

Pentwater Bible Church

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The Book of Ezekiel

Message Eighty-Eight

INTRODUCTION TO THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM AND TEMPLE

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The section of Scripture we are entering is an exposition of the Temple that will exist during the future Messianic Kingdom. The coming Kingdom was known for many ages by the nation Israel and revealed extensively throughout the Old Testament prophets in all of the aspects of it that God chose to provide us. The Scriptures cannot be fully understood without a fundamental knowledge of the kingdom. It is a fact, attested by a multitude of works, and constantly presented throughout the chronological time line of the Bible.

The Jews in the New Testament times knew that a Messiah or anointed one who would rule the earth during this period was coming. They further knew that when He appeared as Scripture had explain He would set up the kingdom for the nation Israel. Very little information regarding the Kingdom is revealed regarding this Kingdom in the New Testament other than the duration of one-thousand years which, is given six times in Revelation chapter twenty and how it would end with the restoration of the eternal Order. The Old Testament prophets knew it When Jesus appeared during His first advent he stated that He was the Messiah.

John 4:21-26

²¹Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. ²²Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. ²⁴God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. ²⁵The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things. ²⁶Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he (ASV, 1901).

JESUS ANNOUNCED THE KINGDOM

Mark 1:14-15

¹⁴Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel (KJV).

Mark says that Jesus *came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God*. He was proclaiming the appointed time of His arrival on earth as prophesied in the Old Testament. Two terms frequently found in the New Testament are the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. It is important to distinguish between these two terms because both of them appear in the Gospels and elsewhere. The basic distinction is that the “Kingdom of God” which appears in Mark chapter one is universal in that it includes all the elect and those who have been regenerated of all ages (Luke 13:28-29; Hebrews 12:22-23). Therefore this is the more inclusive term to include all “saved” people of all times. Whereas the term “Kingdom of Heaven” is a very Messianic term found in the book of Matthew. It can be said that it is Davidic, and Messianic describing the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth over Israel and placing them in a position of government over the nations of the world.

Jesus announced this Kingdom of God as being “at hand” or immediately available. It was rejected by the ruling Jews of His time and it therefore became delayed. It was suspended until a time yet future to the Church Age after the Great Tribulation. In general the Jews did not accept the Gospel of Jesus but the Gentiles did during this period of Grace. The repentance that Jesus spoke of is a faith in the Gospel that is immediately followed with true repentance (II Corinthians 7:13). Interestingly many Jews understood this announcement of the Kingdom from the One who *only* can provide entrance into it. In fact Jesus told His apostles to ask for it during their prayers.

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (ASV 1901).

At the point of His ascension back to Heaven the apostles asked Him if He was going to restore the kingdom to Israel at that time. His answer was essentially “not now.”

Acts 1:6-7

⁶When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? ⁷And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power (KJV).

THE KINGDOM IS NOT A PREVALENT TOPIC IN THE CHURCH

Psalm 25:14

“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant “ (KJV).

Because of this revelation given in Psalm 25:14 knowledge of the Kingdom is sorely lacking in the Church. With the apostasy, biblical ignorance, and assertive moral turpitude God has withdrawn from those who could be enlightened regarding the facts of His Theocratic Kingdom. As a result of this, the concept of the Kingdom has come to mean almost anything. Typically we see definitions such as:

1. Messiah's spiritual reign during the Church Age.
2. The Gospel
3. A renewed heart
4. Religion
5. The truth
6. Salvation
7. Heaven
8. The way of salvation
9. Following the Savior.
10. The world to come

This is hardly an exhaustive list but it provides enough examples to show that there is a variety of different topics that Bible teachers, theologians, and pastors use to define the Lord's Kingdom. There are other sound reasons for this lack of understanding of this important doctrine. Chief among these is a lack of trust in the Bible.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE KINGDOM IS STRICTLY OBTAINED FROM THE BIBLE

There is no other source for the knowledge of God that He has given to this earth. He is the center of all things and our Lord Jesus is God in the flesh that came to save us and during His time on this earth He validated the authenticity of the Scriptures (Mark 12:10; Luke 4:21; John 7:42; Acts 8:32 etc.).

The Bible claims to be the very Word of God (Psalm 19:7, 119:98-99; 2 Samuel 23:2; Matthew 21:42; Matthew 22:29,31-32,43; Matthew 26:54,56; Mark 12:24,36; John 10:35; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; Romans 3:2; Romans 15:4; Galatians 3:8; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 3:7; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19-21 etc.). Underlined passages are where Jesus Himself declared that the so-called experts did not know the Bible.

As such today there is a de-emphasis on learning the Bible and what it teaches. Churches do not teach it fully and accurately. They rely on topical teaching that is fraught with denominational bias and lack of understanding. Mostly this problem can be attributed to faulty seminary training or the lack thereof and an over emphasis on relationships between church members. It has become a man centered training instead of a God centered training of the Body of Christ. The apostle Paul said if he were just out to please man instead of God he would not be a servant of Christ (Galatians 1:10). However, this is what has become of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is a self-serving entity organized to make the lives of all leaders and congregants richer, healthier, and better off in this life in general. This is exactly the opposite of what Christ said. The Lord Jesus called life going to the other side, not here. He also said that the path of getting in was straight and narrow and few will find it. He also said the path of destruction is wide and most of the world's inhabitants will be on that path (Matthew 7:14-15). Inherent with this is a de-emphasis of Bible prophecy. This is one of the keys to understanding the Kingdom since the Bible

says that Jesus is the Spirit of Bible prophecy (Revelation 19:10). When prophecy is not taught one of the results is a lack of understanding of the Kingdom and the King Himself.

The inspiration of the Bible is being denied in many churches and seminaries. When this happens man's attention turns from the Scripture thinking it has limited value. It becomes mere speculation and its serious study falls by the wayside, which results in a poor or no understanding of the Theocratic Kingdom.

GOD IS THE KING IN JESUS CHRIST

The King Himself devised the plan before the foundation of the world of His Theocratic Kingdom and as such it is of supernatural origin. When Jesus who is supernatural comes again He will set up the natural earthly kingdom. It will be the realization of the aspect of the broad concept of the Theocratic Kingdom, which He spoke of while training His apostles to pray (Matthew 6:10). Men who listen to these things today describe them as foolishness or strange and not believable. God foresaw this when He gave Isaiah prophecies 2,700 years ago describing the unbelief that would occur. Men may call this foolishness, incredible, etc., and from a natural experience position it is a "*strange work*" (Isaiah 28:21), "*a marvellous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid*" because "*their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men*" (Isaiah 29:13, 14). Isaiah says that the fear of men is taught superseding the fear of the Lord (Psalm 25:14).

This concept of the Kingdom was known in Israel at the time of Jesus and they were waiting for it. There is much confusion about the nature, development, and fulfillment about the Kingdom in the Bible. The concept of the Kingdom as revealed in the entire Bible is a truth that is developed beginning in the book of Genesis. Many in the Church teach a "Kingdom Now" theology. This is not how the Bible describes the Kingdom.

Typically what happens when most read the Scripture is what is called allegorical interpretation. Those who adhere to this sometimes refer to it as, symbolic, figurative, spiritual or allegorical. The allegorical interpretation of Scripture presents many difficulties for the communication of God's Bible. It takes the normal usage of a variety of grammatical techniques and assumes that since they are used in some instances, all scripture can be viewed as being allegorical. Sometimes this allegorical method is called *spiritualizing* the Scriptures. Some hold that because Christ said His kingdom is not of this world His Word is also not of this world. Therefore, time and space along with consistent normal grammatical historical interpretation is not adequate because the Spirit is eternal and transgresses all time.

Some hold that the literal text is too strong and will offend if read as written. So they soften it up by teaching that it does not mean what the words appear to mean. So the allegorical interpretative method creates unique meaning through the interpreter. This was initially developed during the third century AD so as to not offend the Romans at a time of emperor worship. In the case of Biblical Hermeneutics the expositor will force his theology on a passage to promote the theology to his audience. God gave us His Word and it is of no private interpretation. God wants us to communicate with us.

This is not a credible method of Biblical interpretation since it would render all Scripture to private interpretation (II Peter 1:20) and no one would ever really know what a passage meant. God then would have to be viewed as not truly wanting to clearly communicate with His children.

It is therefore that we make the statement that the nature of, and the things pertaining to, the Kingdom can only be ascertained within the limits of Scripture. This means that we do not refer to Creeds, Confessions, Formulas of Doctrine or any denominational teaching. Only the Scriptures must be used. The Bible being God's Word is our only source and we must understand the intimate and internal connection existing between the Old and New Testaments. They are one unit not two disparate unique bodies of text. They produce one continuous story.

KINGDOM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

The establishment of this Kingdom was determined before, and designed or prepared from, the foundation of the world. As such it is connected with this Supernatural One who lives outside of time and space. We see this referenced in Psalm 90:2; Matthew 25:34; John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 4:3; I Peter 1:20 and Revelation 13:8. The Lord created the Heavenly Kingdom which existed before the earth was formed and before the Fall of mankind. Many believe that the Kingdom is too complex and obscure to be easily comprehended. The doctrine of the Kingdom can become better understood and appreciated with study and a clear presentation by a thorough understanding of the Whole Counsel of God.

THE KINGDOM WAS OFFERED TO THE JEWS

The prophecies of the Kingdom when interpreted literally provide the expectations and hopes of the reverent Jews. The plain literal sense of the prophecies teaches that a Kingdom is coming. It is only found through *a literal restoration* of the Theocratic-Davidic throne and kingdom as expected by the believing Israelites.¹ Peters makes this point to affirm that *no one* in the orthodox (reverent) Jewish community denies a restoration of the Theocratic Jewish Kingdom. The Mosaic Theocracy was an earnest, introductory, or initiatory form of this Kingdom. Such passages as Deuteronomy 7:6 and 14:2; Romans 11:28 and 9:11, etc., are decisive, that the sovereignty of God chose in the descendants of Abraham, the Jews, a people *through whom* should be manifested his Divine purpose in the salvation of man. The Kingdom was offered to this chosen, elected nation, as is seen, in Exodus 19:5, 6, where it is declared that if faithful and obedient, it should be God's "*peculiar treasure above all people,*" and it should become "*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*" The Kingdom itself was offered to them is *a divine-political* (church and state united) dominion, over which *God Himself, as an earthly Ruler,* presides or rules as the Supreme. Moses and the Prophets clearly show this. They do so by uniting the divine and the political in their instructions; by making God's commands, both civil and religious, the sovereign law; by stating that the object of the nation's call, and the bestowment of peculiar privileges and power, was the overruling and superseding

¹ Peters, G. N. H. (1884). *The Theocratic Kingdom of Our Lord Jesus, the Christ* (Vol. 1, p. 190). New York; London: Funk & Wagnalls.

of all earthly governments, thus exalting their God and King *over all*; and by teaching that through the Kingdom thus established, *all nations* should ultimately be brought under the subjection and allegiance of the great Messianic King. This is referenced in Daniel 2:44 and 7:14, 18, 27, etc. The election of Israel embraces *a nationality*, namely the natural descendants of Abraham and the chosen son Isaac. It includes them all, so far as descent *in a certain line* is concerned (as well as those who may be *adopted* by the nation). This is seen as the progeny of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Their descendants of the flesh and those adopted into Israel appear in the genealogies laid out in Matthew chapter one and Luke chapter three.

Some term this as “exclusiveness” (but actually necessary, indispensably so, to preserve *a unity* in the intended dominion), or by “the middle wall of partition (Ephesians 2:14)” which divided them from other nations, or by the declaration of Paul (Romans 9:4 and 11:28), that even to the unbelieving Jews pertained “*the adoption*,” i.e. this election in view of national connection, and that, although “enemies” yet, “*as touching the election* (i.e. this choice of the nation), they are beloved for the father’s sake.” In other words, none but a member of this nation, being a Jew, had this Kingdom offered to him until the election expanded to include the Gentiles in the Church by way of adoption as *the seed of Abraham*. The Gentiles have been adopted into Israel since the time of Moses until the Church was born. It is a new commonwealth of Jews and Gentiles coming together as a unit. It is important to look at the impressive words of Moses, *Deuteronomy* 32:1–43, in which the elect condition of the nation is delineated, then a deep and long-continued apostasy is represented as pertaining to this favored nation, followed by prolonged punishment; but this does not eliminate the nation’s election, for God’s Purpose in reference to it still stands good, and the promise of the Eternal, Unchangeable is recorded, that *the same elect nation*, chastened and scourged, scattered and dispersed, shall be recalled and exalted in glory. Those Jews who make it into the Kingdom will be a mere remnant. God will never *utterly* forsake them, but will remember what He has so often declared, as e.g. 2 Samuel 7:24. The punishment, the scattering and desolation, of the Jewish nation is itself proof of their election as, e.g. Amos 3:2, declares: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: *therefore* I will punish you for all your iniquities.” This casting off is only *temporary*, as evidence e.g. Zechariah 10:6, etc.

THE THEOCRACY

It was a form of government under the sole, *accessible Headship* of God Himself (Deuteronomy 5, etc.). He was the Supreme Lawgiver in *civil and religious* affairs (Deuteronomy 4:12 and 12:32), and when difficult cases required it (Deuteronomy 17:8–13), the Divine Arbiter or Judge. In brief, the *legislative, executive, and judicial* power was vested in Him, and partially delegated to others, to be exercised under a restricted form (Deuteronomy 16:18, etc.). All the people (Deuteronomy 29:10–13), in their *civil, religious, social, and family* relations, were to acknowledge, and be obedient to His expressed will. He communicated His will according to an ordained manner, and when not declared, or where there was doubt, the princes or leaders could come for inquiry and receive specific directions. As an indication and reminder of this Supremacy, all the people were required at certain times in the year (Deuteronomy 16:16, etc.) to visit the place of special manifestation, and renew their vows of allegiance. The prophets (e.g. Isaiah 1:21–24) spoke for God to the highest and lowest, and their rebukes were in the

name of the Supreme Head. According to the sense of the Mosaic constitution, the Hebrews were erected into a kind of republic under *the immediate dominion of Jehovah, forming a strict theocracy.*” One can view the Theocracy “*the formal exhibition of God as King, or Supreme Head of the Commonwealth;* so that all authority and law emanated from Him, and, by necessary consequence, there were not two societies in the ordinary sense, civil and religious, but *a fusion of the two into one body.*” Today many people including Jews reject the view of the Theocracy as being a Divinely ordained purposeful entity. The Godly blessings that came to the Theocracy are numerous, and precisely such (e.g. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, 30, etc.) as a people here on the earth earnestly desire to attain. They culminate in the expression (Leviticus 26:12): “*I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people,*” which is again reiterated (Revelation 21:3) at the restoration of The Eternal Order. The coming Theocracy will be with Jesus running the government from Jerusalem this will be a merging of Church and State. As we move throughout the following nine chapters of the book of Ezekiel we will provide an exposition of the characteristics of the coming Messianic Kingdom as well as the Messianic Temple where a significant amount of activity will occur.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE PROPHECY AGAINST PART II OF THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM
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