

The King and the Kindom

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[0 : 00] 278 in my Bible, but that's probably no help to you. So 1 Samuel chapter 8, now hear God's word.

When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah.

They were judges in Beersheba, yet his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after again. They took brides and perverted justice.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, Behold, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.

But this thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed to the Lord, and the Lord said to Samuel, Obey the voice of the people and all that they say to you.

[1 : 13] For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds that they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day forsaking me and serving other gods.

So they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice. Only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.

So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who are asking for a king from him. He said, These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you.

He will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and run before chariots. He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties and some to plow the ground and to reap the harvest and to make implements for war and the equipment for chariots.

He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give to them his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants.

[2 : 33] He will take your male servants and your female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys and put them to work. He will take a tenth of your flocks and you shall be his slaves.

And in that day you will cry out because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves. But the Lord will not answer you in that day.

But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel and they said no. But there shall be a king over us that we may also be like the nations and that our king may judge us and go out before him and fight our battles.

When Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, Obey their voice and make them a king.

Samuel said to the men of Israel, Go every man to his city. If you want to turn, please, to me to Matthew 1 and we'll read from verse 18 onwards.

[3 : 43] Matthew chapter 1, beginning at verse 18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph before they came together, she was found to be with a child from the Holy Spirit.

And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which means God with us. When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.

He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who is born king of the Jews?

[5 : 02] For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled in all Jerusalem with him, and assembling the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ was to be born.

They told him, In Bethlehem of Judea. For so it is written by the prophet. And you, O Bethlehem, and the land of Judea, are by no means least among the rulers of Judea.

For from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. May God bless his word to us this evening.

We'll stand and sing, and then we'll come back to it together. If you have your Bibles with you, please open them again to 1 Samuel 8 and Matthew.

We'll be considering the two at length, but we're going to be considering other parts of Scripture as well. Well, several years ago, there was a game show, a program, which decided to turn things on its head.

[6 : 13] Instead of the contestants having to come up with the answer, instead they were told that they had to come up with a question. So the answers would be presented on the screen, and so if it was, say, for instance, George Washington, they had to come up with a question, and it could have been he was the ex-president of the United States.

So the answers would come up, and they had to guess what the question was. It was a strange way of doing it, a different way of doing it, but people began to realize that they perhaps knew more about it being asked that way around than the other way around.

And in many ways, the reason for the two readings this evening is to turn things around a bit, and to give you the answer, but then to ask you what's the question. When God's people are before God, there's lots of questions and lots of answers, but the point of these two readings this evening is to focus on Jesus Christ, that God is with us, and what that actually means.

And that's the reason for the two readings. But the readings do something else, and this is worth remembering, that many of the difficulties that we have in our lives today, people have had them before.

Many of the struggles that we have today, people have had before, and so it's not uncommon to see what causes certain problems to reoccur, and also what the solutions are to those problems.

[7 : 49] And those back in the day had the same kind of problems in life that we have, the same kind of problems with sin, same kind of problems with drinking, with money, and the people back then, as people are now, are often reminded that that is where the problems are showing up, but that is not actually the problem.

Sin may be where the problem is showing up, but that's not actually the problem. Money may be where the issue is showing up, but that's not actually where the issue is.

A drink may be where the issue is showing up, but that's not really the heart of what's going on. And so God's people had to realize that there was a big distinction between where problems were arising and what they looked like on the surface, and actually what was giving birth to them underneath.

And this is a lesson for us as well, and it's a lesson that we tend to forget, that where problems show up are not necessarily where the issues really are.

And there's a big distinction between the two. Just because it looks like you have an issue with that, that's not really the issue. There's something far deeper, and that's exactly what the book of James says, that the temptation gives birth to sin.

[9 : 10] And so the problem is not in what we see on the surface, it's what's going on before it makes its ugly face shown in our lives. So I want us to think about these type of issues in this kind of way, and going back to that game show, by giving you the answer and then asking you what the question is, which in the point of the game show is giving an answer as well.

So here's the answer. Jesus. Jesus is the answer. What's the question? What's the question? Jesus is the answer. Jesus is the king. Jesus is God. God who walks amongst us. He is savior. He is lord. He is the shepherd leader. He is the judge.

That's the answer. That's who Jesus is. What's the question? Well, the question is, how can I be saved from my sin so as to be right with God and live in his kingdom?

That's the question. Now, if you're not asking the question, you are not likely to see that Jesus is the answer.

[10:29] And now that you have heard the question and you're still not bothered about asking the question to yourself, then you're not going to see that Jesus is the answer. If you have friends that have heard the question, but they're not interested in the question, they're not going to be interested in Jesus being the answer either.

And so it becomes really quite clear and plain to see that where people are not interested in Jesus is actually because they're not interested in the question.

Jesus is the answer, but Jesus is the answer to a very specific question. And if you're not interested in the question, you're not going to be that interested in Jesus.

And the question is, how can I be saved from my sin so as to be right with God and live in his kingdom? Now, if your heart is asking that question, then you are going to be crying out for Jesus. You're going to see that Jesus is the answer. But if you're not interested in the question, then it naturally follows, unfortunately, that you're not going to be interested in the answer.

[11:46] Jesus is the answer, but he's the answer to a very specific question. And that's the question. Now, the message this evening is really to turn our thoughts once again to the arrival of Jesus, the first advent, the coming king.

And this sermon can be titled under the king and the kingdom, quite simply, the king and the kingdom. And the basic principle behind this is that the type of kingdom you will have will depend entirely upon the type of king you have.

So if you want to know what the kingdom's going to look like, then you need to take a good long look at the king himself. 1 Samuel 8 is a warning that this is the type of king that you'll have and therefore don't have any high hopes of a great kingdom.

So what type of king we have is really important. And in Mark chapter 1, Jesus points out that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the gospel. In other words, that's the answer. And the question is, how do I get into that kingdom? Jesus knew that he had to explain that his coming meant the coming of the kingdom.

[13:06] God's rule on earth as it is in heaven. I don't know if you take any comfort in that, but when I walk out of this building, the people in Westerhales don't rule Westerhales.

The people in Babberton don't rule Babberton. The people in Edinburgh don't rule Edinburgh. God rules Edinburgh. God rules Scotland. God rules England.

God rules Europe. God rules the world. God rules the world. And so there's great confidence and assurance to know that you're safe in the arms of one where the world is living under his rule.

Now, has his kingdom fully come? No. The kingdom of God is at hand, but God is most definitely in control. And so I want to show you this evening as a brief overview that Jesus coming on earth is really about him being the king and about the kingdom.

His incarnation, that God becoming man to save his people from their sins, that he comes as a shepherd leader, that he comes to lead them is really what the nativity is about.

[14:20] That the advent, the first coming of Jesus is really about God's king coming to earth. And showing us that he is in control.

And so here's the first point. I have three and here's the first one. God has done this before. Now, we tend to forget that God walking with man on earth is not something that begins at the nativity. It's not something that begins with Jesus. It didn't begin there at all. That's the second time God's done this. The first time was in creation. God created the world. God created everything in it. And we're told that in that creation, God walked with man. God walked with man. Now, we find this incredibly difficult to get through our head because we don't read Genesis in the way that Genesis was written.

The way Genesis was written at the beginning was written in such a way that the original creation meant that the realm of heaven and earth were joined in such a way that God could actually walk

with man on earth.

[15 : 23] However, since the fall and man being sent out of the garden, that union or dominions between heaven and earth were separated, were torn apart in many ways by sin.

And so God no longer walked with man on earth. Man was sent out of the garden. But man enjoyed living as God's people in God's place, the Garden of Eden, under God's rule, thou shalt not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and was enjoying God's blessing.

So it was God's people in God's place under God's rule receiving God's blessing. And so what do you think the kingdom of God is going to be? Well, it's going to be God's people in God's place under God's rule receiving God's blessing.

So the kingdom that is coming is simply the wonderful reality of what we lost. And this King Jesus is the one who is establishing it in a fallen world.

You've got to remember that man was sent out of the garden. Okay, the garden was not a place where a fallen man could live. It was not a place where a fallen man could walk with God in that sense.

[16 : 36] And so when Jesus comes, it is the second time that God walks with man. Not the first time. But this time, he doesn't walk with man in an untainted garden, a perfect garden.

This time, God walks with man in a fallen world with fallen people. God walks in the place where he sent Adam and Eve out into.

So it's not the first time that God has walked with man. We see that in creation. Jesus coming is the second time that God has done this. And he does this because God's kingdom will be on earth as it is in heaven.

And what this means is that Jesus is just wonderfully qualified, uniquely qualified, to tell us exactly what this kingdom is going to be like. Jesus is uniquely and wonderfully qualified to tell us exactly what the will of God is going to be like on earth as it is in heaven because that is where he's from. He's from heaven. And so this Jesus, God the Son, comes to earth telling us what the kingdom and what God's will is like in heaven. Because that is what it's going to be like on earth.

[17 : 54] Do you know, I can remember being brought up as a child in the Church of England and it was taught completely the other way around that the whole point of salvation was to leave this God forsaken earth and go to heaven. And it's clearly not the case because everything Jesus seems to say is quite the opposite.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. If you had any thought of leaving here then you're going to be brought back before you know it.

But the place that you can be brought back to is going to be far better than the place that we enjoy or don't enjoy in the moment. And so if I can go back and perhaps reverse the principle again and ask you a question and you can think about the answer.

How much room do you think you need to make and I need to make in my life and in this world for the kingdom of God to come which is universal? What kind of room do I need to make for God and his kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven?

And what kind of room am I giving over to God now? Because it will be total. One of the things that we tend to forget is long before God created the nation of Israel long before he ever created a Jewish person he already had his people on earth to fulfill his will.

[19 : 25] Everybody up to Abraham was supposed to do what God wanted them to do but they didn't. And the whole point of Genesis 11 with the Tower of Babel is believe it or not they had the commission to go out into the earth and make disciples.

Their commission was to go out into the whole earth and multiply and make disciples telling people what it was to live under God's rule to follow them. You read it. But they decided that they didn't want to do that.

They decided that they wanted if you read it very carefully to make a name for themselves and that's very crucial because they didn't want to uphold the name of God they wanted to make a name for themselves they decided to build this temple and so God in his judgment scattered them throughout the earth precisely because they wanted their own will rather than doing his will.

And as he scattered them throughout the earth he did so in judgment and confused their language at the same time. So there was this opportunity where people had even before Jesus came and even though they were kicked out of the garden to still listen to what God had to say.

you had Enoch who walked with God. So there were still these moments where people had heard of what it was like for Adam to walk with God and how this could be duplicated through faith in a fallen world.

[20 : 48] And while these people had the commission to go throughout the earth and multiply they didn't. They wanted to make a name for themselves. In other words they didn't want to do God's will they wanted to do their own in short.

And so the point of Jesus coming is to get a people who are scattered throughout the earth saved and into the kingdom of God.

Secondly Israel was given the task before Jesus. Israel we're told the Jewish nation was to be a light to the nations that they were to demonstrate to everybody else on earth what it was like to live under God's rule what it was like to live under God's blessings.

But of course they didn't. And 1 Samuel 8 is a demonstration of them not doing that. They want a king and on the surface it doesn't actually look like a bad thing does it?

For a nation to actually want a king to judge them. But God considers this their request as rejecting him as king over them. That's exactly what God says.

[21 : 59] In fact he says to Samuel look they're not rejecting you they're actually rejecting me. The same thing was said about Moses. You know Moses had to be told that the people of God are not against you Moses even though you're getting the flack they're actually rejecting me.

And so these people are asking for a king but when you look at the reason that they're asking for a king is it's actually because they want to be like the nations around them. they want a king to rule over them like the nations around them.

They had rejected the fact that God was their king that God was the ruler that God led them out of Egypt that God get them safe that God fed them that God gave them the laws that God blessed them and increased that multitude of blessings upon them.

They seem to have forgotten all of that and now they're asking to be like other nations. They're asking to be like other people. They're asking to be like the people around them.

Now the interesting thing is God actually gives the people what they want. Now we don't tend to think that God does that sort of thing do we?

[23 : 10] But there's countless examples in scripture where God does actually give his people what they want even though it will not be helpful to them which is quite a hard thing to swallow.

But God does say what a king ought to be like but he also tells them through Samuel that if they ask for this king what this king will actually be like and remember the king will determine the kingdom. What type of king you have will determine what type of kingdom you live in but they reject what Samuel says they reject the warning and they reject the consequences that it will actually lead to. They are so caught up in wanting what they want that they have no foresight of what it will actually lead to. And so the kingdom that is to come here is a kingdom of their own making. And so when it all goes wrong God is effectively saying to them remember you asked for it. you asked for it.

[24 : 22] When it all goes wrong remember you're the one that wanted it. And so God considers their rejection of him as sorry their asking for a king as actually their rejection of him.

Now Samuel tries to put the brakes on all of this by saying you really need to understand if you ask for this this is what's going to happen. But they are adamant that they want to be like the nations around them.

They don't have too much concern about having the right king. They are just concerned about having a king so they can be like the nations around them. And the interesting thing is that throughout the whole of Israel's history were kings even with the heights of King David that even he wasn't the right king.

Not even he could come up with the standards that God wanted of a king. And so the story so far even before we get to Jesus can be divided into these two sections.

Once upon a time God walked with his people but because of their sin he no longer did. And once upon a time God was their king but because God's people wanted to be like the nations around them he was the rejected king.

[25 : 39] So thirdly we need king Jesus. We need a better king. We need a king who will do exactly what God will do.

We need God as our king. And that's the point of Matthew. Matthew is to establish that Jesus Christ is God the son king who will come and save his people from their sins.

That Jesus has come to do something very specific. Remember Jesus is the answer. Jesus is the answer. So what's the question? Well the question is how can I be saved from my sin so as to be right with God and live in his kingdom under his rule and under his blessing.

That's the question. And so the only question left is whether or not you're asking the question.

God's people are defined fairly easily as a people who have one repented of their sin and two who live under God's rule.

They've repented of their sin, they live under God's rule, they love God, they want to obey God, and they know that they will inherit the kingdom of God. And to answer the question how much room do these people make in their lives for God and for his kingdom to come, their answer is all of it.

[27 : 16] All of my life is given over to make room for this. Because they recognize that the life they have is a life that comes from him. Their whole life and their whole mind and heart is occupied by God, by his love, by his will come on earth as it is in heaven.

And so the main issue in this world is a simple one. It comes down to this. Will you or will you not live under the rule of God?

Will you or will you not live under the rule of God? The gospel saves people and the people that the gospel saves Jesus saves will enter and occupy the kingdom of God.

Now here's the crunch. This then has to be represented by those people lest we like the people of old having received the blessings having received the law having received everything that God is giving us turn around and want to be like the people around us.

And what happens when God's people want to be like the people around them? Well, they want the things that other people around them have and when they want the things that other people around them have they're effectively saying they don't want what God has to give them.

[28 : 48] God and so certain issues and struggles in life are bound up in the fact that that's not where the issues are. The issues are not found in what you see on the surface.

The issues are often found in whether or not we want to live under God's rule and receive God's blessing. The psalmist understood this wonderfully well when he says the trouble that I have in living in this world is not with me trying to keep God's law.

I find it very difficult. Remember the kingdom will be determined by the type of king you have. This can be seen in almost any kind of relation.

You take a marriage the marriage will be determined by the type of people that make up that marriage. The principle is quite plain to see and so the right king is crucial and people responding and repenting to this king is also the only way that you can have your sins forgiven and enter into the kingdom of God to come.

Let me put it this way. The kingdom of God is coming at such a pace that you will either be caught up in it and saved or washed aside by it into a lost eternity.

[30 : 08] There is no other move you can make. So we listen to the warning from 1 Samuel 8 very very carefully.

That it is a people who look as though they want to follow God but they actually want to be like the people around them. So we have something to remember and something to live by.

We're not to be bound up with our own misguided desires. Are we people known for what we want but quite unwilling to serve in God's purposes.

We're quite willing to speak out about the things that we think ought to be but we also have a life that is marked out by the fact that we don't serve or obey God.

In other words, we're making the same mistake as the people of old did. Nothing's new, right? The same struggles and the problems that we have today people have had before.

[31 : 15] But God has sent his son, he is the king, Jesus, who walks with man on earth to do what Israel couldn't do. In fact, to do what Israel didn't want to do.

And so Jesus now calls a whole new people to repent and believe because the kingdom of God is at hand. And so we can't afford to be like the people of old who reject this king.

God's sent king, the God given king. But the moment you want to be like people around you, you are rejecting the king.

The moment you want what people around you have, you are rejecting the king. But you can't afford to reject this king. And so we have the opportunity to say something.

And when you have the opportunity out there in the world to say something, when you have the opportunity out there in the world to own your faith, and you don't, and you don't own your faith, and you know you should have spoke up, you know you should have said something, but you let it slide, you let it slip through the net, when you should have demonstrated that you're living under the rule of Christ, what's happening?

[32 : 26] Well, you're simply demonstrating that you're not living under the rule of Christ. Why? Because the temptation to want to be like others, you know what it's like? The moment comes when you can stand up and own your faith, and you know you should speak out and you don't, and the reason why we don't is because we know there's a moment, there's just that split second moment where you know that this relationship could be on the line, that this relationship could be on the line, it could go either way, and so I can guarantee that this relationship stays as it was if I say nothing, but the trouble is, if you say nothing, that that person's relationship with God stays exactly the way that it is as well, and do you want that?

Is that what you want for other people? And so we have an opportunity to own our faith, we have an opportunity to speak up when we need to speak up, we have the opportunity to look like people who really live under a king, who really live under this kingdom, who really live under a rule, the question is, do we look like those people?

people? So Jesus is the answer. Jesus is the answer. The question is, how can I be continually right with God?

Amen.