a carnal interpretation of being born of water. If they had waited, as spiritual

beings must, on the revelation of the Spirit of God, He would have revealed the true meaning of being born of water.

In the symbolism of scripture, water is often a type of the word of God which washes all the false ideas out of our heart replacing them with truth. So the scripture is speaking of being regenerated by the washing of the water of the word. So we can hear Jesus saying to His disciples, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3. The word is the washing agent.

In the process of being born again, the Spirit of God uses the word of God to get in our heart and drive out all the false ideas. When we accept the truth through the word, the Spirit Himself enters our hearts and changes us from a carnal being into the spiritual. Henceforth, we are born of the water and of the Spirit.

Next we need to understand what it means to enter into the kingdom of God. It does not mean to go to a far off Heaven some day. It means partaking of the blessings of the kingdom through meeting the conditions of the spiritual laws. As the Holy Spirit, who is given to us through Christ's atonement to dwell in us to lead us into all truth, reveals to us all truth and more and more of the laws of God's kingdom, then we enter deeper and deeper into the experiences of the Kingdom of God. This is entering into the kingdom.

It is one thing to see the kingdom and another to enter into it. There are many Christians today who have been born again of the Spirit, and they see the kingdom. They see that it is a spiritual kingdom and that it operates upon spiritual laws. But they do not want to let go of the old carnal, physical worldly life they are living to become spiritual beings and live a spiritual life according to the laws of the spiritual kingdom. Therefore, they do not enter into the kingdom and partake of its blessings. That is why you see the carnal fleshly church powerless today.

In the church today, we have ministers who do not believe in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit (word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kind of tongues, interpretation of tongues ... I Cor. 12:8-10) that is given to us in the law of faith today. The only thing they believe is the literal truth that Christ died for our sins. This is all they preach. They have been born again but have not fully yielded to the Spirit and have not seen the kingdom in all its glory. They are yet carnal, and we speak this without criticism but as a matter of absolute truth. Therefore, these are the only terms they can speak in. Like Nicodemus, they are good men, but they just have not seen the kingdom. Like Nicodemus they believe the Bible and are sincere, but yet carnal and fleshly.

They do not know what the kingdom is all about and that it is all about them today. They have placed it far out in the future. They say when the millennium begins, the kingdom will have come. They speak of the millennium as the kingdom age. They say some day when the kingdom begins we can have perfect health, perfect peace, perfect joy, and the miracle working power of God and victory. They do not know that the kingdom began over 1900 years ago even as Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to see the kingdom.

There are millions of people across the earth who are being taught the laws of the kingdom. They are believing them just as they believe in Jesus. Because of this, spiritual and physical eyes are being opened, spiritual and physical deaf ears are hearing, etc. However, there are still those who do not see anything but say, "Someday the kingdom will come."

A great portion of the Church today is making the same mistake Nicodemus and the Jews made. They are expecting a literal, physical, political kingdom. They expect Jesus to come flashing back at any moment and with supernatural power overthrow all the world's governments by Himself, then sit on a visible throne and rule the earth and they with Him. They expect that when Jesus comes back, He will instantaneously perform a miracle and all the lazy, unspiritual unconcerned Christians will become just like Him. It sounds like a beautiful idea, but that is not what the Bible teaches.

Ephesians 4:15 says, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." We are to grow up in faith, holiness, revelation, power, etc. so as I John 3:2 says, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." It does not say that we shall be made like him after He comes, but we shall be like Him when He appears,

When Christ rules the earth during the millennium, Jesus is not going to be sitting on a visible throne ruling over us. When He shall appear, we shall be like Him. He will not be ruling over us but He'll be one of us. We shall be ruling with Him. The Christ that shall rule in the millennium will be the Body of Christ, a many membered body. Jesus is Lord over us now, but He does not want to Lord over us then. He wants to make us like Him. He became Lord over us that He might lift us up to His level so that the Father might rule through all of us as the Body of Christ. He is our Lord now, but then He will be our Brother. This is why in Hebrews 2: 11 it says, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all in one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

So the kingdom of God is not going to come in the future, it came over 1900 years ago. It is not and never will be a physical, political kingdom with one man sitting on a throne ruling over other men. It is going to be a spiritual kingdom with the Spirit of Christ ruling through all the members of the Body of Christ from within their hearts. This is why Jesus tried through His teachings to get men to see the kingdom of God. He tried to turn them from the idea that it was a physical kingdom. This is why He said the kingdom was like a grain of mustard seed which is planted.

The mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds but grows into a giant tree where the fowls of the air can come and rest in its branches. That is the way the kingdom of God is. It started off through Jesus, His disciples, then 3,000 on the day of Pentecost, 5,000 with the lame man getting healed at the gate of the temple. The laws of the kingdom were operating just as powerful in Peter's day as they will be in the millennium. They were operating so powerful that Peter just passed by people who believed and met the conditions of the spiritual laws of faith, and as his shadow passed over them they were healed.

The final step in God's plan is to set up the kingdom in the earth. He wants to cleanse us and make us holy vessels to enter into and lead us in all truth and reveal all the laws of the kingdom so that we can walk and live in them.

"Yea so the Lord would say unto my people. Lift up thine eye. Look above. Turn thine eye away from the visible to the invisible. Even as my servant Paul said, while we look not on the things seen but the unseen things. There thou shalt see me in all my glory my people, for I have set Myself in the earth in my kingdom that thou mightest see me with the eye of the Spirit." (word of prophecy)

So the problem with much of Christianity today is that they cannot see the kingdom in all its glory. They are not entering into it in all its glory, because they will not let the Spirit of God lead them out of their carnality, their fleshliness, their worldliness and enable them to become spiritual beings and see the kingdom and enter into it.

Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Never the twain shall meet. The kingdom of God shall never be a visible carnal kingdom operating on political laws. It will always be a spiritual kingdom. You can never partake of its blessings through carnal means, through the use of fleshly powers, promotions, organizations and the spending of a lot of money. That which is of the flesh is flesh, and it begets flesh. Only when one has been transformed by the Spirit of God to a spiritual being and is led by the Spirit and filled by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit by the use of the spiritual instruments of prayer and faith, can we overcome the spiritual enemy. Only then will the spiritual kingdom of God stand in the earth in all its glory.

There is not going to be an overthrowing of the world by a mighty flash of Jesus' power. Whatever Jesus does He is going to do through His Body, through the Spirit of God that dwells within us. The kingdom is here, but it is not here in its fullness yet. It is going to be here in its fullness when carnal fleshly Christians become spiritual and see and enter into the kingdom by growing up into Jesus and His likeness in all things. Then each member of the Body of Christ will be like Jesus, and it shall be manifested in the earth.

May God hasten that day. In Jesus name, Amen.