

Advent

Promised Union with the Eternal King

Intro: The God of the Bible is the ruler of history. From the very beginning of creation, He has been making promises and making good on them. One of the major promises of God in the Bible is that there would be (and now is) an eternal and human King who rules all things with both justice and grace. The Old Testament is full of allusions to these promises, and the New Testament is very interested in showing that Jesus Christ fulfills them. This alone is a fascinating story line, but it is truly enthralling when one considered that repentant sinners are also promised intimate union with this same King.

Ezekiel 37:15-28

Background and Historical context:

- Ezekiel was a prophet of God during a hard time of Jewish history. The nation God established by miraculous power was divided against itself shortly thereafter. Only three kings (Saul, David, and Solomon) ruled the nation-state as a whole. After Solomon, the kingdom was divided into two – Israel and Judah. For both kingdoms, peace was elusive at best, until finally Israel (the northern kingdom) fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC. Many of the Israelites were taken into foreign captivity. About 150 years later, Judah (the southern kingdom) was decimated as well, and many more Jews were exiled. This exile, however, was from their temple and their most significant city – Jerusalem.

Ezekiel was among those taken captive in Babylon even before the final destruction of the city and temple. All of Israel (the northern and southern kingdom alike) was facing the judgment of God at the hands of foreign kings. There was no reason, in their circumstances, to hold onto any hope whatever. And yet, God spoke through Ezekiel and Daniel during this dark time, and among their prophetic words are the echoes of hope.

Outline:

- (1) This was not the first time such a King or kingdom was promised.
- (2) Certainly, there are temporal promises here, but the NT testifies that the ultimate fulfillment is Christ the King.
- (3) It is no surprise that Christ is King, but it is a surprise that the King condescends.

Message Body:

“24 My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd.... 25b and David my servant shall be their prince forever. 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them.”

1. This was not the first time such a King or kingdom was promised.

- A. God promised an offspring or seed that would conquer all in Gen. 3:15.
 - i. Genesis 3:15 – “I (God) will put enmity between you (devil) and the woman, and between your offspring (or seed) and her offspring (or seed); he (the offspring/seed) shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
- B. God promised to make Abraham the father [king/ruler] of many nations.
 - i. Genesis 17:3-8 – “And God said to [Abram/Abraham], ‘4 Behold, my covenant is with you, and ***you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.*** 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for ***I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.*** 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and ***I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.*** 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for ***an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.*** 8 And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”
- C. God reiterated the same promise to Jacob.
 - i. Genesis 35:10-12 – “10 And God said to [Jacob, Abraham’s grandson], ‘Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.’ So he called his name Israel. 11 And God said to him, ‘I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. ***A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body.*** 12 The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.”

D. God makes the same promise to David (2 Samuel 7:12-16), and even further specifies that there is one King in particular. This King will:

- i. Be a descendant or “offspring” of David
- ii. Be a God-established King
- iii. Build a “house” that will glorify God
- iv. Be an eternal King
- v. Be the “son” of God
- vi. Be loved by God
- vii. Secure the eternal kingdom of God’s people
- viii. Sit on the throne forever

1. 2 Samuel 7:12-16 – God said to king David, “12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, ***I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.*** When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, 15 but ***my steadfast love will not depart from him,*** as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. 16 And ***your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.***”

E. Later on in life, the psalmist worshiped God and celebrated God’s glorious kingdom as he remembered the promise God made.

- i. Psalm 145:8-13 – “8 The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. 9 The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. 10 All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! 11 They shall speak of ***the glory of your kingdom*** and tell of your power, 12 to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and ***the glorious splendor of your kingdom.*** 13 ***Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.***”

F. The prophet Isaiah speaks hope to the God’s people when they are in deep distress – facing God’s judgment in numerous ways. God’s words of hope come in the form of kingdom promises and personal intimacy.

i. Isaiah 54:10-14 – “10 Though the mountains move and the hills shake, My love will not be removed from you and My covenant of peace will not be shaken,” says your compassionate LORD. 11 “Poor Jerusalem, storm-tossed, and not comforted, *I will set your stones* in black mortar, and *lay your foundations* in sapphires. 12 *I will make your fortifications* out of rubies, *your gates* out of sparkling stones, and *all your walls* out of precious stones. 13 Then *all your children will be taught by the LORD*, their prosperity will be great, 14 and *you will be established on a foundation of righteousness.*”

G. Jeremiah too prophesied during hard times, and God’s words of hope through Jeremiah were also filled with promises of an eternal and secure kingdom.

i. Jeremiah also adds some specifics about the one “prince” or “ruler” to come.

1. Jeremiah 30:18-22 – “Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob (the people of God) and have compassion on his dwellings; the city shall be rebuilt on its mound, and the palace shall stand where it used to be. 19 Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving, and the voices of those who celebrate. I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will make them honored, and they shall not be small. 20 Their children shall be as they were of old, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all who oppress them. *21 Their prince shall be one of themselves; their ruler shall come out from their midst; I will make him draw near, and he shall approach me, for who would dare of himself to approach me?*’ declares the LORD. *22 And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.*”

2. Certainly, there are temporal promises here, but the NT testifies that the ultimate fulfillment is Christ the King.¹

A. The Gospel of Matthew begins with a genealogy, which is intended to establish the kingly heritage of Jesus.

¹ “Ezekiel himself may have looked forward to a literal restoration of the sanctuary; but its highest realization must be sought for, first in the Incarnation (John 1:14), next in God’s inhabitation of the Church through the Spirit (2 Corinthians 6:16), and finally in his tabernacling with redeemed men in the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21:3, 22).” This quote was taken from the Pulpit Commentary. See full comments at: <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/pulpit/ezekiel/37.htm>

- i. Matthew 1:1 – “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”
 - 1. Then Matthew goes from Abram to David “the king” (v6), from David to the “deportation” to Babylon (v11), and from the deportation to Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, “who is called the Christ” (v16).
- B. The Gospel of Mark tells us that Jesus began His earthly ministry with a peculiar message.
 - i. Jesus said, “The time is fulfilled, and *the kingdom of God is at hand [or “has drawn near”]*; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15).
- C. The Gospel of Luke explains the situation in extremely clear terms. He tells us that an angel said to Mary:
 - i. “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 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*, 33 and *he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end*” (Luke 1:30-33).
- D. The author of Hebrews tells us that Christ is God, and that He is the eternal King.
 - i. Hebrews 1:8-9 – “of the Son he [God] says, ‘*Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom*. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.’”
- E. John sees the final picture of King Jesus as the victorious ruler and judge of all.
 - i. Revelation 19:11-16 – “11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and *on his head are many diadems [crowns]*, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which *he is called is The Word of God*. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes *a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations*, and *he will rule them with a rod of iron*. He

will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”

3. It is no surprise that Christ is King, but it is a surprise that the King condescends.

A. The final promise here is that God says, “*27 My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28 Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.*”

i. John 1:1-4, 14-17 – “*1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men... 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt [made His tabernacle] among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth... 16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*”

1. Where has there ever been such a gracious King?
 - a. What king gives away his riches to settle the debts of his subjects?
 - b. What king steps down from his throne to dwell where desperate people roam?
 - c. What king empties his cupboards to fill the bellies of a defiant population?
 - d. What king leaves the comforts of luxury to wear the tattered garments of paupers?

Application

- What is God commanding us to BELIEVE here?
 - God is the sovereign ruler of time and history
 - Christ is the King who has been promised from ancient days
 - Christ is the King now, who makes Himself known to His people
- What is God commanding us to DO here?
 - Marvel at and trust in the sovereignty of God
 - Behold the beauty and wonder of Christ's prophetic kingship
 - Trust in and enjoy the King of glory who makes Himself known to you

My Prayers

- May God comfort us with His presence as we remember His promise.
- May God help us to find joy, peace, and rest in Him this Christmas season.