

Biblical Theology:

Reading the Bible as One Book

Covenant Life College

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Session 4

The Lord's King

1. The paradoxical nature of the biblical king
 - a. We expect kings to establish justice in their nation, to enforce laws and punish wrongdoers, to exercise authority for the common good of his people, to defend his nation against foreign invaders. Ideal kings succeed in these endeavors.
 - b. And this is true of God's ideal king in Scripture, yet with a paradoxical twist: this king also must suffer for the sake of his people.
2. Adam and his seed ruling
 - a. Genesis 1:28. The first man is given "dominion" over the living creatures of the created order.
 - b. Genesis 3:15. The seed of the woman will contend with the offspring of the serpent, being wounded in the process (the serpent's seed will "bruise his heel") yet overcoming the serpent's authority ("he shall bruise his head").
3. A part of the promise given to Abraham was the issuance of kings from his descendents.
 - a. Gen. 17:6, 16
 - b. Gen. 35:11
 - c. Gen. 49:8-10. Note that this king will come from the tribe of Judah.

4. God's king (Deut. 17:14-20)

- a. He is king, yet subject to God.
- b. He is subject to a written code (vv. 18-19). This is unique in the ANE where the *king's* words were the law.
- c. He is not to consider himself above his fellow Israelites (v. 20). This, too, is unique: ancient kings often postured themselves as gods.
- d. Special commandments to the king
 - i. He must be chosen by God (v. 15).
 - ii. He must be an Israelite (v. 15).
 - iii. He must not rely on military might (v. 16)
 - iv. He must not acquire many wives "lest his heart turn away," i.e. from the Lord (v. 17).
 - v. He must not amass great wealth (v. 17).
- e. Israel's motives in wanting a king were mixed. They desired what God had promised in the Law of Moses, but for the wrong reasons—to reject the Lord as their king and to be like the other nations around them (1 Sam. 8: 5, 7). They get what they want in Saul.

5. David and his dynasty.

- a. The Lord chooses David as king (1 Samuel 16: 1-13).
 - i. Note that David is youngest of his brothers, breaking with the tradition of the oldest son receiving the chief inheritance and the father's position of authority (be it over the family, clan, tribe or nation).
 - ii. Note that the Lord chooses David based on his heart disposition (v. 7).

b. The Lord's covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:1-17)

i. Context: David's greatest passion was not his personal kingdom nor his legacy through his sons but the glory of God revealed in a permanent temple matching the tabernacle given through Moses erected in a permanent and secure city.

ii. Promises:

1. a great name
2. security for the nation in the land
3. rest from enemies
4. a son to build the temple
5. an eternal (!) dynasty
6. a father-son relationship between the Lord and the king (cf. Ps. 2:7)
7. unending steadfast love

iii. Warning

1. "When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men."

iv. David experiences all of these blessings (though he is disciplined for the sins issuing from his lust after Bathsheba). He effectively conquers the lands promised in the covenant with Abraham (2 Sam. 8), experiences rest from his enemies, and gains a great name.

v. But David also experiences much suffering from the day of his anointing to be king to his death. His trials and suffering are recorded in 1&2 Samuel and in his prayers to the Lord in regard to his trials are recorded in the Psalms.

1. Psalm 22
2. Note the superscriptions of Psalms 3, 7, 18, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 63

vi. The enigmatic nature of Psalm 110.

1. Verse 1, though David is king the Lord speaks to David's lord.
2. The Lord makes David a "priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (v. 4).

vii. The history of the Davidic kings recorded in the Old Testament is sadly one of God's keeping his promise of love and a father-son relationship as he secures the dynasty but the king's failing to keep the Law and experiencing the discipline of the Lord through "the rod of men."

6. Hope for a future king

- a. The prophets, having announced the Lord's destruction of the nation in response to her many sins (Jer. 32:26-35), also promise a future restoration which will include a restoration of the Davidic monarchy.
- b. Isaiah 9:2-7. vv. 6-7 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this."
- c. Jeremiah 23:5-6 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'"
- d. Ezekiel 34:23-24 "And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken."
- e. Dan. 7:13-14 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came

to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”

7. Yet this hope of a future glorious restoration of the monarchy is tempered by the agent of this restoration suffering to accomplish it.
 - a. The “Servant Songs” of Isaiah 42-53. After Isaiah announces that a foreign king called Cyrus will release God’s people from captivity, the question arises: while Cyrus may be able to give a degree of political restoration, who will restore the people’s hearts to the Lord? The answer: the Servant of the Lord.
 - i. Isaiah 42:1-7. He comes in gentleness to restore those who are broken and almost lifeless.
 - ii. Isaiah 49:1-7. His work appears to be fruitless in restoring Israel, yet the Lord is with him to go beyond the restoration of Israel to bringing salvation to Gentiles as far as the ends of the earth. Though he was despised, the rulers of the earth will ultimately submit to him.
 - iii. Isaiah 50:4-9. He gives himself to disfigurement and disgrace, yet the Lord helps him and so he is vindicated.
 - iv. Isaiah 52:12-53:12. Though the Servant is wise, “high and lifted up, and shall be exalted,” he astonishes many because his appearance is marred beyond recognition. He “sprinkles many nations” and silences kings. He is a “man of sorrows” with no appearance to suggest royalty. He suffers—without any resistance—wounding, crushing, and flogging for the sins of his people. His suffering and death are deemed God’s doing, yet he had done nothing wrong. In fact, he was “stricken for the transgression of [God’s] people” to make “an offering for sin.” Despite his death, he shall live and “see his offspring” and make many righteous by bearing their iniquities.
 - b. Zechariah 12:10. This restoration of the house of David and Jerusalem will require mourning over someone they have killed. “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for

him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”

8. So the hope from the time of the restoration of the Temple in 515 BC to the coming of Jesus was not only for a conquering king who will rout the enemies of God's people and rule to the ends of the earth, but also for a servant who will suffer and die for the sins of the people to restore them to a right relationship with God.
9. Prior to Jesus' birth, an angel announces to his mother: “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-33).
10. When Jesus begins his public ministry, he announces the arrival of “the kingdom of God” (Mark 1:15). His ministry is a three-year demonstration of that kingdom. He demonstrates his authority over sickness, demons, nature, false doctrine and death. Yet in the people's eyes, he carries none of the trappings of royal power. He has no place to call home, lacks money, has peasants as his primary followers, and achieves no favor with the Jewish priests or rulers of the day. He draws great crowds and the attention of the country's rulers, yet as soon as he calls people to receive his death for their life, they desert him (John 6:22-66).
11. Yet still, as he arrives in Jerusalem to die, he is welcomed as a king by the crowds (John 12:12-15).
12. In his death, he identifies himself with the suffering David by quoting Psalm 22:1 in his anguish, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
13. In his death, Pilate insists that he be identified as “King of the Jews” (John 19:19-22).
14. Even the high priest Caiaphas prophesied that “one man should die for the nation...” (John 11:49-53). The priest unwittingly announced that Jesus should fulfill the role of the servant of the Lord as recorded in Isaiah.
15. The New Testament writers clearly identify Jesus as the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:21-25
 - b. Acts 8:32-33

16. The challenge for the early disciples was how and when Jesus would fulfill the promises of world-wide royal dominion.
- a. Acts 1:6-8. Jesus essentially tells his disciples that the consummation of his kingdom will come at a future, undisclosed date, and that in the mean time they are to witness to his gospel message to “the ends of the earth.”
 - b. Hence, the kingdom is “inaugurated” but not “consummated.”
 - c. So the kingdom comes, as Jesus taught, like a tiny mustard seed that grows into a great tree, like yeast, which is virtually undetectable yet affects the entire lump of dough (Matt. 13:31-33). There may be disappointment at those who appear to be disciples yet fall away or those who seek to choke God's people, yet God will achieve a harvest of people when the “Son of Man” comes (Matt. 13:1-30).
17. The book of Revelation is an extended argument for how the kingdom can come with so many problems in the churches (chapters 2-3) and such persecution and seduction of God's people. God's king, the Lamb of God, preserves his church as they preach the gospel throughout the world until a day of final reckoning when he will judge and condemn the wicked and establish a New Jerusalem from which he will rule the world which will be reconstituted as a new heavens and new earth.
- a. He controls all of history as the king (Rev. 5:5) because of his sacrificial death (Rev. 5:9).
 - b. He may be attacked by Satan and his beastly authorities, but his conquest is assured (Rev. 17:14; 19:16).
 - c. Forever, the subjects of the Lamb will prosper under their king's rule and dwell with him in a new Eden (Rev. 22:1-4).