

The Greatness of the Kingdom part 2

1. Introduction

a. What elements are essential for a country? Include all essential elements and customary elements.

1. Ruler -A person with adequate authority and power to enforce his rule.

2. Ream -Subjects to be ruled

3. Rule -Laws or instructions, administration and customs

4. Borders -An extent of the kingdom, if not the whole earth and universal in time. NONESSENTIAL BUT IMPORTANT

2. Can you have sovereignty without a sovereign? Can you have sovereignty without a people? Can you have it without laws?

No. This is no abstract power absent a king, no abstract kingdom missing a people, no rule without rules. Dr. Ladd puts forth an abstract reign, which is a contradiction in both English terms and Semitic terms. Hebrew is quite concrete, and rarely promotes concepts without a concrete example or intent.

Broadly defined, the Kingdom of God may be defined as God's rule over His Creation. Specifically, the kingdom has these seemingly contradictory aspects:

a. Some passages present the Kingdom as always having existed, and others as having a definite beginning among men. See Ps 10:16, Daniel 2:44

b. The Kingdom in Scripture is both Universal in scope and yet is revealed as local with rule on the earth in a set time. See Ps 103:19 and Isa 24:23.

c. The Kingdom appears as the rule of God directly, with no intermediary between God and man, yet also is pictured as involving a mediator who serves as a channel between God and man. See Ps. 59:13 and Ps 2:4-6

d. The Bible presents the Kingdom as both wholly future and a present reality. See Zech 14:9 and Ps 29:10.

e. The Kingdom is both unconditioned rule arising out of God Himself, and other times appears as a Covenant, with man's will and obedience required. See Dan 4:34-35 and Ps 89:27-29.

These contradictions show that there are both Universal and Limited aspects of the Kingdom, which are both true in some measure or at some time. In other words, there is both a Kingdom ON Earth, and a Kingdom OVER the Earth. The former we shall call Mediatorial, the latter Universal. The latter talks of the Extent of rule, while the former talks of the Method of rule.

3. The Universal Kingdom of God: Aspects of the Universal Kingdom

a. The Universal Kingdom exists without interruption throughout all time: (Ps 145:13: “Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom”); Ps 29:10, Jer 10:2-5, 10. Even in Lamentations, though the people will go into captivity (Lam 4:22), “Thou, O Lord, remain forever, thy throne from generation to generation (Lam 5:19). Israel may suffer, but God still reigns.

b. The Universal Kingdom includes all that exists in space-time: “Thou reignest over all (I Chron 29:12). Nothing is outside it’s scope and reach, not heaven, nor hell. The Earth and all the men in it may rebel, but Jehovah is still “the King of Nations” (Jer 10:7). Men are not to forget that the God of Heaven is he who “removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (Dan 2:19-21). He rules over heaven and all kingdoms (Ps 103:19) and brings blessing to men of every age (Ps 103:19-22). He, not Satan, rules over hell (Amos 9:2, Isa 28:15-18). He is the God over everything in time and space. There is no place we can escape from His rule (Ps 139:7-10). Nobody understood this better than David, who said, “Thine, o Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the glory... thou reignest over all.” (I Chron 29:11)

c. God’s control in the Universal Kingdom is generally providential (i.e., involves secondary causes): “Fire, hail, snow, and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling his Word” Ps 148:8. God controls natural laws, and is able to “tip the scales” in ways often indiscernible to the eyes of men. Because the God of Nature controls the processes of Nature, he is able to control man’s existence, to promote and to punish, and even uses other nations to chastise Israel. See Jer 25:9, where the Babylonian king is God’s chosen “servant” to accomplish His work among His people. Then, God raises up the “king of the Medes” to destroy Babylon (Jer 51:11; 28-37). Finally, the great Cyrus is both named and anointed to restore Israel and to rebuild the Temple (Isa 44:28-45:4). Esther shows many examples of God’s providential hand. The providential hand is everywhere seen in the life of Joseph. The prophet Isaiah sums it up (Isa 44:25-26): God is in charge of everything.

d. God’s control in the Universal Kingdom may at times be by supernatural means: “He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and earth” (Dan 6:27). The God of Nature is also OVER nature. He who is transcendent is also immanent in His creation. Both natural and supernatural methods of rule are seen in Ps 135:6-9: it involves both nature and “tokens and wonders,” and a terrible plague on Egypt and her arrogant king. God resorts to the supernatural to demonstrate there is a true God in heaven, who will always have the last word. He replies to the challenge of Pharaoh: “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice and let His people go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go” (Ex 5:2). The

purpose, as Deut 4:34-35 says, “Unto thee is was showed, that thou should know that the Lord is God, and there is none beside Him.”

e. The Universal Kingdom rule always works, and can't be thwarted by it's subjects: “None can stay his hand, or say unto Him, "What doest thou?” (Dan 4:35). In heaven, the angels do the will of God (Ps 103:20). On Earth, God's people long to do His will (Ps 84:2-3) and in the New Testament, though the Lord is never called the King of the Church, there is no setting aside the Universal Kingdom of God, and the church must exist within it. There is no dispute that the church gladly submits to the will of her only Head, and because of that, “He that doeth the will of God abides for ever” (I John 2:17). Satan may oppose, and on earth there will be those who are deceived, but the Scriptures declare that “All things worketh after the counsel of His own will” (Eph 1:11). Man cannot choose to be under the Universal Kingdom; like it or not, he is already there (Ps 75:4-7).

f. The Rule of the Universal Kingdom is administered through the Eternal Son: “He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Col 1:17). This concept will lead us to the Mediatorial Kingdom aspect of the Kingdom. We cannot limit this to the Messianic Kingdom alone, as his rule begins in ancient past, before creation. Several facts now appear:

1) The creation and the Universal Kingdom must be contemporaneous, and done by the Son (Heb 1:2). Jesus created the Universe.

2) The creation is to be a revelation of the invisible God. (Rom 1:20). Jesus is God.

3) The creation reveals the power of God through the Son, by Whom the creation is redeemed and upheld (Heb 1:3). Jesus redeems.

g. The Universal Kingdom is not EXACTLY the same as the kingdom which our Lord taught his disciples to pray “Thy Kingdom come” (Matt 6:10) vs. “His Kingdom ruleth over all.” (Ps 103:19) In one sense, the kingdom of God is here: God has created, has superintended, is accomplishing His will, and rules over every place including the hearts of those who obey not (Ps 103:19). What then is the Kingdom for which Christ told his disciples to pray? The answer is in the clause, “As in heaven, so on earth” (Matt 6:10) God's name to be made holy, God's Kingdom to come, and God's will to be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven. The earthly kingdom is different from the Universal Kingdom. Why? Because on Earth, sin and rebellion have required God to come and put down all rebellion, to bring the Kingdom to earth, as it is in Heaven. When this happens, the Mediatorial Kingdom and the Universal Kingdom will be merged.

Next week: The Mediatorial Kingdom in the Old Testament