

“SEE Eternity In The Kingdom Of God”

Matthew 12-28

January 8, 2023

INTRO: **VIDEO – “Good Stories”**

- ~ Did you hear... hard times make for good stories.
- ~ Good “stories” don’t always make for good lives.

Why do we declare that God is good when the sun shines... but then resist Him (when the clouds come) just when need Him the most?

- ~ Easy is not very exciting. Why do passions burn?
- ~ Life is messy. Truth is... life is hard AND messy!
- ~ ...the backdrop for seeing the kingdom of God...

Faith begins when
we can't imagine what the next chapter holds.

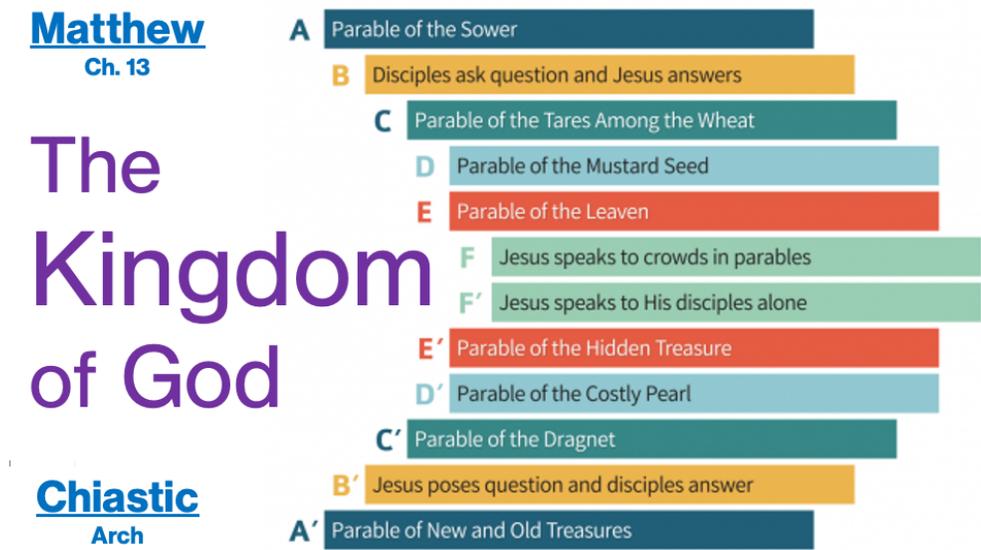
PRAYER

CONTEXT/PREVIEW:

1. Past
2. Present
3. Future

BIG IDEA: God’s Word on God’s kingdom is God glorifying & people-purifying!

T/S: God's Word divides the crowds & unifies the Church!
(Remember Matt. 12's cause & Matt. 13's Christ!)



I. SEE the kingdom PAST

a. Scripture:

- i. Genesis 1 & John 1
- ii. Old Testament prophets/psalmists
- iii. New Testament teachings by Christ

b. Sermon Series:

- i. See *(It takes a miracle...)*

We'll seldom BE what we cannot see!

VIDEO – "PARABLES"

ii. **BE**

(Fruit reveals roots)

The kingdom of God is filled with Christ's fruitful & faithful family of followers.

iii. **Query**

(2 Q&A sessions are good)

The Word of God speaks sharply to and about dull hearts!

iv. **We**

(True kingdom citizens)

The kingdom of God is real & it is really under attack... but the eternal end is drawing near... and we win because our King has already won the war!

v. **Wee**

(Starting small/humble)

Most people are clueless and Christless when it comes to the kingdom of God!

When you follow the wows instead of the Word you end up with the wrath of God! – JDP

vi. **Christmas EVE** *(Hope)*

Christmas EVE is all about holy HOPE and the kingdom of God!

vii. **Christmas DAY** *(Help)*

Christmas DAY is all about Christ and the healing HELP that comes with His kingdom!

viii. **New Year's DAY** *(New from True)*

If you want the new you need the true.

ix. **SEE ETERNITY In the Kingdom of God**

God's Word on God's kingdom is ALWAYS
God glorifying and people purifying!

II. SEE the kingdom PRESENT

a. Do YOU spiritually see, hear, & understand?

i. **Colossians 1:13** *(transferred to the kingdom)*

ii. **2 Thessalonians 1:5-8** *(considered worthy...)*

b. Are YOU spiritually blind, deaf, & confused?

c. Bottom line:

i. Ignore & pretend

ii. Reject & rebel

iii. Believe & obey

All of God's Words, especially His kingdom parables, are designed to either build you up or tear you down... depending on where & how they find you... & your heart.

– JDP

III. SEE the kingdom FUTURE

a. Going forward in the text (Christ's kingdom parables)

i. **UNFORGIVING SERVANT** (18:23-35)

1. Thankful
2. Memorable
3. Merciful
4. Empathetic

ii. **LABORERS in the VINEYARD** (20:1-16)

1. Perspective
2. Vertical
3. Equal
4. No grumbling

iii. **The 2 SONS** (21:28-32)

1. Lip service
2. Life service
3. Authenticity
4. Ends vs. beginnings

iv. **The TENANT FARMERS** (21:33-45)

1. The kingdom is at war
2. The danger & death rate are real
3. Don't expect better treatment...
4. **Remember** the price our King paid!

VIDEO: *"It Matters!"*

(Why – How - THAT we do this!)

*** COMMUNION ***

b. Going forward on the mission

i. **The MARRIAGE FEAST** (22:1-14)

1. The King invites ALL but begs none! - JDP
2. The King expects NO EXCUSES!
3. The King calls us to compel them to come
4. The King commands reverence & awe

VIDEO: *"Who We Are - QR"*

c. Going forward into eternity

i. **The 10 VIRGINS** (25:1-13)

- ~ You need supernatural, Gospel oil!
- ~ You better be ready.

ii. **The TALENTS** (25:14-30)

- ~ The King of the kingdom is eternally serious
- ~ The King demands your BEST & your FRUIT
- ~ The King is absolutely crystal clear!

When was the last time you took inventory and evaluated the kingdom **devotion** and kingdom **application** of your time, talent, & treasures?

(REMEMBER)

BIG IDEA: God's Word on God's kingdom is God glorifying & people-purifying!

CLOSING: So where do we/you go from here?

"The Church is so sick today. We need an evangelist to evangelize the evangelists. We need some teachers to teach the Bible teachers. We need counselors to counsel the counselors. We've never been as sick as we are right now."

- Leonard Ravenhill

When it comes to SEE-ing eternity in the kingdom of God

*I leave you with 3 personal perspectives
and 3 biblical passages:*

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. PAST | = Hope-filled called-to | WORSHIP |
| 2. PRESENT | = Help-full “how-to” | WITNESS |
| 3. FUTURE | = Hell-bound, end-times | WARNING |

*Whether God’s Word on God’s kingdom
comes to you Evangelizing, Clarifying,
or Horrifying...*

Hear & heed the Word of God
& the God of The Word!

1. Hebrews 1:1-2

*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God
spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last
days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He
appointed the Heir of all things, through whom also
He created the world.*

2. Hebrews 4:16

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

3. Hebrews 12:28-29

Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire.

It's ONLY when you miraculously see, hear, understand, & serve the kingdom of God, with a PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE... personal & passionate perspective, that you will know the PEACE, POWER, & PASSION of The King of kings & His eternal Kingdom. - JDP

...and such is my prayer for you.

Let's PRAY

WORSHIP: *"Holy Water"*

Parables of Jesus from the Book of Matthew

The Divided Kingdom - [Matthew 12:24-30](#)

- But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

The Sower - [Matthew 13:1-23](#)

- That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a

hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear." The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. This is why I speak to them in parables:

"Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

"You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.
For this people's heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.'

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone

who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

The Weeds Among the Wheat - [Matthew 13:24-30](#)

- Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

"An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

"No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"

The Mustard Seed - [Matthew 13:31-32](#)

- He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

The Leaven - [Matthew 13:33-34](#)

- He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds[a] of flour until it worked all through the dough." Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable.

Hidden Treasure - [Matthew 13:44](#)

- "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

Pearl of Great Price - [Matthew 13:45-46](#)

- "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The Net - [Matthew 13:47-50](#)

- "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The New & Old Treasure - [Matthew 13:52](#)

And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

The Heart of Man - [Matthew 15:10-20](#)

- Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them."

Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; they are blind guides.[a] If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."

Peter said, "Explain the parable to us."

"Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them."

The Lost Sheep - [Matthew 18:10-14](#)

- “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

The Unforgiving Servant - [Matthew 18:23-35](#)

- “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Laborers in the Vineyard - [Matthew 20:1-16](#)

- "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius[a] for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

"About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.

"He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

"'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.

"He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

"The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a

denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 'These who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

"But he answered one of them, 'I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The Two Sons - [Matthew 21:28-32](#)

- "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

"I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

"Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

"Which of the two did what his father wanted?"

"The first," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

The Tenant Farmers - [Matthew 21:33-45](#)

- "Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

"The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

"But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

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

"The stone the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

the Lord has done this,

and it is marvelous in our eyes'[a]?"

"Therefore, I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. 44 Anyone who

falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them.

Marriage Feast or Great Banquet - [Matthew 22:1-14](#)

- Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

“Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

“But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

"Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie his hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

"For many are invited, but few are chosen."

The Budding Fig Tree - [Matthew 24:32-35](#)

- "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

The Faithful vs. The Wicked Servant - [Matthew 24:45-51](#)

- "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Ten Virgins - [Matthew 25:1-13](#)

- “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

“‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

“But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Ten Talents or Gold Coins - [Matthew 25:14-30](#)

- “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability.

Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

"The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

"Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So, I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So, you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

"So, take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an

abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.

And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

[Ligonier Ministries:](#)

The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament: The Prophetic Hope

Ben C. Dunson

9 Min Read

When the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel went into exile the hope for God's rule over the earth to be manifested in an Israelite king seemed to have come to nothing. The prophets (before, during, and after the exile), however, make it clear that even with the exile God would not, and did not, abandon His intention to rule over His people and His world through a Davidic king.

Many important prophetic passages reveal that the only hope for the establishment of an enduring and faithful kingdom in Israel lies in a future work of God's redemption. The human heart is too corrupt for God's purposes for the world to be accomplished through Israel's fallen and sinful kings. Periodic revivals and times of faithfulness (such as Josiah's reforms [[2 Kings 23](#)]) are not enough to usher in God's worldwide dominion. Despite Israel's earthly failure God still does not abandon His plan to reign over the whole world through His appointed human king.

How will this reign manifest itself? What is necessary for God to reverse the failure of Israel to be a light to the nations and extend the kingdom across

the earth? First, God will be doing about a new exodus. This exodus, however, will not be a mere deliverance from Israel's earthly enemies. Instead, God will come in power to deliver His people as He ushers in the new creation itself and renews His reign over His people. As [Isa 35:1-4, 8-10](#) puts it:

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." ... 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.

The prophets speak of God's deliverance of His people in this way as the reestablishment of God's kingdom:

Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. ([Isa 40:9-11](#))

It is not as if God somehow ceased to be king simply because of the failure of Israel's earthly kings. Instead, speaking of a return of God in the power of His kingdom is meant to highlight the necessity of God performing a dramatic act of salvation and rescue for His wayward people in the future. If

the kingdom of God is to be manifest over the earth, and if Israel is to be a light to the nations (which will be brought about through a messianic king: [Isa 9:1-7; 42:1-9](#)), then it will only come about when YHWH returns to Zion to deliver His sinful people and equip them to extend His saving reign to the furthest points of the earth:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. ([Isa 52:7-10](#))

Jeremiah expresses this with the imagery of God placing shepherds (a symbol of kingship) over His people in the context of bringing them (in a new exodus) out from the nations to which they have been driven ([Jer 23:3-4](#)): "Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the Lord."

Daniel speaks of this reality in this way ([Dan 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."

Through the end-time kingdom that God will set up "the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one" ([Zech 14:9](#)). God, through a future, godly Davidic king will reign over the whole world forever (see [Psalm 89](#)). Adam's dominion mandate will be fulfilled through the dramatic saving work of God. In that day "the earth will be filled

with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” ([Hab 2:14](#)).

While the prophets consistently speak of God as the one who will sovereignly usher in His end time kingdom, they also speak of this as being accomplished through a kingly messiah figure. This messiah is described in many ways in the prophets, but two passages stand out as particularly significant for understanding the ministry of Jesus Christ, namely [Isaiah 52:13-53:12](#) and [Daniel 7](#).

In [Isaiah 52:13-53:12](#) the prophet speaks of a coming servant of the Lord who “shall be high and lifted up and shall be exalted” ([Isa 52:13](#)). This is the language of kingly exaltation, as is reinforced two verses later where we read that “kings shall shut their mouths because of him” (52:15). The exaltation of God’s servant, however, will paradoxically come about through his own suffering (53:3-5):

He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Israel’s sinful failure requires atonement: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all” ([Isa 53:6](#)). The suffering and death of God’s kingly servant is necessary for the end-time kingdom to be established. In fact, it is the very means by which the kingdom will be established.

In [Daniel 7](#) the coming kingly deliverer of God’s people seems strikingly unlike the suffering servant of [Isaiah 52-53](#). Consider [Dan 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 dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

These two verses nicely encapsulate Daniel's vision of an end-time "son of man" who will defeat all the enemies of God and of His people. Through this son of man, God will establish his dominion over all nations, a dominion that will never pass away or be destroyed. The dominion mandate of Adam will be fulfilled. Israel (see [Dan 7:22](#)), through the kingly son of man, will establish God's kingdom over all peoples.

How is it, then, that the final, saving reign of God can be said to ushered in through a suffering servant ([Isa 52-53](#)) and a triumphant heavenly deliverer ([Dan 7](#))? Which is it? The answer is that it is both: victory will come about through the suffering of God's king. This was difficult for many Jews to accept, because they simply expected a triumphant king, without understanding how he would triumph (see [John 6:15](#), for example). This is, however, precisely how Jesus understands His own kingly calling: He is the heavenly son of man who will come on the clouds to judge the world, but only after He has died on the cross for the sins of His people. This seemingly paradoxical reality is a vital theme that we must return to in future posts.

While Israel does eventually return from its earthly exile in Babylon (which has since come to be ruled by the Persians), the reports in Ezra and Nehemiah of their return fall short of the prophetic hope of a renewed Israel ruled over by a righteous Davidic king. The Persian king Cyrus sends the Israelites back to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple ([2 Chron 36:22-23](#)), which they indeed do ([Ezra 1-6](#)), but Israel never attains anything near the glories of the monarchy under King David. This is perhaps seen most clearly in the weeping of the elders of the people at the dedication of the new temple, since it falls significantly short of the glory of the previous temple ([Ezra 3:12-13](#)). This new temple probably did not even contain the ark of the covenant (the centerpiece of God's saving presence with his people) which was most likely lost or destroyed when Judah was defeated by Babylon. The prophetic hope looks to a future day when God will come in power to once-and-for-all set up his end-time kingdom. It is with this sense of anticipation that the

Gospels open, which is captured so memorably in Simeon's words in [Luke 2:29-23](#): "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

Simeon, like Anna, and "all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem" ([Luke 2:38](#)), knew that a king would one day come who would save and deliver God's people.

The Old Testament teaching on God's kingdom is the necessary context for making sense of Jesus' teaching and preaching, especially His announcement that the kingdom of God was "at hand" ([Matt 3:2](#)). The Jews Jesus preached to knew that God was king. They knew that He had always been king. What they did not know (apart from those who were given special revelation) was that the final, end-time, saving reign of God announced by Israel's prophets was already breaking into the world in Jesus' own person and ministry. We must therefore turn to the Gospels to see what Jesus has to say about the nature of the kingdom of God.

Suggestions for Further Reading:

- Herman Ridderbos, [The Coming of the Kingdom](#) (Philipsburg: P & R, 1962), pp. 3-17.
- Jeremy Treat, [The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology](#) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), pp. 53-86.
- Christopher M. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson eds., [The Kingdom of God](#) (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), pp. 49-94.

See also:

- [The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament: Kingship and Creation](#)
- [The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament: From Abraham to Israel](#)

The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament: Kingship and Creation

Ben C. Dunson

4 Min Read

In a [previous post](#) I mentioned that the exact phrase "kingdom of God" does not show up in the Old Testament (although "kingdom of the Lord" does appear in [2 Chronicles 13:8](#); see also the talk of God's kingdom in Daniel [for example, [Dan 6:26](#)]). Despite this fact, the concept of God's kingship is present throughout the Old Testament and is vital if we are going to make sense of Jesus' preaching about the kingdom of God. Remember: Jesus simply announces that the kingdom is "at hand" ([Matt 3:2](#)), assuming that His hearers had some grasp of what He meant, even if He knew that they did not fully understand Him.

What, then, does the Old Testament have to say about the kingdom of God? In this post we will examine the kingdom of God at creation, namely in the commission God gives to Adam to rule over the earth. The most important teaching on the kingdom in the Old Testament, however, is that God is king, so we must turn to this idea first. The Old Testament spells this out in two main ways.

First, God is king over all of creation. As [Psalm 10:16](#) says: "The LORD is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land." Or as King Jehoshaphat confesses in [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." Or consider King Hezekiah's exultation in [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." See also [Psalms 93:1-2](#); [95:3-6](#); [96:10](#); [104](#); [136:1-9](#). Simply put, God is the sovereign ruler of the universe.

Second, the Old Testament portrays God as king over Israel in a special way. In [1 Samuel 12](#) the prophet Samuel rebukes Israel for desiring a king that would be just like the greedy, self-serving kings of the nations surrounding Israel. While it was not wrong for Israel to desire a king (more on this below), the reason driving Israel's request was indeed sinful. As Samuel says in [1 Sam 12:12-13](#): "The Lord sent Jerubbaal and Barak and Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety. And when you saw that Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the Lord your God was your king." Israel's desire for a powerful earthly king was driven by fear and earthly-mindedness (see [1 Sam 8:4-9](#)). God's people failed to rest in the fact that God was their king, and that He would protect His covenant people.

While it is true that God alone is the ultimate king of Israel and over all of creation, human kings have a key role to play in God's kingdom. In fact, God built human kingship into creation itself. In [Genesis 1-2](#) Adam is clearly portrayed as a king. This is seen most clearly in the commission that God gives to Adam in [Genesis 1:26-30](#) (and repeated in [Gen 2:15-17](#)):

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion 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. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 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." 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. 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.

Kingship is at the heart of the commission that God gives to Adam: he is granted dominion over all animal life on the earth (1:26); he is told to have many children in order to subdue the earth and take dominion over it (1:28). He 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, the true king over all. He 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. In this sense, God reigns over His creation in and through Adam. Adam, of course, fails to take dominion over the earth. Instead, he rebels against his own sovereign, the Lord God almighty. Nonetheless, God does not abandon His intention to rule over the earth through a human king. In the next post we will look at how God's kingdom develops in the Old Testament, beginning with Abraham, moving on to kingship in Israel, and ending with the exile of the northern and southern kingdoms.

See also:

- [The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament: From Abraham to Israel](#)
- [The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament: The Prophetic Hope](#)

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