



DISCIPLESHIP

THE HEART OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

SESSION #2 THE SHAPE OF WHAT'S TO COME: 8 OT PROPHETIC ATTRIBUTES OF THE COMING KINGDOM

CONVERSATION LAB #1 INSTRUCTIONS & ASSIGNMENT: 3-5 peers or professors whom you don't already know are Christians: "What do you think Jesus' central message and his central mission was? Where did you learn that?"

I. **INTRODUCTION:** Salient Points from last weeks opening class.

A. **POINT #1:** Jesus' central message is the good news about the arrival of the "Kingdom of God."

Mark 1:14 Later on, after John (*the baptizer whose message was "the Kingdom of God is very close at hand"*) was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he announced God's Good News. **15** "The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is come to you!"

B. **POINT #2:** The foundational idea of the Kingdom is found in the Old Testament story of the Creation (God is the creator King and has the right and wisdom to rule over His creation); to the story of the Fall where we discover that there is devious and destructive spiritual rebellion against God's good rule and humanity by fake news about God and the deceptive enticement that they would be more than they are and equal to God, bite the proverbial fruit and find themselves alienated and infected with the malware of sin, alienation, and death.

C. **POINT #3:** God's Push Back Against Evil & Alienation: From the Creation and Fall (Genesis 1-3) we rapidly traced the trail of God's quest to bring humanity back to himself and to restore His creation to His original intentions for it. From Abraham, to Moses, to the creation of Israel (who was chosen to be a blessing to all nations by revealing the blessing and reality of living under God's loving wise rule); we followed the Old Testament story from Israel's entering the promised land to the golden age of David and Solomon and the building of the Temple; to the destruction that comes to Israel through civil war, conquest and exile by marauding empires.

Through all of this we discover God raising up prophets that bring HIS words to Israel. At times they forewarn Israel and Judah of impending disaster flowing from their disobedience, but other times they speak of a time in the future when their King the Lord God Almighty will bring about a new era and restoration of His purposes in the earth. — In the time between Malachi and John this future time becomes summated as "The Kingdom of God!"

D. **POINT #4:** The idea and message of the coming Kingdom turns the OT into a good of expectant hope and acts as bridge uniting the Old and New Testament into an ongoing cohesive revelation. It is this Kingdom that Jesus announces and calls people to. — But what are the attributes or culture of the Kingdom of God (KOG)?

II. **THE SHAPE OF WHAT'S TO COME: 8 OT PROPHETIC ATTRIBUTES OF THE COMING KINGDOM (CULTURE) OF GOD. (KOG)**

A. **SLIDE #5 — UNIFYING ATTRIBUTE: IT WILL BE THE TIME OF THE _____ (HEBREW); OR THE _____ (GREEK).**

B. The Messiah/Christ? Word means "_____ " and is associated with a King who was anointed to rule. The Messiah/Christ was the one promised by God to usher in His Kingdom. When the Messiah King comes, the other 7 dynamics will be expressed in and through him.

1. **Diverse Images of the Messiah in the Prophets.** He is spoken of in various ways — as a delivering savior; a triumphant king; a bold prophetic voice; an anointed servant of YAHW (Isaiah 42:1-4; Isaiah 61:1; See also John 3:34); but also as a suffering servant of YAWH (Isaiah 53) • Messiah is declared to spring from the line of David (the stump of Jesse/David's father) Isaiah 11:1 "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." (Isaiah. 16:5) — Then God will establish one of David's descendants as king. He will rule

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with mercy and truth. He will always do what is just and be eager to do what is right.—Yet the Messiah is stated to be greater than David, (the idealized king during Israel's golden era), he (the Messiah) shall sit upon an eternal throne, and he will judge the nations. (See Jesus in Mt.22:42-44, Psalms 110, Acts 2:34–37)

2. **KOG:** The Kingdom is Messiah's Culture — reflecting his Kingly Rule!

C. THE TIME OF _____ ON THE EVIL OF ALL NATIONS

1. **ON GENTILES:** Gentiles?

(See Ps.2:1-6, 9:17; Joel 3:9-16; Zechariah 14:1-21)

2. **ON ISRAEL: Amos 5:18-20** — "Woe to you (speaking to the Chosen people) who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light. It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him. Will not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light — pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness? (See Also: Isaiah 2:6-22).
3. **KOG:** Messiah's culture is a place that discerns & pushes back against human evil. A place that lives in the confidence that evil will not afflict humanity endlessly.

D. A TIME OF _____ OR _____ FOR ALL NATIONS & CREATION

1. **KOG:** Messiah's culture is a place devoted to rescuing others. The KOG is a place that is "other-oriented" and invested in the well-being of others. Not self-oriented or isolated. — Risk oriented and lives in the confidence of redemptive suffering for others sake.
2. **Distortion In The Intra-Testamental Period:** This promise of a blessing for all people groups and a judgment on all people groups was profoundly distorted during inter-testament times. By the time of Jesus many Jews anticipated a blessing only on them and a judgment only on the gentiles. — Cultural distortion of the Prophets vision. Culturalizes religion and its compromises with the the drive for personal cultural supremacy (racism) and its drive for self-preserving power.

Zechariah 2:10-13) *"Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you," declares the Lord. "Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people. (echo of 10 Commandments/covenant language). — I will live among you and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling."* (See also Isaiah.11:11; Jeremiah 23:1-8 & Amos 9:11-13 – actual reading quoted in Acts 15:17).

3. **THE SALVATION OF CREATION — ISAIAH. 65:17 (REV.21:1)** "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."
 - a) **KOG:** It is an ecologically thoughtful place and people. (Living out godly stewardship of the earth.

E. A TIME OF _____

1. **DEFINING OUR TERM:** A legal term meaning to "_____ " In scripture, God is the _____ behind His being reconciled to man/woman. (The other oriented initiating God.) **Ephesian 2:14:** "He is our peace who has broken down the wall that separated ...")

2. **GOD'S GRACIOUS GOAL?** — It is to reconcile humanity (Jew & Gentile) from a state of estrangement, hostility, sin, judgment, and death. The LORD'S act of reconciliation will destroy the curse of sin, which is death and judgment and will affect people from all nations.
 - **Isaiah 25: 6-9** — *"On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine - the best meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken. In that day they will say, ' Surely this is our god; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.'"*
 - **Isaiah 56:6-8** — *"And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him... I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations. The Sovereign Lord declares - he who gathers the exiles of Israel: "I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered." _*
3. **KOG:** Messiah's culture is devoted to seeking peace between people and God, people to people, and nation to nation. **Matthew 5:6** Jesus said, "Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called God's own offspring – children of God." – **1Corinthians 5:20** We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

F. A TIME OF THE _____

1. Defining Our Term: A "Covenant" refers to a solemn agreement which brings about a committed relationship between two parties. We experience covenant life in promise making and promise keeping: Oaths/Marriage/Contracts.
2. **Jeremiah's "New Covenant** — speaking to Israel: Jer. 31:31-34 — *"The time is coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, (Mosaic Covenant) because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. — "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord, "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people... "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*
 - Themes: The _____ Of God The _____ Of God The _____ of God.
 - The end intention of the first covenant and the new covenant is identical: **" I will be their God and they shall be my people."**
 - The New Covenant is instituted by Jesus in the "Lord's Supper", when the Passover celebration is reapplied by Jesus to himself in light of his impending death.. **"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.**
3. **KOG:** Messiah's culture is a culture that creates local communities that live for the Messiah and for one-another in covenant life, being promise making and promise keeping people like their King.

G. A TIME OF THE _____

1. **Two Essential Things To Know!** — More on living life in the Spirit later in the class.
 - a) **The Means To The Inner Experience Of Jeremiah. (Ezekiel 36:24-27)**

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"For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."

b) The Means To A Life of Empowered Service (Joel 2:28-29)

"And after words, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams; your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."

c) KOG: Messiah's culture is made real through an intimate encountering and submission to the presences and character of the Spirit of God.

H. A TIME OF _____

1. What is the Relationship of Righteousness and Justice? — Justice is a fruit of righteousness of "right-relatedness." — *The righteous love what is good and have learned to hate what is evil and so seek to conform to the righteousness of God.*

Mt. 6:33 Jesus said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you."

a) Justice is an expression of the 2nd Commandment (Love your neighbor as yourself). **Zechariah 7:9** — "This is what the LORD Almighty says: Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another." **Amos 5:15** — "Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts." **Micah 6:8** — "The Lord has shown you what is required: To love mercy, to do justly and to walk in humility with your God."

2. The time of Messiah's Kingdom will be when the broken, oppressed & rejected of society shall find God as their defender. (**Isaiah 42:1-4**)

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. 2 He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. 3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; 4 he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope."

3. KOG — Messiah's culture is shaped by right-relatedness and thus promotes godly-justice wrapped in a merciful hope.

I. A TIME OF _____ OR _____ (Hebrew)

1. DEFINING OUR TERM "SHALOM": — In general shalom speaks of completeness, or a state (condition) in which nothing is lacking. For the Israelite, peace is a state of life given by God as a gift. — The word became a way of greeting others — extending the desire/hope of shalom on those they encountered. (See opening of Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, etc.)

PEACE DOES NOT CONSIST SIMPLY IN TERMS OF PROSPERITY, WELLBEING, OF THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICT — but always entails righteousness. "There is no peace for the wicked." (Isaiah 48:22). The prophet notes that obedience to God's commandments would have made the peace of Israel like a flowing river. (Isaiah 48:18)

2. Jesus will speak of the peace he desired to bring to Jerusalem but they would not welcome him. (Matthew 23:37) — "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you,

how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

3. **A Poetic Imaginative Picture Of True Shalom** — True Shalom, according to the prophets was to come when Messiah came and saved His people. No place in this more wonderfully said than in the stunning imaginative imagery of **(Isaiah. 11:1-9)**.

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power; the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord - and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

III. CONCLUSION:

Don't WE Long For These Things? —When you read the headlines or look at your own life – doesn't this sound like the life that is REALLY life? Doesn't your heart resonate with the desire to see evil vanquished, the vulnerable and marginalized defended; righteousness and true to triumph and justice to role down like a mighty river? To see people rescued from the their alienation from God and one another; to see harmony and real community grow up around you and to see peace, real and lasting peace reign over all the earth?

After 400 years of prophetic silence — and then suddenly John comes into the area of Galilee from the wilderness and raises his voice, announcing, "The Kingdom of God has come to you!" – "No wonder the whole countryside emptied to see him!"

Reading Assignment: Please re-read the outline notes and the attached 2-page discussion on the "Distortion of the OT Prophets" during this coming week.



DISCIPLESHIP

THE HEART OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

THE COMING KINGDOM

DISTORTION IN THE TIMES BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

A DISCIPLESHIP CLASS HANDOUT- BY BRADY BOBBINK

Introduction: From Malachi to the coming of John the Baptist there is a 400 year expanse of time known as the “times between the testaments” or the inter-testamentary period. During the time, following the great Babylonian exile, Israel meticulously maintained its monotheism and the “law”. Added to this was the growing Rabbinical tradition with it's six hundred plus extensions of the Ten Commandments known as the Mishna.

Many religious leaders during this post exilic time thought and taught that through obedience to the law and traditions the Kingdom of God would be brought into reality for Israel. Instead of the Kingdom coming in came the legions of Rome with their Caesar worship and standards declaring false gods.

In the midst of Israel's despair and defeat new theoretical views arose during this long period of prophetic silence regarding the coming of God's Kingdom. The propagators of this new view became known as the apocalyptic writers, with their forecasts regarding the ultimate destiny of the world.

The Apocalyptic School

It is important to note that Biblical scholars use the term “apocalyptic” more than one way. The first use of the term is to describe a specific type or genre of Biblical and extra biblical literature composed between 200 B.C. and 100 A.D.

Apocalyptic teachings were revelatory in nature and concerned with the coming of cataclysmic future events. The genre is marked by its frequent use of vivid dreams, visions, beasts, and other highly symbolic means of conveying the prophetic writer's message. The Biblical student can see examples of apocalyptic writings in both the Old and New Testaments by looking in the books of Revelation, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Daniel.

The second way scholars use the term apocalyptic is to describe this inter-testamentary school of teaching regarding God and His coming kingdom when compared to the historical prophets found in the books of the Old Testament or what might be called the “biblical prophets.”

Comparing the Apocalyptic Writers and the Historical Prophets

Understanding Their Differing View of God and History: The Apocalyptic writers taught that God is no longer active in the affairs of human kind because they saw the world as being so evil. The present evil age that Israel found she in was one of uncontrolled darkness.

Because of this great evil God was thought to have withdrawn from involvement in the world until the final judgment of God would be unleashed on the earth. The evidence, according to

these teachers, of God being aloof could be vividly seen in the absence of new prophets being raised up to teach and guide Israel in her hour of need.

Since the ministry of prophesy was rightly understood to be the effect of God's Spirit the apocalyptic writers thought that there was no longer any direct activity of the Spirit and none should be expected until the Kingdom came in fullness.

Many of the inter-testamentary rabbis taught that Israel must simply wait till the end and in the mean time one had only the Temple and the Torah to give strength and comfort. During this period Israel saw herself as being obedient to God's law and will even though she was withdrawn from a concern for the nations around her.

In contrast the historical prophets of the Old Testament declared that God has been and always will be actively involved in human history. That God's promises, purposes, mercies and judgments do not cease simply because of Israel's hardships or disobedience. The Old Testament prophets declared that God was actively present redeeming humankind, [both Israel and the nations], to himself and would continue to do so until the very end of time.

Such a view would have encouraged an outward and activist faith on Israel's part. But she in fact withdraws into a false sense of security toward her own spirituality and an overly harsh view of God's attitude toward the Gentiles.

Understanding Their Differing View Concerning the End of History: The apocalyptic writers of this period taught that God would act only at the end of history in one final consummating act of judgment on this evil world.

This coming judgment would fall on the Gentiles and on only certain Jews who were notorious in their rebellion against God. Included in this group were tax collectors [known in the KJV as publicans], and sinners. "Sinners" being a rather indistinct group that would most likely have included harlots, the adulterous, and blasphemers.

Salvation on the other hand was for the righteous. The righteous were understood to be those that were keepers of the Law of Moses and the traditions of the elders. Therefore, the reasoning went, Israel alone would be saved for she alone was the chosen covenant people who kept the law.

In contrast not only did the historical prophets of the Old Testament think that God had not abandoned the world but they foresaw the day when God will visit the world with a new covenant of salvation and as well as a judgment for all humanity whether Jew or Gentile. When the Kingdom of God broke into human affairs salvation would not be based on simple outward obedience to the letter of the law, or due to one's ancestry, but rather would be the result of God's grace in response to sincere inner heart faith and allegiance toward the Messiah.

The prophets declared the saved of the future would experience salvation not because they are Israelites in the flesh (bodily circumcision) but because they are true Israelites who are circumcised in the heart toward God (Jer. 4:4; Dt. 10:15-16).

Understanding Their Differing View Regarding the Necessity of Ethically Action: The assumptions of the apocalyptic school led the writers to omit any call or demand for deep ethical change in Israel. After all Israel is already righteous through her obedience to the law, her sacraments of sacrifice and temple offerings, and her submission to the traditions of the elders.

In stark contrast to this non-ethical religiosity was the repeated call of Old Testament prophets for repentance in response to God's character and in preparation for the coming of His eternal reign. This call was regularly given to Israel. The prophets were quite willing to warn their fellow Jews that being Jewish, being circumcised, and doing outward religious obedience was no substitute for a true relationship of the heart toward the Lord.

Conclusion: These two very different views of God and the Kingdom would be the seedbed for consistent conflict between Jesus and the teaching religious leaders of his day.

We modern students should humbly take note that what one believes does indeed have deep impact on how we and the future generations will understand the faith once and for all given to us by the Apostles, prophets, and our Lord Jesus. It behooves us to set our hearts and minds to being patient and thorough students of the Scripture lest we begin to believe biblical half truths or even worse cultural distortions of the Gospel and its implications.