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ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE (OHMS)

Today's Text: Micah Chap. 4

Extracts:

Now it shall come to pass *in the latter days* that *the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths."* For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ... *For all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord forever and ever* [Mic. 4: 1-2, 5]

The United Kingdom (UK) is a monarchy, a kingdom whose head is the King or Queen of England. Currently, the constitutional head of state is Queen Elizabeth II. If you work for government or in public institutions, you are "On Her Majesty's Service (OHMS)."¹ Taxes and customs duties are collected by "Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs," and the national postal service is known as "Royal Mail." The official opposition party is "Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition." When you serve in the military, you are in the "Royal Army," or "Royal Navy," or "Royal Air Force," among other military units. Even the fictional superspy agent, James Bond, Agent 007, is "On Her Majesty's Secret Service." Clearly, no one is left in doubt as to who owns the land. In practice, however, the UK is a democracy, one of the oldest in the world, and elected politicians are in control. The monarch is a mere ceremonial head, at best a modern symbol of the once absolute monarchy of ages past.

But there is another kingdom that every believer aspires to join. It is an absolute monarchy where there is no democracy or fundamental human rights! Everyone is on the monarch's service for real. It is called the Kingdom of God. Since God is the King of that kingdom, believers are, by definition, on His Majesty's Service. We are labourers in His vineyard. Of course, we can exercise our free will to be or not to be subjects of such a kingdom. However, since most people want to go to heaven, not hell, when they die, God's kingdom is quite attractive!

What does the Kingdom of God mean or look like? How can we be part of it? How can we be on His Majesty's service? Let us find out from today's study.

¹ Based on http://wikipedia.org/wiki/UK_government and http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Mail

1. Background: A glimpse of the coming Kingdom of God

The prophet Micah talks of the Lord's coming reign in Zion "that shall come to pass in the latter days" [**Mic. 4: 1**]. From out of Zion, the word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem (a city on Mount Zion), and nations and all the peoples of the earth would come to be taught the ways of the Lord by which they should walk [**vv. 2-3**], and such of them that accept God's sovereignty over them would "walk in the name of the Lord .. forever and ever" [**v. 5**]. The people of Israel would experience some hard times before the coming of God's reign in Zion, such as their captivity and exile to Babylon [**v. 10**], but God's ultimate triumph and the bliss of His reign in Zion would more than compensate for any temporary hardships [**vv. 11-13**].

Daniel was one of the exiles in Babylon. While there, he received the following revelation concerning the Lord's Kingdom [**Dan. 7: 13-14**]:

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

When the archangel Gabriel came to announce to Mary the conception of Jesus, he told her, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, *and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end*" [**Lk 1: 26-33**]. When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He preached "the gospel of the kingdom of God," saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" [**Mk 1: 14-15**].² Later, when He taught His disciples how to pray to His Father, He said, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done *in earth, as it is in heaven*" [**Matt. 6: 10-KJV**].

From the forgoing, we can infer that the kingdom prophesied by Micah and other prophets of old was proclaimed by Jesus when He came in flesh [**Matt. 4: 17; Mk 1: 15**]. But what does it really mean? How do we become subjects of that kingdom? What are we supposed to do when we are on His Majesty's service?

2. The Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven?

² For a very helpful discussion of the subject of the kingdom, read Myles Monroe's books, such as, *Rediscovering the Kingdom: Ancient Hope for our 21st Century* (July 2004) and *Kingdom Principles: Preparing for Kingdom Experience and Expansion (Understanding the Kingdom)* (Sept. 2006), both published by Destiny Image Publishers

A rich young man once came to Jesus to ask Him what it would take for him to gain eternal life. When Jesus made it clear to him that he had to give up trust in earthly treasures and put his trust totally in God., the young man walked away sad because he could not give up his wealth [Matt. 19: 16-22]. Then Jesus told His disciples, “It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven”; (and added) “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” [vv. 23-24]. What is the difference (if any) between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God?

We know that God’s (and the Lamb’s) throne is in heaven [Rev. 4: 2-3; 5: 5-6; 22: 1-5] and when we pray, we say, “Our Father who art in heaven” [Matt. 6: 9]. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is where true believers go to when they die [Rev. 7: 9-17]. For example, Jesus, on hearing the confession of faith of the centurion whose servant was sick, confirmed that Gentiles would come from the east and the west and “sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” [Matt. 8: 11], thus affirming heaven as the abode for those who die in the Lord. It is from there that they will ultimately be brought down to earth in the New Jerusalem [Rev. 21: 1-8], and that is when the righteous shall inherit the earth and dwell there forever [Ps. 37: 29]. Instructively, most of the parables of Jesus concerning life in the hereafter always began with “The kingdom of heaven is like...” [See, for example, Matt. 20: 1; 25: 1, 14].

The kingdom of God extends beyond heaven because He is the King of the universe, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. God is Spirit and those who worship Him can only do so in spirit [Jn 4: 24]. When the Pharisees asked Jesus to tell them when the kingdom of God would come, He replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation, nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For in deed, the kingdom of God is within you” [Lk 17: 20-21]. The analogy of the rich man used by Jesus makes this quite clear. A rich man cannot enter the kingdom of God (while alive) if the cares of this world choke the word of God out of his heart. Consequently, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (when he dies) because of idolatry (worshipping earthly treasures in place of God). Thus, your current spiritual standing measures your kingdom status, that is, *you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven when you die if you are not in the kingdom of God while you are still alive!* Therefore, believers who are still alive on earth are subjects of the kingdom of God and they need to know what it takes to be on His Majesty’s service (OHMS).

3. Membership of the Kingdom of God

Scripture has taught us that “the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but *righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*” [Rom. 14: 17]. Religious rituals may be important but they do not substitute for cultivating a personal relationship with Christ, our gateway to God in heaven. Here are some of the steps you need to take in order to be on His Majesty’s service:

a) *You must be born again*

There is hardly a new thing that you go into without first performing a rite of passage or induction ceremony. For example, you matriculate to enter a university. You take wedding vows to enter a marriage. You have to be born as a baby before you enter into the world! In like manner, those who want to enter the kingdom of God must first be born again. Jesus made this point to a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus, as follows: “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” and “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” [Jn 3: 1-5].

Water baptism is an essential rite to receive Christ into your life. For example, when Peter was preaching to the household of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit fell on them and they began to speak with tongues and to magnify God’s name. Peter said, “Can anyone forbid water, that these (Gentiles) should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit, *just as we have?*” He went on to baptize them [Acts 10: 44-48]. It is also instructive that Paul was baptized after his sight had been restored, following his encounter with Jesus on the way to Damascus [Acts 9: 17-18]. Being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is in line with Christ’s commission [Matt. 28: 19]. Before His passion, Jesus prayed for His disciples, saying among other things, “I do not pray for the world *but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours*” [Jn 17: 9]. By baptism, God gives us to His Son.

b) *You must make God your priority while on earth*

Jesus has made it abundantly clear that we should, “Seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these (earthly blessings) shall be added to you” [Matt. 6: 33]. God’s righteousness is nothing but faith in action, for Abraham believed and it was accounted to him for righteousness [Gen. 15: 6], and the just shall live by his faith [Hab. 2: 4; Rom. 1: 17].

You cannot claim to be born again and yet your priority is pursuing earthly/material gains to the detriment of your spiritual relationship with God. Why are you so pious on Sunday and operate as a pirate for the rest of the week? Why do you wear your anxieties on your face like those who do not believe in God? Are you not supposed to be the temple of the Holy Spirit? So, why is there so much wickedness and sexual immorality among you? Remember, you may be the only Bible that people around you may ever read [2 Cor. 3:2]. What are they reading from what you say and do? Have you made Christ and His Father honoured or odious before them?

c) *Your work has no vacation!*

As a subject of the kingdom of God, you keep working until the day you die! There is so much work to do (to win souls for Christ before His imminent return) but the labourers are few [**Matt. 9: 37**]. You cannot resign for “no one, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” [**Lk 9: 62**]. Therefore, you cannot continue to rely on the grace of confession and forgiveness to relapse into sin or backsliding [**2 Pet. 2:20-22**]. You can no longer be tired of doing good [**Gal. 6: 9**]. You can no longer forgive only for a season but at all times [**Matt. 18: 21-35**]. You can no longer show kindness only to those you love but to all your neighbours, especially strangers and the poor [**Jam.2: 1-9**].

Peter and his colleagues came to Jesus and asked Him what was there for them who had forsaken all and followed Him. He replied, “Anyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother, or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life” [**Matt. 19: 27, 29**]. Membership of the kingdom of God is the prerequisite for eternal life!

d) *You must be ready to suffer for the kingdom*

Many people love God’s blessings but not the trials and tribulations! Interestingly, the so-called trials and tribulations are the fine prints of obedience that can usher in the blessings that we crave. Part of being subjects of the kingdom of God is your readiness to suffer for it or to give up *whatever* you love more than God.

For example, it was God (by the Holy Spirit) that sent Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles [**Acts 13: 2**] on their first missionary journey. Jews from Antioch and Iconium caught Paul and stoned him outside the city, leaving him only when they supposed that he had died. However, the disciples gathered around him and he revived. He joined Barnabas in Derbe and used his own experience to strengthen the disciples there saying; “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God” [**Acts 14: 19-22**].

Was it not God that sent Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt that also hardened Pharaoh’s heart? Was it not God that saw Job as the most righteous man on earth that allowed Satan to destroy his children and material wealth [**Job 1: 6-12**]? If you are not ready to suffer for God’s sake, you are not yet ready to enter His kingdom.

4. Conclusion: Go OHMS!

The prophets of old, including Micah, spoke of the coming kingdom of God on earth. It is linked to the throne of David which God had promised him would last

forever [2 Sam. 7: 16]. Zion was a fortress that David had captured from the Jebusites and made his seat of power in Jerusalem [2 Sam. 5: 6-9]. That is why Zion has come to symbolize God's spiritual kingdom [Ps. 125: 1] on which the Lamb will stand in due course [Rev. 14: 1]. When Jesus came in flesh, He took the throne of His father, David [Lk 1:32] and preached the kingdom of God. When He returns, it is to judge the world. The just will go to the kingdom of heaven and the unrighteous will go to hell. Those who die before His return receive instant judgment. Some are already with Him in the Kingdom of heaven and will be with Christ in the air at the rapture [1 Thes. 4: 16-17]. After the tribulation, the righteous in heaven will be brought to earth in the New Jerusalem and dwell on earth in the Kingdom of Christ for ever. That is the kingdom addressed by Micah and other prophets of old. At that point, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven will become one since God's righteousness reigns everywhere.

You have the choice to join that great and glorious company of saints on earth and in heaven. To assess your current standing, use the following checklist:

- *Are you a creature or child of God?* Everything created by God, including man, animals and plants, are His creations. Only human beings who believe in Jesus the Christ can be called God's sons and daughters [Jn 1: 12; 1 Jn 5: 1];
- *Are you an immigrant or a diplomat on earth?*³ If you trust in material things as if earth is your permanent home, you are an immigrant but if heaven is your home and you see yourself as an ambassador of Christ on earth [Ps. 119: 19; 2 Cor. 5: 20], you are a diplomat. Only diplomats are in the kingdom of God;
- *Are you on welfare or workfare?* You are on welfare if all you do is mainly asking for God's favours. You are on workfare if you are working for God and His Christ and using His blessings to help the needy. You are in the kingdom of God if you are on workfare.

Are you yet on His Majesty's service?

³ For more on this, read, "Earth's Immigrants or Heaven's Diplomats?" *Weekly Bible Study Series*, Volume 2, No. 16: 1 July 2001, www.bibleresourcecentre.com