

KINGDOM BREAKTHROUGH

Sermon Two

PROMISES OF THE KINGDOM

As we began our series past time we looked at three pictures that the Old Testament gives to us of the Kingdom of God. As we considered the freedom of the Jews from Egypt, the journey to the Promised Land and finally the conquering of the Promised Land we saw three aspects of the King of the Kingdom of God. We saw that he is a confronting, a covenanting and a conquering King. As King David and Solomon reigned over Canaan the Kingdom of God had become for His people a reality. Sadly many of the Kings that followed did not obey God and the people ultimately went astray. God punished them by sending the Babylonians to take them into exile. As God's people were in exile it was almost as if they were back in Egypt, captives away from their own land. The

Kingdom of God was no longer a practical reality to them. Consequently God's people mourned their loss of freedom and longed for the day that they would once again be free. In Psalm 137:1 we are given a picture of this when we read of God's people, "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion". They longed for the Kingdom of God to be re-established so that they might sing their songs of joy in their own land. God hears their cry as he did in the days of Moses when the people cried out in Egypt and he sends them words of encouragement in the form of promises that the Kingdom of God would be restored in the future. In this regard he speaks mainly through the prophet Isaiah and in Isaiah 43:16-19, "This is what the Lord says- he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses....forget the former things; do not dwell in the past. See I am doing a new

thing! I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland...”. The amazing thing about this picture is the reality that God would not let the coming of his Kingdom be thwarted by the sin of man. God was determined that His Kingdom would come and so he gives many promises through Isaiah which look forward to the future coming of His Kingdom that would be far greater than the when it came with the Exodus. They were to look forward and not back and see the new thing that God would be doing in the future. These promises looked forward to the coming of the promised Messiah and all the blessings associated with that including salvation and freedom for God’s people. This morning I invite you join with me as we look at the promises of the Kingdom they looked forward to, promises which are a reality for us today.

1. GOD WILL RETURN

With the exile from Canaan there came a loss of hope and an overwhelming sense of despair that all the blessings of the Kingdom in the Promised Land had been lost forever. The amazing thing however about our God is that He is the God of the second chance. As God speaks to His people through the prophet Isaiah the first word of encouragement He gives to them is the promise of His return to them. In Isaiah 52:7 we read, “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation who say to Zion, “Your God reigns! Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it”. God had not abandoned His people as His people had thought but gives them promises of His return. As a consequence of his return, God encourages his people to respond in the following way in Isaiah 60:1, “Arise

shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you”. These are all messianic texts looking forward to the coming Messiah who would set His people free.

2. HE WILL RETURN AS KING

Replacing the Kingdom over which David ruled there will come a King in the line of David, a stem of Jesse, the “Branch of the Lord” and we are told of this King in Isaiah 9:6-7,
“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and

forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this”.

The kingdom which lay in ruins after David and Solomon’s reign will be re-established by God through his Son who would come from the line of David. This speaks to me of how God’s purposes will be achieved despite the many obstacles we place in His way. We now live under the reign of Jesus and in His kingdom. We can experience the many blessings that God’s people in those days could only look forward to. Jesus has returned as King and ushered in the Kingdom of God. There may have been a time when God reigned in our lives but because of sin our spiritual lives are in ruin. God in His grace never gives up on us and he longs to re-establish his reign in our lives as individuals as well as a community of believers.

3. HE WILL RETURN AS THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the prophecies and promises of Isaiah there are many pictures of the promised Holy Spirit that would come when Christ ascended to the Father. In Isaiah 32:15 speaks of “the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field...” and in Isaiah 44:3 God promises as follows, “I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants...”. Many thousands of years before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost God had promised his people that he would return not just as King in the person of his Son, but he would return as the Holy Spirit to be a blessing to His people. It’s amazing how the Old Testament points to what God was going to do in the New Testament and that the theme of God’s return is to be found throughout Scripture. God in the person of his Spirit would now live within the life of the believer and therefore Jesus is correct

when asked where the kingdom was to say that the Kingdom of God is within us, those who believe. The wonderful truth of this is that it will never again be removed from us but as we are obedient we will experience more and more of the kingdom in our lives.

4. HE WILL RETURN AS SAVIOUR

The third picture we have of God’s promised return is that He will return as Saviour. In Isaiah 51:5-6 God says the following of the salvation to come when He notes, “my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail”. As a consequence of this wonderful

salvation that Christ would bring to mankind, the prophet paints such a wonderful picture of the exiles returning to the Promised Land, spiritual exiles who were in a kingdom of darkness now returning to the spiritual Zion and the kingdom of light. Notice this in Isaiah 51:11. “The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away”.

CONCLUSION

God is the God of the second chance. The nations of Israel and Judah blew it big time when they disobeyed God and they suffered the consequence of this in their exile from the Promised Land. They lost the blessings of the kingdom. But our God is gracious and he gives to them promises of His return and the reestablishment of his kingdom here on

earth. The people of God were encouraged by these promises but could only look forward to their fulfilment. We have the blessing of having seen them being fulfilled in the coming of Christ and the coming of the Kingdom once again. We can know the King, the Holy Spirit and the Saviour as a reality in our lives.