

Walking by the spirit: The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, Part 3

Turn to Acts 1

In part 2 of this teaching series on the gospel of the kingdom of God, I asked the question:

“How did the gospel of the kingdom of God start? Where did it come from or who started it?”

We examined Acts and Luke for answers to this question. We discovered that in the age that we now live in, this gospel was initiated by Jesus Christ and then the apostle Paul.

When I say that it was initiated by Jesus Christ means that he is the one who first taught it. He taught it to the apostles while he was in his new spiritual body, before his ascension.

Acts 1:1

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,

2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the holy spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

Verse 2 imparts some very important information to us. At the time when verse 2 takes place, Jesus Christ is in his new spiritual body. The holy spirit mentioned here is NOT holy spirit upon him as was recorded in the old testament or in the four gospels. This is referring to the fullness of holy spirit.

Ephesians 4 speaks of the mission of the visionaries. This mission is to continue

Ephesians 4:13

until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

Turn to Galatians 3

When Jesus Christ presented himself to the apostles and disciples in Acts 1, it was as a fully mature spiritual man. We will attain this spiritual maturity, this spiritual fullness when we are gathered together with him to meet him in the clouds.

Our fully mature savior continues to be our example as recorded in Acts 1; he continues to walk by the spirit, taking his orders from his heavenly Father. As always, God is the AUTHOR of the gospel of the kingdom of God. God has his son, Jesus Christ continue to teach, announce and speak about the kingdom of God.

In the ESV, Galatians 3:8 says:

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”

This version is not very clear. First of all, it could not have been foretold in the scriptures that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, as this was part of the great mystery. Nothing of the great mystery is in the old testament scriptures, which includes the four gospels.

The Lamsa translation handles Galatians 3:8 as follows:

8 Because God knew in advance that the Gentiles would be declared righteous through faith, he first preached to Abraham, as it is said in the holy scripture, In you shall all the Gentiles be blessed.

Now this translation is minutely accurate. So, aspects of the gospel of the kingdom of God were revealed to Abraham and to Jesus Christ. The fullness of this gospel was not revealed until after the

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resurrection of Jesus Christ and then the calling of the apostle Paul.

Turn to Matthew 21

Jesus is teaching in the temple in Jerusalem when he is personally confronted by the top religious leaders; the chief priests and the elders of the people. Of their followers Jesus had said in John 8:44 that

44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Matthew 21:23

23 And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?"

These children of the devil had no right to make any demands of Jesus. Here they are, arrogantly demanding an answer to their question.

Matthew 21:24

24 Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Jesus, using his authority, takes command of the situation using it as an opportunity to teach those around him. He does not owe any allegiance, love or obedience to these children of the devil; neither does any other genuine believer who is walking by the spirit. He takes command of the situation by asking a simple question.

Matthew 21:25

25 The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" 26 But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Jesus continues with the authority that they came to question, and asks them another question. He is beginning to expose the true character of these top religious leaders and rulers.

Matthew 21:28

28 "What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' 29 And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. 30 And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

Jesus exposed their hardness of heart and their unbelief. Their unbelief barred them from any salvation, to the point that those who these leaders despised would obtain the kingdom of God before these leaders.

Jesus continues to confront these religious rulers and leaders by teaching more about the kingdom of

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God. Now he begins to expose the devil spirits who are controlling these religious rulers.

Matthew 21:33

33 “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. 34 When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit.

Did the tenants own the vineyard? No, they had a lease. The master retained ownership, although the tenants had access to the vineyard; they controlled it for a time.

Whose fruit was withheld from the master? His own fruit, the fruit that was due to the master.

Matthew 21:35

35 And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. 37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ 39 And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

When the tenants agreed to the lease they gave their word. Here they have shown themselves to be liars, thieves, robbers and murderers. They have done nothing beneficial at all. They are full of iniquity in their thoughts, greedy, ruthless and merciless in their actions.

Matthew 21:40

40 When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

41 They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“‘The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

this was the Lord's doing,

and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you (*the religious rulers*) and given to a people producing its fruits.

44 And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces (*without remedy – it's fatal*); and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them.

46 And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

These religious rulers perceived correctly that he was speaking about them. He exposed their deeds and the unclean spirits behind their deeds. God revealed the spiritual powers functioning in these religious rulers. Then he had his son expose them openly, with great authority. This is the love of God in action!

Turn to Genesis 1

This parable accurately describes the spiritual condition of the world. Let's examine this in further

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detail.

Genesis 1:26

26 Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion (*rulership*) over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

This verse records God's words which express His decision as the ruler of all creation. This is a record of an event in the kingdom of God.

God delegated all of humanity, both male and female, dominion, rulership, authority, over all the earth, as well as the animal life on the earth. Does this verse mention anything about ownership? NO. The ownership of the earth and all creation is retained by God.

Genesis 1:28

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.

30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food. And it was so

God outlines the purpose of humanity, their mission, what they were to do with the authority that God delegated to them. He also explained to them how creation is organized so that they could work effectively within the organizational structure which HE designed and created.

Chapter 2 of Genesis records more details what the first man, Adam, the ruler over all the earth was to do.

Genesis 2:15

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Who does Adam, the ruler of all the earth, work for? He works for God, in the kingdom of God. Note that all this communication that is taking place between God and Adam is happening by revelation. Adam is walking by the spirit. God is giving Adam commands; this is what is referred to elsewhere in the Bible as the "law of God".

Adam worked for God and lived in subjection to God, performing what He told him to do.

Now, verse 17 records a consequence if Adam did not obey this commandment that God gave him.

Adam would die. Adam would die to everything that God gave him, all the dominion, all the authority and everything that pertained to his rulership. In this case, DEATH would rule over humanity.

This is exactly what happened when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. The one who had the power of death began to rule over humanity.

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Turn to Luke 4

In Luke there is a good description of what happened to the dominion, rulership and authority that had been delegated to Adam and Eve.

Luke 4:5

5 And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,

6 and said to him, To you I will give all this authority and their glory (*exercised power*), for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.

7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.

At the time of Luke 4, the devil owned the delegated dominion, rulership and authority over the kingdoms of this world. He could further delegate that authority to men and women as he desired. So, who does the devil work for? Well, he is self-employed, he works for himself. The devil does not submit to God or any other authority. Jesus could have had all the authority and exercised power of the devil, if he would submit and worship the devil. The devil delegates his power for a price.

At any time did humankind or the devil ever OWN the world? NO! God still retains ownership of all creation. The kingdom of God remains intact.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 2

Something has happened since the event recorded in Luke 4. The devil murdered Gods only begotten son, Jesus Christ. After that, God, the ruler over all creation, raised Jesus from the dead, nevermore to die. Then he was seen openly for a number of days by the apostles and disciples. After that, he ascended into heaven. The day of Pentecost arrived when it became available for men and women to be born spiritually from above and manifest spiritual power again.

As it is written in 1 Corinthians 2:6

6 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.

7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Turn to Colossians 2

The devil and all the spirits in his kingdom would never had murdered Jesus Christ had they know the great mystery and the consequences of their actions. The devil and all the devil spirits are the evil tenants in the parable that Jesus spoke to the religious rulers and the devil spirits that infested them. What else happened that they did not know about?

Colossians 2:9

9 For in him (*Christ*) the whole fullness of deity (*God*) dwells bodily,

10 and you have been filled in him (*Christ*), who is the head of all rule and authority. (*We are identified with Christ. We to have been filled with the fullness of God in Christ, and we are in complete union with Christ*)

11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through

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faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Colossians 2:13

13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him (*Christ*), having forgiven us all our trespasses, (*this was a legal action of God. It has already taken place. You have already been through a judgment and have been forgiven*)

14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (*There are no further legal charges against you. You have already been judged.*)

15 He (*God*) disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him (*Christ*).

Turn to Ephesians 1

The former rulers of the kingdoms of this world have been disarmed and have been put to an open shame. God has triumphed over them in Christ.

Colossians 1:27 notes that the riches of the exercised power of this great mystery is "...Christ in You...". That is the power and authority that is resident in each and every believer.

All this came to pass by the actions of the king over all creation, which is God, our heavenly Father.

Ephesians 1:19

19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his (*Gods*) power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

20 that he (*God*) worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,

23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

It is written in Ephesians 2:6 that we were raised up and seated next to Christ. This makes sense as we are members of his body.

We are identified with Christ, not our flesh. Our old identity which was of the flesh is dead and gone.

We now work for the head of the Church, Christ. He works for God. The delegated rulership over the kingdoms of this world has been won back. Once again it is in the hands of a man who does submit to the rulership of God.

Ephesians 6:12

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Our war is not with the flesh, but with spiritual powers who rule over the present darkness of this world. Remember, they have been disarmed, their authority over the kingdoms of this world has been won back by the son of God, Jesus Christ.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 15

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All of this that I have been teaching is from Gods point of view. From His vantage point all this has been accomplished. You and I however have a more terrestrial point of view. We live and move in a physical world. God has not forgotten this. For our benefit, he has recorded the work that remains to be done before we receive the fullness of our inheritance in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:20

20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

21 For as by a man (*Adam*) came death, by a **man** (*Christ*) has come also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die (*he transferred his God given authority to the devil*), so also in Christ shall all be made alive (*in Christ our God given authority has been regained*).

23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

What follows is the task list for Christ and those in the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:24

24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

27 For God has put all things in subjection under his (*Christs*) feet (*remember that we are part of his body*). But when it says, all things are put in subjection, it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. (*God is not subject to Christ. This is still the kingdom of God*)

28 When all things are subjected to him (*the accomplished reality of all things being subject to the son*), then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, **that God may be all in all.**

The son of God, our savior and “elder brother”, Christ, will do something that humanity and the devil failed to do. He will subject himself to his heavenly Father. Christ will conduct himself as an obedient son, adhering to the will of God. Christ Jesus is the supreme example of subjecting himself to his fathers will.

Turn to John 12

Jesus performed the will of God as he walked by the spirit. As Galatians 5:18 states:

18 But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law.

Jesus was free from the religious law of commandments contained in ordinances. He fulfilled the entire law as he walked by the spirit, accomplishing what God wanted, not what Jesus wanted.

In John 12, Jesus is teaching in the temple and he answers the question that the spiritually polluted religious leaders had demanded of him “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”

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John 12:44

44 And Jesus cried out and said, Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. 45 And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.

Jesus was truly his father's son. He so imitated his Father that those who saw him in the physical realm saw his Father. That is what we are called to do in Ephesian chapter 5.

John 12:46

46 I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

Again Jesus walked as a child of light which is what we are called to do as well. What is it to remain in darkness? He tells us in the next two verses.

John 12:47

47 If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

48 The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

Remember that Jesus Christ continued to speak after his resurrection. He continued to speak to the apostles and the other believers after the day of Pentecost. He spoke to Paul and revealed to him the gospel of the kingdom of God which he taught as is recorded in Galatians 1.

So, how is it that the words that Jesus speaks, both then and now, has such authority?

John 12:49

49 For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.

50 And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.

That is why the words that Jesus speaks has such authority and power – they are words which God has authored and inspired!

Turn to John 16

Later Jesus describes the basis of the future believers authority and power, even though he had no knowledge of the great mystery.

John 16:12

12 I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Understand that this record is prophesying of the gift of holy spirit which would become available on the next day of Pentecost that year. This is the new spiritual self in each one of us which is created in perfect union with Christ Jesus. This spiritual creation does not speak on its own authority, but takes what belongs to Christ Jesus and declares it to us. We too can speak with as much authority as he spoke when we speak according to his will not our own will.

Turn back to John 15

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John 15:12

12 This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends.

14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.

Jesus is the great supreme example of what it is to love. He does not love according to his own personal standard, his own personal feelings. He loves according to God's standard, speaking and doing what God commands as he walks by the spirit. He imitated his heavenly father, just as we are to do. He walked by the spirit, just as we are to walk by the spirit. This is what it is to be a living sacrifice.

John 15:15

15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

This is true friendship! This is why Jesus could expect his friends to do what he commanded them. He always spoke what God wanted spoken! This is what we are to do as well.

John 15:16

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

17 These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Turn to Romans 7

These verses are accomplished only as we walk by the new spiritual self – the flesh is useless and powerless. No man made corporate religious organization has the authority or power to make the appointments that are recorded here. We are to love and be fruitful according to God's calling, according to God's standards regardless of the response of the world or the religious organizations of this world.

The apostle Paul had to come to terms with his wretched past and his human imperfections. He had been personally called by Christ Jesus our Saviour and appointed as an apostle, sent to minister to the Gentiles. Yet, he was just a human being as we all are.

As unbelievable as it sounds, he wrote by revelation in 1 Corinthians 2:16 that "...we have the mind of Christ.". Do we have this mind of Christ in the physical brain? No, it is in the newly created spiritual self! Remember this as we read

Romans 7:6

6 But **now** (*right NOW, TODAY, from NOW ON*) we are released from the law (*the religious law of commandments contained in ordinances*), having died to that which held us captive (*enslaved*), so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

Our new life of service is conducted and fulfilled as we walk in newness of life by way of our new spiritual self. We no longer study the Bible or work the scriptures as lawyers who study the law. The old written code, the old written law, has been accomplished and abolished, along with the lawyers, courts, judgments, penalties, practices, offices and organizations. If you find this difficult to believe, then just check out 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and see what it says about the law. Pay close attention to the use of the word "ministry" in that section.

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Romans 7:21

21 So I find it to be a law (*a principle*) that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

22 For I delight in the **law of God**, in my inner being (*the new spiritual self*),

What is this “law of God”? According to verse 6 it cannot be the law of Moses, the mosaic law, the written law of commandments contained in ordinances. Paul is writing about the gospel of the kingdom of God. In this kingdom, there are commandments, the law of God, which is imparted spiritually by revelation as we walk by the spirit. This is how we recognize when a person is speaking by revelation and when a person is just talking. We recognize the truth as a function of the new spiritual self. This is called spiritual discernment.

Romans 7:23

23 but I see in my members another law (*principle*) waging war against the law of my mind (*the spiritual mind*) and making me captive to the law of sin (*this is the sin nature*) that dwells in my members.

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death (*the physical body of flesh with all its imperfections*)?

25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (*HE WILL!*) So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind (*the spiritual mind, the mind of Christ*), but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

It is the flesh that desires to go along with the world, its religious fashions, customs and standards. However, we are called to a spiritual calling, to delight in the law of God, the commandments of the kingdom of God. These are the directions, the guidance, the instructions, which show us how to fulfill his will in our day and time.

Turn to Galatians 5

We have learned how important it is to submit to God and His will; to sacrifice our identity with the old self of the flesh and embrace our new identity of the new self of the spirit. This is how we can begin to walk with great spiritual effectiveness, great love and great power.

The self sacrifice in the kingdom of God consists of forsaking the old self of the flesh and embracing the new spiritual self and its desires.

Galatians 5:1

1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision (*or any other religious practice*), Christ will be of no advantage to you.

3 I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision (*or any other religious practice*) that he is obligated to keep the whole law.

It is unfathomable to me that the primary desire of the flesh is to return to the bondage, the slavery, the idolatry of religious legalism. We cast off these old practices and desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:13

13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Loving one another is how the law is fulfilled. Loving one another is accomplished according to Gods standards not the standards of the world or the standards of religious legalism. We do not use our

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freedom to return to religious legalism.

Galatians 5:16

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

17 For the desires of the flesh (*this includes the old self of the flesh and the practices and customs of the world*) are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit (*the new spiritual self*) are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Remember, we do not serve by way of religious legalism – we serve in newness of life walking by the new spiritual self.

Galatians 5:24

24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

That is a living sacrifice! We put off the identity of the old self of the flesh, its practices, customs, passions, and desires. We put on and embrace the identity of our new spiritual self which is in union with Christ Jesus.

Galatians 5:25

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

We are alive by way of the newly created spiritual self. Our appropriate response is to walk, move, minister, speak and love according to the spiritual instruction and guidance that is given so richly to each one of us by way of the new spiritual self.

This is what it is to submit to God, His authority, His will, in the kingdom of God. This is what it is to do the “law of God”.