Entering the Kingdom – The New Covenant

If we are drawn by the beauty of His perfect character, this will lead to admiration and love. In this way love will be stirred up in us, and with it the desire to be His betrothed and His bride. (I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please. Song of Solomon 8:4)

He draws us with the beauty of His character and the beauty of His Kingdom, and He is long-suffering with us until admiration and love awaken, both for Him and for His ways. (And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. John 12:32)

When He becomes for us a treasure of great price, and we give up the old things, then the Lord will enter into a relationship with me by making a covenant of love, so that I may be His. (Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Matthew 13:44)

This is not a covenant like those in business dealings; it is a covenant of marriage, of love. (Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. Ezekiel 16:8; The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying… I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Jeremiah 31:3)

God knows our hearts. He knows when we find and admire His beauty, when love comes with all our mind. (And God, which knoweth the hearts… Acts 15:8) Only then are we ready to follow Him and to keep the word of the Lord Jesus. Only then is the covenant made between Him and me. (If ye love me, keep my commandments. John 14:15)

The beauty of the heart of the Lord Jesus must be for us the greatest treasure a person can ever find. (What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold… This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. Song of Solomon 5:9-16)

Our relationship with the Lord Jesus must be like the engagement between a young man and a young woman, which one can enter only through mutual admiration, through wholehearted love. The Lord Jesus does not enter into a covenant with us because we don't want to end up in hell, or because He offers us streets of gold in His eternal Kingdom.

He will not enter into this relationship of love with us if we are not drawn by His beauty, if we do not love Him more than anyone else. (He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Matthew

10:37)

Only someone in love can delight in the words spoken by the one they admire and love. (My soul failed when he spake. Song of Solomon 5:6; And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. Psalm 119:47; My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. Psalm 119:20)

Only in this way will the Lord enter into a covenant with us: if our aim, too, is to live in a relationship of love and to prepare ourselves as a betrothed bride for the wedding with our Bridegroom. (For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. Revelation 19:7)

Scripture tells us that the Son of God agreed to die on the cross so that we could be set free from the dominion of the devil, cleansed of our sins, reconciled to God and redeemed, and so that the new birth and our being translated into His Kingdom could become possible. (…to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28)

The work of the cross is God's gift to every person who, on hearing the Word, falls in love with Christ and repents of their evil deeds. The sacrifice of the cross makes possible the forgiveness of sins and redemption for the one who denies himself and trusts Him completely. (Who… hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13-14)

The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus makes this possible, so that we can be placed in a new state in which He can work with us through the Holy Spirit to restore us and make us perfect. (…through sanctification of the Spirit. 1 Peter 1:2; …are changed into the same image… even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18)

God commits Himself to begin the work of perfecting our character only with those who love Him with all their heart, who deny themselves and enter into a covenant with Him.

Self-denial is a mandatory requirement that must be fulfilled by everyone who wants to begin this new life. (If any man will come after me, let him **deny himself,** and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9:23) It is easy to see that self-denial is the starting point in the plan of salvation, without which there is no new birth.

This is the moment of entering the territory of the Kingdom, the moment of the new birth, a birth that few people experience and that will remain a great mystery to most of us. Many want to reach the Kingdom of God for the things to be found there, yet without making any real change in their lives.

The word of Scripture is very clear on this. The Lord Jesus tells us that many will seek to enter and will not be able. (Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke 13:24)

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