Kingdom Living

 II Pet. 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

 What element of this inspirational treasure of truth jumps out at us first? Could it be the personal aspect in the words “unto you”? Perhaps it was the promise administered in the words “shall be ministered’. A few moments of meditation might produce a desire to know more about the potential abundance of kingdom life that could be, yea, should be acquired. After all, it is the child of God’s inheritance in Christ.

 We find in the words “For so an entrance shall be ministered” that the promise of administration is conditional. We find this condition nestled in the words “For so”. These two words together require that we go back to the prior verse to locate the required condition, as we would with the words therefore or wherefore. The prior verse, verse 10 says, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure:” Ahh! Have we not found the condition in the words “give diligence”? There obviously is an established requirement by God that we give diligence if he is to fulfill his promise and administer unto us an abundant entrance into his kingdom.

 The thought that is no doubt surging through your mind is, What are we to give diligence too? The first word of verse 10 is one of those wherefores aforementioned. To more fully search the mind of the Spirit, in search of an answer, it is necessary to move further back into the context. A quick search, as we go up the ladder of verses, reveals the heart of the matter in verse 5 in these words, “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith……” and then names seven key particulars that we must give all diligence to in order to insure they are added to our faith.

 Verse 8 says, “For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” A failure to give all diligence in adding these key elements to our faith can rob us of our full assurance of our knowledge of Jesus Christ, according to verse 9, where we find these words, “But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” It seems, as we read verse 8, that there must be an assurance of our personal saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in order to grow in the faith and to be fruitful. Giving all diligence and adding to our faith makes us fruitful according to verse 8. It makes our calling and election sure according to verse 10a. It makes it so that we never fall according to verse 10b, and it assures us of an abundant entrance being ministered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord, perchance we do fall.

 Perchance we do fall? Does not the passage say, “we shall never fall”? In the context of the passage, keep in mind that the concept is that if we are giving all diligence and adding to our faith. In God’s way of looking at it, if we are doing these things, we are growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. In lieu of the fact that our Lord only gives grace to the humble, this truth would imply that we are walking in a state of humbled obedience made possible by the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. We are walking in the new man in God’s kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The moment we choose to put off the new man by yielding our members to our unrighteous lusts, we fall from a state of humility and grace and from God’s kingdom of righteousness.

 In order to understand kingdom living, it would be helpful to look into the concept of the kingdom of God, also known as the kingdom of Christ. (Eph.5:5)

 Col.1:13 says, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”. This verse speaks of our Heavenly Father’s salvation deliverance from the power and kingdom of darkness through a spiritual “translation” or transfer into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. Our new life in Christ, which is Christ in us, the hope of glory, is designed to be lived in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, also referred to elsewhere as the kingdom of God. It is here in this spiritual kingdom that Jesus lives his resurrection life through us. This ‘kingdom living’ is lived by God’s children that choose to walk in, or under the control of, the Spirit of Jesus Christ. While under the control of the Holy Spirit, the new creature in Christ, or the new man, lives a life of consistent victory in a state of righteousness and true holiness. (Eph.4:24)

 Rms.14:17 says, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Kingdom living is lived in a perpetual state of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of Christ and of God. In this state of Spirit filled and Spirit controlled living, we have the mind of Christ and a heart that sets it’s affections on things above, and not on things below.

 Rms.14:18 says, “For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.” It is certainly worthy of note that our kingdom serving of Christ must be incorporated with our kingdom living, in a state of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, if it is to be acceptable unto God our Father.

 How would we rate our service to our Lord based on God’s stated standard? Are we just going through the motions without the mind of Christ and the heart of God? Is it Christ in us serving in us, or is it just us? The Judgment Seat of Christ will reveal the fruit of our kingdom living and our kingdom service!

 So what is the key to consistent kingdom living and kingdom serving? The answer lies in Rms.14:17 in the words, “righteousness…..in the Holy Ghost.” This is not self righteousness, which is the only kind the old man can produce. This is God’s righteousness that he imparts to his convicted and repentant children that have chosen to put off the old man and put on the new man at the I Jn.1:9 blood gate.

 One of the clearest pictures of the Holy Spirit ministering an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God is found in Heb.10:19-22 in these words, “Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God, (heavenly house, holy of holies, headquarters for the kingdom of God, God’s throne room) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and our bodies washed with pure water”.

 Here, we seem to have a very practical picture of our entrance into the kingdom of God, necessitated by an evil and defiled conscience and heart. The departure was effected by our carnal desire and our choice to yield a member or members through fleshly lust and enticement unto sin and unrighteousness.

 I Jn.1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”(Our high priest sprinkles our hearts with his blood from an evil conscience, thus allowing an entrance back into the kingdom of God and of Christ)

 Our newly acquired righteousness, through Christ’s new and living way, which is the blood of Christ, gives us immediate access back into the kingdom of God and kingdom living.

 It is so important to understand that when we exit the kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit immediately begins wooing us and working in us through conviction and reproof, to restore us unto repentance and forgiveness. This is in essence, a loving Abba Father seeking to bring his beloved son back into his kingdom and presence. The Spirit takes us lovingly and gently by the hand, if you will, and leads us to and through the blood gate for cleansing and restoration to kingdom fellowship and kingdom living.

 This is literally a life changing crossroad where our Lord grants us repentance unto revival, and according to II Pet.1:3, he grants us according to his divine power, all things that pertain unto life and godliness. Keep in mind that the only life that produces godliness is the resurrection kingdom life lived through us by Jesus Christ. Notice the words, “through the knowledge of him”.

 II Pet.1:4 tells us that we are also granted exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature of God! Now take special note of when we are granted all these benefits of abundant kingdom living in these words of the latter part of verse 4, “having escaped the corruption that is in this world (Satan’s kingdom) through lust.”

 When do we escape the corruption that is in this world through our lust? The answer of course is when we surrender to the wooing and working of the Holy Spirit and through his person and power, allow him to lead us through the blood gate into the kingdom of righteousness and true holiness. Eph.4:22-24 says it this way, “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”. When we put off the old man and put on the new man, we become partakers of the divine nature by putting on Jesus Christ. The moment he begins living his resurrection life through us, we become partakers of his divine nature and his abundant life of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

 Is it possible that these wonderful benefits of kingdom living are what God was speaking of when he said these words in II Pet.1:11, “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”? It is apparent that the last thing on the Spirit’s mind, found in verses 5-11, was the benefits of giving all diligence in adding to our faith and spiritual growth so that we can make our calling and election sure. This truly is kingdom living as we grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, with the promise that, as long as we are living this life, “we shall never fall”. The kingdom of God and of Christ is the dwelling place for the new man, not the old man with all his lusts and corruption.

 May we conclude by considering an alternative interpretation of the words, “into the everlasting kingdom”. Having no desire to force an incorrect interpretation, could this “everlasting kingdom” be talking about a future kingdom where an abundant entrance awaits those that faithfully give all diligence to add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity?

 Finally, we might ask if the Judgement Seat of Christ is in view here. Is II Pet.1:11 talking about rewards to be received for faithfulness in giving all diligence? Let us ponder on which interpretation fits the context and follows the mind of the Holy Spirit the closest. One thing is for sure, and that is that any way you slice it, it is going to be spiritually enrichening.