

THE PROMISED KINGDOM 1 – STUDY NOTES

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Matt 6:33. Seek it first. It must be important. How well do we all understand this?

Imagine we are all in a classroom. The professor announces we have a surprise guest today. In walks the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's imagine his glory doesn't blind us like it did Paul. He tells us to rise from the floor where we have all fallen on our faces. He says, "Grace and peace to you. Today we are going to have an essay test. I'd like you to write an essay entitled 'What have you learned from the Bible about my kingdom? We'll collect your papers in an hour.'" How would you feel about Jesus Christ asking you to do that?

I have been a pretty serious student of the Bible for about 50 years. If I had to write that essay ten years ago, it would have been about one page. Since then, I feel like I have learned a lot more, and it has been a thrill. It has changed me and changed the way I look at life and I would like us to share that by studying together. When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, he is going to grade us on how faithful we were to what we know, not how much we know.

Our prayer for this seminar is to have our hearts impacted by the story of the kingdom as it develops through the Bible and for the story to have the intended effect on how we live.

From general Bible knowledge, you know that, as the world moves closer to the return of Christ, there will be more chaos and deception. Understanding the big picture of the kingdom adds endurance to our faith and hope.

If we were doing that imaginary essay test, we would probably all remember these 3 scriptures.

Matt 6:33 – I used to think this simply meant to put God first or put the things of God first. In the context, it certainly means putting the things of God first, but why does it use these words? It says to seek the kingdom of God first. Doesn't it make sense that the better we understand the kingdom, the better we can do that?

Matt 6:10. This is in the same chapter in the Sermon on the Mountain, which is all about the standards of righteousness of the Kingdom of God. "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". That's certainly not the way things are now. Let me ask you—where is this supposed to happen? On earth! It's not about us going to heaven where God's will is always done. It is about that kind of glorious righteousness coming to earth.

Luke 1:31-33. Jesus is a perfect human because he was born the son of God. Who else was a perfect human? Adam. Jesus Christ is called the second Adam. We'll come back to that. What throne will he get? Where was that throne? It's not just the chair- it's is

the rulership that represents. Where will that throne be when Jesus gets it? Who is he going to reign over? For how long?

This seminar on The Promised Kingdom will cover these and other topics.

- **How did the Old Testament explain the Kingdom?**
- **How did Jesus explain the Kingdom?**
- **Is the Church in the Kingdom now?**
- **The Millennial Kingdom in Revelation**

Here is a preview of this whole class. This is main plot line of the Bible.

1. God created man, Adam, to have dominion over the earth in the literal, material realm. He was to be God's under-ruler in subjection to God.
2. Man screwed it all up and continues to screw it up. People can't fix it. They can't fix themselves and they can't fix the world.
3. God miraculously had Mary conceive a second perfect man, the second Adam, to be the sacrifice for all the sin and to judge the evil earthly and heavenly adversaries.
4. In eternity, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, will be God's under-ruler over a restored earth. We, the church, reign with him.
5. This is GOOD NEWS. This is the gospel of the kingdom.

In other word, God's original will is immutable and it will come to pass. The promise that man will "have dominion" over the earth will be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus Christ is king. There will be a lot of people and there must be government. We also know that we are joint-heirs with Christ. It is exciting to understand what that inheritance is that we share with him. We will go through OT scriptures, and some NT scriptures, to understand this kingdom over which Jesus, the Messiah, will reign. That is the Kingdom of God.

SLIDE Daniel 2:44-45

Daniel gets a few different visions, or view, of future events until the end of the age. This is one we can certainly understand. **The kingdom of God is the prophesied kingdom that will knock down the previous kingdoms and stand forever.**

Jer. 23:5-6 is the very definition of Messiah is the future descendant of David who will be king. This is 150 years after the ten northern tribes had been carried away for their sins by Assyria. The Babylonians are in the process of conquering Judah. I'm not completely sure of this, but I don't think there was a descendant of David who actually reigned as king in Judea after the Babylonian Captivity. Cyrus the Persian allowed them to return after 70 years and Jeremiah had foretold, but they were still subordinate to Persia. Then came Alexander the Great and the Greek dynasties. Then came the Romans. There were priestly rulers and Jewish governors approved by the Greeks or Romans. They had some rebellions that briefly made them independent, but nothing like this prophecy of Jeremiah. **There has been no righteous reign in peace under a descendant of David from Jeremiah until now, so this must refer to the future kingdom.**

When Jesus began his ministry, he didn't call a big press conference to tell the nation he was the son of God, the Messiah, and that he was going to live a sinless life and die for their sins in his first coming and then come back thousands of years later to establish his kingdom. He was actually quite cautious about saying he was the Messiah, which made people want to kill him. Instead, he demonstrated the righteousness of God's coming kingdom. Of course, all Israel wanted Messiah to come and get rid of the Romans. The test was, did they really want God's truth and justice to reign among them.

When studying the Bible, it is very important to understand to whom it is written. But we need to go further. We need to ask what the speaker or writer meant their immediate audience to understand. None of it is written to modern Americans. When Jesus was speaking, how did he intend for the immediate audience to understand it?

John the Baptist	Matt 3:2 "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"
Jesus	Matt 4:17 " ditto exactly " " "
Sermon on the Mount.	mentions the kingdom 8 times
The 12 sent forth	Matt 10:7 "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"

Jesus knows the OT scriptures and his audience does too. What is going through their brains as Jesus is preaching. Of course, his messages were longer than these 8 words, "Repent, the kingdom of God is at hand." He probably went on to describe it. **Matthew usually uses the term "kingdom of heaven", while Mark and Luke use "kingdom of God" to record what Jesus said in some of the same instances.** It is certainly heavenly in its origins. There are, no doubt, good reasons for Matthew to call it the "kingdom of heaven", when he wrote his gospel years later. **For purposes of this seminar, we will assume that both phrases refer to the same coming kingdom when the Lord Jesus Christ will reign on earth from Mt. Zion.**

SLIDES Jer 30:6-7 30:8-9 30:10-11

Jer 30:3-11. Captivity. Judgment upon Israel. Then destroy enemies and Israel blessed. Will David reign?! Is that metonymy, meaning that Jesus will reign on "the throne of his father David"?

Even in Deuteronomy, Moses foretold that Israel would break the Sinai covenant, and their situation would get so bad they would go into exile and that God would rescue them from this exile and bring them into their own land and finally bless them. We will cover this more in a later episode because it is very important in understanding the writings of the Old Testament prophets. It is also important to understand that there are the Day of the LORD judgements before the final return of the exiles and the blessing on renewed Israel.

SLIDES Zech 14:1-4 – Hard to read, but this was known to Jesus's audiences
Zech 12:1-3, 10

All of this background helps us understand what people are thinking and Jesus is teaching and preaching to them. The obvious question as he proclaims the kingdom of God is, “who or where is the king, the Messiah?” If Jesus is that king, it is a huge political issue and a threat to those in power. Herod killed all the babies around Bethlehem to remove this threat. Jesus kept the Pharisees and Jewish leaders guessing. They wanted to turn him over to the Romans for claiming to be king. At his trial the high priest said, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” The Romans did not want someone claiming to be Messiah. His sentence which Pilate had nailed to his cross was “King of the Jews”. Jesus Christ publicly proclaimed the kingdom and taught about it in a way that made it hard to convict him for claiming to be the Messiah, while revealing it to those with hearts to accept it.