

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

The Kingdom of God in The OT **Selected Passages**

Keywords: Kingdom of God, Sovereignty of God, Reign, Hope, Mediatorial Kingdom

SermonAudio Blurb: The Kingdom of God is truly God's. He is the sovereign one over all. For that, the Bible is utterly clear. But how do we, as humans, see this rule and reign? Primarily it is seen in what is commonly called the Mediatorial Kingdom. Simply put it is God, working through appointed people and entities, to exercise His will and reign. To put it a different way, the mediatorial kingdom is where we see the outworking of God's sovereign rule. This is what we will begin to explore in the next few sermons as we continue to grasp why the Kingdom of God was such a critical reality to which the early church held so closely.

I. Introduction.

- A. Last time I preached we approached the huge and exciting doctrine of what is called the Kingdom of God.
 - 1. It is my hope and task to get you excited about it so that you will be encouraged.
 - 2. But also so that you will be able to appreciate and understand so much of the bible that often you either pass over with mild interest or you misapply to yourselves, thinking that it has to do with you and the Church today.
 - 3. Realize that the Old Testament is 2/3 of the Bible and it is primarily focused upon God's relationship with Israel. So many of the promises we love to claim as our own are not directed to us but to the people of Israel. But if we fail to understand this fact then we end up misreading the Bible in ways that are not helpful or proper.
 - a. Let me give you a simple example of this with regard to the idea of lovingkindness. This has little to do with the Kingdom of God but it is a good example of misreading a passage.
 - b. Psalm 44:26 (turn).
 - (1) Now we can read this and not apply sound hermeneutics and still walk away with something that encourages us. That is not too hard. And it happens all the time.
 - (2) But in the long run it is not helpful because you still don't understand its meaning. What it actually says.

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- (3) The Psalm is a national Psalm for Israel. It is a lament psalm by the people as they feel and experience the disciplining hand of God against them.
- (4) Notice vs 4 where the Kingdom of God is expressed. Though they have a human king, the true King for them is God.
- (5) Notice vss 1ff starts out with how God worked in Israel in the early days. This is important to notice. They entered the promised land by the hand of God.
- (6) But by vs 9 things change. Now they reflect on the hard things they are experiencing and they know that this too is from the hand of God.
- (7) Now the question you and I should ask is, “Why?” And the answer is simple, it is part of the covenant promises they lived under. Israel operated under the covenant promises given on Mt. Sinai that we know as the Mosaic Covenant.
 - (a) It had clear stipulations, obey God and you are blessed and protected. Disobey God and you will suffer curses, enemies, and hardship. Because the nation was in a time of crisis they knew what was wrong, they had sinned and remained in that sin.
 - (b) Notice how the writer understands this because in vss 10ff he repeatedly says of God, “You. . . .”
 - (c) And then in vss 20ff he begins to assert that Israel has repented and has not forgotten their God. Therefore, because of this he asks God to rise up and defend them.
- (8) And it is here that vs 26 comes into play. Rise up. Help us. Redeem us. Why?
 - (a) Because of your lovingkindness. A simple word that is so full of meaning. A word not of emotion but of the will. And that makes it so much better.

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- (b) It is a word that speaks of making covenant with someone. When God showed lovingkindness it means that He set His love upon a people in such a way that He made covenant promises to them. This is what Israel experiences and this is what it means when the Old Testament uses this phrase.
 - (c) We make it a warm, fuzzy and emotional word but it isn't. In this passage the Psalmist ends with calling God to show mercy to them because He has made covenant promises to do so.
 - (d) In fact it is interesting to note that the LXX does not translate this term, *hesed*, with the Greek word for grace. Rather it translates it "on account of your name." Meaning, your reputation as the faithful, covenant-keeping God of Israel is the basis for my request.
 - (e) So the meaning of this verse is wrapped up within the historical context in which it is written. It is for Israel specifically, built upon their covenant relationship with God.
 - (f) We can make application to us, but we cannot change the meaning to have it refer to us.
- B. When talking about the Kingdom of God in the New Testament we must remember that the anticipation for it comes out the Old Testament.
1. And, just like the Psalm we just looked at, we need to remember that the Old Testament is often speaking about the kingdom in ways that we may not understand at first.
 2. That is the task before me today. To give a broad sweep of how the Kingdom of God is developed in the Old Testament.
 3. We saw already that in one way the reign of God and His kingdom is already a fact.
 - a. He is God. He shares His glory with no other. The nations rage against Him but He still reigns.

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- b. It is a statement of God's absolute sovereignty over all. The right to do what He wants; when He wants; to whom He wants; how He wants and no one has a right to say why?
- 4. But it doesn't end there. From the very beginning we read of how God rules through a mediator, all of which is ultimately pointing to the final, true King, Jesus Himself.
- C. We will break this down in the following way:
 - 1. The origins of the mediatorial kingdom.
 - 2. The development of the mediatorial kingdom.
 - 3. The anticipation in the mediatorial kingdom.

II. The Kingdom of God in the Old Testament.

- A. The origins of the mediatorial kingdom.
 - 1. To understand the end of the bible and the culmination of the message of hope in the bible you must go to the beginning of the bible. Start anywhere else and you end up missing key information.
 - a. The bible starts with the creation of a universe without sin and death and it ends with a new creation without sin and death. From beginning to end the creator God reigns over it all.
 - b. But this rulership, kingdom is one that is mediated through specific people and it is found to begin in the beginning.
 - 2. Genesis 1:26-28. [slide]
 - a. *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." . . . God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth"*
 - b. This dominion over creation was part of the intended plan of God, not an after thought. The Triune God did this.

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- c. The kingship belonged to God's image bearers. Each would rule over whatever part of creation was theirs.
 - d. The kingdom was anything and everything from the air above to the sea below.
 - e. It was and still is a blessing by God.
 - f. It means we need never apologize when we exercise this dominion. But it also means we take it seriously to reflect a love for the creation as God has. A biblical view of the environment is worthy of your reflection.
 - g. But it also explains why we do what we do as humans. We cannot leave creation alone, we are compelled by something deep within to change, improve, alter and expand on the raw material known as this universe.
3. But, of course, it all went sideways very quickly. We read in chapter 3 of the sin of Adam and as the representative of humanity through him sin and death entered into the world.
- a. Sin now reigned.
 - b. And humanity went from kingship to enslavement in the blink of an eye.
4. But the bible is clear that God would not have it stay nor end there. But that is for a little later in this message.
- B. The development of the mediatorial kingdom.
- 1. From Genesis 4 to Genesis 10 we see individual people making individual decisions but we don't see a formal establishing of rulership like we tend to think of it.
 - 2. But in Genesis 11 we see that as a group the totality of humanity decided that they would build a city and in that city a great tower for the purpose of making for themselves a name, a great reputation.
 - a. We see then that God disperses them through the establishing of many languages.
 - b. And the city is no longer built and the people scatter. The name of the city was Babel, we know it as Babylon. And it was the place

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where a counter-kingdom is established and it is one that shows up over and over in the bible, ending in Revelation 17-18 as a city opposed to God and His kingdom.

- c. And so this section of Genesis fades to black and the curtain raises on a new picture and a new reality in the land of Ur, just a short distance from Babel, comes into focus. And with it comes a very specific way that God would deal with humanity—through covenants.

3. The covenant with Abraham.

- a. If you can imagine the book of Genesis as a series of scenes of an epic movie then it can help understand its flow. The screen has just faded to black and as it comes back to focus there is a man in the land of Ur named Abram, later to be known as Abraham.

- b. Genesis 12:1-3. [slide]

- (1) There is a land promise.
- (2) The promise to become a great nation.
- (3) To be blessed by God so that he, in turn, would be a blessing to others.
- (4) A promise of divine protection.
- (5) And a promise of a future, worldwide blessing in him.

- c. In Genesis 15:1-21 [slide] this covenant is overtly instituted by God with Abraham.

- (1) The establishment of a line of descendants through which the blessing and covenant promises would flow (4).
- (2) Reaffirmation of a land for this unique lineage (7).
- (3) Guaranteed via a covenant, in which God cannot lie or deny Himself (8ff).

- d. In Genesis 17:2-14 [slide] God again reaffirms this covenant.

- (1) From Abraham will come nations and kings (6). (And here we see the idea of kingship coming into play.)
- (2) Covenant is not only with Abraham but his descendants (7).

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- (3) The promise of land in Canaan which is everlasting (8).
- e. The importance of this covenant cannot be overstated. It controls the other covenants and even affects them in one way or another. It is an everlasting covenant made, not only to Abraham, but to all of those who are his descendants, namely Israel.
 - (1) 1 Chronicles 16:16-17, “The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac. He also confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant.”
 - (2) Note that this is everlasting and is given to Israel.
 - (3) In the verses that follow it again promises them the land in which they were to possess and dwell.
 - (4) And it is unbreakable because it does not rest in the ability of Israel, but God.
 - (5) It is out of this covenant that we saw God send His Son to be our savior. Because it in Jesus, the final and ultimate seed of Abraham that blessing would come to the nations.
4. Other covenants come into play with Israel and they carry similar ideas and promises built into them.
 - a. The Mosaic Covenant was given to Israel via Moses on Mt. Sinai. It is also known as the “Old” Covenant. Moses represented Israel toward God and he represented God toward the people.
 - b. It was temporary and was given to only the nation of Israel as they became the point of witness to the rest of the nations of the glory and character of YHWH, the one, true God.
 - c. But it did not replace the Abrahamic Covenant nor was it ever designed to do so. It regulated this nation as a unique people so that they stood out.
 - (1) It gave the nation a legal code by which they were to conduct themselves with those outside of the covenant (i.e. the gentiles/nations), with one another within the covenant, and with God.
 - (2) It defined for them what it meant to be a holy people and it gave them three key offices: the prophet, priest and king.

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All of which were designed to bring them to truly know God.

- (3) But also all three functioned as mediators between man and God.
 - (a) The prophet brought the word from God to the people of God.
 - (b) The priest brought the sinful person to God for forgiveness through a proper sacrifice.
 - (c) And the king was the one who was to bring about governmental rule on behalf of God to God's people.

5. The Davidic Covenant.

- a. Within the Abrahamic covenant and the Mosaic covenant came a king.
- b. In reality this started with Moses but came into fruition with Saul, who failed. Then it came to David, who failed, though he also was defined by God as a man after His own heart.
- c. 2 Samuel 7:8-16 is where this covenant was made with David and it is exceedingly important to grasp and remember.
 - (1) David would be king over God's people (not his own) Israel (8). This is the essence of mediation.
 - (2) More importantly God will raise up descendants after David to be kings over Israel and that the house of David will endure forever (12, 16).
 - (3) He again appoints a land promise (10).
 - (4) And the kingdom of David and therefore the throne of David will be forever (16).
- d. And this is what you witness as you read from 1 Samuel to the end of the Old Testament.
 - (1) It is God being faithful to His word even when Israel is unfaithful.

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- (2) It is God giving glimmers of what the future Kingdom of God would look like through these prophets, priests and kings.
 - (3) We see God being faithful to His appointed kings even when they are unfaithful.
 - (4) And in this whole thing you will find the prophets proclaiming, rebuking, instructing and warning the people of God. But more importantly they are giving to Israel promises that God will always be faithful to His covenant promises.
- C. The anticipation in the mediatorial kingdom.
1. Remember how God made Adam to rule with Eve over creation? And remember how through Adam all things fell under the power of sin?
 2. Well the story continues because the Old Testament speaks of a coming King who would undo all that Adam destroyed. He would do all the things Adam failed to do. And in this King would come salvation and justice.
 3. There is a terrible moment in the Old Testament where you read of a radical change in relationship between God and Israel in Ezekiel.
 - a. This book recounts the great evil occurring in the land of Israel. The temple is used for every vile act and prophets only speak falsehoods.
 - b. And in this dark time God shows Ezekiel a vision of the glory of God departing the Temple and then departing Israel itself. And darkness became the norm for this land and people.
 - c. But still the prophets' word would speak through the written word. And they spoke of the day when one would sit on the throne of David and He would rule.
 - d. Isaiah 9:6-7.
 - (1) This one would be born within Israel and He would be unique.
 - (2) Notice the terms describing Him in vs 6.

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- (3) Vs 7 speaks of Him having the fulness of government upon His shoulder; but also notice where He would sit and what He would rule over.
 - (a) Not just “a” kingdom.
 - (b) But it would be over “His” kingdom.
- e. Daniel 7:13-14 picks up this same theme.
 - (1) “Son of man” is Jesus’ favorite term that He uses to refer to Himself.
 - (2) And it is designed not to focus on His humanity as many think, but to point back to this passage. A passage promising the coming King.
 - (3) Note the characteristics of this kingdom in vs 14.
- f. Jeremiah 23:5-8.
 - (1) This has not yet happened.
 - (2) The first advent brought Jesus as the suffering servant who would be the sacrifice and priest to deal with sin.
 - (3) The second advent is when Jesus will fulfill these words, and many like them.
 - (4) Notice though again the connection to the Davidic Covenant and the Abrahamic covenant with kingship and the gathering of the people of Israel back to their land.
 - (5) But, some will try to say that these are spiritual promises and not literal. And they will say that the land promises were all fulfilled when the people came back in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.
- g. But Zechariah will not allow for this.
 - (1) Post-exilic.
 - (2) chapters 12-14 speak of a yet future time even now where God shall fight for Israel and destroy her enemies.
 - (3) What is interesting is that it specifically points to it being a time after the death and resurrection of the Messiah. “And

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it will come about in that day that I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born” (Zech. 12:9-10)

(4) And so with those words we then read in 14:7-9 the promise of the coming King who is the True King.

4. And so, with promises like these the Old Testament closes and God is silent for 400 years and no true prophet is in the land.

III. Conclusion.

- A. And then we read in the gospels of the coming of John the Baptist who announces that the Kingdom of God is at hand.
- B. Then we see Jesus who is the promised messiah announcing the same thing.
- C. And everything changes.
- D. And this is what we will look at next time we gather.