

# How The Church and The Kingdom Merge

by Stephen Kaung

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*This sermon delves into the themes of the church, the kingdom of heaven, the return of Jesus Christ, and the ultimate culmination of God's plan for eternity. It explores the concept of the church being built by the kingdom, the importance of understanding the gospel of the kingdom, the role of overcomers in the church, the two stages of Christ's return, the judgment seat of Christ, the great tribulation, the marriage of the Lamb, the New Jerusalem, and the eternal reign with Christ. The sermon emphasizes the need for absolute surrender to Christ as King and the significance of being prepared for His return.*

**Scripture:** Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:6, Revelation 21:1, Revelation 22:16, Matthew 24:44, Colossians 1:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Romans 8:29, Revelation 3:10, Revelation 20:4, Revelation 21:2

**Topics:** "Kingdom of Heaven", "Preparation for Christ's Return"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to the book of Acts, Acts chapter 1, verse 11. Acts chapter 1, verse 11. Who also said, Man of Galilee, why do you stand beholding into heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, shall thus come in the manner in which he had beheld him going into heaven.

Then will you please turn to the book of Revelation. Revelation chapter 19. Revelation chapter 19.

We'll begin with verse 6. And I heard as a voice of a great crowd, and as a voice of many waters, and as a voice of strong thunders, saying hallelujah, for the Lord our God the Almighty has taken to himself kingly power. Let us rejoice and exult and give him glory. For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready, and it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure.

For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he says to me, write, blessed are they who are called to the supper of the marriage of the Lamb. And he says to me, these are the true words of God.

And I fell before his face to do his homage, and he says to me, see thou do it not. I'm thy fellow born man, and the fellow born men are my brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Do homage to God, for the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

And will you please turn to chapter 21. Revelation chapter 21. We begin with verse 1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and the sea exists no more.

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of the heavens from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice out of the heaven saying, behold the tabernacle of God is with man, and he shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God. And he shall wipe away every tears from their eyes, and death shall not exist anymore.

Nor grief, nor cry, nor distress shall exist anymore, for the former things have passed away. And he that sat on the throne said, behold I make all things new. And he says to me, write, for these words are true and faithful.

And he said to me, it is done. I'm the author and the maker, the beginning and the end. I will give to him the thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

He that overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be to him God, and he shall be to me for son. And finally chapter 22 verses 16 and 17. I Jesus have sent my angel to testify these things to you in the assemblies.

I'm the root and offspring of David, the bride and morning star, and the spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that hears say, come. And let him that is thirst, come.

He that will, let him take the water of life freely. May we have a further word of prayer. Dear Lord, as we gathered here unto thy name, we praise and thank thee for thy faithfulness.

Because thou has promised us, where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in their midst. So Lord, we know that thou art here with us. And we do pray Lord that thou will enable us to remove our shoes, stand in the place of thy born servants.

That we may be able to hear what Lord has to say to each one of us. To prepare us, to bring us into thy very presence. We praise and thank thee knowing that thou art coming.

And Lord, we do pray that thou will so prepare each one of us that we can see thee face to face without regrets, without shame. That we may glorify your name. We ask in thy precious name.

Amen. We have been sharing together on this matter of the church and the kingdom. First, we mentioned how the church is built by the kingdom.

Our Lord Jesus said, I will build my church upon this rock. And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. We do acknowledge that the one who really builds the church is our Lord himself.

But how does he build his church? He builds his church with living stones. He builds his church with the life that he has given to each one of us. He builds his church through discipline.

That is to say, everything that is in us, which is not of him, he will deal with it until Christ is fully formed in each and every one of us. And this is the way he will build his church. So that's the reason why we say, it is the kingdom that builds the church.

The problem, why is it throughout these 20 some centuries, we find that the church is not, is still not being fully built. Now, why is it so? The only reason is that God's people do not know the gospel of the kingdom of the heavens. The gospel of the kingdom of heavens must be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to the nations.

And then the Bible says, the end shall come. So dear brothers and sisters, the kingdom is not just a term, a name. The kingdom is a reality.

Christ, he is the king. He is not a nominal king. He is a real king.

And as our king, he demands our absolute surrender. And it is only under that condition that the principle of the kingdom can begin to work in our lives, to remove everything that is not of Christ, and to build up Christ within each and every one of us, and build us together. So brothers and sisters, we need to remember how important is the kingdom of the heavens, because it is the only means by which the king will use to build up his church.

And then we also mention that it is the church that brings in the kingdom. When our Lord Jesus first came into this world, a foreign world, a world that is under a foreign rule. But our Lord Jesus, he came from heaven to bring the kingdom of the heavens upon this earth.

His first message is, repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. And thank God, through his preaching of the gospel of the kingdom of the heavens, some people repented and put themselves under the absolute rule of Jesus the king. So there you find in chapter 11 of Matthew, the Lord Jesus said, the kingdom of the heavens is to be seized by violence, and the violent seize upon it.

Again, we say the word violent is a neutral term. It depends on whom do you do violence to. If you do violence to other people, that's sinful.

But if by the grace of God, you are able to do violence to yourself, that is to put yourself underneath, instead of allowing yourself to rule over you, then the violent shall seize upon the kingdom. Brothers and sisters, on the one hand, positionally, we are all in the kingdom of the heavens. Because our Lord Jesus said in Colossians chapter one, he has delivered us out of the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

So positionally, all who are the Lords, who believe in the Lord Jesus, we are positionally in the kingdom of the heavens. But in our experience, are you really, are we really living as a citizen of the kingdom of the heavens? So it is of absolute importance, brothers and sisters, as our Lord Jesus is building his church. And the church has a tremendous responsibility.

The church is an overcoming church, because the head of the church is overcoming. How on Calvary's cross, he cast out the devil. How he brought all his enemies, and make a public show of them.

The victory of our Lord Jesus is absolute. How he denied himself. How he obeyed the Father, even unto death, and led the death of the cross.

Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus came into this world as a man, and he overcame the enemy as a man. And now we are in the train of that victory. The church is given the commission to continue that victory in this world.

To continue to defeat the enemy in our lives. And how are we going to overcome? Not by ourselves. It is, number one, by the blood of the Lamb.

We do realize our weakness, but thank God, the blood of our Lord Jesus cleanses us from all our sins. There is no need for us to dwell upon our defeats. As soon as we fall, we got up through the blood of our Lord Jesus.

By the word of their testimony, we do have a testimony to bear. And the testimony is, Jesus is Lord. But to bear that testimony, there must be a reality.

Is Jesus really our Lord? And if he really is our Lord, then we say, Jesus is Lord. There is authority behind it. And they loved not their life, even unto death.

And that is the death of the cross. Brothers and sisters, God is looking for his church to fulfill his mission. To bear the testimony of Jesus, in spite of all the opposition that comes from the enemy.

And we say, we thank God, because our Lord Jesus has overcome. So we shall overcome. And it is on that basis that we find the kingdom is brought in.

So when you read Revelation chapter 12, you find when the man-child is born, immediately he's raptured to the throne. And you must remember that the air today is where the enemy has his headquarter. But that man-child, he can go through the air, up to heaven, to the throne.

That means he has overcome Satan. He has overcome the enemy. And as soon as he reached the throne, what happened? The Bible tells us, Michael and his angels will come and fight with Satan and his followers in the air.

And there was no more room in the air for Satan. He was thrown down with his followers upon the earth. The air was clear.

For what reason that the air was clear to receive our Lord Jesus, who had come from the throne to the air? When Satan was cast down upon the earth, and you find the man of sin, the beast, and also the false prophet, when all these three, trinity of evil, will be upon this earth, what will happen to this earth? The great tribulation. The great tribulation. So, brothers and sisters, we find that how important it is for the church to be completed so that the kingdom might come.

Now, this morning, we would like to share together how the kingdom and the church merge into one. I believe, brothers and sisters, we all know that our Lord Jesus is coming soon. The expectation is there.

But the thing is, how will he come back? Will it be that one day the trumpets sound, and the angels shout, and our Lord Jesus will come from heaven to this earth with his followers? Every eye shall see him. So, is that the way that he's coming? Is this the way they were expecting him to come? You know, there are a number of hymns that we have been singing. When they talk about the coming of the Lord, usually they sing of how the trumpets sound, how the angels shout, and our Lord Jesus come with a big train.

Brothers and sisters, is this the way that he will come? Are you expecting that? Do you wait for that day to come? If you read very carefully the word of God, you will find that his coming is in two stages, because this is the way he went to heaven. In Acts chapter 1, after the resurrection of our Lord and appeared to his disciples for 40 days, then he led them to Mount Olive, and there he ascended up to heaven. What was the scene at that time? The disciples that were with him, they saw how his feet ascended out of Mount Olive and going upward.

They all saw him going, but while they were looking on him, a cloud came and took him. They couldn't see him anymore, but surely he was still ascending, and as they would continue to look up, two men in white appeared to them and said, Man of Galilee, why are you looking up in this way? Because the one who is leaving, he will come back in like manner. In other words, he will come back in the same way as he left, and when he was leaving, he left in two stages.

The first stage is from Mount Olive to the cloud, visible. Every eye saw him. But the second stage, from the cloud to the throne, invisible.

Though it is invisible, yet we know he has arrived there. Why? Because on the day of Pentecost, you find how he was already crowned, anointed, and out of his head come the anointing, the oil coming down upon the 120 believers who were meeting there. And in the scripture, when you read about the coming of the Lord, you know the word coming, especially when you find in Matthew chapter 24, the word coming in Greek is parousia, and those who know Greek tell us parousia means presence.

But presence is not just one short time, one event. Parousia is a series of events within a certain period of time. In Matthew chapter 24, you find the Bible says, the coming of the Lord is like the days of Noah.

When Noah entered into the ark, and suddenly, people were aware of it, the storm came. Or as Luke 17 tells us, it is like Lot. As soon as he fled from Sodom, then you find the fire came down and burn up these cities.

So brothers and sisters, in this world, you'll find it was like in the days of Noah. People just married and being married. People just stood in business.

Everything seems to be usual. And suddenly, it happens. Or as in the days of Lot, people are married and married, eating and drinking, building, and so forth.

Everything seems to be going on as usual. But as soon as Lot went out, the fire came down. Brothers and sisters, the coming of the Lord is like those days.

So far as the world is concerned, they were still sleeping. Because they were the sons of night, of darkness. But we, who are the sons of day, the sons of light, it shouldn't be like that.

So brothers and sisters, when the Lord shall come, during that first stage, from the throne to the cloud is invisible. That's the reason why he used the parable of a thief. He said his coming is like a thief.

Why is it so? Because no thief will blow the trumpet and say, I'm coming. Strangely, as if the thief knows that every hour that you are not watching, there he comes. Suddenly he comes and he goes.

So our Lord Jesus said, when two women, two men, were sleeping in bed, suddenly one is taken and one is left. Two women were grinding the meal in the morning. Suddenly one was taken, one was left.

Two men were working in the fields. Suddenly one was taken and one was left. Brothers and sisters, this is the way that the Lord shall come.

During that first stage, it is hidden. He will come as a thief. But may I ask you a question? When the thief comes, what is he looking for? What will he take? Will he go and take your garbage? I hope he'll come every night.

And strangely, it seems as if the thief always knows where your treasure is. He goes for your treasure and left your trash. So here you'll find when our Lord Jesus comes, why two? Because two is the minimum of plurality.

It is a type of the church. It speaks of God's people who are living at the time of his coming. Throughout the centuries, many who love the Lord, many who are the Lord, they have gone to sleep.

They have died. They were waiting for the Lord in their time. I sincerely believe that in the first century, people were looking for the coming of the Lord and they were not mistaken because the Lord could come during the first century.

Why didn't he come? We already have mentioned because the bride was not ready. He was ever ready but it seems as if we are never ready. And he has waited and waited for 20 centuries and we are still not ready yet.

Brothers and sisters, so these two represent the Christians who are living at the time of the coming of the Lord. Why is it you have two women in the morning grinding the meal, two at noontime working in the field, and two sleeping because the earth is round? To some place is morning. To the other place is noontime.

To the other place is night. So brothers and sisters, when everything so far as the world is concerned seem to go on as usual, eating and drinking, marrying and getting married, feuding but suddenly one day the man child was born. And as soon as he was born, he was taken up to the throne.

So brothers and sisters, how about the remaining 10? We know the number of the church is 12. You have 12 disciples. That's a complete number.

Here you have the two in chapter 24. Those who are living at the time of the coming of the Lord. Now how about the 10 others? Well, you look at chapter 25 and you find the 10 virgins.

There you find the kingdom of the heavens at that time. It's like 10 virgins. They are called virgins.

Why? Because they have been saved out of the world. People in the world are adulterous, but virgins prefer to Christians because he has cleansed us, delivered us, set us apart for himself. So we are as chaste virgins waiting for our bridegroom.

And these 10 virgins, they were waiting. They have the torch with them. But five wise ones, they have extra oil in the vessels.

Five foolish ones, they have oil in the torch, but they do not prepare extra oil in the vessel. Probably they have filled their vessels with gold and silver and things that they consider precious to their lives. But as they were waiting for the Lord, the Lord seemed to delay.

So they all fell asleep. Now here, the falling asleep speaks of the death of believers. Because believers' deaths are like sleep.

One day we will wake up and see our Lord's face. So brothers and sisters, the 10 virgins actually represent those believers who waited for the Lord, but the Lord didn't return in their lifetime. And they are dead.

They passed away. But thank God, they will be waken up. So brothers and sisters, the Lord will come like a thief.

Only those who are waiting, who are watching, who are listening, who are preparing, who do not allow things on this earth to pull them down, to fasten them to the world. Then when the call shall come, come up, and there they go. Brothers and sisters, so far as we Christians are concerned, this is the time we are looking for.

And then immediately after they ascend it up to the throne as the welcoming party to the Lord Jesus, then you find there will be war in the air. Satan will be thrown down upon this earth. And in the air is clear for our Lord Jesus to descend from the throne to the air, waiting for the rest of his own.

And during that period, we find that there will be great tribulation upon this earth. As we find in Revelation 3, chapter 3, the promise to the church in Philadelphia, because they overcome, so they will be delivered out of time of that great tribulation. When the great tribulation should come, they were already gone.

But people, Christians, who are not watching, who are being tied down by this earth, they have to go through great tribulation. Terrible but so far as God's purpose is concerned, it is God's mercy. It is as if God gave Christians another opportunity.

In the terrible situation, were they stand firm for the Lord and not worship the idol and not have the mark of the beast upon them, they would rather die without eating than to deny their faith. God gave them another opportunity to be overcomers. So thank God out of the great tribulation, there will be overcomers coming out as it were, of defeat.

But brothers and sisters, what tribulation they will have to pass through. And then you find in the scripture, the Lord shall return. And before his return, you find in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, all those who were asleep in Christ Jesus, they will be woken up.

And those who remain on earth will be caught up together with them, where? To the air, not to the throne. Because the Lord is already there in the air, waiting for them. And what happens during that period? You find in the scripture, the judgment seat of Christ.

Now thank God, we who have been saved, we are saved from the great white throne judgment. Judgment. Because one day a great white throne will be set up.

And it is a governmental judgment. It is a judgment of eternal life or eternal death. But thank God, we who believe in the Lord Jesus, we who have received the Lord Jesus as our savior, he was judged for us on Calvary's cross.

Therefore, that judgment is no longer ours. Thank God we have been saved from the great white throne judgment. Because eternal life has already been settled.

But brothers and sisters, it doesn't mean that God's people will not be judged. There will be a family judgment. It is not called throne, because throne is governmental.

It is called bima, a seat, the judgment seat. Now you have to know the Eastern culture, because there you find in Eastern world, they have big families. Several generations live together, a big family.

I came from such a family. Everything, the head of the family, maybe the grandfather, he was in control over the whole family. He supported the whole family.

And one day, or from time to time, they will have a family meeting. All the members of the family will be called together. Now only those who are in the family will attend that meeting.

If you are not of the family, you're not qualified to attend the meeting. But all the family members will be there. And the head of the family will sit on a bima, a lifted place.

And the family members will be standing before him. And there will be a family judgment. In other words, to those children who have brought glory, honor to the family, they will be recommended and even rewarded.

But those of the members of family that brought shame, reproach to the family, they will be not only blamed, but even disciplined. Now that is the judgment seat of Christ. And it is at the judgment seat that will decide whether you are worthy to rule and reign with Christ when the kingdom of the heavens shall publicly appear upon this earth.

And if you're not qualified, you will be cast into outer darkness. You remember, this is what happened to the five foolish virgins. Because the door was shut.

They couldn't enter into the marriage feast. And they were in darkness, gnashing their teeth, regretting that for the love of a few hours of their life, they lose their life. Brothers and sisters, do not think that any one of us will totally escape the discipline of the Lord.

God is like a father. A good father will never fail to discipline his sons. Because without discipline, people never grow up to manhood or womanhood.

So if we deny, refuse discipline today, one day during the kingdom age, he will still discipline us. Why? Because if you read Romans chapter 8, whom he has foreknown, he has called. Whom he has called, he has justified.

Whom he has justified, he has glorified. In other words, everyone who is called, he will see to it that they be conformed to the image of his beloved son. So dear brothers and sisters, do not despise the discipline of the father today.

If you do, you need to be disciplined during the kingdom age. And it is only after that the German seed of Christ is over. Then what happened upon this earth? After all the Christians had been raptured to the air, what happened upon this earth? This is what the Bible tells us about the seven vials, the wrath of God.

So during the time of the German seed of Christ in the air, on the earth, it was the pouring forth of the wrath of God. And at the end of this, you find there will be last war, the war of Armageddon. Satan will lead all the nations to rebel against God, and Christ will come with his overcomers into this earth to fight that battle.

And as the Bible said, there will be great earthquake. Jerusalem will be broken in, but thank God, those who trust the Lord among the chosen people, God opened a way for them to escape. When the feet of our Lord Jesus shall come upon Mount Olive, Mount Olive will be broken into two and open the way for his chosen people to flee from disaster.

Brothers and sisters, then Christ will come and put the beast and the false prophet away into the lake of fire, and Satan will be bound and shut up in Abyss for a thousand years. And our Lord Jesus will judge the world, the nations, the sheep nation, those who treat the Lord's little brother good, they will be removed into the kingdom of God on earth. As nations, and during that period, brothers and sisters, those overcomers, they will reign and rule with Christ from the air to the earth.

And the nation of Israel will become the first of the nations, and they will go out and evangelize the world. Brothers and sisters, that's the glorious future. Now when you read the Bible, do you notice that in Revelation there are two marriages at the end? In chapter 19, you find the first marriage, the wife of the Lamb is ready.

He is given to be clothed with the bright shining linen, which is the righteousness of the saints. This is what we find in Matthew 24. When the marriage feast comes, the bridegroom has returned, and the five wise ones, they enter into the marriage feast, and the door was closed.

But when you read carefully, when did that marriage happen? You find this marriage actually begins, starts the millennium. It introduces, as it were, the millennium. So our question is, who will compose this wife of the Lamb, that be with him throughout a thousand years? And then when you read Revelation 21, another marriage, as it were, same marriage, but here he said the bride of the Lamb is ready.

It is the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven as a bride to the Lamb. Now brothers and sisters, when did that happen? It happened a thousand years later, because this is an introduction into eternity to come. So actually you have two marriages here, maybe one, but it continues on, and it seems to be broadened.

So to me I feel, I do not know whether you will agree with me or not, but to me I feel as I read this, I'm asking this question, who is the bride, the wife of the Lamb in chapter 19? Is he different from the one from chapter 21? To my understanding, I feel there is a difference, because here you find in chapter 19, that was before millennium, and the wife of the Lamb is composed of the overcomers of the church, because the overcomers do not overcome just for themselves. The overcomers overcome for the whole church. As the first fruit, when you have the first fruit, then you know you have the highest.

So brothers and sisters, I think it is a great privilege, if by the grace of God you can be raptured to the throne, you can be among the first fruits, and there you will be the wife of the Lamb throughout the millennium time. You will rule and reign with him from heaven upon earth. But when you come to chapter 21, you find that's the beginning of eternity.

The old heavens and the old earth have passed away, and there you find New Jerusalem descending down from heaven as a bride of the Lamb. But when you read carefully, you will find this New Jerusalem is the consummation of all the works of God throughout the centuries. It is a gathering together of all the work of Christ, including the Jews and the Gentiles, the church, all together.

Why? Because when you read it, you will find Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem, has 12 gates, 12 pillars, and there you find the 12 names of the tribe of Israel. That is to say, all the work of God in the Old Testament is gathered there. And then you find the foundation, 12 foundations.

The foundations are the names of the apostles, so all that the Lord has done in the New Testament time are gathered there. It is a great coming together of all the work of God throughout the centuries. That will be the bride, eternal bride, of our Lord Jesus.

It is a city, four square, of immense capacity, capacity. 12,000 stadia, long in breadth and height, and 60 stadia equal to seven, about seven English miles. So you can compute how long it is.

We never see such a big city before. What the Lord has done is tremendous. And you have the wall, 144 cubits.

A cubit is the length of the arm width in our head. We know that in the Garden of Eden, there was no wall. Why? Why? Because God wanted Adam to be the wall.

He said, you got it, but he failed. But in New Jerusalem, you have a huge wall, complete, because it is the multiple of 12, perfection. The separation there is perfect, and the wall is made of jasper.

And in Revelation chapter 4, you'll find the one who sits on the throne is like a jasper. In other words, it is the life of God. He is the wall.

There was no temple there, because God and his son, they are the temple. The whole city is a temple. God's throne is there.

There's a river of life coming down from the throne, throughout the whole city. And tree of life everywhere. In other words, it's a sign of life, God's life.

His life alone. And there's that river, the river of life, flowing through the whole city. And his servants shall serve him day and night, and have his name upon their forehead.

They shall see him. There is no light. There is no need of light, because God is the light, and the Lamb is the lamp.

There is no longer death, no longer tears. The Lord said, I've made all things new. Brothers and sisters, this is eternity.

This is where we find the church and the kingdom merged into one. And this is our future. Thank God for that.

Shall we pray? Dear Lord, what thou has prepared for us is beyond our imagination. Thou the God of glory, and nothing but glory will satisfy thy heart. So Lord, here we are.

We are full of shame, but thou are able to transform us from glory to glory, as even by the Lord the Spirit. Oh, dear Lord, give us a strong desire to put ourselves in thy hand, and allow thee to work out thy full salvation, thy glorious salvation, upon each and every one of us. Deliver us, Lord, from living for ourselves.

Give us the strong desire for us to live is Christ. Oh, dear Lord, may thy will be done in us, as it is in heaven. May glory be unto thee.

We ask in thy precious name.

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