

# Rulership of the King of the Kingdom of God on Earth - Part 1

by Art Katz

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*The central theme of the entire Christian faith is the kingdom of God, which is the rule of God over his own creation, and it is essential for the church to understand and live out this kingdom.*

**Duration:** 1:24:05

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:1, Matthew 22:14, John 1:47, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 12:29, Revelation 5:9

**Topics:** "Kingdom Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for worship to be centered on God and filled with awe and reverence. He highlights the importance of recognizing God as the King and approaching Him with reverence. The speaker also discusses the concept of being fitted and prepared to receive a kingdom, referring to Ezekiel 37 and the appointment of a ruler over the dry bones. He encourages believers to understand their identity and hope in the kingdom of God, regardless of their social status or origin. The sermon concludes with a personal testimony of a trial within the church and the speaker's belief in God's ability to transform individuals and use their present circumstances for character development and rule in the kingdom.

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## Transcript

Well, while they're adjusting the books, if anyone will not be here tomorrow night and wants this or any of these, see me. And so I'll just say, what shall I say? Outstanding, anointed, rich, things given of God, spirit of truth, the title speaks for itself, reality, I, people commend it, who read it annually, Apostolic Conversion, what is the nature of conversion, the anatomy of conversion, and last but not least and most recently, devastating book coming out both in German and in French, this fall, The Holocaust, Where Was God? I have received my first scathing letter from an Israeli official to whom the book had come, and I think there'll be other scathing letters to follow. So they'll be angry before they'll be blessed, but it's a word that they cannot gainsay nor reject, and I trust that it's one of the Lord, I know it is, and that'll have its purpose.

It may shock you as a Christian to read it, and some of your categories and even your understanding of God will be vitally and profoundly affected by this book. Okay. Well, I'm feeling lousy physically, so there must be something good in that.

So I can understand that I think I have an important theme, and how shall I introduce it? Maybe just a little quiz question. What would you say, if someone were to ask, for the one theme that is central to the entire Christian faith, what one thing, what one consummation, what is the whole thing about that eventuates at the conclusion of the age, which at the same time is more conspicuously absent from the consideration of the church today? What one thing would you finger? Maybe Jesus in a very particular focus, as I hope to share as we go on. Anybody else want to take a stab at one statement, one phrase, one? The cross, certainly central, and certainly evaded.

That's for sure. You on the back of that? Israel, we'll figure it in prominently to this whole subject. The love of Christ.

The love of Christ? Something about redemption? The scarlet thread of redemption. Hey, you guys are giving me about half a dozen choice sermon themes. Reconciliation.

Well, I'm just going to have to tell you. And my topic, my theme, subsumes and includes everything that has been expressed by you. It is, you're going to be disappointed when I mention it.

You say, oh, that? I know that. I've heard of that. I speak that, but we don't know as we ought to know.

And we don't speak it with the comprehension that we ought. Here's a lady that's got to. What do you think? Christ crucified.

Christ crucified? In fact, I wrote a book. It all is included. When Christ was crucified, what one mocking statement was nailed over his head on the cross in three languages? How did they disfigure the crucified one to add insult to his injury by thrusting a crown upon his head of thorns and a robe? What was all that calculated to mock, to intimidate, and to negate? That is the answer of what the entire faith is about.

Namely, Jesus Christ as King. And the one thing for which the whole faith attends and will be realized is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God.

And I used to preach about it. And I haven't in a number of years taken up with other themes about Israel. But just recently on this trip, last overseas trip in East Germany, I'm rubbing my head.

You can pray for me. I'm headachy. I had the opportunity to visit two East German pastors whom I had not seen in 20 years.

And in that time, they were still under communist authority. And one man was threatened with imprisonment, even for bringing up the subject of Israel. All true believers lived under a certain kind of fear of repercussion, of threat, of intimidation, of imprisonment.

It's not easy to be a believer in an atheistic regime that is threatening. And there was a certain tension to the faith in those days. When a man like myself came, there was an excitement.

People leaned forward. All of that is gone. The wall is down between East and West Germany.

The communist regime no longer exists. The standard of living has risen. I could see that visibly in the homes that we visited.

But I think something had gone out that was no longer with them that impressed me those 20 years ago. A kind of living on the sharp edge of faith, where to be a believer was costly, threatening. There was a

significance of the faith that somehow departed.

And so my question to these pastors on the same day was, what has substituted for the communist threat under which you lived 20 years ago that would give to your present faith and ministry the same quality of significance and alertness and sharp edgedness that communism had provided? And they had no answer for me. It was clear to me that whatever that distinctive sharp thing was, it was gone and nothing had replaced it. When I came up to the second home, there was a kid, the son of the household for whom I had prayed 20 years ago.

The mother then pregnant had been told by the authorities she should not give birth to this child that would come out deformed, that her own life would be threatened by that birth, that she should have an abortion. What do you think, Art? And so I thought quickly and I said, have this child. And she had it.

And there it was standing in front of the house as I came up 20 years later with spiked hair. What do you call it? Tinted or I would say tainted. Everything but the nose ring.

He was a real punk rock kid of his generation. The son that I prayed for 20 years ago. Did I miss the Lord? He was a kind of a visible statement that something indeed had gone out and had not been replaced with a significance that would compel his attention and keep him from being sucked into the orbit of teen culture, rock music and all other kind of stuff.

And so he was in agony for his parents. And so to both pastors, I asked the question, what could replace this living under the sharp edge of communist threat that would continue to give your ministry and congregation a sense of significance, reason for coming that had been yours 20 years before? And they had no answer. I said, how about the kingdom of God? What about the kingdom of God? Oh, yes.

That's nice. The kingdom of God is within us. And the kingdom, we're living by kingdom.

I don't know how they said it, but they both did not understand what I was getting at. And I have not been able to spit out what the Lord sowed in my spirit from that day. It was clear that they had a kind of conventional sense of the kingdom that is individualistic and subjective.

The kingdom of God within. And that's true. And the kingdom of God principles by which we conduct church life.

But what I was getting at and that what was unknown to them and needs, I believe, to be profoundly restored is the kingdom of God as the kingdom of God, not a subjective dimension that we speak about in a vague kind of way that doesn't have a really distinctive meaning, but the kingdom of God and its political sense of rule in the earth. In a word, the kingdom of God as a theocratic reality. That's what we're tending toward.

It's the rule of God over his own creation. And that has been violently opposed by the nations and the spirits that rule and jerk the nations. There will be a final climactic and devastating conflict at the end of the age, as I think there was at the beginning of the church history over this issue of a kingdom come.

When Jesus was asked by his disciples, how shall we pray? The one prayer that he gave them was pray this, our father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come in earth as it is in heaven. Jesus was profoundly kingdom conscious. His message from the very inception of his earthly ministry was the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Repent, it's about to break in upon you. These miracles and demonstrations of power that you're seeing are the evidence of that kingdom. That was the message of John the Baptist.

And you don't find any explanation. His hearers did not say, well, what do you mean by the kingdom? Those who heard him evidently understood what it meant. They were Jews.

There was a biblical expectation of a kingdom that would conclude the age and restore the glory of Israel. And it was a Davidic kingdom. It had to be established on the throne of David.

And that even though in the time of Jesus, Israel was in a sorry condition and plight, the tabernacle of David had fallen down, a Gentile nation ruled over it. They were in bondage. There was four centuries without a prophet.

Yet their hope was at the conclusion of the age, and it's a right hope and a biblical hope and a prophetic hope that the kingdom of God would come. The kingdom of God was even the reward for faithfulness. And when Jesus spoke with John 3 with Nicodemus, Nicodemus asked him, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said, except that you are born by the spirit, you cannot see nor enter the kingdom of God.

He was asking about eternal life. Jesus was answering in the context of the kingdom of God. And there was no disparity between those two things.

For the issue of eternal life was and is the issue of the kingdom. And the reward of faithful obedience in this life is the reward of the kingdom and participation in the kingdom. This is entirely absent from our present consciousness.

And I believe has disfigured the church and needs to be restored. You cannot understand the issue of Israel outside the issue of the kingdom that comes with Israel's restoration. Israel will be honored after a final time of dishonoring a chastisement and humbling by being the nexus and the nation out of whose holy city and holy hill of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem.

We have spiritualized those statements. Zion has become to us a symbol of an ambiguous kind. And we have missed the specific literal intent of God that accounts for, I believe, the unhappy condition of the church today that lacks its kingdom consciousness and the greatest motivation that God gives for fidelity and walk of an uncommon kind to which we are called.

Paul says to the Thessalonians, newly saved out of primitive paganism who have forsaken their idols to serve the living God, walk worthy of the Lord and the glory and the kingdom to which you are called. That's not Paul in a kind of apostolic rhetoric. That's a man indicating that the true incentive for walk of a walk of that kind is the incentive of the kingdom and its glory.

Not to have that incentive is to assure us that our walk is going to be something other and less than that to which Paul called these Thessalonians in his apostolic ministry. Got the picture? Let me pray. Lord, if I have a headache and hot flashes and physical discomfort because powers of darkness hate this subject and want to diminish my God, this speaking and the faith that comes by the hearing of it and the restoration of that which has been lost to the church that accounts for the petty kingdoms of religious men and the whole mentality, my God, that is something less than other than that for which your faithful Hebrews have long waited and is the climax of the age of the issue of your coming as king and ruling upon the throne of David and bringing equity and justice and righteousness in the earth.

If the powers of darkness hate that kingdom, hate that coming, hate that reality, and want even to diminish the speaking of it that would again restore the anticipation of it and give us of the incentive for the kind of holy living and walk, my God, that presages such a kingdom and gives indication of what it is that is to come, then rule, Lord, rule. You're already on the throne, my God. All authority has been given to you in heaven and in earth.

You're a reigning God, and we ask that you would prevail tonight, my God. Prevail over my infirmity. Prevail, my God, over the powers of darkness that want in every way to bring this subject that is speaking to north.

Come, my God, only you, soon coming king, have the right and the ability to set forth the glory of that kingdom and that we're barking up the wrong tree and we're reduced to mindless choruses about the majesty of God, except that we understand you in the majesty of your kingdom, that the king of glory is waiting to come in, even into the consciousness of his church as king. And Lord, we North Americans, especially from the USA, are not responsive to monarchy. We're democratic rather than theocratic.

We don't like the idea of a God who rules. It's offensive to our egalitarian sympathies, and we want to all go to the same heaven. We don't like the idea that some will rule over five cities and some over ten, and that Paul was deeply distressed to find two Corinthians going to the court of the world in order to resolve the difference between them, and said, don't you know you're going to rule over angels and over nations? And they didn't know, and we don't know, and it shows in the way in which we're living our life presently.

We're not living in the anticipation of that kingdom. We're not preparing for our part in it. We don't really expect it.

It's become a kind of a buzzword. It's the kingdom, the kingdom that has subjective, individualistic meanings, but we've lost the greater meaning. And I'm asking in Jesus' name, Yeshua, the anointed one, anointed for kingdom rule, that you would convey to us, my God, what has been lost.

May it blaze in our hearts, my God. May we anticipate it. May we have a restored eschatology and expectation of what it is toward which we're moving that saves one Sunday from being like another.

Give us a direction, my God, and alert us for what the last opposition will be to this rule, which the powers of darkness dread. These false usurpers. Come, my God, lead us in an excursion through your word and show us the central theme of the entire faith that needs to be restored.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. Can we pray for you? You want to pray for me? Yeah.

Okay. Can I have a couple of brothers come up? Thank you. I have some kind of ambiguous phrase.

That's what it has become. It's lost its cogency, its power. Even the word government and rule have taken on unsavory connotations because of the way in which men rule.

One woman said, I don't even desire to rule and reign with Christ. It doesn't appeal to me. Well, if it's only the continuation of human government of the kind that we have happily been suffering, especially in my country under Clinton, I can well understand that.

But the government of God is not bureaucracy. It's not paper shuffling. It's not lining your pockets with self-aggrandizing.

What is the kingdom of God? Why is it to be so desired? Why have saints been willing over the centuries to die for it and expect it in a very literal way? Because it's equity, justice, righteousness in the earth. Oh my, that there will not be victims who are crunched because they have not a political voice or they have not an economic weight or a coalition of forces in their behalf. God will rule with absolute equity, justice, and righteousness between nations.

Just think of the promise in Isaiah chapter two, repeated exactly, I think, word for word in Micah chapter four, not because the one whispered to the other, but that the two prophets received independently by the same spirit, the same statement that the mountain that of the Lord's house will be higher than the mountains of the world and of the nations. Mountain is always the symbol of government and rule and that the mountain that the nations despise is the holy hill of Zion. Psalm two, why do the nations rage? Why do the heathen rage? And imagine a vain thing, that they can break asunder the cords of the Lord and his anointed.

Why are they in such a fury that they foam at the mouth? But God holds them in derision and he has declared the decree, this, thou art my son and I have established you on the holy hill of Zion and given you the nations and the heathen for your inheritance. Dear saints, intensely preoccupy yourself with Psalm two. It is a gem that zeros into the whole profound controversy over the issue of who's going to rule in God's creation.

The heathen, the nations, the kings and the rulers take thought against the Lord and against his anointed. And by the way, the whole issue of anointing is the issue of the kingdom. Kings were anointed to rule.

The Christ, that's the Christos is the anointed one. We are the little anointed ones, but for the very same reason, for those things that pertain to and relate to the coming of this kingdom. We need an unction because the world and its powers mightily resist that rule.

You know that we have suffered so greatly for spiritualizing these references away. And so you take a text like Isaiah two, that the law shall go forth out of Zion and the law of the Lord out of Zion, the word of God out of Jerusalem. And somehow it loses its power and we don't expect anything.

We think it's a kind of a poetic reference. We don't let it smite us in its literalness. Not the least of the reason is, is the historic anti-Semitism that is in the church.

They don't fancy a kingdom whose nexus is to be found in the nation and land of Israel. That would not be their choice. They would have chosen Geneva or New York city or some other appropriate Mount Olympus to be the locus of God's rule in the earth.

But the holy hill of Zion is still a hill. Anyone who goes to Jerusalem today can see it. The city of David, it's nothing that is awesome.

In fact, it's chosen because it's not awesome. It's chosen because it is modest. It's chosen because it's the place in which a king shall dwell, have a sanctuary and his rule who came to Israel in fulfillment of Zechariah chapter nine.

Your king shall come to you lowly and meek riding on the back of an ass, a cult upon which never man sat. This king is born in the stable. This king dies in the dung heap outside the city.

Little wonder that Jews have had little stomach for a king of this kind whom they expected in grandeur and to dispossess Roman rule, etc, etc. They didn't understand the genius of this king, the character of this king, the humility of this king. And I don't know that we understand it.

And so God chooses a foolish nation whose track record is a stench in its infidelity caught to God and its history of broken covenant faithfulness. He chooses a city that has been ravaged time and time again by invaders and one that even now I would take no delight in visiting. It's painful for me to visit Israel and especially Jerusalem because it is so evidently inappropriate for the coming of the king.

I can't stand to see it's Jerry built houses and it's cheap things in neon lights and grass and they're growing in the cracks of the streets and just the whole spirit and atmosphere is not conducive or appropriate to a king. That's not the least of the reasons why that present city will in one day soon be reduced to rubble together with other cities in Israel and will be rebuilt as unto the Lord and for the Lord and the kind of millennial glory that such a king deserves and must have not only in the architecture of the city, but in the character of the people in whose land and principal city Israel will go forth. They will be the emissaries, the ambassadors of such a kingdom.

They will be going into the nations and the nations will be coming to them, not in their present arrogance, but in the meekness that will be theirs. When God will have chastised them and brought them down before he exalts them as the locus of his eternal rule. You know, the whole kind of the kingdom, I'll put it this way.

If you don't understand Israel in the context of the kingdom of God, you don't understand Israel. You will necessarily sentimentalize or see Israel or have an affinity for present Israel in a way that disfigures actually God's intention for you and that people. The way that to see and understand Israel are right is to understand God's intention for it in the context of his coming kingdom and his millennial rule out of the nexus of a restored nation and a transformed people.

If you don't understand that you will be offended by God with God at the chastisement and the severity of the dealings that are yet future for that nation because of their kingdom call. I was just noticing last night that the book of Acts both begins and ends with the reference to the kingdom. Once you get into this, I was thinking my cats, why, why haven't you written this up? Why don't, why don't you come with a formal outline and show us, you know, in a ordered way, this thing? Well, it's for others, but I have to do it with spasms and jerks.

It has to come prophetically. The Lord has to put it together on this occasion as you will choose it and which will be different from others. In chapter one of the book of Acts written to Theophilus, notice the word theo, the prefix theo, theocratic, and I'm using a word like that when I know that you probably don't understand it.

You know what democratic means? Both the preface and the suffix are Greek. Demo and demos is people and kratik is rule. So demo kratik is rule of the people.

But what then is theocratic is the rule of God. Have you the faith to believe for that? Do you have a heart to desire that? Are you sick to the teeth with the human equivalent? Are you chafed in your spirit, in your righteous spirits for the injustice of human government that necessarily must be so because only God being God can rule in righteousness. We should at least desire that because we've desired and anticipated it ought to be reflected in our present life.

Interesting that this is written for Theophilus, who is a lover of the, God. Of all that Jesus didn't talk from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven. After giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen after his suffering, he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during 40 days and speaking exclusively, I'm adding that, about the kingdom of God.

Have you noticed that? 40 days in his resurrection body before he could ascend to the father and take the place of honor that was his because he was obedient unto death. God had given him a name and a place above everything. But before he could ascend to it, he had to remain in the earth and instruct his disciples on the core reason for his first coming and what will be the distinctive of his final coming and the kind of function that they will have to perform in order to expedite and facilitate that coming.

He spoke to them on one subject only for 40 days, the kingdom of God. I don't know that there's one among us who has ever had that privilege in a lifetime of believing. I don't know that I've had four hours of instruction, let alone 40 days of it.

Hardly anyone speaks of it and very few have the audacity of faith to believe for it that there will be a kingdom and a rule and it will emanate from one place in the earth that God himself has chosen. Now some hotshots and wise guys say God is not interested in real estate. The kingdom is some kind of ambiguous thing that is everywhere.

It doesn't have any one specific locus. Well, they're wrong. If God is not the God who chooses the particular thing, he's not God.

He's chosen Israel. He's chosen a land. He's chosen a city.

He's chosen a hill because that's what makes God, God is the distinctive, the ability of the right to choose what he will choose and have mercy upon whom he will have mercy and elect what he will elect. But have you noticed that every time he does it, his choice is something contrary and other than what we as Anglo-Saxons would have chosen? Something semitic and offensive, something different from us and people in a place that would not have impressed us is his choice. That's the stumbling stone of Zion that God sets in the path of the church to test and to reveal its secret heart.

That though we say Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, and all those kinds of things, are we really in agreement with the God who has chosen Zion? Or will we find ourselves with those that rage and fume against him? This is the scandal of particularity. It's the express and thing that God has chosen. And the saint is a saint who rejoices and agrees with God in his chosenness for that is the very issue of God.

That issue is going to be affected and established in a point of time and will carry on millennially and eternally. He's going to rule from the throne of David. Do you remember that he was passing through Jericho and there was a blind beggar who cried out in all of the din of the noise and they tried to stop his mouth and he kept crying out, Jesus, thou son of David, Jesus, thou son of David, and Jesus stopped.

The moment he heard that, who said that? Where's that coming from? A beggar, blind beggar, because son of David is altogether theocratic in its significance. God had promised David that out of his loins one would rule, who was descended from him upon his very throne and rule forever. And this blind man recognized in this itinerant preacher, the son of David, the one spoken of who will rule from his throne and rule forever.

And Jesus stopped. All Israel could not recognize their king and lampooned and ridiculed him and put on that sign over his cross as a mock. But the blind beggar intuitively and instinctively understood who this anointed one is, the son of David, the promised ruler, the messiah, the anointed one, the coming king.

You look, if I had the time I would show you, but look in the arms as I'm seeing it now and I'm marking it with a yellow marking pen to every reference to king, majesty. You'll see the king in his beauty. I don't, you know, I'm a little suspicious about the, this charismatic emphasis today on love with loving Jesus and passionate love.

I get a little icky feeling like it borders on the romantic. I mean, I understand the intent of it, but there's something about it that doesn't quite strike my kosher heart rightly. It's almost like a sensual love, the love of Jesus.

What I'm thinking is that what God is waiting for and wanting is a love and appreciation of him that has to do with his being king. That until we come into the loftiness and the majesty, the elevation that has to do exclusively with kingship, that our reference to Jesus is somehow marred out of whack and somewhat deformed. That it can only be corrected by this thing, seeing the Lord high and lifted up.

So, it took 40 days to instruct them about the kingdom of God. And it's interesting that their one question before he departed from them was, is it time now to restore the kingdom to Israel? What a supreme opportunity Jesus had for all the generations to follow to say, hey, when are you guys going to grow up? Are you still preoccupied with your narrow Jewish nationalistic interest? Don't you understand that the kingdom of God is an all-embracing term that has to do with the subjective influence of God that will make life and relationships cordial, pleasant, but you still think of it as some political thing that is going to be the distinction of your Hebrew nation. He did not speak one word of rebuke.

He accepted everything that he knows in us, that there's a kingdom that was promised Israel, divided from their city, that would be their eternal distinction. The question is, is it coming now? Is it time now to restore the kingdom to Israel? When you read Amos chapter 9, in one summary of the whole process by which God shakes the nation in the last days, I will assist you through all nations. That's coming sense.

That's why I'm here. That's why I think Canada is so significant. There's going to be a movement, maybe I'll speak of this tomorrow night, of Jews in the last days.

And I'm not just talking about Canadian Jews. I don't know how they're going to get here, but some way they're going to be sifted and sieved through here and down to Washington, Minnesota and on. And he says in that day, the day of their sifting, the day of their time of Jacob's trouble, I will restore and build up again the tabernacle of David that has fallen down.

He's not talking about the restoration of Hebraic worship, however lovely that might be. He's talking about the tabernacle of David as a symbolic statement of the throne of David, the rule of David, the kingdom of God shall be established again. Because the next verse says, and Edom and the nations that will be called by my name will be submitted unto it.

He's not talking about a form of worship. He's talking about a form of rule. When you come to the end of the book of Acts, there's Paul in his facility there in Rome before he's beheaded, talking to his kinsmen, as many as would come to him, about the salvation of God.

And it says in the very last verse, he lived there two whole years at his own expense. That's Paul. And welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

I don't think that we can rightly teach about the Lord Jesus Christ apart from the context of the kingdom. So as being a believer now 35 years and having opportunity to visit, be exposed and touch other ministries and the whole tenor of our present Christianity, I can't help but observe the proliferation of the petty kingdoms of men. Have you observed? I've even said to one brother, or at least the thought came to me in a little tension between us, he was unable to receive a prophetic word of correction from a man whom he honors in that office and of whom he publicly speaks as having been significant influence in his own life and ministry.

But when a corrective word had to come from me for him, he could not bear to hear it or to receive it. And later on, I pondered that and I thought, well, his ministry has gone forth and leaps and bounds. I mean, he's now not just nationally known, he's internationally known.

People run to hear him and buy his books and all of these things. And I thought that a young man is particularly defensive of his own ministry. He can't have the magnanimity of older men who have been tempered by God and can receive a corrective word.

There's something about their ambition, something about the necessity for young men to succeed in an age in which identity and security and recognition have become so all-important, even among Christians. And so I thought, the only safety for a man like that with such successful ministry is to cut it off at a certain level. When it reaches a certain development where your religious establishment and your ministry has become so all-encompassing for you that you need to protect it and defend it and cannot receive a corrective word, you've gone too far.

Limit it. Don't allow it to reach such proportion as to disqualify you from hearing a word that would be corrective, lest later on your end will be less happy. What I'm saying is, and suspecting that in the absence of the real recognition of the Kingdom of God, that what invariably will fill that space is the raising up of the petty kingdoms of men, even in the name of Jesus.

That God's safeguard is that we should be so taken up with his kingdom, his coming, and his rule, that that removes the possibility even of developing for ourselves the pettiness of our own smaller kingdoms. So I would just invite you to share this growing concern with me, that something is grievously out of whack with our contemporary Christianity, and I believe that the root of it is the loss of this conception, this principle, this heart of matter, this thing toward which everything in our faith tends, and will be fulfilled by the coming of the Lord as King. His kingdom come.

Pray this. Will anything else hallow the name of the Father in heaven but this? Hallowed be thy name. And for the want of this kingdom, by which his name is hallowed, the name of God is not hallowed and more likely to be dishonored and disfigured.

It's the kingdom that gives to God his eminence, his glory, his majesty, his stature, his respect, his reverence, his awe. Hebrews chapters 12 and 13, if you can just look quickly there, where chapter 12 speaks about the chastising that is intrinsic and necessary for sons, and that Jesus himself had to bear, who is seated now in verse 2 of chapter 12, at the right hand of the throne of God. Sonship, maturity, qualification for rule is altogether in the context of the kingdom.

To talk about coming of age or becoming the sons of God outside of this context gives it a warp and a disfiguring that only the correct alignment with the kingdom will provide. The kingdom of God is his provision. It's our safety, even in this present life, as well as our incentive and our willingness to bear the chastisements of the disciplines of God that we might share in his holiness, because without holiness, no man shall see God.

And if we can't see God, how shall we rule with God, even from his throne? This is the reward for overcoming and for enduring. You'll be seated with me upon my throne. And that when he comes, he gives to every man their reward for their labors.

And that reward is their place in his kingdom. This thing about some shall rule over five cities and some over ten shows that we're not all coming to the same place and that we're not going to share the same kind of eternal distinction. It's relative to what was the quality and character of all in this present world.

And by the way, that is an apostolic phrase, this present world, that the apostle who coined that indicates that this is the transient thing. This is the preparatory thing. This is not the enduring thing.

It's only this present thing. The thing that really comes is the thing that is eternal. And it is for that, that our eyes should be set and that we're willing to bear in this present world, the suffering, the humiliations, the indignities, the misunderstandings, and worse, that must necessarily precede that kingdom and glory.

It changes your whole view. It removes any reason for self-pity and why we're suffering this or why that. It's all a preparation for that which is to come.

And that was the definitive understanding of the church that was groomed by the apostles. When Paul did not withhold the whole counsel of God, what he was speaking to them was the reality of a kingdom for which this present life was preparation. That's the peaceable fruit of righteousness that will be given later to those who have been trained by the chastisements and the dealings of God.

A little further into that chapter, it speaks about you have not come to a mountain ablaze with fire and so on as was Israel's experience that they trembled with fear. But in verse 22, you have come to Mount Zion. You've come to the locus of God's millennial and eternal rule to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

Heavenly, not because of where it is in space, but what it is in character. Heaven is where God is. Heaven is where the king is, where the rule is.

And he's coming to rule in the earth. Jerusalem will be his sanctuary and his dwelling. He must rule from the throne of David or he will not rule at all.

The law must go forth from Zion or nations will continue studying war, will continue manufacturing the instruments of war. It's only when the rule of God comes from the appointed place of God in the appointed son of God and son of David, who is both genealogically descended and is as God can rule eternally, that nations will study war no more. That saves us from spiritualizing this remarkable reference and missing its very literal significance that God has intended.

And the church has taken this usurping way of dealing with scripture and robbed it of its most cogent meaning. There's a very literal rule from a very literal place from a very literal person. And it's going to be very literally resisted.

How the nations rage, how the heathen rage and take thought against the Lord, the kings and the rulers. What is that? Redundant? Does that mean the kings and the kings? What do you mean kings and the rulers? A king is a ruler. Is God being unnecessarily repetitious? Not at all.

The kings are the visible magistrates of the earth, but the rulers are the invisible realm of spirit force in the heavenlies that play upon them, manipulate them, jerk them, and affect the usurping governmental role through them. The kings and the rulers. Come on, saints.

We've got to wake up to the great and invisible spectrum of spirit reality that undergirds this whole present world system. Tomorrow I'll be talking about the time of Jacob's trouble, the coming anguish and final chastisement of Jews in the world. And I say with frequently, and I say it with a kind of painful confidence, the majority of Jews in the world today will not survive it.

We're going to see an attrition and an elimination of Jews that will exceed that of Hitler in the Nazi time. Six million, perhaps will be more like 10 million the time that this final catastrophe is over. There's going to be such a vehement bitterness directed against Jews that their lives will be hanging by the proverbial hair.

They will be in threat of their lives. They will be forced to be rooted up and moved through the nations. They will be finding themselves in the wilderness of the nations in places that they would never have appointed.

So furious will be the vendetta and the vehemence of the powers of darkness that will not be satisfied with anything less but their elimination, a genocidal removal of an entire Jewish people. How come? How do we explain that? What is the animus? What is the energy? What is the diabolical hatred against the Jew that requires their elimination? It's because the powers of darkness know better than the church that the Lord is contained in the heavens in Acts 3.21, waiting for the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets since the world began. And what the prophets have spoken is that in the last days, in the last days, after thousands of years of apostasy and alienation from God, and even being outside the land and in the nations, there would be a final restoration after a final time of chastisement and suffering, that the redeemed of the Lord, the surviving remnant of Israel would return to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads.

Why everlasting? Because there would never again be a time of sorrowing and affliction of that kind that preceded that return. Everlasting joy will be upon their heads and mourning and sighing will flee away. What is the everlasting joy? It's the honor and distinction of being the people of God, whom he will call by a new name, the servants of the Lord, who will, from the earthly plane, out from Jerusalem and from the redeemed nation, bring the knowledge of that God and that King to nations.

And nations will come to them and pay homage to them. Rulers will bring the remnant of those who have been afflicted, made lame and blind from the last of Israel's devastations, and they've been flung to the farthest corners of the earth, back on litters and on mules and dromedaries and the shoulders and kings of queens back to their land. They will bring their treasure to a nation that God has honored after a long and final dishonoring.

What is the honor? It's the honor of being at the nexus and hub of his millennial and eternal rule over all nations. You'll no longer be the tail. You'll be the head.

This was God's intention from the first in Deuteronomy 32, 8, that he determined the number of the nations according to the sons of Israel. There's some kind of genius of God's stratagem and order for the nations relative to one nation, the nation Israel, but a nation restored, a nation transformed, a nation changed in its character where God winnows and sifts it and brings it through the deepest chastening so that they might share in the holiness of God as sons, that they might rule and reign with him from the earthly plane, even as we shall rule and reign with him from the heavenly. You're expecting that, aren't you? Why else are we being given glorified bodies? That we should no longer suffer the pangs and burnings and discomforts that irritate us now? No.

That we can move through space and place as Jesus did, even coming through closed doors, in order to mediate the rule of God and the places in which we will bear that rule, ascending and descending upon the son of man. That's why we receive a glorified body, to participate with him in the glory of his kingdom. Israel does not receive that, only the church.

That's to save us from being envious of their restoration and the honor that will be given them among all nations as the first and the foremost nation. Our distinction will be yet greater, ruling and reigning with the Lord from the heavenly place, in the earth and above it, in the glorified bodies that that will require, to those who will rise in that first resurrection when the Lord comes, who are in Christ and those who are, how does it say it, who are, somebody help me, who are alive and, what the Greek represents is that they have barely survived death and persecution, who are alive and remain, not in some perpetual status, but remain yet alive despite the ferocity and the intensity of the last day's persecution of the church and of Israel. And they will rise with those who are asleep in Christ and meet him in the air in glorified bodies.

The word *parousia*, the Greek word of meeting the Lord in the air, is not to be taken with him to some distant place where we play a harp on a cloud, but to welcome the coming dignitary and to accompany him to his place of rule in the earth. Oh dear saints, the church has been so escapist, so wanting to flee, so wanting to get away. Their concept of heaven more reflects an Islamic sensuality of a spiritual kind of an eternal vacation than it is a participation because we have lost the key, which is the kingdom.

It will change our whole way of viewing our present life, not under bearing the chastisements, but how do we come to a place where we rule over five cities or ten? What, where did we gain that distinction? Where did we gain the wisdom? Rule, rule is the summation of wisdom, of patience, of fortitude, of courage, of compassion, and yet firmness and sternness without being censorious. It's not taking advantage to ward it over anyone or to bear down. To rule in the character of God is the highest, most ultimate privilege that can be given man, but where do we gain the qualification? How does he make the distinction about the rewards five cities or ten? Or the steward that is cast out into out of darkness because he didn't in any way multiply the talent that he had.

It's this life, that those skills, that wisdom, that sensitivity, that knowledge is obtained that will have its eternal reward in proportion to the degree to which we are fitted for it in this life. I recently shared one of the highlights of our community experience some years ago, where we had to try a brother over whether he would be dismissed from fellowship, expelled from the privilege of Christian fellowship in our community, and even to give his flesh over to the devil for its destruction that his spirit would be saved. How would you like to participate in a trial, a literal trial like that, where the man is standing and that the church has the authority to make that determination? I will never forget it.

Never. It was one of the high watermarks of our whole history as a community of believers. And the young man was himself the son of a Pentecostal movement.

His father was a famous pastor, his grandfather, and yet he was the black sheep and a problem and a trouble and never made it with anyone. And we took him in, in the hope of something redemptive, because he needed the attention of an entire community. He needed a daily oversight.

He needed daily correction. Only a community can provide that. And what I'm describing is not some unusual configuration, but God's normative intention for the church.

The early church made determinations of this kind. Paul himself instructed them to give this sinner's flesh over to the devil because he had not responded to one coming to two coming. He needs now to be brought before the entire church.

Well, when we did it that day, I watched with amazement housewives making statements of such weight, of such wisdom, of such consideration, of such a moment that when the trial is over, they're not going to go back to some kind of petty housewifery. They have been transformed and elevated by what was summoned and called for in that critical trial that will always remain with them and be even a factor in their further elevation and growth and maturity and character. What I'm saying is that there's something about judgment and the requirement to perform it, to make righteous judgments that should be our distinction in this life that is our qualification for eternity.

But where in our present church life do we have the occasion? We're in such a man-honoring milieu, a particular addressing of need, of situation, and this is what Paul was saying to Timothy. When he said preach the word, he wasn't saying bring good biblical sermons. He was saying bring the exhortation, bring the rebuke, bring the application of the word to the particular need that's before you in the congregation to where you're ministering.

Lest their ears would seek some interesting novelty, but preach the word. Bring the word in application to their life to fit them for the things that are eternal. That kind of note is absent from our present Christianity.

We don't want to be offensive to men. And who are we to say? And divorce is rampant in the church. And there's hardly anything that distinguishes the condition of our life from that which is in the world.

We're afraid to judge. We are afraid to offend. And who's going to bring judgment in righteousness and equity? And how are you qualified? And why should we hear from you? It raises enormous questions.

But I'm looking for, believing for, a qualitative shift in the last days for the church that will distinguish it both in the world and in this life and make it a significant factor in its communities, even as it prepares itself for its eternal role. Remember Nathanael, whom Jesus saw standing under the tree? I saw you standing under the tree. Who knows what the remorse, what was in the heart of that man who was a Jew without garland.

Israelite in whom there's no garland. Was it a disappointment with the condition of Israel? Was it the failure of the priestly class? Was it recognition that the Pharisees were so zealous, had their own agenda, that there was a deeply rooted selfishness even in their own religiosity? Was it a sense of hopelessness that Israel would ever attain to its grandeur and calling? Whatever it was, Jesus saw Nathanael under the tree. He knew his heart.

And he said, you're the king of Israel. You're the son of God. You're the king of Israel.

Look at the recognition of this guileless Israelite. And Jesus said, you're impressed with that? I'll show you something greater. Angels ascending and descending upon the son of man.

Have you ever pondered that? It's not just something greater. It is the greatest. It is the ultimate consummation of the age.

It is God having prepared princes whom he has taken off the dung heap and fitted to rule with princes. That's us. Sensualists.

Rebels. Unable to fend for ourselves and maintain civility in our own life and relationship. We were in despicable condition when he found us.

He took us off the dung heap and he fits us to sit with princes. And the princes that I believe that that refers to are others who are called to the same distinction of royal rule by the shaping of their character at the hand of God. Off the dung heap to sit with princes.

The Lord began to speak this to my heart in Savannah, Georgia, in a recent conference. I was the low man on the totem pole. I was the little fill-in.

The principal speaker was from Toronto. It was a conference on revival. But in those days and in my hotel room, the Lord was quickening these things that I had the audacity to say to the executive committee, if you will give me one opportunity to share what the Lord is putting in my heart in one message, I believe that the Lord is giving me a statement for the black people who constituted maybe 40 or more percentage of those who are coming to those meetings to lift them up out of the crunch of what is my identity? What is my hope? In their social condition where they're at the bottom of the pile and I'd have to have a Cadillac even if they can't afford it and all the kinds of things where men need identity in the world, God would give them in the kingdom that whatever their status, whatever their origin, he can take them off that dung heap and make them to sit with princes and use the very ingredients of their present life in their black ghettos or whatever their condition to fit them for character and for rule.

And for them to know that is to transfigure their present life. The incentive of millennial and eternal rule from the throne of God over nations proportionate to our ability to rule to the growth of wisdom, mercy, compassion, sensitivity, firmness, love of justice, of righteousness is the thing that will eternally determine what we will occupy either to our embarrassment or to joy unspeakable full of glory. Now I know that I know that you are not taking that into your present consideration.

The church is not understanding that. The church is not considering that. The church is fixed in time, fixed in its present culture, fixed in its present ambition.

It does not look beyond this present life. It has not an eternal anticipation that would factor into their present living and transform it dramatically. We're missing the kingdom, the consciousness of the kingdom and it shows. We are the spiritual just men being made perfect, called to Mount Zion.

We are receiving the kingdom that cannot be shaken. These are not metaphors. This is a literal statement.

May God break the power of our egoistic right to move from God's literal intention in this word and give it figurative and metaphorical spiritual meanings he doesn't intend. Who are we to transfigure the word and

give it some kind of secondary meaning when the literal meaning is the meaning that has the greatest power both in this life and in the life to come. We are going to receive the kingdom.

We're being fitted for that kingdom. God is going to rule over the nations. He's going to have a people in the earth a restored Israel that will be the perfect accompaniment around his throne into the nations and he'll have a glorified church ascending and descending upon the Son of Man aiding and abetting that precious rule.

So Paul says we give thanks by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe for indeed our God is a consuming fire. And I had to say that there are things that I observed in that Savannah conference and elsewhere. Our worship more often chafes me than blesses me.

Too loud, it's too boisterous, it's too strident, it's become too technical, it's too virtuoso, it's too aided and abetted by instruments and amplifiers and what's lacking is an awe and a reverence to God in our worship. That only comes when I know that we are being fitted and prepared to receive a kingdom. It's only the sense of God as king that awakens the reverence and awe that he deserves only and especially in his enchristened title king.

The Lord of glory is the king waiting to come in. Ezekiel 37, the second half of that which we rarely ever consider is what happens after the dry bones are brought to life through the prophecy of the Son of Man. God sets a ruler over them, a prince, even David who will rule over the house of Israel forever.

What was the first angelic pronouncement that attended the birth of Jesus in chapter one of the gospel of Luke? I pay very special attention to what angels have to say as recorded in scripture because their communication is so uncorrupted. It's not tainted by any human factor. It's right from the throne of heaven to those in the earth to whom it comes.

In this case to Mary who is going to suffer the prospect of an unexplainable pregnancy that she will bear that the spirit of God would conceive in her and who is this one who will be born from her? In verse 32 of chapter one, he will be great and will be called the son of the most high and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David and he will reign over the house of Israel, over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end. The very first statement of what is to be born through this virgin underlines and makes clear he's born to rule and to rule forever on the throne of his ancestor David because he has that genealogy and that divine distinction that will enable him to do so. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder and of the increase of that government of that rule there shall be no end.

From this time forth and forever the zeal of Lord of hosts will perform it. So much more can be said. Read the Psalms, mark every reference to king, kingdom, majesty, the beauty of the king.

There's a beauty, there's a nobility, there's an elevation that can only be understood and seen in Jesus as king. Anything if we miss that necessarily he becomes an accommodation for our interest, he becomes our errand boy, he does things for us. There's a familiarity that is reflected in our questionable worship that lacks the reverence and the awe that is only appropriate to a king.

Thy kingdom come saints, pray it. Thy kingdom come, this piece of earth as it is in heaven. So Lord, precious God, stir our hearts Lord, break in, bring us to a repentance for falling short of the kingdom and of the glory and of necessarily finding ourselves involved with lesser kingdoms, our own, our denomination,

our church, our ministry.

Everything is somehow disfigured when we omit yourself as king and perhaps Lord, we're not even wanting that rule now, let alone millennially and eternally. We're not willing to put upon your shoulder our government. We determine our retirement, we determine which mate to whom we will be joined, what career we will pursue.

We are full of presumption, we go to colleges and universities and seminaries even and appoint the program that we want, assuming that you're there to follow up and somehow to endorse our choice. We have not consulted you as king. We have not been willing to give you the absolute lordship of our coming in and our going out and the world is suffering because the church itself has not come to a place where Jesus is yet its king.

And they'll unhappily hear when they say, Lord, Lord, and hear the retort, I never knew you. My God, your kingdom come, your actual rule come now for us. Break into that deep inveterate selfishness by which we ourselves are on the throne of our own lives, calling the shots, making the decisions and trusting you're there to endorse it.

Of the increase of your government and of your rule, there shall be no end. If we're lacking in peace, it's because we're lacking in that rule. And so I ask my God that you would zing our hearts, prick our hearts and bring us to a kingdom consciousness of the thing to which all things are attending, which the whole history of the faith and the presence of witnesses, invisible witnesses that might even be hovering over us tonight, is to egg us on and to give us a spurt from that transcendent realm because they know that thing to which we have been intended better than we.

Come my God, may we see everything in the context of your kingdom. If we have murmured and complained about any factor in our life, we understand it as a preparation for rule, for significance in the life to come. And that's the reward for the bearing and the patience, stewardship, growth in wisdom, teach us to sit with princes, to be princes, to share your loyalty in priestly way as the king himself who is lowly and meek.

Thank you, Lord. Send a shaft down into the foundation of the church of this locality by tonight, by this awkward stumbling choke, spluttering thing, my God, which is like the king coming on the back of an ass, upon which never man sat. Why did you choose that ass, that foal? Why didn't you take the mother who had experienced the weight of man and would allow you to come down in a dignified way? Why take this cult, this weak thing upon which never man sat that you would be ridiculed, that you would be foolish to come in jerks and spurts down that precipitous slope? Because if your kingdom does not come that way, it's not your kingdom.

And even the message of the kingdom has got to come that way. Not with human eloquence, not with well-ordered statements, but the same jerking, humiliating thing that comes down that it might come up. My God, may we be the willing disciples, the willing citizens of such a kingdom as that.

May we abhor prestige, wealth, titles, the honorings of men, and choose, my God, the way of your kingdom. Oh, your kingdom come, Lord. Come to this locality, Lord.

Come in your church where it's more than just the kingdom of God is within us and then dismiss it blandly and go on and live in unkingdom ways. Let your kingdom come, Lord. Righteousness.

Teach us to judge, to discern, to reckon, to speak one to another often in the fear of the Lord, to discern those who serve the Lord, those who serve Him not. This is a murky age, my God. It's turbulent.

It's full of disturbing things. Bring us to an acuity, a sharpness through the exercise of gifts, the exercise of discernance, and the weighty things that should be before us as the children of the kingdom. Thank you, Lord.

If our church is something less than this, and the only issue that we ever vote on is changing the carpet or painting the building or extending it, bring us to that kind of church that is church, where we are occupied with real issues of weighing, evaluating, of bringing correction, chastisement of one coming and two, and bringing an erring brother before the entire church, because the church is the expression of that king, and its dignity will not allow for a cheap passing over of the things that need to be identified and dealt with. And our very willingness to bear the pain of that is itself the inducement for the growth that will enable us as princes to sit and rule and reign with you from the heavenly throne. Oh, your kingdom come, Lord, is more than a cheapie.

It's an ultimate requirement. And for that reason, the Holy Spirit has been given. It's the spirit of the kingdom, not to adorn our denominations or to liven our meetings, but to fit us for rule.

For your spirit is your wisdom, my God, and your understanding and the love of truth and righteousness and enablement and courage to act in a kingdom way in a world that is inhospitable. And even in a church world that is inhospitable. Oh my God, give us a jealousy for the kingdom of God that we would walk worthy of the kingdom and the glory to which we are called from this night forth.

Put a seal on this. Let the spirit of the speaking sink into the foundations of the church and affect every category of our consideration and make us to see how self-willed, independent, autonomous we are. Doing what we like, coming.

I don't feel like the church is hypocritical. I don't have to join myself, but have my own. My God, your kingdom come.

Your name be hallowed in the earth because it's coming here as it is in heaven. And we thank you and praise you. May we never again cheaply and glibly speak the word kingdom without the cognizance of what it means both now and in the age to come.

Thank you, Lord. Put a seal on this tonight and we thank and give you praise that it's time to restore the kingdom to your people. Come Lord, come my God.

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