

**"It's Always Been the Kingdom" - Multiple passages
Sunday AM - 10/14/18**

Receiving a Kingdom perspective is, in my opinion, the largest need in the Church today. John the Baptizer opened up his ministry by telling people to repent and enter the Kingdom. Jesus began His public preaching with the exact same message – the Kingdom. If you study His sermons you will find that He preached the Kingdom more than anything else. The first beatitude promises the Kingdom to the poor in spirit (Mt. 5:3). The first petition in the Lord's Prayer is for the Kingdom to come to earth (Mt. 6:10). The paradigm that Jesus assigns to all of His followers was to seek first the Kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33). When Jesus dispatched the original twelve disciples to begin their ministries, the message He assigned for them to proclaim was "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt. 10:7). Jesus taught that the reason He spoke in parables was to reveal "the secrets of the Kingdom" to those who have faith (Mt. 13:11). No fewer than ten of His parables specifically mention that they are structured to reveal what the Kingdom is like. Jesus called us to become like humble, innocent children in order to enter the Kingdom (Mt. 19:13-15). He told Nicodemus that a second-birth, a spiritual birth, was required for any person to enter the Kingdom (John 3:3-8). He later stated that powerful and wealthy people will not likely make it into the Kingdom (Mt. 19:23-24). He rebuked the controlling, hyper-religious Pharisees for shutting the door to the Kingdom of Heaven in the faces of those who desired to enter in (Mt. 23:13). The Kingdom was the primary thrust of what the Son of God proclaimed during His years on earth. If we are honest, the primary message of Christians today is not the same as Jesus and the Apostles. Our message seems to be, "Ask Jesus into your heart so you may go to Heaven when you die." Jesus Christ never preached that. While it is true that one must surrender personally to Jesus as Lord of one's life, our making going-to-Heaven-when-you-die is woefully misrepresentative of the message of the early Church. They proclaimed the King and His Kingdom. So must we. Let's trace the concept and actuality of the Kingdom of God in the Scriptures.

I. God is king over all of creation

Psalm 10:16 - "The LORD is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land."

2 Chronicles 20:6 - "O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you."

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Isaiah 37:16 - "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth."

Psalm 95:3-6 - "For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!"

Simply put, God is the sovereign ruler of the universe. These Old Testament verses show the Lord's supremacy, authority, and royalty to be above all earthly kings and nations. God is pictured as Scripture as sitting above all of creation and ruling it in eternal, unmatched glory.

II. God offered His kingdom to Adam (Genesis 1:26-30)

Kingship is at the heart of the commission that God gives to Adam:

- A. Adam is granted dominion over all animal life on the earth (1:26)**
- B. Adam is told to have many children in order to subdue the earth and take dominion over it (1:28).**
- C. Adam is given control over all plant life (1:29) and again over every animal on the earth (1:30).**

In short, Adam is to rule over the whole world as a subordinate king underneath God, who is the true King over all. Adam is to spread God's own dominion outside the boundaries of the ordered garden of Eden so that it branches out to the farthest reaches of creation. BUT ADAM REBELS & THEREBY FORFEITS HIS KINGSHIP. The first human king sinned and fell from his delegated position.

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III. After Adam forfeits his kingship, God covenants with Abraham (Genesis 17:4-6)

"Behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you."

IV. God's covenant with David promises an everlasting kingship in David's lineage (2 Samuel 7:12-16)

"When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."

After David and Solomon, the history of Israel's kings is one of repeated, abject failure from generation to generation. As God brings judgment upon the disobedience of these kings and the people of Israel, all hope of there ever emerging an everlasting king seems to be unrealistic. Among all Israel's kings, there is none righteous, no not one. All sinned and fell short of God's glory. For seventy years there was no true human king while Israel was in captivity, being disciplined for their rebellion against God. For Israelites who were alive and experiencing the chastisement of God during the years of exile, it would seem that the covenants with Abraham and David were null and void. Yet God had previously established a prophetic hope of the certainty of His kingdom, seen in the writings of the OT prophets below.

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V. Israel's kings failed God, but God promised a glorious kingdom in spite of them

Isaiah 35:1-10 - "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Daniel 2:44 – "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever..."

Zechariah 14:9 – "And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one."

Isaiah 52:13, 15 - "Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted...so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of Him."

Daniel 7:13-14 – "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting

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dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

The promise of God's Kingdom was not rescinded due to Israel's failures. The Kingdom will be established. Moving from the Old Testament into the New Testament, what is the very first message we see being proclaimed? It is no other message but the Kingdom of God being announced by the forerunner to the King over every other king.

VI. John the Baptizer is the first person to specifically announce the Kingdom:

After 400 years of zero prophetic revelation from God, John the Baptizer bursts upon the scene announcing the Kingdom:

Matthew 3:1-3 – "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."

VII. Jesus Christ's message for His entire earthly ministry was the Kingdom

A. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Matthew 4:17, 23) – "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand...23 And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people."

B. All throughout His earthly ministry (note the parables in Matthew 13).

C. At the end of His earthly ministry (Matthew 24:14, Matthew 25:34, Matthew 26:29)

D. After He rose from the dead (Acts 1:3) - "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."

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What the New Testament reveals is that the forerunner, John the Baptizer, and the King both proclaimed the message of repentance (a complete changing of one's mind) in light of the coming Kingdom of God. John prepared the way for the Messiah by boldly calling his generation to recognize that the Kingdom of God was coming to them. Jesus then took the stage and declared the very same message. Jesus began His public ministry with the call to repent and receive the Kingdom. The three years of His preaching ministry kept the Kingdom of God as the primary message. Shortly before His crucifixion, we see that His message was God's Kingdom. When He rose from the dead, He resumed His proclamation of the Kingdom of God. We will also see in this series that the Apostles wrote of the Kingdom of God. Dramatically, the Book of Revelation communicates to us what the climax of the Kingdom will look like as all lesser, competing kingdoms and rulers are destroyed. Since it is evident in Scripture that the Kingdom of God was the primary message from Genesis to Revelation, why is the Church in modern times proclaiming something different?