

Study Goals:

- To show your student the Bible can be trusted from beginning to end.
- To show your student that God is faithful and does what He says He will do.
- To show your student how they fit into the story of Jesus and how they can participate in the new life He offers.

The King & The Kingdom pt. 1

Read Acts 1:1-6

- What did Jesus' disciples mean by "restore the kingdom to Israel" (1:6)? In order to understand the answer to that question, one must know a bit of history.

I. A Few Old Testament Prophecies/Promises

Read Genesis 12:1-3

- What promises are made to Abraham?

God fulfills His promise to Abraham and Abraham's descendents eventually become the nation of Israel (Jews). God reigns as King over Abraham's descendents. They worship Him, serve Him, and He takes care of them both through direct action and also through leaders He raised up to serve them. The Israelites relationship with God continued in this way for hundreds of years all the way up until the time of Samuel.

In 1 Samuel 8, the people decided they wanted their own, earthly king, because they desired to be like all the other nations around them. God explained to them an earthly king would not be good for them, would mistreat them, and that by asking for one they were rejecting Him as king. But the people said they didn't care and wanted to be like everyone else regardless of God's warning, so God granted their wish and gave them a king.

The first king of Israel was a man named Saul (1 Samuel 9-31), and, while he started out well, his reign turned out to be a disaster in the end. Saul did not love God and was disobedient to Him, and as a result God removed him and replaced him with a man named David (1 Samuel 16; 2 Samuel 1).

David was a good king who loved God, obeyed Him, and who God loved greatly. In fact, so great was God's love for David that around 1,000 B.C. He made a promise to David, a descendent of Abraham, unlike any He had made to another human being.

Read 1 Samuel 16:1, 12-13 & 2 Samuel 7:16

- Who was David's father?
- What is the promise God makes to David? How did this differ from the promise made to Abraham, David's forefather?

The kingdom of Israel prospered under David's reign, and David continued to serve God until the day he died and the kingdom was taken over by his son. It wouldn't be long, however, before things

would go bad for Israel. Subsequent generations of kings were nothing like David. These new kings did not love God, and did as they pleased instead of obeying Him.

In fact, instead of worshiping God, they turned to idols, adopted the religions of their pagan neighbors, and began engaging in child sacrifice and ritual orgies like the nations around them instead of worshiping the one and only true God – even after all He had done for them!

As a result of the Israelites' betrayal, God became furious and decided to punish them. God incited other nations to attack the Israelites, and they did, but Israel refused to repent and continued in their idolatry. This enraged God further, and He eventually sent the Babylonians – an ancient superpower – to dismantle the Davidic monarchy, carry the people into exile in Babylon in 605 B.C. (where they would remain for 70 years), and to destroy Jerusalem (including Solomon's temple) in 586.

During the time of the exile, the people began to lose hope, and God took pity on them. Remembering the promises He'd made to His people, God encouraged them through His prophets (i.e. men who shared messages from God).

Some would argue the greatest prophetic activity in history occurred during this time via the ministries of Daniel, Nahum, Zechariah, Ezekiel – all of whom prophesied during the time of the exile. Additionally, most scholars believe much of the book of Isaiah was written during this time as well.

Read Daniel 2, Isaiah 2:2-3

- What did each of the metals represent in Nebuchadnezzar's vision in Daniel 2 (NOTE: this prophecy was spoken during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar – between 586 and 582 BC)?
 - Gold –
 - Silver –
 - Bronze –
 - Iron & Clay –
 - The Rock –
- How do Daniel and Isaiah describe the coming kingdom (NOTE: "mountain of the Lord", "Zion", and "Jerusalem" are all the same thing)?

Read Daniel 7:13-14, Isaiah 11:1-10

- How do Daniel and Isaiah describe the coming king, and what is the significance of the references to Jesse in the Isaiah passage?

(For further study on the prophecies of the coming King and Kingdom, see Psalms 2:6-9, 89:6-9, 110:1-2; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14; Ezekiel 21:24-27, 34:23-25, 37:24-26; Zechariah 6:12-13, 14:8-9; Isaiah 9:2-7, 42:1-7, 52:13-53:12, 55:3-5, 61:1-3; Micah 4:2-3)

Summary of Old Testament Promises:

1. God promised Abraham he would turn his descendants into a mighty nation who would bless all peoples.
2. God promised David that He would establish his throne forever, creating an eternal kingdom that would never be defeated with one of David's descendants on the throne.

3. During the time of the exile, God spoke through the prophets reminding the people of His previous promises to them, assuring them that He would fulfill them.
4. God spoke through the prophets to tell the people this eternal Kingdom would be:
 - a) Established during the rule of the "empire of iron" (Rome) in Jerusalem.
 - b) Divinely instituted ("not by human hands").
 - c) Ruled by a descendent of King David.
 - d) Indescribably greater than all earthly kingdoms.

II. Coming Kingdom/King Promises Misunderstood

Fast forward to the first century. Babylon had fallen to Persia in 538 B.C., later the Greeks rose to be the world power, then the Romans after them through the time of Christ. While the Jews had been largely ignored by the Persians, the subsequent powers of the Greeks and Romans had a bad reputation for mistreating and oppressing.

- If you were a Jewish child living under the oppressive rule of the Romans who'd heard all these prophecies about the coming King and coming Kingdom, what would you believe the coming kingdom would be like?
- What would you expect the coming King to do?

The traditional Jewish understanding of the coming King and coming kingdom pictured an earthly kingdom ruled by an earthly king that would dominate all the other kingdoms of the earth. In other words, the first century Jews expected the coming King (or Messiah) to be a great military leader who would raise up an army to defeat the Romans in battle and set up a new Jewish kingdom that would never be destroyed.

Read Luke 4:16-21, Matthew 4:17b

- In the Luke passage, Jesus quotes an Old Testament kingdom prophecy from Isaiah 61 before telling the people He'd come to fulfill it. In this way Jesus says, "I am here to fulfill the prophecies regarding the coming King!" How would the people have expected Him to do so?
- How would the people have understood Jesus' words in Matthew 4:17b?

Read John 6:1-15

- What did the people do after the miracle? Why? How did Jesus react?

Read Matthew 18:1-4

- How did Jesus explain one could become "great" in the kingdom? How would this have contradicted His friends' understanding of the nature of the kingdom?

Read Matthew 20:20-22a

- What do you believe motivated this question? What is it the mother and two brothers were wanting?

Re-Read Acts 1:4-6

- What were the disciples expecting when they asked what they did in verse 6?

The people in Jesus' day didn't understand the nature of the coming kingdom, and Jesus' closest disciples didn't either.

The disciples were lusting after power, but the kind of power they wanted was not something Jesus was prepared to offer them. He would, however, offer power to them in a better form.

Read Acts 1:7-11

- Jesus promises to give His disciples power in what form, and what would this power enable them to do (1:8)?
- What happened next? What promise is given to the disciples in verse 11?

III. Promises Fulfilled

Read Acts 2:1-13

- What day is it? What happened?
- Who made up the crowd that was drawn?
- What do some say to make fun of the disciples?

Read Acts 2:14-21

- Why does Peter appeal to the Old Testament?
- Peter quotes from the Old Testament book of Joel. What is Peter saying in applying that Old Testament quotation to the present events? How had the prophecy quoted in 2:17-18 just been fulfilled?
- How had the prophecy quoted in 2:19-21 been fulfilled in previous days?

Read Acts 2:22-24

- Summarize Acts 2:22-24. What claims did Peter make about Jesus? How did Peter convict the people of their own sin?
- Verse 23 says Jesus was handed over "by God's set purpose and foreknowledge" to those who put Him to death. Romans 8:32 says God the Father "did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all." Isaiah 53:10 says it was God the Father's will to "crush [Jesus] and cause him to suffer" and to make his life a "guilt offering" for us all. What does all this mean? Why would God allow His Son to die in this way (hint: see John 3:16)?

Read Acts 2:25-32

- In this section, Peter relies heavily on using the Old Testament to explain Jesus was the King prophesied to come in the Old Testament. Who had given Peter and the other disciples insight into the Old Testament Scriptures to be able to explain this (see Luke 24:44-45)?
- What points does Peter make to build his case?

Read Acts 2:33-35

- Verse 35 refers to Jesus' enemies who will be defeated by him. Who were Jesus' enemies, and how were they defeated?

Read Acts 2:36

- What did Peter mean when he said Jesus is "Lord"? "Christ"?
- Generations of Jews had been expecting the prophesied King to come since the promise had been made to David around 1,000 B.C. Now, 1,000 years later, this generation learned that, not only had the King come and they hadn't recognized Him – they murdered Him in the worst way they could kill a person (Roman execution)! Additionally, the King hadn't stayed in His tomb having been raised from the dead, was now in heaven seated at the right hand of God, and had all the power of God's blessing and wrath at His disposal. How did they feel in that moment? What were they thinking might happen next?

Read Acts 2:37

- What do you think the people expected Peter to say to them? Would Jesus have been justified in wiping them off the face of the planet right then and there?

Read Acts 2:38-39

- What is surprising about this? What does this response say about Jesus?
- Specifically, what blessings are promised to the people in verse 38? What are the conditions that must be met? What does it mean to repent? To be baptized?
- Were these blessings only for them?
- How do you think the people reacted to Peter's message? Would they have been grateful?

Read Acts 2:40-47

- What did the people who responded to Peter's message do? Do you think they were grateful considering how Peter could have responded? How did they live out of their gratefulness?
- How did God continue to bless them (verse 47)?
- How did these people live as members of Jesus' kingdom? How can we participate today?

Acts 2 chronicles the establishment of the prophesied kingdom in Jerusalem. The rest of Acts chronicles the spread of the kingdom from Jerusalem and the surrounding areas to the larger world.

How were each of the following promises fulfilled?

1. God promised Abraham he would turn his descendants into a mighty nation who would bless all peoples.
 - ✓ **Answer:** The Israelites are descended from Abraham, and Jesus Christ was an Israelite. Through Jesus' defeat of sin and death, new life is available to all who follow Him. It is only through Jesus Christ that humanity can have their sins forgiven and be saved from eternal death. His life and victory is the greatest blessing the world has ever known!
2. God promised David that He would establish his throne forever, creating an eternal kingdom that would never be defeated with one of David's descendants on the throne.

- ✓ **Answer:** Jesus Christ is a direct, blood descendant of King David. The Kingdom proclaimed in Acts 2 still exists today, and will exist forever. All who submit to Jesus as King in this life will join Him in His eternal Kingdom.
3. During the time of the exile, God spoke through the prophets reminding the people of His previous promises to them, assuring them that He would fulfill them.
- ✓ **Answer:** And He did less than 600 years later through Jesus Christ.
4. God spoke through the prophets to tell the people this eternal Kingdom would be:
- a) Established during the rule of the "empire of iron" (Rome) in Jerusalem.
 - ✓ **Answer:** The events of the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension/enthronement of Jesus Christ all occurred during the rule of the Roman Empire.
 - b) Divinely instituted ("not by human hands").
 - ✓ **Answer:** The coming of the Kingdom of God was inaugurated by Jesus' defeat of sin and death through His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. These were divine actions of God no human being was capable of.
 - c) Ruled by a descendent of King David.
 - ✓ **Answer:** Jesus Christ is a direct, blood descendant of King David.
 - d) Indescribably greater than all earthly kingdoms.
 - ✓ **Answer:** The Kingdom of God is greater than all earthly kingdoms, because it is only within the Kingdom of God victory over sin and death is found. While those living in earthly kingdoms are consumed by temporal issues and locked in battle with enemies made up of other peoples/nations, those within the Kingdom of God are consumed by eternal issues and driven to invite others to participate in the victory already gained for them by their King over the enemies of sin and death – the enemies of all humanity. Additionally and unlike earthly kingdoms, the Kingdom of God is not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, or geographic borders. There are no elections or squabbles over who is in charge, as there is only one King.

IV. Close: Is God Faithful?

Read Acts 1:11b

Acts 1:11b

11 "... This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Final questions:

- Does God do what He says He will do? Is God faithful to His promises?
- Jesus is coming back someday – do you believe this? Will you be ready for Him? How (remember Acts 2:38-39)?