

"THE KINGDOM THAT IS TO COME"

**I. Introduction**

- A. Before he died, a seventeenth century Scottish minister named Thomas Hog gave his congregation a peculiar charge.
  - 1. He told them to bury his body at the threshold of the church building in order that his grave could stand sentinel against any unworthy minister who might take up a call in that church in future years.
  - 2. He then had his tombstone inscribed with these words: "This stone shall bear witness against the parishioners of Kiltearn if they bring an ungodly minister in here." [see Davis, 295]
  - 3. As he prepared for his departure from this world, Reverend Hog gave careful thought to his congregations's future spiritual leadership.
  
- B. In the verses we have just read, we see that the same was true of David.
  - 1. As we saw last week, the song contained in chapter 22 looked back upon David's reign.
  - 2. That song is immediately followed by another one that looks forward to the coming of another king.
  - 3. And while Thomas Hog looked ahead to what might happen to his congregation in the years after his death with a sense of foreboding, David looked ahead with great anticipation.
  - 4. In his final song, David sang about the coming of a righteous king who would be the source of untold blessings for those who submit to him, and of fiery destruction for those who reject him.

## II. Foretold in Prophecy

- A. The first thing that this passage teaches about the coming kingdom of God is that it has been foretold in prophecy.
1. This passage is described in verse 1 as David's "last words."
  2. This does not necessarily mean that these were the final words that David spoke before he died.
  3. These were his last public words, his last recorded words.
  4. There are other passages that contain the "last words" of key Old Testament figures, most notably Jacob and Moses.
  5. Both of those passages contain blessings that were pronounced upon God's people, blessings that were of a prophetic nature.
  6. In our text, David's last words are straightforward prophecy, given in the form of a song.
- B. The first three verses contain multiple references to the prophetic nature of what David says here.
1. The word "oracle" is used twice, and then David says, "The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue," and "The God of Israel has spoken; the Rock of Israel has said to me."
  2. David is obviously stressing a point.
  3. He is pressing home that these words are the very words of God.
  4. This means the things that are said in this passage are absolutely certain.
  5. This is not just David's personal take on what the future will hold for Israel.

6. This is God's revelation of what lies ahead for us as his covenant people.
  7. God is going to send us a righteous ruler, a ruler who will be the source of the greatest blessings, a ruler who will bring an end to all the instability and division that exists in this world.
- C. We should ponder the fact that David's last public words were not his own words but God's words.
1. This is something to which we should all aspire.
  2. We should want to have God's words, God's promises, in our minds and on our lips when the time comes for us to depart from this world.
  3. While we cannot speak new revelation as David did, we can hide the Word of God in our hearts by memorizing portions of Scripture, along with catechism questions and biblically based hymns.
  4. You don't want it to be the case that the only words you have at your disposal in your final hours are your own words.
  5. Let God's Word richly indwell you, so that you can cherish and proclaim his promises when the end draws near.
- D. Notice also how David talks about himself as he composes his last public words.
1. He refers to himself as the son of Jesse.
  2. While this was a respectable family in Israel, it was by no means a prominent one.
  3. David says that he was raised on high.
  4. The tense of the verb there is passive.

5. David is acknowledging that God is the one who raised him up.
6. There is no boasting for David here.
7. The Lord took him, the least of Jesse's sons, and anointed him as Israel's king.
8. Notice also that David refers to the Lord as the God of the great patriarch Jacob.
9. This points back to God's covenant promises.
10. It shows us that David sees his life in light of the bigger picture of God's plan.

### III. Ruled in Righteousness

- A. The next thing that this passage says about the coming kingdom is that it will be ruled in righteousness.
  1. It will be so ruled because it will have a righteous king.
  2. This just king is clearly someone other than David, though he was foreshadowed by David.
  3. Of course it is true that David had a righteous standing with God through the grace of justification.
  4. It is also true that David never utterly apostatized from God's ways, unlike his predecessor Saul.
  5. But David fell far short of God's perfect standard of righteousness, both on a personal level and in his office as king.
  6. The only king who reigns with complete righteousness is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. Listen again to how David describes Jesus' rule: "He dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning, like

rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.”

1. These are very pleasant images.
2. They are images of life, prosperity, and refreshment.
3. They picture the benefits that a wise and just leader brings to those who are under his authority.
4. A good leader is a source of inspiration and hope.
5. Think of how you feel when you hear a story about some leader whose life was marked by a high degree of integrity.
6. Think of that admiration you have for that individual.
7. In Jesus Christ we have a King who is infinitely more admirable.
8. His rule is pleasant, beautiful, good, and true.
9. It brings untold blessings upon his subjects.
10. We long for such a king because we have never seen one in this world.
11. No government is entirely free from corruption and oppression.
12. But the Lord Jesus Christ presides over a government that never uses or manipulates or deceives its people.
13. His kingdom is a kingdom of light and life.

#### **IV. Rooted in God's Covenant**

- A. The next thing that our text says about the coming kingdom is that it is rooted in God's covenant promise.
  1. David does not have confidence about what will unfold in the years after his death because of the things that he has done to establish a

legacy for his house.

2. Instead, he says this: "For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?" (2 Sam 23:5 ESV)
  3. The Lord promised David back in chapter 7 that he would build David a house.
  4. He promised that one of David's descendants would have a throne that would be established forever.
  5. As David approached the end of his days, he clung to that promise and took comfort in knowing that an everlasting kingdom, blessed by God, would one day appear.
- B. It is because of God's covenant that we can have the confidence that Christ's church will never be destroyed.
1. Consider these words from a Dutch theologian named Herman Witsius, "we profess, that there has existed from the beginning of time, still exists, and will continue to the end of the world to exist, a society of men chosen by God to salvation, called by the Gospel and the Spirit, professing faith and piety with the mouth, and practicing them in the conduct. We declare, also, that neither the machinations of the world that lieth in wickedness, nor the gates of hell, shall ever prevail against this society. For it is utterly impossible that the decree of God should fail; that the promises of God should come to nought; that the word of salvation should be preached in vain; that the prophecies respecting the perpetuity of Christ's kingdom should fall to the ground; or that Christ should lose the reward of his labor, and become a Master without disciples, a King without subjects, a Bridegroom without a bride, a Head without a body." [*Sacred Dissertations on the Apostles' Creed*, 2:362]
  2. What a comfort this is to us at those times when we get discouraged about the state of the church in the world.

3. What a relief it is to know that the church's ultimate prosperity does not depend on the efforts of man, but on the faithfulness of God.

## V. Opposed by Worthless Men

- A. The last thing that David says about the coming kingdom is that it is opposed by worthless men.
  1. You may recall some of the times when this phrase was used at earlier points in the books of Samuel.
  2. The sons of Eli the priest were "worthless men" because they disgraced their office by flouting God's law.
  3. The rich man Nabal was described by his servants and his wife Abigail as a "worthless man" because he refused to help David when he was on the run from Saul, even though David and his men had protected Nabal's shepherds.
  4. Sheba the Benjaminite was called a "worthless man" because he led the northern tribes in a revolt against David.
  5. In all of these examples, the thing that makes these people "worthless" is that they set themselves against the Lord and against his anointed, and we see the same idea expressed here in our text.
- B. Some people are not drawn to the righteous ruler described in this text.
  1. They want to rule themselves instead.
  2. They agree with John Milton's Satan when he leads the fallen angels in their rebellion by saying, "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." [1.263]
  3. Apart from God's grace, every one of us has that mindset.

4. And this passage makes it clear that the fate that lies in store for those who persist in this mindset is damnation.
5. This is not a pleasant thought, but the Bible clearly teaches it.
6. We see it in the book of Isaiah, which ends with these words: "And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." (Isa. 66:24 ESV)
7. We see it in the Gospels, where Jesus says things like this: "The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt 13:41–42 ESV)
8. And we see it in the closing chapters of Revelation, which contains statements like this: "But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." (Rev 21:8 ESV)
9. Regardless of how unpleasant or unpopular it is, the doctrine of hell needs to be preached and professed.
10. As J. Gresham Machen once pointed out, "No man is interested in a piece of good news unless he has the consciousness of needing it; no man is interested in an offer of salvation unless he knows there is something from which he needs to be saved." [*God Transcendent*, 34]

## VI. Conclusion

- A. As we look ahead to the future, we can only make our best guesses about what will happen as long as this present age endures.



- B. It may be, as many are predicting, that we are entering into a new dark age.
- C. Perhaps at some point there will be a turnaround through some kind of reformation.
- D. Whatever happens, as long as it remains this present age it is an evil age.
- E. We are waiting for the coming of a better kingdom, and this text assures us that it will most assuredly come.