

A close-up photograph of a wheat field. The majority of the wheat stalks are golden-brown and appear to be ripe. In the center of the frame, a single, vibrant green stalk stands out prominently, contrasting with the surrounding mature grain. The background is a dense field of similar wheat, slightly out of focus.

Good and evil

The Now

and

The Not Yet

Good and evil - Now and not yet

We pray "Your kingdom come" and there is a sense in which God's kingdom is already in force. *"At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to Him. But we see Him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death."* (Heb 2:8-9) Jesus' crowning shows us we have a "now" and a "not yet." Jesus is the King, but He says His kingdom is not yet of this world. *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."* John 18:36

All who believe and obey are in Christ as the children of God, but we are not what we shall be. *"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see*

him as he is.” (1 John 3:2) We are children of the King, but we must wait to see exactly what that means. 'And these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.' (Rom 8:30) Our glory is not yet complete. *'For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'*

2 Cor 4:17-18

In a spiritual sense, we are already raised up with Him on His throne, (Eph 2:6) but we are still here. Here we don't always behave in a glorified way, and our world doesn't look like heaven; but we have already received these things in Him; and one day they will be complete in Him. One day we will actually be seated with Him. *"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My*

throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." Rev3:21

Therefore, we must be careful not to imply what is not clear in the Bible. Christ's kingdom is not in full operation at this time, and our prayer cannot make it "breakthrough" into our world. Our Evangelism does not advance the kingdom of God; we spread the word, only God advances the kingdom in His timing. People will continue to get sick, and the poor will always be with us, (Matt 26:11) because the riches of the completeness of the kingdom are not fully available now; and the evil one still has dominion on earth. 1 John 5:19

All Jesus' disciples are to take the knowledge of the kingdom into the world and make disciples. (Matt 28:18-20) The kingdom of Christ is not presently of this world. (John 18:36) Jesus' parables of the kingdom as yeast slowly working in dough, and a tree growing to maturity, indicate a process of gradual fulfilment.

The kingdom is slowly working toward its triumph. One day, when Jesus returns, He will establish His kingdom on earth. Until then, Jesus is building His church according to the knowledge of God, *"I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."* (Matt 16:18) Meanwhile, Hades is still working to disrupt the work of the Lord, but evil will not succeed in preventing His glory.

"And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood."

Rev 12:13-15

Although Satan rages, he is already defeated. *"I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33) The

first coming of Christ was the turning point of the war against evil. This event guaranteed the defeat of Satan. In Christ, God has won victory once and for all time. (1 Cor 15:21-22) *"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."* (John 12:31) All the hostile powers have been defeated in heaven. Col 2:15

The new age of the kingdom has already begun for those who believe and obey Christ. *'For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.'* (Col 1:13) We have begun a new life in Christ. *'Even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).* (Eph 2:5) Since we are made new people according to His image, we must grow in Him, *'you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him,'* Col 3:9-10

The first coming of Christ is to be followed by a second coming. *"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."* (John 14:3) The kingdom was established when He rose again, but has not come to its final completion on earth. The full coming of the kingdom includes Christ's second coming, the general resurrection, the Day of Judgment, and the new heaven and the new earth. The new creation, including our resurrected bodies, is the goal of God's activity in the history of the redemption of all things. *'He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him.'* Eph 1:9-10

This means that when we see horrors in the world, we can always be assured our God is still in control, and His history is moving

forward to His intended goal, in His timing. At this time, the whole created order is in tension between the now and the not yet. *'For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.'* Rom 8:19-22

Although we are spiritual children of God, we are not yet fully as we will be, so we too groan within ourselves. But we have confidence God will complete in us what He has begun. *'Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.'* 1 John 3:2

While we grow in Christ, and we move towards His completion in the world, the kingdom of evil also continues to do its work. Satan's kingdom will exist and grow as long as God's kingdom grows, until the Day of Judgment. This is clear in the parable of the wheat and the weeds. *"Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.""*

Matt 13:27-30

Evil and good will continue to exist side by side in an ongoing conflict in this present age. While Satan wages war, *'we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.'*

Rom 8:28

Christ's victory is not in doubt, the enemy is fighting a losing battle, and Satan rages on in his hate and rebellion to everything Christ stands for. The awful curse which came on

creation by Adam's rebellion was that he handed his dominion over to Satan and the curse still stands for now, so wars, sickness, and poverty will continue until the Lord returns. But we must be patient as we wait. If we already had it all, there would be no need for Christ to wipe away our tears. For now, when the Lord allows adversity and trials to come upon us, His grace upholds us; (2Cor 12:9) when we are weak, His power can strengthen us. Phil 4:12-13

Jesus warned us of the battle we face. *'For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most*

people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."

Matt 24:7-13

In spite of these words of Jesus', some people want to believe that the Kingdom of God is a spiritual reality and fully functioning today. They want to claim many, or all of the promises of the age to come are already theirs, claiming that these things of the coming of Christ are ours now. They claim that all believers are guaranteed health and wealth now, even while Satan rages against us.

While some miraculous healing does take place today, and we do have the Holy Spirit in us as a deposit and a guarantee of what is to come; we don't have it all to do all. Although we have a new spiritual beginning, we are still subject to the curse. *'We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.'* (Rom 8:23) It is God alone in Christ, that is, Christ alone, who rules according to His will, to choose to heal whom He chooses. If we

continue to suffer we do so as a witness to the world, showing how to endure with joy in the presence of God. (James 1:2) While we are a new spiritual creation, we still live in the flesh and continue to be subject to its curse until the Lord returns.

While we have already been raised with Him, and our life is to be patterned after the cross and the example of Jesus. (Phil 2:5-8) This life of the cross is a life of self denial and suffering; (Rom 8:17) it is not triumphant, it is not loud, but humble and obedient. The triumph comes after we suffer in the age to come. We have the command of Jesus to lay it all down for Him now. *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”* Luke 9:23

While we do have personal potential for victory over our sinful inclinations by the Spirit, (Gal 5:16) it doesn't mean we will be without sin. 1 John 1:8

Good and evil will exist side by side for a time, and our suffering will only end when Christ returns, until then we will have tears, we will groan in pain even as we live a life born of the Spirit, for we still dwell in the flesh, waiting for our physical redemption; *'we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.'* Rom 8:23

The New Testament message to us is about denying self and putting on the Christ life, regardless of the circumstances to be face, or the suffering to be endured.

For those who look to now, the focus is with our physical life, and about making this life more enjoyable by avoiding suffering, and improving the quality of our daily circumstances. Others who look to the not yet, look longingly to another home not of this world. The first group is mainly concerned with our existence in this world, looking for

the power of God to make this life more comfortable in a world without suffering. The others look to the power of God to gain the Christ life by overcoming the world as they follow His example and endure suffering. In the Bible we are taught to be content in this world, and to be thankful in all things. We are told God uses all our circumstances, the good and bad, for our good in transforming us into the likeness of His Son. Should we forsake following Christ' example, and therefore deny Him the fellowship of His suffering, just so we can have a more comfortable and enjoyable existence in this world?

When the Lord returns, the first earth will pass away, along with its curse. Jesus will wipe away every tear, and there will no longer be any death, so there will be no mourning or crying or pain, these first things will pass away. Jesus will make all things new, for He is faithful and true. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

We are called on to have faith in Christ even as we suffer as we battle the forces of darkness. We are called to persevere for the joy set before us. *"He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."* Rev 3:5

Be happy with our God who knows all things and wants the very best for all His children. Be happy with God who upholds you in all you are going through. Be happy with God for He is your life, not the things, or the circumstances where you live. Be happy with God who is using your walk here to mold you into His likeness. Don't look for your happiness in the world around you but be happy with God, and you will live in peace in the world. Happiness depends on being with God. Obeying Jesus shows we are happy with God. Be happy with God and contentment will complete your days. The only constantly good and perfect we can have is God.



Living Water Resources

Come to the River

Compiled by

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