

Kingdom Prophecy in the Old Testament

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Quick now, without looking, answer the following questions:

- Who will be president in 2036? What institution(s) will he/she establish?
- Too hard? What about the president in 2024? That's only two presidential election cycles from now. Same question: Who will be the president and what institution(s) will he/she establish?

One of the amazing, awe-inspiring facts about the Old Testament is that in book after book, prophecy after prophecy is made some hundreds and even thousands of years before the Messiah ever walked the earth. Each of these prophecies gave a piece of the puzzle to show the plan of God through the Messiah to establish a "Kingdom that would never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). The fact that each prophecy is fulfilled in Christ and the church is great evidence for inspiration! Here are some hopes, promises, and implications of the Kingdom prophecies in the Old Testament and how they relate to Christians today:

The Legitimacy of the Kingdom Stands or Falls with the Legitimacy of Jesus (Luke 24:44-48). The truth of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus were all the catalysts to bring about fulfillment of the Kingdom prophecies and its establishment in Acts 2. In fact, as Peter and the apostles preached the first gospel sermon in Acts 2, Peter quoted the Kingdom prophecy from Joel 2:28-32 and immediately tied it to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to show the plan of God in the church's establishment (Acts 2:16-47). As the book of Acts unfolds, the authority and name of Jesus become the focus for the Kingdom to be preached in all the world (Matt. 28:18-20). We cannot separate the Kingdom from the King!

Because the Kingdom is Not the "Preferred Plan" by Mankind, Does Not Make It Any Less of God's Plan (Romans 10:15-21). The Jewish nation is a great example of this. In Romans, Paul is systematically answering the questions about how God can reconcile both Jews and Gentiles into one body. He quotes from a great number of Old Testament prophecies throughout the book to prove to the Jews that God did not "switch horses" but that Christ and the church were always His plan (cf. Rom. 15:8-12; Is. 11:10). As one man said, "It's God's train. You can get onboard or you can get run over, but it's not going to stop just because you don't like it" (cf. Acts 13:40-41; Hab. 1:5). Though men may still today reject the church (i.e. "the Man not the plan"-type philosophies), we know that there is only salvation in Christ, in His body, in the church, in the Kingdom (Eph. 1:3; 22-23).

In the Kingdom, Christians Can Be Confident in God's Promise of Forgiveness (Hebrews 8:8-12; Jeremiah 31:31-34). The Law of Moses could never take away sin (Heb. 9:22). However, when the Kingdom was prophesied by the inspired prophet Jeremiah, he foretold of a time when God would establish a "better covenant based on better promises" (Heb. 8:6). In this promise of the new covenant, God emphasized, "for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds, I will remember no more" (Heb. 8:12; Jer. 31:34). Friends, if God has promised from the Old Testament that in the Kingdom there is a better covenant, a

better hope, and better promises, is it not God's will that Christians be confident in His precious forgiveness (I John. 1:7-9)? Because all Christians stumble and fall sometimes, does not give us cause to think we are any less a part of His Kingdom than we were before. As we walk faithfully in the Kingdom, God's forgiveness promises still stand and that ought to give Christians great comfort and encouragement.

Earthly Kingdoms Come and Go, But the Kingdom God Established is Forever (Daniel 2:44; Matt. 16:18-19). How much better would the Kingdom of God be if Christians in America spoke as passionately about the church as they did about the American kingdom? The Old Testament book of Daniel shows, among other lessons, "God rules in the kingdoms of men" (Dan. 4:34-37). God's purposes will not be thwarted. In fact, during the reign of one of the harshest governments to ever be on the earth, God established the church. That harsh government (Rome) would then proceed to persecute the citizens of God's Kingdom for the next 200 years. The church saw the demise of Rome (Rev. 18). Indeed, God has watched the church of His Son flourish throughout two thousand years of human history while earthly kingdoms have risen and fallen. Is this not the message of what Daniel originally interpreted regarding the Kingdom God would establish that would "never be destroyed" (Daniel 2:44)? Our citizenship on this earth will not matter in eternity, what will matter is if we accept now the Kingship of Jesus Christ and are added to His Kingdom (Matt. 9:35; Rom. 6:17).

It is important to remember that the knowledge of Kingdom prophecies in the Old Testament are not just an academic fancy or simply an answer to Bible trivia. Rather, they are exceedingly precious promises that should encourage and bolster the faith of Christians everywhere. They remind Christians that God is faithful, that His work is sure, that His Kingdom will endure, and that we are a part of what He has been working in all of history to accomplish! That, friends, is great news. Add to that fact that ALL can be a part of the Kingdom of God and we have something that is worth sharing (Rom. 1:16-17)! *Oh, will you not tell it today?*