

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 23, 2012

Will you join me this morning by taking your Bibles and turning to Luke's gospel chapter one? I would like to speak to you this morning about King Jesus and his kingdom. And we will focus primarily on verses 32 and 33, but let's get a running start here and begin in verse 26. Luke chapter one beginning at verse 26.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."<sup>1</sup>

Seven hundred years prior to this announcement the prophet Isaiah spoke on the Lord's behalf in Isaiah chapter nine. And in verse six we are told:

"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us."<sup>2</sup>

And now in our day we can look back and see that, indeed, that has happened. But the prophecy included something else that has not happened. He says:

"And the government will rest on His shoulders."<sup>3</sup>

He went on to say:

"There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore."<sup>4</sup>

That hasn't happened yet. And, again, as he told Mary here in verse 32, he is going to be called the son of the most high. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will have no end.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 1:26-33.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 9:6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 9:7.

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If this is true, where is his kingdom today? And what way is Jesus king on the throne of his father David? What is the realm of his kingdom? Who are his subjects? How did these things translate into the prophetic promises concerning a future kingdom upon the earth? Are we living in the kingdom now as some would assert?

What wonderful questions we can answer as we approach Scripture this morning, especially at this time of year where celebrate the birth of our Messiah king.

As you think about the kingdom of God we can literally say that it is the grand theme of all of Scripture. In fact, the Bible could be titled the book of the coming kingdom of God. But it has been my experience that most Christians have a very superficial understanding of God's kingdom. They tend to oversimplify the concept of the kingdom of God ending up with a partial and inadequate view and inadequate definitions. And typically most Christians, if you asked them about the kingdom of God, what does that really mean, they would say something like, "Well, the Lord wants to reign upon the throne of your heart."

Well, certainly that is true. But it is so much more than that. Obviously this is a subject that is so vast it would be impossible to cover it completely this morning. So today I wish to give you just an expositional overview to this glorious concept of God's kingdom program, to give you the big picture of King Jesus. Let's look at him this morning as king. And we will look at the kingdom. And in so doing we can increase the breadth and the depth of your understanding of who Jesus is and what he is up to, where history is going, because ultimately history is his story.

Not only must we have an accurate and complete understanding of Jesus as our Savior, but also as our Lord, as our king. These magnificent truths pertaining to the kingdom help us understand God's purposes of redemptive history. They help shape our world view so that we can understand what is happening and where we are going. Moreover, these great truths can fan the flames of our hope, an exhilarating hope of who we are in Christ and the age to come when we will see and serve our glorious Messiah King the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to break this overview down into three very simple sections. First of all we are going to look at the universal kingdom of God and then, secondly, the mediatorial kingdom in the Old Testament and, finally, the mediatorial kingdom in the New Testament.

Now mediatorial sounds like a big word, but it has to do with a mediator and a mediator is just one who acts on behalf of another as an intermediary, as a go between and in Scripture, as we will see, these will be mediators between God and man, those who speak of God to the people, those who bring reconciliation and so forth and ultimately we know, according to 1 Timothy 2:5 that there is only one mediator between God and man and that is the man Christ Jesus.

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Now first bear in mind that there are two separate, but not distinct kingdoms revealed in Scripture and they have two aspects of phases of the one rule of our sovereign God. Let me make it very simple. There is the universal kingdom and that refers to the extent of God's rule as we will see. And then we can see another kingdom, what we would call a mediatorial kingdom that really refers to the method of the rule where the rule is conducted by one that God has appointed as mediator. So think of a big circle as the universal kingdom in which all things exist and inside you have a smaller circle which is the mediatorial kingdom that exists within the universal kingdom, but that smaller circle changes in shape and in color over the course of redemptive history.

So let's look, first, at the universal kingdom. And in this we will begin to understand more of who King Jesus really is. From all eternity there has existed a universal kingdom or dominion of God whereby he rules over all that he has created. In Psalm 10 verse 16 we read:

“The LORD is King forever and ever.”<sup>5</sup>

And in Psalm 29 he is depicted as God the creator, the supreme sovereign over various phenomena including heavenly being and the forces of nature and humanity, the one who has reigned in eternity past, present and future. And in verse 10 we read:

“The LORD sat as King at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever.”<sup>6</sup>

Psalm 103:19:

“The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; And His sovereignty rules over all.”<sup>7</sup>

Psalm 145:13:

“Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.”<sup>8</sup>

And one of my favorite passages on this topic is in 1 Chronicles 29 beginning in verse 11.

“Thine, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O LORD, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Psalm 10:16.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 29:10.

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 103:19.

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 145:13.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Chronicles 29:11.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

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So, indeed, Jehovah God is the eternal king over everything in time and in space or, indeed, he has created all things. But there is also, secondly, a mediatorial kingdom that exists within the universal kingdom and, as I say, it exists in various shapes, various forms throughout the course of history. First let's look at this mediatorial kingdom in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament we see that God ruled through divinely chosen human representatives who would speak on his behalf and who would represent the people before God. This actually began with the first created man Adam. In Genesis 1:26 we read:

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”<sup>10</sup>

And throughout Old Testament history we witness the divine government on earth through a variety of mediators, men who served in three various offices in the theocratic kingdom in particular. We talked about that some last week. You will remember that there was the divinely chosen prophet and a priest and a king, those that were consecrated or set apart by God as his mediators, they were the small messiahs, as you may recall. Prophets spoke God's truth to man and the priests were the ones that brought the sins of the people before God and interceded on their behalf, provided sacrifices and, of course, the kings ruled man for God. So these were the mediatorial rulers in the theocratic kingdom and these three offices all pointed ultimately to the Messiah who was the perfect embodiment of all three offices.

Now as we look at the New Testament we can also go back to Abraham and later in both Isaac and Jacob we see the mediatorial idea beginning to take more concrete form historically because God spoke directly to the patriarchs and they, in turn, mediated the divine will, though not always perfectly. You will recall that God revealed himself and his will to Abraham. You will recall that he made an unconditional, unilateral, irreversible covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12 and Genesis 15 and reaffirmed it again in chapter 17, an everlasting covenant that contained four elements. One that there would be a seed that would come from him and ultimately that would refer to the Jewish people and ultimately the Messiah. And, secondly, that they would be given a specific piece of land on the earth, that they would, thirdly, be a nation, fourthly that they would be blessed and protected throughout time. And in Genesis 17:6 he promised that kings shall come out of thee. And ultimately the King of kings came from the loins of Abraham.

And you will recall that Abraham later on met a strange and fascinating figure in Genesis chapter 14. His name was Melchizedek, a great name to name your son. Melchizedek,

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis 1:26.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

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**Preached on:** Sunday, January 23, 2012

which, by the way, means righteous king. And he was the king of pre Israelite Jerusalem, the King of Salem in the days of Abraham.

In Genesis 14:18 we read that he was a priest of God most high, El Elyon, the Sovereign Lord, the one true God whom Abram called Yahweh. And Abraham recognized this and he paid him tithes. He received blessings from Melchizedek and all of this proved his superiority to Abraham and here, again, we see the first glimpses of Jesus as the Messiah. Why? Because Melchizedek was a type of Christ. He was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. He foreshadowed him. There was a resemblance there. And, of course, the Lord Jesus was far greater than Melchizedek, but he ultimately became the king priest, the Messiah.

In fact, in Psalm 110 the first seven verses, a very fascinating passage there we see that Christ is exalted as the holy king over all the world as well as the royal high priest who will some day build a glorious temple where the world will come to worship. You see the details of that in Ezekiel 40 through 48.

It will be a time when Jesus will reign as the Messiah king in the millennial kingdom on earth, an intermediate kingdom, after the present age, but before the eternal state. And there in that psalm, in Psalm 110 verse four we read this. God speaks to the psalmist and says:

“The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind’ ”Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”<sup>11</sup>

By the way, this was a passage quoted many years later by the writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 5:6 again referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

We see another mediatorial ruler in Moses. He became actually the first ruler and the theocratic kingdom of history. He was authorized to stand before Israel, quote, instead of God, Exodus 4:16. And he was authorized then to be God’s spokesman to the people. In fact, Moses is also presented as a type of Christ, a picture of Christ who alone will eventually be the perfect embodiment of God’s mediatorial ruler in the millennial kingdom. But this historical kingdom was actually broadened at Mount Sinai to include the people of Israel. In Exodus 19:6 we read:

“...and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”<sup>12</sup>

There we see the divine commissioning of Israel to be the ones that would mediate the blessings of God to the whole world. They would be a witness nation. They were to be the custodians of divine truth.

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<sup>11</sup> Psalm 110:4.

<sup>12</sup> Exodus 19:6.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

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**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

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In Psalm 114 verses one and two the psalmist reflects back upon this period of responsibility and he says this:

When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah became His sanctuary, Israel, His dominion.<sup>13</sup>

And it was during that time that Moses framed a civil government by the inspiration of God, one that would exist upon the earth to illustrate the kingdom of God and the theocracy of Israel became the greatest model of government in the history of the world. And over the course of history other mediatorial rulers came on the scene. They were leader judges of Israel from Joshua to Samuel, men chosen directly by God, invested with regal functions. They were powered by the Holy Spirit. And then God eventually established a monarchical form of government whereby he mediated the rule of his kingdom through various kings. And, as you know, some of them were godly. A lot of them were not. And because of their chronic rebellion, because of their chronic sin, the Old Testament records chronic cycles of tragedy and triumph and judgment and captivity and so God had in his plan from eternity past a remedy for all of this and that remedy, of course, was to bring the Messiah King, a Savior King into the world. In fact, God made another promise to one of the mediatorial rulers, King David, regarding this very thing.

You will recall in 2 Samuel seven God made a covenant promise with King David and actually that was a reaffirmation of the regal rights in terms of the original Abrahamic covenant, but also with the addition that the ultimate provision of those covenantal rights would permanently be attached to a historical dynasty, they dynasty of King David.

God spoke to David through his prophet Nathan and said in 2 Samuel 7:16:

“And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.”<sup>14</sup>

Now, the ultimate fulfillment of that promise has been interrupted for a season, as we will understand better, but it will eventually be fulfilled in a future earthly kingdom when a restored Israel will once again be the covenant nation that it was intended to be.

The covenant that God made with David contained four elements: That his name would be great; secondly, that God would provide for Israel a literal place, a home of their own; and, thirdly, that Israel would be given undisturbed rest from all of her enemies—obviously these things have not happened fully yet—and all... and, finally, that a royal dynasty and a kingdom would be given to David forever.

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<sup>13</sup> Psalm 114:1-2.

<sup>14</sup> 2 Samuel 7:16.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

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Now repeatedly the Old Testament prophets speak of a coming reign of Messiah over a ... over the nations of a restored earth after a time of world wide tribulation. You can read about this, for example, in Isaiah 24 and 25 and Zechariah 14 and you can go to Matthew chapter 24 and chapter 25 in the New Testament where Jesus spoke about that and Luke 21 and certainly Revelation 20 specifies the actual length of time, a thousand years and so forth.

Now, as a footnote, I need to digress for a moment, this view is called Premillennialism. It means that God is going to come before the millennial reign. He is going to come and establish it. This was the dominant view of the Christian church for the first 150 years until the allegorical spiritualizing method of Bible interpretation was introduced by Philo and by Origen and resulting in fanciful interpretations of Bible prophecy that denies the normal meaning of language, claiming that God doesn't really mean what he is saying so clearly in Scripture. In fact, he really means something else. And there is all kinds of views that have flowed from kind of hermeneutic. I cannot claim such apostolic authority. So I want to stick with what the literal Scripture says. And, as a result of this you get what is called replacement theology where the church basically has replaced Israel. All the promises that God gave to Israel is now given to the church.

It also goes by other technical names like Amillennialism or another off shoot of that would be Postmillennialism. Amillennialism just means we are living in the kingdom now. Postmillennialism is that the earth is going to get better and better and, as I say, we are going to elect enough Christians and Republicans to turn the whole thing around and then eventually give the kingdom over to Christ. That view, by the way, is really struggling today. It also goes by terms like Augustinian eschatology. It is Roman Catholic eschatology. One of the technical terms is supercessionism and so forth.

But anyway it is basically a view that argues that the church has replaced Israel in God's plan of redemption, that Israel's national identity has been permanently eliminated, that ethnic, national, territorial Israel is all absorbed into the universal church and that King Jesus is merely reigning in a spiritual way right now in the hearts of men. But Premillennialism the view that we hold to in this church and certainly what I believe the Scripture teaches is a result of the application of a historical, grammatical hermeneutic. Hermeneutics is just the science and the art of Bible interpretation which takes into account the genre and the literary structure of all of the books that discuss these matters.

So based on that we await the day when the Messiah King will do exactly what the angel said to Mary, will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will have no end. This will be a day when he will return to judge the nations and he will bring this rebel planet back into conformity with the universal kingdom. And he will ultimately restore all things material and all things immaterial to the way they were originally created.

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Dr. Michael Vos says this. I like the way he puts it. Quote, "Jesus must rule over the planet that rejected him. When this phase of the kingdom program is over he will hand the kingdom over to God the Father and the messianic kingdom will be merged into the universal kingdom which is also called the eternal state," end quote.

Well, Scripture speaks of this. You will recall what Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 beginning in verse 24. And here he speaks of the culmination of world history and after the restoration of the earth and the Messiah King's rule upon the earth and he says this:

...then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.<sup>15</sup>

Now let's look more at the mediatorial kingdom in the New Testament. Let's return again to God's promise to Mary concerning her son who was also, as Luke 1:32 says:

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.<sup>16</sup>

You know, again, at Christmas time we tend to think of Jesus as our Savior, not as our King. But he was the Christ child, the Messiah child. He was the King. He is the King and he has a kingdom that is far beyond some spiritual kingdom in your heart. The New Testament opens with some thrilling announcements. I don't have time to go into them in detail, but you will remember that he spoke to Zacharias. He spoke to Mary and Joseph. He spoke to the shepherds. And about the king. And he spoke to the Persian king makers, the magi who were anticipating a king. And in Luke one it was celebrated in the song of Elizabeth. We read it as well in Mary's hymn of praise, the magnificat in Luke one. And in Luke two we are told of Simeon who was among those who waited, quote, for the consolation of Israel.

And then he quotes from Isaiah 42 and 49 passages, by the way, that were set in a regal context. The Jews understood this passage to refer to the Messiah and his kingdom on

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<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

<sup>16</sup> Luke 1:32-33.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

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**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 23, 2012

earth. What does Simeon say? He was looking for the consolation of Israel, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.

And then I love the story in Luke two where the 84 year old widow, the prophetess Anna we are told continued to speak of him to all those who were looking. What were they looking for? The redemption of Jerusalem, Luke 2:38. And when John the Baptist came who was the herald of the king, what did he say? He said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” Matthew 3:2.

The kingdom of heaven is also called the kingdom of God and certainly it includes God ruling in the hearts of those who belong to him. But in its fullest sense it refers to a kingdom that awaits a future, physical fulfillment.

You see, this is what all the Jews were looking for and for good reason. It is because this is what the prophets told them to look for. In fact, the very first words of Matthew’s gospel begin with the genealogical record supporting Jesus’ descent from the royal line of David. Matthew 1:1 it says:

“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”<sup>17</sup>

And it goes on from there. Now what did the incarnate King Jesus have to say about his kingdom? Let me give you a few examples. In the synoptic gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke—he spoke of himself as the divine bride groom, fascinating, a fascinating figure. He told the Pharisees in Matthew 9:15 that, quote, the bridegroom was with them.

Now this figure of the bridegroom appears in the Old Testament, for example in Isaiah 61 and 62, chapters that deal with a future day when the Messiah reigns in his messianic kingdom, when the Messiah is married to Israel, when Israel is married to the Lord, Isaiah 62:5 says:

“For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you.”<sup>18</sup>

Now we see this imagery as well in Hosea’s prophecy. You will remember that Hosea prophesied against the nation of Israel, because God had cast them out. Why? Because she played the harlot, because she was unfaithful. And yet in his restoring love he said to them in Hosea two verse 19.

And I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion, And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Matthew 1:1.

<sup>18</sup> Isaiah 62:5.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 23, 2012

He went on to promise in chapter three of Hosea beginning in verse four:

For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, and without ephod or household idols. Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days.<sup>20</sup>

And, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of David the greater Son of David. And in John 3:29 we read that John the Baptist tells the people that they should rejoice greatly because the bridegroom was among them.

So the Jews knew what this was referring to. The bride groom was always used in reference to the Messiah and his kingdom, when Israel would finally be married in complete faithfulness to the Lord that has loved them with an everlasting love.

Now you must understand that when Jesus came he was fully prepared to establish the earthly kingdom as the prophets predicted. In fact, he first went to Israel alone even though unbelieving Gentiles were always promised to be beneficiaries of the kingdom age. John 1:11 we read:

“He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.”<sup>21</sup>

It is interesting. In Mark 1:15 Jesus says:

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."<sup>22</sup>

Now this announcement of the kingdom required Israel to make a decision. They had to repent. They had to believe in their Messiah. Had they done so he would have established that kingdom then and there, but that was not part of his plan even though they were still held responsible for their unbelief.

Now I know there are those who will argue that he was merely at that point offering a spiritual kingdom, the rule of God in the heart, but, frankly, such a concept would have been silly to the Jews, because that was always true. God was always to be the one who ruled in their heart. There was always that spiritual kingdom, for example, in Psalm 37:31 we read:

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<sup>19</sup> Hosea 2:19-20.

<sup>20</sup> Hosea 3:4-5.

<sup>21</sup> John 1:11.

<sup>22</sup> Mark 1:15.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 23, 2012

“The law of his God is in his heart.”<sup>23</sup>

Now, my friends, what Jesus was offering to them was the mediatorial kingdom on earth through the reign of the Messiah that stood before them. Though such a mediatorial kingdom on earth has always been with conditions, you will recall that God’s promises to Abraham required that they be received by faith and those promises were established in history at Sinai, but they were subject to something. They were subject to Israel’s willingness to obey God. But when they rebelled the kingdom was terminated on earth. So now Jesus comes to offer himself to the people of Israel as their promised Messiah King to establish the kingdom if they would repent. But they refused.

And it is amazing if you think of the New Testament. Despite all of the miracles he performed to authenticate both the message and the messenger, glimpses of millennial glory, they still rejected him. The battle lines were drawn early in Jesus’ ministry.

You will recall early on he goes into the temple and he cleanses it and there he makes his first great public assertion of his messianic rights and John two verse 16 he says:

“...stop making My Father’s house a house of merchandise.”<sup>24</sup>

And then it says:

“His disciples remembered that it was written...”<sup>25</sup>

And here we have a quote from Psalm 69:9:

“ZEAL FOR THY HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME.”<sup>26</sup>

By the way, Psalm 69 was speaking about the Messiah, the messianic kingdom pictured through David. We know that because Paul quoted the latter part of Psalm 69:9 in Romans 15:3. And this clearly indicated the messianic nature of the psalm and what it meant to the early church. So they knew what he was talking about. And the tide of opposition continued to mount over the course of Jesus’ ministry as he offered himself and the kingdom to Israel, but the climax of that rejection occurred when the Pharisees attributed his miraculous works to Satan.

You will recall in Matthew 12:23—and, by the way, this happened right after he delivered and healed the demon possessed man who was blind and dumb. There we read:

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<sup>23</sup> Psalm 37:31.

<sup>24</sup> John 2:16.

<sup>25</sup> John 2:17.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 23, 2012

And all the multitudes were amazed, and began to say, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?" But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." And knowing their thoughts He said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand. "And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges. "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.<sup>27</sup>

From that time on the offer of the immediate establishment of the kingdom on earth was withdrawn. You being to see a shift in focus in Jesus' ministry. He begins to focus now not so much on him as the Messiah King and the kingdom, he begins to focus on his death and on his second coming.

So beginning in chapter 13 of Matthew Christ sets forth the mystery form of the kingdom. But he does this in a series of parables. Parables, by the way, where he deliberately confused the unbelieving, hard hearted multitude. And this was an act of judicial hardening. These were parables to the multitudes, but they were followed by exposition to his disciples where he explained more of what he was saying.

In Matthew 13 verse 10 we read:

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT

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<sup>27</sup> Matthew 12:23-31.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 23, 2012

WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS  
BECOME DULL.<sup>28</sup>

That was a passage—Isaiah chapter six verses nine through 10—a passage that is referred to five times in the New Testament, five times and it is always in connection with what? With Israel’s rejection of her king.

In Matthew 13 he began with the parable of the soils, the sower and the seed that would ultimately result in a harvest. And when will that harvest be? According to verse 40 at the end of the age. And in the period of sowing and growth of the present age, in between he speaks of developing a body that he calls in verse 38 children, literally sons of the kingdom. And when the Son of man comes to establish his kingdom on earth by means of harvest judgment, we know that the lawless will be taken away and the righteous will be made to, according to verse 30:43, shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

And then as we follow the ministry of Jesus we see he begins to announce the building of a new thing, his Church, a body of believers invested with special authority in the future kingdom of heaven, those who would become the spiritual nucleus of the future kingdom on earth.

In Matthew 16 verse 15 and following you will recall that based upon the testimony of Peter that Christ is the Son of the living God, what did Jesus say? He said:

“...upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>29</sup>

Keys speak of authority and stewardship and so now the Church becomes the new custodians of divine truth, the truths of the kingdom. In fact, Jesus described this in Matthew 21 verse 43. He says:

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.”<sup>30</sup>

The nation referring to the Church. Peter described the Church as a holy nation in 1 Peter 2:9. But this will also include a repentant, regenerated Israel on a renovated earth when her Messiah becomes in harmony with Old Testament prophecy.

So because Israel rejected her Messiah the mystery phase of the kingdom is ushered in as the Church becomes the temporary replacement of Israel as the new custodians of truth.

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<sup>28</sup> Matthew 13:10-15.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew 16:18-19.

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 21:43.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 23, 2012

The body of Christ, where Jews and Gentiles are described as heirs together, Ephesians 3:6 and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

But, again, may I remind you, dear friends, Israel is never described in Scripture as being absorbed into the Church. It remains distinct from the Church as an ethnic people and as a nation they still have a prophetic future. So the present church age must be seen as an ongoing part of the fulfillment of God's Old Testament promises that will culminate in the messianic kingdom upon the earth. The Church shares in the promises of Israel, but not in her unique identity as a chosen nation. Israel was God's unique focus of redemption in the Old Testament and that particular dispensation while the Church consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, has been his focus since their rejection of their Messiah. And, ultimately, we know from Scripture that God's focus will return yet again to Israel during the millennial reign of the Messiah on earth when all of God's remaining covenant promises to Israel will be literally fulfilled like all of the rest of the prophecies that have been fulfilled. They have been fulfilled literally. This will include the promises of earthly blessings and an earthly messianic kingdom. Prophetic literature is filled with the pivotal role of Israel during this time.

So after having come unto his own, after being rejected, after announcing the mystery form of kingdom that will exist in the Church age, he begins to discuss with his disciples something they could not comprehend. And that was his death and his resurrection.

Matthew 16:21 we read:

“From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.”<sup>31</sup>

You see, friends, the cross was not the central theme early on in his ministry. Why? Because Jesus was offering himself as the Messiah King. He was offering them the kingdom which they refused. But it is fascinating as we study Jesus' ministry we see that in order to reassure his disciples that his impending death would not in any way cancel the promised earthly kingdom and to show them that its establishment would be an association with him as the king that would come a second time, he takes Peter, James and John to a mountain and he peels back his flesh and he allows the glory of his shekinah to emanate from him. And in the effulgence of that glory he shows to them that, indeed, I am the glorious king and I am going to give you a sample, a foretaste of the glory to come. So be encouraged. It is not all over here.

And who came to that place at that time on the mount of transfiguration? Who else did they see? There appeared with the Lord two ancient mediatorial rulers, Moses who was a ruler and Elijah who was a prophet. And it is fascinating. They appear and then they

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<sup>31</sup> Matthew 16:21.

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disappear. When did they disappear? When the Father spoke from heaven in the midst of the shekinah and he said in Matthew 17:5:

"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"<sup>32</sup>

And why did Moses and Elijah disappear? Because in their place will come the ultimate ruler, the ultimate prophet. The glorious appearing of the Messiah will one day supersede all other authority and that was pictured in the mount of transfiguration. There they witnessed the ineffable glory of the king, a foreshadowing of the kingdom of God to come. In fact, in 2 Peter one verse 16 Peter describes this and he says to the church:

“For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”<sup>33</sup>

Can't you tell? He is just about to explode he is so excited. He says:

“For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased’”<sup>34</sup>

And in Matthew 19:28 in order to give them further assurance of the kingdom that these promises would not be abandoned Jesus promises his disciples a special place in the coming earthly kingdom. There he says:

"Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”<sup>35</sup>

And we see other passages of Scripture describing this glorious reign. And as Jesus gradually made his way to the cross he spoke in more parables to correct the false assumption that the kingdom would come immediately. You remember, that is what they thought was going to happen now and he emphasized the facts of its present rejection. He talked about the interval of its delay and its ultimate arrival at his second coming.

But then anticipating his death, he lamented over Israel's rejection in Luke 13:34. There we read what he says:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a

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<sup>32</sup> Matthew 17:5.

<sup>33</sup> 2 Peter 1:16.

<sup>34</sup> 2 Peter 1:17.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew 19:28.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

By David Harrell

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hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!  
Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you shall not  
see Me until the time comes when you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO  
COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"<sup>36</sup>

A reference to his second coming.

The gospels record the mock coronation, the multitudes gave Jesus when he approached Jerusalem, that he came to offer himself as the messianic king of Israel, the perfect fulfillment of prophecy, knowing full well that they were rejecting him. According to John 12:12 we read:

On the next day the great multitude who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went out to meet Him, and began to cry out, "Hosanna! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel."<sup>37</sup>

Only they did not want the king on his terms. They wanted him on their terms. So the Messiah King does not enter his city with joy, but with immense sorrow, tears flowing.

In Luke 19:41 we read:

And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."<sup>38</sup>

And, of course, what he predicted came true a few years later in AD 70 when the Romans came in and slaughtered them.

Just a few days before his crucifixion King Jesus gives his last and longest eschatological discourse in Matthew 24 and 25 revealing a period of time and revealing certain events that must take place between his departure and his return. By the way, the same chronology we see revealed in the Lord's revelation in chapters six through 19.

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<sup>36</sup> Luke 13:34-35.

<sup>37</sup> John 12:12-13.

<sup>38</sup> Luke 19:41-44.

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**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

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And then in his last supper with his disciples the kingdom was heavy on his heart and we read that he says:

And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes."<sup>39</sup>

Obviously it wasn't complete at that point. There was something yet future. And to give them more encouragement and hope he says in verse 28:

"And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."<sup>40</sup>

And during the final indignities of his mock trial the Lord once again renewed his regal claims to his messianic office. You will recall in John 18:33 Pilate said:

Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You up to me; what have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." Pilate therefore said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."<sup>41</sup>

And later on what did Pilate do? He hung a sign over Jesus' head on the cross. This is the King of the Jews.

After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection he comes to his disciples. He meets with them for 40 days and guess what he talked about? The coming kingdom. Acts 1:3:

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<sup>39</sup> Luke 22:15-18.

<sup>40</sup> Luke 22:28-30.

<sup>41</sup> John 18:33-37.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 23, 2012

“To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.”<sup>42</sup>

So in great anticipation of the coming kingdom and not knowing the time, you know, the disciples are saying, “Oh, great, this is so exciting.” And what do they say?

And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."<sup>43</sup>

And then an absolutely amazing event occurred, one that should give enormous hope to every one of us as believers, one that should cause us to anticipate the return of our Messiah King. In verse nine we read this:

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, dear friends, King Jesus is going to return as the glorious King of kings and Lord of lords, the messianic King to establish his millennial reign upon the earth.

Jesus described this in Mark 13:24:

But in those days, after that tribulation, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL BE FALLING from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Acts 1:3.

<sup>43</sup> Acts 1:6-8.

<sup>44</sup> Acts 1:9-11.

<sup>45</sup> Mark 13:24-26.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Luke 1:32-33

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 23, 2012

My friends, don't see Jesus as merely a baby in the manger. See him as your coming King.

In Revelation 1:7 John says:

“BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.”<sup>46</sup>

Beloved, when he returns again those promises that the angel gave to Mary will be fulfilled completely. The Lord will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will have no end. This will be the time, according to the apostle Paul in Romans 11:26 when all Israel will be saved, that remnant of the elect of Israel during that time. And it says that the deliverer will come from Zion. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob and this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.

Indeed, this will be the time when Jesus comes, establishes that kingdom, binds Satan for a thousand years as we read in Revelation 20 when the long promised mediatorial king of Israel will finally rule from Jerusalem. This is the intermediate kingdom. It will be the consummating bridge between human history and the eternal state when ultimately that circle in the center will become part of the big circle of the universal kingdom.

Zechariah 14:9 says:

“And the LORD will be king over all the earth.”<sup>47</sup>

He is not there today, is he?

“And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.”<sup>48</sup>

And in conclusion I leave you with the words of Jesus in his great apocalypse where he reveals the truth of his second coming, what will happen at the end of the age. Here is what he says to the churches, to us, my friends, Revelation 22 verse 16. He says:

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star." And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. I testify to everyone who hears the

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<sup>46</sup> Revelation 1:7.

<sup>47</sup> Zechariah 14:9.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

# King Jesus and His Kingdom

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words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.<sup>49</sup>

Dear friends, I pray that this Christmas season we will all do homage to the King and for those of you that do not know the King, do not love him, do not long for him as I do, as so many of us do, may I remind you that there is only one way to enter into the kingdom and it is through the narrow gate of repentance, placing your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who alone can save you, who alone can forgive your sin. He is the one that we praise this day. Amen? Amen.

Let's pray.

*Father, thank you for these eternal truths. They are overwhelming to us and we praise you that you have revealed them to us in your Word, but, Lord, they would be meaningful unless we live consistently with them. So, Lord, may we be a people known for their adoration and their service and their love for the King. For it is in his name that we pray. Amen.*

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<sup>49</sup> Revelation 22:16-20.