

I. The Inauguration of the Kingdom

In God's creation process, He created man and woman last, on the sixth day (Gen. 1-2), after He had put all the hills, rivers, vegetation and animals in place. He put His beloved children in this marvelous environment, much like a loving parent preparing the room, furniture, cradle and toys to welcome the birth of the new born baby!

God created mankind and wanted them to be His people in His Kingdom. Thus began the Kingdom concept. There are three necessary elements that constitute a kingdom, namely, the king, the people and the territory. God is the King and mankind His people. As to the territory, in a narrower sense, the Kingdom is in the believers' hearts (Luke 17:21); in a broader sense, this world is God's; all nations, all peoples and all creatures are under Him. His Kingdom fills the whole earth. He is not only the creator but also the sustainer. He is "*sustaining all things by His powerful word*" (Heb. 1:3). The very "existence" of all things depends on Him. He gives breath to all creatures. He takes care of young lions and rodents. He provides rain, air, sun shine and the good earth to all people whether good or evil, free of charge.

Among all God's creature, God created only Adam and Eve in His image and likeness. What an honor and privilege! Furthermore, God gave them an important responsibility and mission. "*God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.*" (Gen 1:26-28). They became the royal messenger of God.

God so loved Adam and Eve—the very first subjects of His Kingdom, and gave them the best living environment—the Garden of Eden. It had trees that were "*pleasing to the eyes*"; four beautiful rivers watering the land and land that produced fine gold, aromatic resin and onyx. Indeed it was a paradise on earth.

In the midst of this marvelous setting, they were given only one restriction—the fruit of tree of the knowledge of good and evil, to which God said, "*You must not eat...for when you eat of it, you will surely die.*" (Gen. 3:17) Unfortunately, this sole restriction became the cause of their fall!