

KINGDOM BREAKTHROUGH

Sermon One

PICTURES OF THE KINGDOM

As we begin our series on the Kingdom of God we recognise how important it is to understand that the Kingdom of God has broken through into the experience of mankind, that it breaks through each day and that it will ultimately breakthrough at the end of the age where once and for all the Kingdom of God will be established in its fullness. The Kingdom has come but are we living in the power and the blessing of the Kingdom that has come? I suspect that many of us are not and are missing out on the blessing and the power of the Kingdom that God intended us to experience. As we begin our journey, we need to start right at the beginning looking at the coming of the Kingdom with the Exodus of God's people from Egypt. Many believe that the Kingdom only came with the coming of Christ but the events of the Exodus, the entering of the Promised Land as well as the reign of King David begin the process of the coming of the Kingdom with the coming of Christ. All of the Old Testament points to the coming of Christ and the Kingdom. The Old

Testament gives to us three pictures of the coming Kingdom of God and in particular three pictures of the King of the Kingdom.

1. A CONFRONTING KING – THE EXODUS

The coming of the Kingdom begins with God breaking through into the history of mankind and intervening on their behalf to set them free from their oppression. In Exodus 3:7-8 God speaks to Moses from the burning bush and notes the following,

“I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land.....”. For the first time God intervenes on behalf of his people to establish a kingdom for His people in the Promised Land. The Exodus from Egypt ushered in a new era in which God's people saw his amazing deeds and concluded in Ex 15:18 after having seen what God had done, “The Lord will reign forever and ever”. God reveals himself in terms of His name, “I am” and his amazing miraculous deeds through signs and wonders. In ushering in His Kingdom he confronts Pharaoh and the forces of

darkness. The battle or confrontation that follows happens firstly at a spiritual level and then at a military level.

At a spiritual level he confronts the God's of the Egyptians. In Exodus 12:12 God says, "I will bring judgement on all the god's of Egypt. I am the Lord". All the plagues that were then sent by God were plagues against the God's of Egypt. Each of these plagues signalled the defeat of another Egyptian God. When the Kingdom of God comes it begins with a victory in the spiritual realms. Secondly, following on from the spiritual intervention there is a military intervention with the destruction of the Egyptian army when we read in Ex 14:28, "The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen – the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them has survived".

In this first picture of God we see God breaking through into the history of mankind and confronting the forces of evil against His people, spiritually and physically, announcing the coming of a new Kingdom. What does this tell us about the King?

1. He is for his people
2. He is against the oppressor of his people.

3. The Kings rule means freedom for his people. No longer would they be slaves of Pharaoh, but servants of the King.
4. His kingdom brings liberation.
5. He is not a distant God.

This picture of the Kingdom in the Exodus points to the fulfilment of the Kingdom in Jesus Christ. God intervenes with the sending of His Son into the world to save His people. He confronts the forces of evil by casting out demons, healing the sick and in so doing setting His people free. The Exodus was an expression of God's grace but Christ is an expression of grace upon grace.

2. A COVENANTAL KING – MT SINAI

Having confronted the forces of evil and set His people, having established his Kingdom reign he now establishes for himself a kingdom people. In making the covenant with His people at Sinai God says in Ex 19:5-6 "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all the nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation". As a covenantal relational being God draws near to his people. God's reign and His Kingdom

is never geographical but found among His people. He has chosen them to be priests to the rest of the world, channels of his grace, mercy and blessing. As a covenantal King He for the first time established a relationship with His people. Israel moved from being a slave nation in Egypt to a Kingdom nation in relationship with the King. God had chosen them and he chooses us to be his. In the New Testament understanding we are adopted into the family of God sharing all the privileges of the Kingdom as sons and daughters of the most high.

With the coming of Jesus called Immanuel God with us, this covenantal relationship comes a step closer as it does with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the reality that God will now live within His people.

3. A CONQUERING KING – PROMISED LAND

The third picture of the Kingdom is that of God as the conquering King. God breaks through and confronts evil setting His people free and he establishes a relationship with them as his chosen people. Now with the taking of the Promised Land and the rule of King David and Solomon we see the conquering King establishing his

kingdom on earth. In David's Psalms we see many pictures referring to the conquering King. Psalm 47:2-3, "How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth! He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet". Under King David God would no longer speak through prophets but through His King on earth. In Psalm 2 we are given a picture of this God putting King David into place in verses 1-6.

"Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. Let us break their chains they say, and throw off their fetters. The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath saying, I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill". This psalm refers to David as God's anointed but also looks forward to the coming of Christ. The term "anointed one" was the Israelite name for their king and can also be translated as "messiah". Christ was born in the line of David and so David is seen as a forerunner to Him.

As a consequence of David's anointing God used Him as an instrument to establish His kingdom on earth. Consider the

following passages. 2 Samuel 8 is a chronicle of David's victories and in verse 6 and 14 we have the following statement mentioned twice, "The Lord gave David victory wherever he went". After the reign of David and the era of Solomon's kingship we see great peace upon the land and God's conquest is completed. The conquest of the Promised Land looked forward to the conquest of Jesus on the cross as well as the final conquest when Christ returns and the final victory is won over the forces of evil.

CONCLUSION

We have considered three pictures of the Kingdom of God this morning. The confronting king, the covenanting king and finally the conquering king. When ever God chose to breakthrough into the experience of humanity and establish His kingdom, it always had the following common results. The kingdom always brings liberty from the oppressive rule of evil. The kingdom brings the rule of justice. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and he sets the prisoner free, watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow. When Jesus came He too came in this way, a confronting King. He confronted the traditional Jewish religion, he confronted the forces

of evil. He came as a covenanting King, choosing men to be in relationship with Him. And finally on the cross he comes as a conquering King as he defeats the power of sin and death by His sacrifice. In our relationship with Jesus, do we experience Him in these three ways?