



Jesus the King

Lesson 7

On May 22, 1782, a Colonel Lewis Nicola in the Continental army sent a letter to George Washington expressing his concerns over the current state of the fledgling nation, and suggesting that perhaps it wouldn't be a terrible idea if Washington himself was king. Nicola and several in the military were frustrated with Congress and were fearful they might not get the pay they were promised for fighting in the revolution. Nicola suggested what it is likely others were thinking – “Wouldn't it be great if Washington just took over?” Washington did not take kindly to the idea, to put it mildly. He responded the same day by saying

“With a mixture of great surprise & astonishment I have read with attention the Sentiments you have submitted to my perusal. Be assured, Sir, no occurrence in the course of the War, has given me more painful sensations than your information of there being such ideas existing in the Army as you have expressed, & I must view with abhorrence, and reprehend with severity.”¹ In other words, absolutely not.

As Americans, many of us are of the George Washington mindset. No kings! Presidents, prime ministers, congress, courts, okay. But no kings! Yet as we come to Scripture, we are confronted with a story that sets up as the exciting conclusion of the story a king. One day, we will all have a king – King Jesus! While this side of heaven a democratic republic might work better than a monarchy, we should all be looking forward to when the King comes and sets up his kingdom, the greatest kingdom of all time!

Why do you think that we as Americans don't like kings?

Why is it that King Jesus is worth not only accepting, but looking forward to?

I. The Old Testament Hope: A King and a Kingdom

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel came to look forward to a powerful, reigning king who would set up a worldwide kingdom, ruling all the nations from Jerusalem. This expectation began with David, who was promised an everlasting dynasty, it grew throughout

¹ <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99-01-02-08501>

the prophetic literature, and then came to a head in one of the last books of the Old Testament to be written, the book of Daniel.

A. The Coming King

Reading the Old Testament sets up the expectation that there will one day be a powerful, good king will rule the world in justice and righteousness. A careful study of several key passages will clearly demonstrate this point.

What Old Testament passages can you think of that set up the hope of a coming King?

1. The Son of David (2 Samuel 7:12-17; Psalm 2)

As has already been mentioned, this hope for a powerful king with an unending dynasty begin with the promise God made to David. The hope for a Davidic heir becomes important throughout the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms which often exalt the coming Davidic heir in quite exalted terms (see for e.g. Psalm 2).

2. The Branch (Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8; 6:12)

Jeremiah foresaw the coming destruction of the nation of Judah, but he also saw beyond that to the coming restoration that God had promised. One term in particular shows up here and then again later in the book of Zechariah: the Branch. Isaiah uses similar terminology to describe a small plant coming out of the trunk of a tree. Just as the Davidic dynasty had been cut off, like a tree being chopped down, so also there would come a fresh start, a young plant that would come out of that dynasty, a ruler who would yet fulfill all that the prophets had hoped for.

3. The Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14, 27)

In a previous lesson we discussed this fascinating passage from the book of Daniel, in which one like a son of man comes to the Ancient of Days and is given a kingdom. The result of this is that all people serve him and that he shares that rule with his saints.

B. The Coming Kingdom (Isaiah 11)

The Old Testament prophets predicted that this coming king would also usher in a new kingdom. Although these prophecies are scattered throughout the prophets, perhaps no one built the vision for what this kingdom will look like better than the prophet Isaiah. As we study what Isaiah and others have taught, we see at least 3 key aspects of this coming kingdom:

How does the Old Testament describe the coming kingdom of God?

1. The Messiah would establish a national kingdom (Hosea 1:11; Isaiah 11:4-5, 11-16).

This coming kingdom is very much focused on Israel, both the northern and the southern kingdoms (Hosea 1:11; Isaiah 11:11-16). Together, they would be united and would be ruled with justice and righteousness (Isaiah 11:4-5).

2. The Messiah would establish an international kingdom.

Not only would Israel profit from this king, but the whole world will find themselves under the reign of the king. Isaiah (2:2-4), Micah (4:1-3) and Zechariah (14:9ff) all predict a day when God will reign as king over the whole earth. This will lead to an end of conflict (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3) and to a kingdom of worldwide peace and unity where God is worshipped as he ought to be (Zechariah 14:16-19).

3. The Messiah would establish a supernatural kingdom (Isaiah 65:17-25).

Finally, the coming kingdom was expected to bring with it a reversal of the curse. Death would become relegated to those who rebelled, and animals would go back to eating vegetables. Pain, suffering, and violence would end, and all nations would give up war forever (cf Isaiah 2:4).

What difference should reading these Old Testament accounts have on us? How should we be changed as a result of our study of the coming king?

What can we learn about God's character from these Old Testament accounts?

II. The New Testament Reality: The King Has Come

In the New Testament, Jesus comes with the good news that God's kingdom was near. Throughout his ministry, it becomes clear that the kingdom is near because the king of the kingdom was present.

A. Jesus is of the royal lineage (Matthew 1; Luke 3).

The New Testament begins with a genealogy for a reason. In the first few verses of Matthew, the Holy Spirit points out the fact that Jesus is in fact the Son of David, meaning that he is the rightful Davidic heir. It is not by accident that the first book of the New Testament starts off by making the claim that Jesus has the right to the throne.

B. Jesus has all authority (Matthew 28:18).

Throughout the gospels, we see over and over again that Jesus has authority unlike that of any other person.² In Mark, for example, we find that Jesus has the authority over

² There are two Greek words that are sometimes translated as "power" or "authority." The first is *dunamis*, and has the idea of strength or ability, what we normally think of when we hear the word "power" like we would talk about the power of an engine. But the second word is *exousia*, a word which means power in the sense of "authority," like we would talk about a king's power. *Exousia* shows up frequently in the gospels, for example we find it in Matthew in 7:9; 8:9; 9:6, 8; 10:1; 21:23, 24, 27 28:18.

demons (1:27), sin (2:10), and sickness (3:15). After his resurrection, Jesus tells his followers that all authority has been given to him.

What does it mean that Jesus has all authority? What does that mean for you personally in your own life?

What does the authority of Jesus mean for the world in which we now live?

If Jesus has all authority, why doesn't he exercise that authority and remove evil?

C. Jesus will rule all kingdoms (Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:19-23).

As we are about to see, Jesus' role as king has been confirmed, but not yet established. Jesus will reign, but he is not reigning now,³ at least not earth as he one day will. But the New Testament is clear, Jesus' reign is only a matter of time. There is coming a day when all will confess Jesus as Lord and his authority will be recognized all across the world. Paul even goes so far in Ephesians as to claim that Jesus will rule over all authorities ("powers") in both heaven and earth. Jesus reign will be total and complete one day. No one will be able to stand up to the King when he comes in power!

How can this truth be a comfort in uncertain times?

III. The New Testament Hope: The Kingdom Is Coming

But if Jesus is the King, and if the kingdom really is the glorious kingdom we see predicted in the Old Testament, then what happened? The answer the New Testament gives us is that we are in between the coming of the King and the coming of his kingdom. Christ will rule, it's only a matter of time. But his kingdom has not yet come, although it will. So what are we to do in the meantime?

A. We are to witness while we wait for the kingdom (Acts 1:6-8).

The disciples didn't foresee a 2,000+ gap between Jesus' first coming and the establishment of his kingdom. So they asked a fairly understandable question "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus' answer to them is the same as his answer to us: witness while you wait. Jesus tells his disciples they don't need to know when, that is the business of the Father. Their job is to tell others and testify to Jesus while awaiting the coming of the kingdom.

³ Debates continue over whether the current state of affairs can be considered a "kingdom" over which Christ is reigning, or if the kingdom is still entirely future. In either case, all believers should recognize that they are currently under the rule of Christ, and that the world we see now is not the finality of the kingdom which will come when Christ returns.

B. We are to look forward expectantly while we wait for the kingdom (Revelation 19-22).

Not only should we witness, but we should continue to look forward to the coming kingdom with excitement and expectancy. In Revelation 19-22 we are given a clear picture of what this kingdom will look like – a 1,000 year reign of Christ followed by a rebellion, followed by a recreation of heaven and earth and a New Jerusalem.

Do you look forward to the coming kingdom? If your answer is anything less than an enthusiastic yes, how can you cultivate an excitement for the coming kingdom?

Jesus is the King of Kings. He will one day reign forever and ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. Even now he has all authority, although for a time he has refrained from completely annihilating all rebels. One day, though, he will return and set up his kingdom. We believers should look forward with joyful anticipation to that day, and we should seek to be witnesses to that coming kingdom to all we come in contact with.