

The Kingdom of God

Valleys Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 1st April 2012

Intro-

- My dream of Switzerland, Bedford, King's Arms.
- Daniel had dreams which came true in a remarkable way- dreams about the Empires of the world that would emerge from his day onwards.
- A key part of His visions & dreams and also the dream he interpreted for the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar was the revelation of a kingdom yet to come which would be the most supreme kingdom the world had ever seen and ever will. This kingdom is the Kingdom of God.

Read Dan 7:1-14

God's Kingdom is Supreme

- The picture from verse 9 onwards is a courtroom scene with the supreme king of the universe judging the proceedings.
The world seems to be obsessed with who the greatest is- hence world empires. At school- 'My Dad's bigger than your Dad' scenario. Before this picture you have had 4 world empires competing for position and power, but they all must answer to the ultimate superpower- God. God as supreme ruler seen here in:

-'Ancient of Days'- title for God- only God is truly eternal- Alpha & the Omega.

-Glory of God- seen in the whiteness of His garments and hair as well as the fire in His throne and it's wheels. My dream about God's glory. Pauls sees risen Lord brighter than the sun, Jesus on Mt. Transfiguration, Ezekiel's vision & John's vision in revelation, Mose's face shining.

-The throne He sits on- speaks of His kingship, majesty. He deserves to be king as He is the creator of all. There are wheels on His throne- Ezekiel saw these wheels and said they were full of eyes- God is all seeing and all-knowing, the wheels speak about His omnipresence- only He is truly everywhere. No nation or individual can escape from His gaze.

My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes.- Jeremiah 16:17

..He (jesus) began saying to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. "Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops. -Luke 12:1-3

- V10- Books are opened. In Rev John speaks about our deeds being recorded in books & other scriptures mention that we will all be judged by God:

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. (NASB) Rev. 20:12-13

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment . . . (NASB) Hebrews 9:27 .

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (NASB) 2 Cor. 5:10

- The beast is judged and thrown into the river of fire- the Beast is one of the 4 empires- first there is Babylon, then Medo-Persia, then Greece and finally Rome. This beast is seen as relating to Rome- there is the rebellious horn which speaks against God and persecutes His people. This aspect of the beast is what God brings into judgement. This is the spirit of the antichrist- that which opposes Christ- seen after the Greek Empire when Antiochus Epiphanes persecuted Israel, seen when the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem under Titus in AD 70, but also to be seen again when the AntiChrist is revealed before Jesus returns. This picture here may relate to any of the last 3 or perhaps all of them. John mentions a similar scene with a lake of fire and the beast being thrown into it- speaks of Hell- the judgement of God against sin.
- **Application**-Are you ready to meet God? The message of John the baptist and Jesus was 'repent for the Kingdom of God is near'. When the Spirit of God moves our own mortality and the brevity of life strikes us, as does the need to get right with God.
- Decisions we make in life our and priorities are best evaluated in the light of eternity.
- Make the world aware that we will all one day stand before God.

God's Kingdom operates differently to the world's

- If we look at the kingdoms seen in this dream of Daniel's we see vast Empires with a desire to take over the known world. We have Babylonia who destroyed the temple in Jerusalem and exiled the Jews for 70 years. We have the Medes and Persians under Cyrus who took Babylon, but released captives, including the Jews, but later almost wiped the Jews out under wicked Haman (saved by Esther's bravery). We have the Greek empire under Alexander the Great who made it a personal ambition to take over the known world and spread Greek culture everywhere. Then we have the Roman empire with their military might taking over the world and at the time of Jesus ruling Israel.
- The Jews were waiting for this promised Kingdom to come to deliver them from the Romans. They had read the prophecies of Daniel and others about the Messiah-anointed One- King. They expected military might like King David.
- Jesus came in humility- born in a stable, raised in Nazareth (a nobody's town) by poor parents, condemned by the people's and sentenced to the lowest of death's- it didn't seem like the next world empire they were expecting.
- Jesus however came as the King of love to save the world. He was a gift from the Father, the Ancient of Days, to save us and reconcile us to Himself that we would truly be part of His kingdom by voluntarily surrendering to Him. This is the world domination that God has- militantly capturing people's hearts.
- Q. Has He captured your heart? Look at what sort of a King Jesus is- Pilate said Ecce homo arch in Jerusalem, where Pilate presented Jesus to the people-

Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!" - John 19:5

Without sin, yet suffering for us. Ridiculed, mocked. This is the true King of glory, our creator, whom all nations will worship (Dan 7 v 14) and yet He was willing to wear a crown of thorns, have a titulus placed round his neck with His crime 'king of the Jews' (later nailed to the cross he had to carry). He was ridiculed, beaten, stripped naked and nailed to the cross. People made fun of Him being a supposed king as He died there. He did this for us- this is our King of Love. After the Passion

of the Christ the cinema just sat there, dumbfounded and in awe of the sacrifice of love shown by Jesus- it hit them. There are moments in this life when we glimpse how loved we really are, just like Lazarus was by the saviour- 'behold how much he (loves us)'.

- In Jesus we see 2 extremes- He is the greatest- He is the King of the universe and yet He went the lowest- none will ever go as low as He was prepared to go for our salvation- and that is what it took to save us- He is the sort of King I would want to follow. The sort of perfect King that Isaiah saw from a distance when He described the root of Jesse growing up and the spirit of wisdom etc resting on this King.
- **Application-** Have you been captivated yet by His love? Have you voluntarily surrendered your heart to Him? Are you willing to tell others of this greatest love?

God's Kingdom is ever-increasing

- God's kingdom came at the arrival of Jesus, but it is still coming today and yet will also come in the future. It is the rule and reign of God- this is the Kingdom of God.

Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst." Lk 17:20

- God's kingdom comes when someone gets saved, healed or delivered. These are signs of what is happening in Heaven happening on the earth.
- In Heaven there is no sickness, demons do not have power to harm. When Jesus or the disciples cast out demons and did miracles He said this was the Kingdom of God coming:

But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Lk 11:20

As you go, preach, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Matt 10:7-8

- Of the increase of
- **Application-** realise the Church will never fade away- the Kingdom is increasing
- World mission

Summary

- God's Kingdom is supreme
- God's Kingdom operates differently to the world
- God's Kingdom is ever-increasing

Song: *Blessing & honour*