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The kingdom of God in the Old Testament

I- Introduction

The Kingdom of God is God in Christ in the saints governing the creation of God. The Kingdom of God is the eternal union of the Life of God with all that is found worthy in the material realm. The Person and Life of God provide the government, the life, the righteousness, the holiness, the love, the joy, the peace, the significance, the wonder, the glory of the Kingdom. The people, creatures, and things of earth provide the substance and visible form of the Kingdom.

Old Testament prophecies foretell the extent of Christ's rule. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south *And the LORD shall be king over all the earth:* in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one" (Zech. 14:4, 9).

II- Definition of the concept "Kingdom of God"

There is only one kingdom of God, variously described in Scripture as the "kingdom of heaven," "kingdom of God," "kingdom of the Son of Man" (Matthew 13:41), "kingdom of the Son" (Luke 22:30), "kingdom of Jesus" (Revelation 1:9), "kingdom of Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 4:1), "kingdom of Christ and God" (Ephesians 5:5), and "kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (Revelation 11:15).

"Kingdom of the Lord" occurs once in the Old Testament *malkuth Yahweh* (1 Chronicles 28:5). The term "kingdom of God" is not an Old Testament one, but the concept is. Clearly, Jesus' hearers had some concept of "kingdom" which rested on their Old Testament upbringing, and they would have recognized Jesus' words as a claim that the hope or expectation of Israel was to find its fulfillment in Him.

There are of course many occurrences of "kingdom" in The Old Testament for earthly territory or domain. "Dominion" or "rule" is occasionally the translation for the idea of God's authority and power (Psalms 22:28, 45:6, 66:7, 103:19, 145:11-13; 1 Chronicles 17:14, 29:11). Throughout the Old Testament (but especially in the Psalms and the prophets) the idea of God as King ruling over His creation and over Israel is clearly expressed. Although God's immediate kingship is evident in the Old Testament, there is also a strong emphasis on a future fulfillment of God's universal rule. This anticipation often coincides with messianic expectations associated with both the first and second advents (cf. Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-12, 24:21-23, 45:22-23; Zechariah 14:9). Daniel 4:34 describes God's rule as "an everlasting dominion" and a "kingdom [that] is from generation to generation.

III- Linguistic Meaning of the term kingdom

The primary meaning of *malkuth* (Hebrew) and *basileia* (Greek) and *malakut* (Arabic) is the authority, reign, or rule of a king. The territory, subjects, and it must have laws. The kingdom of God is the sphere of God's rule (cf. Psalm 22:28). Yet fallen man participates in the universal rebellion against God and His authority (1 John 5:19, Revelation 11:17-18). By faith and obedience man turns from his rebellion, is regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and becomes a part of the Kingdom and its operation. Though human participation in the Kingdom is voluntary, God's kingdom is present, whether or not people recognize and accept it.

IV- The Kingdom of God Through the Old Testament History

1- In The Garden of Eden

The first manifestation of the sovereign rule of God is the creation. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of creation, for it establishes the foundation for all our understanding of reality. It establishes once and for all the sovereignty of God and the fact that things are what they are because God made them so. The climax of God's creation was the establishment of His kingdom that we are now considering. In Eden God set His people-Adam and Eve, made in His image and reflecting His rule-in their own dominion over the rest of the created order (Gen. 1 :26). God's own rule was epitomized in the probationary word which set the bounds of human freedom within the kingdom (Gen. 2:15-17). The blessedness of kingdom existence consisted in both the relationship of man to God and the relationship of man to the creation. Nature was submissive to man's dominion and fruitful in providing his needs. Salvation, of course, had no place in this prototype kingdom since man was made in the kingdom and needed no saving.

2- The Kingdom after the fall

The fall of man (Gen. 3) caused a disruption in his kingdom existence. As a rebel against God, he was no longer a willing subject and had to suffer ejection from the garden. As man fell, the creation was made to fall with him. The ground was cursed, nature challenged man's dominion, and all of man's existence was now out-side the garden. But judgment and grace go hand in hand. God declared His purpose to reverse the fall by means of the woman's seed (Gen. 3:15). Genesis 4 to 11 shows two lines of human development-one ungodly line expressing human sin and inviting God's judgment, and a godly line showing God's purpose of grace to make a people for Himself. The godly line leads us to Abra-ham, to whom the significant covenant promises were made. These promises have three focal points:

1. God will make of Abraham's descendants a great nation.
2. They will be given a land to dwell in.
3. They will be established on a special relationship to God.

Here we see nothing less than the promise of the king-dom of God. Abraham's descendants are to be God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

The rest of Genesis shows the tension between the promise and the actual experience of the patriarchs. Everything seemed to work against the fulfillment of the promises, so that

only God's word of promise was left to be embraced by faith. The ultimate reversal was seen when the descendants of Jacob ended up in Egypt, where they suffered a cruel bondage.

3- In Israel's History:

The relationship of the covenant to Abraham and to the salvation of Israel from Egypt is clearly seen in Exodus 2:23, 24: " . . . *their cry under bondage came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob*" RSV. We cannot comment here on every detail of the great exodus from Egypt, but we should note its main features, for they form the pattern of salvation in the Bible. When God gave His covenant stipulations at Sinai, He addressed Israel as His people. It is clear that this law of Moses is not a program of works for salvation. Salvation is of grace, and the covenant of Sinai was given, not so that Israel might be saved, but because she was saved. The law is thus a manifestation for the people of the kingdom.

Again, space is too short to detail the whole range of Israel's history, but we can easily observe the emerging pattern:

1. The promise of the kingdom was given to Abraham.
2. The acts of God in bringing Israel out of Egypt were the definitive acts of salvation.
3. Sinai marked the objective constitution of Israel as the people of God.
4. Salvation as the way into the kingdom also involved the bringing of Israel into possession of Canaan. The pattern of conquest under Joshua continued the demonstration of the fact that it was the power of God at work in salvation.
5. The political development leading through the period of the judges to the establishment of the united monarchy was a demonstration (albeit imperfect) of the principle of a theocracy—a God-ruled state.

The book of Ruth makes clear that God's love and grace extend to those outside of Israel, even to the hated Moabites. Therefore a key theological notion of the book is the universal love of the Lord God for all peoples. Another idea is fidelity, since Ruth remains faithful to her mother-in-law in good times and in bad. The book is also concerned with genealogy, since it deals with an ancestor of King David. Matthew mentions Ruth in the genealogy of Christ.

In first and second Samuel: The rule of God in Israel was mediated through the Sinai covenant as it was administered by God's anointed, King David and his lineage, and as the focal point of this administration was established in relationship to the temple in Jerusalem.

Once again we see a clear expression of the kingdom of God answering to the promises to Abraham and exhibiting the basic characteristics of God's people, in God's place, under God's rule. But history will not permit us to oversimplify the situation, for the decline and fall of Israel between 922 B.C. and 586 B.C. raises the very important question about the nature of the fulfillment that existed under David and Solomon. In certain ways the physical characteristics of the promises to Abraham were fulfilled:

“Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land which He swore to give to their fathers. . . . Not one of all the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.”-Josh. 21:43,45.

In first and second Kings: David is the main character in both books. Theologically, the most important passage is found in 2 Sam. 7 in which God promises David that his descendants will rule forever. This prophecy is the basis of the Messianism which runs through the rest of the Bible and finds its fulfillment in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, while the kingdom of David and Solomon was a glorious fulfillment of the promises, it was nevertheless a kingdom of fallen people in a fallen world. It never could be permanent in itself, for it was imperfect. But when this kingdom fell apart, the question of the real fulfillment of the promises was a problem. The answer was given by the prophets of Israel. The main point is that the fall of Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem was the result of the chosen people's infidelity to the covenant with Yahweh. The theological message of the two books is: 1) the catastrophe is to be explained because of the continual infidelity of the kings of Israel and Judah to both covenant and temple; 2) the word of God is infallible and always attains its end; 3) the promise made by God to David in 2 Sam. 7 that his dynasty will be eternal is a promise which must be fulfilled because God is faithful. The prophets Elijah and Elisha combine their preaching with many miracles and in this they foreshadow Jesus who announces the Kingdom of God in power and miracles.

4- The Kingdom in The Prophets

The prophetic books belong to the dark ages of God's chosen people. The prophets were men whom God raised up during the dark days of Israel's history. They were the evangelists of the days, the religious patriots of the hour.

The writings of these prophets begin in the time of the book of second kings, some of them written by men who told the northern kingdom to straighten out or it will be carried away, others written to the southern kingdom, some written in the exile, and a few written after the return. The obvious characteristic of futuristic prophecy is that it describes the future of the kingdom in terms which are drawn from the pattern of past history.

The kingdom of God involves three essential aspects in the Prophets: The reign or rule of the king, the subjects of that rule who are the people of God, and the sphere of that rule, which is the place where God is the unchallenged Lord among his people.

The objectives of God's Kingdom are to restore world peace (See Isaiah 2:4, 32:17-18; Zechariah 9:10), to restore the spiritual needs and worship of the people (See Isaiah 2:2-3; Zechariah 14:16-17; Acts 15:16-17) and then a physical restoration of the world that is presently suffering in the environmental area as never before. (See Isaiah 35, 41:18-20, 51:3; Ezekiel 36:34-35; Amos 9:13-14; Joel 3:18, Zechariah 14:8-10) *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."* Daniel 2:44

A- In Isaiah:

“The eschatology found in book of Isaiah is a kingdom eschatology. By that we mean that the emphasis is on the future kingdom of Israel. It is depicted as a kingdom centered in Jerusalem. Peace and prosperity will abound, and all the world will come to Jerusalem and marvel and be taught. Proper worship and the centrality of the law are significant characteristics of this kingdom. A descendant of Jesse will be on the throne, but this aspect of the kingdom is not prominent in Isaiah. The emphasis is on the fact that Yahweh will reign (2:23; 33:22; 43:15; 44:6) and will be the pride of remnant of Judah and the glory of Jerusalem.”ⁱ

“There are two main themes in Isaiah: first, The Lord is the Holy One of Israel chapters 1-39 and second, The Lord is the king of history chapters 40-66.”ⁱⁱ

In Isaiah, chapters seven through twelve, the prophet is dealing with what could be called the Assyrian crisis.

“From verse one that one of the kings in Isaiah’s time was Ahaz. Well, in the days of Ahaz, the king and his people were worried to death because, just north of their border, the northern kingdom and Syria were joining forces and it seemed like they were planning to conquer Judah.

Chapters seven and eight tell us how God used Assyria to punish both kingdoms, Israel and Judah. The last verse of chapter eight shows the people looking around and seeing trouble, darkness, and the gloom of anguish. As chapter nine opens, the prophet is saying: This gloom will not last forever. The picture gives way to a picture of total gloom which closed the preceding chapter. It gives way to a picture of brilliant light. There was still reason for hope, as to the future. God’s plan would be carried out. A time would come, Isaiah says, “*when darkness would be dispelled by light; gloom would be replaced by darkness, and God would have a nation of people, ruled by a perfect king*” (Isaiah 9:1-7).”ⁱⁱⁱ

These things, I am persuaded, refer to Christ and His people. I believe Isaiah is giving a prophecy of Christ and the church. He is describing events to come as if they were already accomplished. Matthew 4:12-17 quotes this passage and he applies it to the king of kings. Some Orthodox Jewish commentators and modernists will say this was Hezekiah who reigned after Ahaz. Well, Hezekiah was a better man than Ahaz; Hezekiah carried out some good plans and policies but he wasn’t God, he wasn’t everlasting Father.

“The hope of Israel is thus driven ahead the existing nation. Over this Remnant, that shall one day be, there shall rule the Messiah Prince of the line of David. Isaiah’s hope of the coming kingdom of God is not to be explained, as we have said, merely as a child of the “David idea”; it springs, rather, from the mainstream of Israel theology. But it is not at all strange that Isaiah should have used the ideology of royal David to express it. There will come new David, a

David redivivus; he will rule over new and a redeemed Israel (9:1-7; 11:1-5; cf. Mic.5:2-4)”^{iv}

The whole purpose of the prophecies was to reveal God’s kingdom.

“It is the kingdom of God toward which all history moves. The messianic hope of Israel was thus tied firmly to the line of David, to Jerusalem and the temple, and given a form which it would never lose. Messiah does not come to a proud nation glorying in its strength, but to a beaten nation, a cut-down stump of a nation, a nation tried in the furnace of affliction. No humiliation could be so object, no torment so brutally severe, but that faith might whisper. Messiah is a ruling king. Yet it is an unusual figure of a king: of humble and unlikely origins (Mic. 5:2), a sprout from the stump of a once-mighty tree (Is. 11:1), whose power is not of the sword but over the spirits of men. And his kingdom is one entered by the humiliated that small Remnant who in suffering and tragedy have been purged of their sinful ways, who in that suffering have learned obedience to the will of God. Who was a root out of dry ground (Is.53:2); of a king, a lowly king, who comes riding on an ass (Zech 9:9). We shall hear of One, every inch a king, who summoned the poor in spirit to his kingdom (Mat. 5:3): Clearly a kingdom to which “not many wise, not many powerful, not many...of noble birth” are called 1Cor. 1:26). In the Isaianic doctrine of the Remnant the hope of the kingdom of God begins to shift markedly from the nation Israel to a church within the nation.”^v

The fact that God rules, the truth of the kingdom of God, the very thing that is the one and only true gospel of Jesus Christ! And, secondly, to reveal preserved in writing for us today, what is to happen in the latter days. Other Scriptures tell us: *"For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many"* (Isa. 66:15–16).

“Isaiah wrote about the king of History who will destroy Pekah and Rezin, bring the terrible Assyrian invasion, humiliate and punish haughty Assyria, bring the remnant back, establish the kingdom of David and raise the Royal king.”^{vi}

Isaiah tells us a moral world order is inconceivable and impossible save in submission to the righteous rule of God. The time shall indeed come so faith makes affirmation (Is.11:9).

“Isaiah was aware of a distinction between the faithful and the sinful majority. The people of God became identified with the Israelite state, and the victory of God’s purpose with the glorification of that state. We have also seen that the

prophets were obliged to reject that identification completely the notion. In the notion of the Remnant, however, a distinction begins to be drawn between physical Israel and the true Israel, the actual Israel and the ideal Israel. The notion begins to take root in Hebrew theology that actual Israel will not inherit the kingdom of God. It is an Israel, not of birth, but of individual choice for the calling of God. Over this true Israel, and over it alone, will God rule-for these are the people of his kingdom. The prophets understood that a new Israel “according to the spirit” and not the nation Israel, would be heir of the promise of the kingdom. In all of them the notion of the Remnant appears, even here the term is not used.”^{vii}

The instruction to the people is to heed and listen to the commands of God:

Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for *a law shall proceed from me*, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. (Isa. 51:4)

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. (Isa. 11:4)

For thy Maker is thin husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. (Isa. 54:5)

For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. (Isa. 60:12)

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (Isa. 2:2)

No longer will the nations maintain their own religious beliefs and traditions. No longer will they follow their own laws and customs. The whole earth will be under the rule and authority of God, under His inexorable spiritual and physical laws. No longer will antagonisms and hostility toward other countries exist. The world will be at peace. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). The one world government sought for by the statesmen and leaders of society *will* come about, but not by their hand or in their way. It will come about by the return of Christ who will manifest His power and glory. The many Old Testament texts that foretell these great events comprise the Gospel message.

B. In Jeremiah:

The purpose and message of Jeremiah are summarized in one verse in the call of Jeremiah: “See, today I appoint you over the nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant” (1:10)

“These six verbs recur in key places throughout the book as Jeremiah proclaims the word of the Lord (cf. 18:7-10; 24:6; 31:28) therefore the call have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” the message they gave is that the Lord would bring the people of Israel back from exile (29:10) and would make a new covenant with them (31:31-34). The people would return to God (29:12-14) and the city would

be rebuilt (30:18), and a righteous Davidic king would sit on the throne (33:15-26).^{viii}

Speaking of King Jesus, the prophet Jeremiah said: "*Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will raise to David a branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness IN THE EARTH. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is the name by which He will be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*" Jeremiah 23:5-6

For Jeremiah Israel had certainly broken covenant and paid for it with her national life, it was certain above all certainty that God never breaks covenant.

"The hope is not linked to Israelite state, for Israel has broken the covenant. It is too late to speak of a Remnant of the nation which will be spared-although the idea is exactly the same. Here we hear of a new Israel, a spiritual Israel to which God will one day accord a New Covenant and a new start. It will be an Israel wholly obedient to God's law, not because she has reformed, but because the law is within, written on the very heart. Here is a new covenant which no external obedience can secure, but which is given to a people who have surrendered their hearts to God and received his forgiving grace (Jer.31:31-34)".^{ix}

Jeremiah's message is, of course, a total rejection of the state as the vehicle of the kingdom of God beyond which nothing could be more total.

"This does not mean that he was a revolutionary who called for the destruction of the state and the monarchy as sinful institution. On the contrary-and this is true for all prophets-Jeremiah never attacked existing institutions...But the states he knew, that Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, was a godless state. With the injustice and the idolatry which it tolerated or foddered, it was anything but the kingdom of God's people God was not going to defend such a kingdom. It had turned on God like a wild beast (12:7-8); God must therefore hate what he had dearly loved and give it over into the hands of its enemies. Whatever covenant had existed between God and that state is broken, finished. Jeremiah's younger cotemporary, Ezekiel, had exactly the same conviction (Ezek. 10-11).Jeremiah's gloom mitigated, as Isaiah's had been, by the confidence that there was a "holy seed" in the nation which the present tragedy would purify. Jeremiah powerfully played on the Remnant theme. For all his gloom he never gave up hope of a glorious future for the true people of God".^x

The kingdom which God will establish is not equal to the kingdom of Judah and its temple. By the same token the destruction of that state and temple is not the defeat of God.

"Jeremiah himself entertained the hope that one day there would be a Remnant over which the Messiah King would rule (23:5-6). But this king, who should be called "Yahweh is our righteousness" has nothing to do with this Zedekiah who

so unworthily wears that name. As for Zedekiah and his crew, they are so many bad figs too rotten to eat (Ch. 24); they are not God's people, and the kingdom of God will not be established over them."^{xi}

C. In Ezekiel:

The purpose of Ezekiel's divine commission as God's "watchman" was to warn a generation of obstinate and hardened Israelites of impending judgment (2:3-8), to underscore each generation's accountability for sin (18:20), and to call those willing to heed the counsel "repent and live" (18:21-23, 32). The day of Jacob's trouble, chaps. 25-32).

"Ezekiel's was a reminder to Israel that Yahweh is indeed righteous and just in His sovereign rule of the nations (28:2-26). Finally, in chapters 33-48 Ezekiel instills hope among the captive Hebrew remnant by encouraging them with the promise of a new "covenant of peace" superintended by the "Davidic shepherd" (34:20-31). Yahweh the covenant-keeping God of Abraham, would once again restore the fortunes of Israel and Judah by joining them into a single nation (one kingdom) under one messianic king. The Davidic prince who will rule forever. The Lord will change his people, establish faithfulness in the Land, relocate his sanctuary in their midst, and bless Israel through his servant David (37:15-28). The Lord addressed Ezekiel by the title "Son of man" some ninety times in the book. Also in Daniel 8:17 and it is used to emphasize the humanity of the messenger in contrast to the divine origin and authority of the message."^{xii}

Ezekiel stressed the doctrine of "individualism" in the old testament covenant faith represented a distinct break from the philosophy current in his day. Ezekiel sought to counterbalance the teaching of the Torah by integrating the principles of both corporate and individual responsibility.

Ezekiel was the father of individualism in the Old Testament faith. It is true that the Hebrew had always a strong sense of the corporate nature of society and that the prophets had hurled their challenge at the nation and addressed it as a whole in the light of its position as the covenant people. But the nation was composed of individual men, and there was never a time when the Old Testament mind was not aware of that fact. The "you shall" of the Decalogue is addressed to the individual will. The whole ethical attack of the prophets moved from the plight of individual men to an assault on the conscience of those individuals who oppressed them. No prophet laid greater stress on the inward nature of repentance, the change of heart, than did he. His preaching was not merely an attack on the state, it was a call to individual men to decide for the kingdom of God against the kingdom of Jehoikim. And his own life was an illustration of the immense cost of that decision. It may be added that Ezekiel in his own way followed the same path (Ch. 18).

Ezekiel in a vision (Ch. 37) it seemed that he saw a vast plain covered with bleached bones, and he knew that they were the bones of the defunct nation. Nor was it possible to see how the dead nation might ever live again (vs. 3, 11). But God spoke to the prophet, and in his vision he summoned the very spirit of God from the four winds of heaven. And the spirit breathed on the bones, and they "stood on their feet and exceeding great army" (vs. 9-10). It is a nation dead in its sin in the cross of the eternal death, alive again with

the spirit of God in its heart. Here is the people of God and the kingdom of God (37:23-28; 11:19-20).

Though Christ came as God in the flesh, His inevitable destiny was to be a king. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9). This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem as a humble king on Palm Sunday.

Jesus instructed His disciples: "*I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem*" (Zech. 12:10–11)

Christ's birthplace and kingship are described by the prophet Micah: "*But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*" (Micah 5:2). The city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt and also the temple, and the Davidic king will once again rule God's people.

The exodus salvation in prophecy involves forgiveness of sins, and the covenant will be written on the heart. Human nature will be changed to conform perfectly with God's law. The land will perfectly reflect Eden by its fruitfulness, and nature will no longer be at odds with itself and with man. In fact, the renewal will be a remaking of the very sky and the earth. Sometimes the prophets deliberately mix the restored Israel theme with the restored Eden theme (Ezek. 36:35; Isa. 51 :3). So Ezekiel depicts the river of life flowing from the new temple and flanked by the tree of life (Ezek. 47:3-12; cf. Rev. 22:1, 2). Now the crucial question is: when is all this fulfilled? Clearly, the historical restoration from Babylon was not the anticipated fulfillment. It did provide a very pale reflection of fulfillment in that all the physical features were there to some degree. But the restoration that we read of in Ezra and Nehemiah, far from out-shining the glories of David and Solomon's day, did not even come near to equaling them. In the face of this disappointment, the post-exilic prophets (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi) point still to that future great day of the Lord.

D. In Daniel:

The prophet Daniel, who lived 600 years before Christ, knew that the Kingdom of God was a real kingdom, a government ruling over literal people on the earth. Jesus Christ brought additional knowledge about it which the prophet Daniel might not have known. Still, Daniel knew there was going to be a real, literal Kingdom of God on the earth. Daniel was one of four extraordinary, intelligent, and brilliant Jewish men in the Judean captivity. These four men were stationed in the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar of the Chaldean Empire, in training for special responsibilities in the Babylonian government. Daniel was a prophet who had been given special understanding in visions and dreams, (Daniel 1:17). Nebuchadnezzar was the first real world ruler. He had conquered a vast Empire, including the nation of Judah. This king had a dream so impressive it troubled him, moved him to tremendous concern. He demanded that his magicians, astrologers,

and sorcerers tell him both what he had dreamed, and what it meant. They could not. They were baffled. Then Daniel was brought before the King. Daniel disclaimed any more human ability to interpret dreams than the Chaldean magicians, but, he said, there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days (Daniel 2:28). The sovereignty of God is evident in his providing Daniel with the interpretation of the dream and thereby sparing their lives. First, God's purpose was to reveal to this world-ruling human king that there is a God in heaven ? that God is supreme ruler over all nations, governments, and kings ? that God rules the universe! This Chaldean king knew only about the many pagan demon gods. He knew nothing of the true living almighty God.

The prophet Daniel wrote about the time near the end of this age: *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever"* (Dan. 2:44).

The kingdom of God is the climax of God's agenda for Israel and the world. The kingdom will never be destroyed, though in some senses. God already rules an everlasting kingdom (4:3, 34-35). The kingdom of God will destroy the kingdoms of the world. The wind will blow them away, with no trace left and the kingdom of God will fill the whole earth.

"The Holy One will judge the sinful nation and raise the remnant from destruction and He will show His presence in the midst of His people.

The book of Daniel demonstrates God's power and control over the gentile kings and kingdoms. God has overall agenda and a significant difference from the discussion of the four kingdoms in chapter 7 shows clearly the perversity, especially of the fourth kingdom, and the hostility toward the godly, however, the emphasis is on the fact that after these pagan kingdoms, the kingdom of God is coming and will endure forever (v.16-18, 27)^{xiii}

E- In Amos 9:8 we read *"Behold the eyes of Lord Yahweh are the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth"*

"God has rejected the Israelite state, and has rejected it totally. The kingdom of Israel is not the kingdom of God, it can neither be that kingdom nor inherit it. It cannot be the kingdom of God, because it has flouted the laws of God and violated the covenant brotherhood. The kingdom of Israel is under the judgment of God and the judgment is history!"^{xiv}

Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. (Rom. 7:12)

"Israel is the people of God, but only as she keeps his law and exhibits his righteousness. Because Israel has not done so, but has egregiously violated the covenant brotherhood, Israel is no true people of God!

God does not have favored people. No earthly state is established of God, guaranteed of God, and identified with his purposes. Nor has any earthly order, however good, the means of setting up God's order in terms of its own ends...we must, like Israel, learn that our order is not God's but must conform to it or perish. For sinful society, as sinful society none. Man's disorder cannot inherit the kingdom of God but must, on the contrary, live ever history's judgment.

Hosea rejected the Israelite nation as resoundingly as did Amos. The hope of the fruition of God's kingdom is thus completely divorced from the Israelite state. But it is not thereby dissipated. On the contrary, it begins to take new form. God, who must divorce and destroy his people, nevertheless has a future for them."^{xv}

V- Chronology of the prophets

Kings of Israel (10 northern tribes)	Kings of Judah (2 southern tribes Benjamine and Judah)	Prophets	Kingdoms of the world	Events and the Prophet's messages
Ahab 875-852	Jehoshaphat 876-851	Elijah	Growth of Phoenicia	Killed 450 Baal prophets
Ahaziah 853-851	Jehoram 851-842	Elisha		
Jehoram 851-842	Ahaziah 843-842	Joel	Assyrian Empire conquered the Northern kingdom , a hundred fifty years 827-800	Judgment by Locust, repentance and the coming of the spiritual kingdom
Jehu 842-814	Athaliah 842-836	Jonah	Shalmaneser III	Salvation by grace to the Gentiles (Ninevites)
Jehoahaz 814-797	Jehoash 836-796	Obadiah	Adad-Nirari III 811-801	God will destroy Edom because her sin and the kingdom of God will be established
Joash 797-881	Amaziah 796-782	Amos	During the reign of Uzziah and Jeroboam II	Restoring the fallen house of David
Jeroboam 782-740	Azariah 782-737	Hosea	Founding of Rome 750	God's great love for Israel in spite of her unfaithfulness

Menahem 740-737	Jotham 737-735	Nahum	Assyrian invasion of Israel 745-721	Refers to preaching the gospel and to God's restoring the land
Pekah 737-733	Ahaz 735-725	Micah	Tiglath Pileser III 744-727	Getting up after falling down. The light in the darkness
Hoshea 733-722	Hezekiah 725-696	Isaiah 730-690	Shalmaneser V 727-722 Sargon II 722-705 Fall of Israel 722. Siege of Jerusalem 700	The Lord is the king of history. The remnant will return. The Davidic king will reign
	Manasseh 696-641	Zephaniah, Habakkuk	Assyria's great expansion. 680-627	Judging the nations and restoring the remnant (pure hearts and humble). Righteous by faith shall live
	Amon 641-639	Jeremiah	The fall of Nineveh and Jerusalem 587	The sin of the people and leadership. The coming judgment and The new covenant
	Josiah 639-608	Ezekiel	The rule of Babylon 625-539 Conquered the Southern kingdom for seventy years	Judgment is the departure of God's glory from the old Jerusalem and hope to return to the new Jerusalem.

	Jehoiakim 608-597	Daniel	Fall of Nineveh 606 The last days of Judah. Reign of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar 609-587. Fall of Babylon 539	The kingdom of God will destroy the kingdoms of the world. The kingdom of God will fill the whole earth
	Jehoiachin 597	Haggai	The Persian Empire 538-331 Conquered the Babylonians and let the Jews return to the land	Obey and Build the temple and God will care of you and bless you
	Zedekiah 597-586	Zechariah	Cyrus the king of Persia 558 - 529. Cambyses 529-523	Call to obedience. Victory over the nations. Coming of the king and future Zion's victory
		Esther, a Jewish girl who became queen of the Persian Empire	Ahasuerus=Xerxes 485-464 The book of Esther	Rebuilding of the Temple Darius I 534-516.
		Nehemiah who rebuilt the temple (governor) Ezra collects the books Zerubbabel refused help from the Samaritans	Xerxes's invasion of Greece Artaxerxes I Longimanus 464-424	Battle of Salamis. Return from exile

		Malachi	Jews and Samaritans division	Criticize of the priesthood and the sacrifices. God's love and unfaithful people and priests. Coming of Elijah the prophet (John the Baptist)
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VI- Conclusion:

Who are the people of that Church and who proudly claim to be the heirs of that promise? To be sure we no longer look forward to the coming of the Messiah king. As Christians we must affirm that hope has been amply fulfilled in One born of the house and lineage of David and hailed in derision as King of the Jews!

All the biblical promises find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Every element of the Old Testament's unfolding revelation of the kingdom leads to the Person of Jesus Christ come in the flesh. The kingdom of God has its objective reality in Him. He is God's true people. His presence marks the presence of God in the place we designate His kingdom. His word comes as God's ruling word with all authority.

The New Testament, in declaring the kingdom "at hand" with the coming of Jesus, points us to the fact that there is yet a consummation. But this consummation, such as is described in Revelation 21 and 22, is the outcome of the definitive work of Christ in the flesh, His living and dying. The great victory over the dragon of the Revelation is essentially the victory won two thousand years ago for us in the Person of Jesus Christ. To understand the gospel, Christ's life and death and resurrection for us, is to understand eschatology. The gospel, and it alone, is the key to those events which the Revelation describes as part of the process of bringing about the consummation of the kingdom. In the book of Revelation no new principle, no new aspect of the kingdom of God, is dealt with which is not already established on the basis of the gospel. The second coming of Christ and the whole of biblical eschatology involves the consummation of the gospel. The first coming of Christ determines the nature of events at His second coming.

In looking at the theme of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament, we have done little more than establish a framework necessary to understand the Old Testament basis of the gospel. Most importantly, this framework establishes the objective, historical nature of the gospel and rescues us from subjective caricatures of the gospel. Since all the promises and hopes of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ, we recognize that the righteousness of God is fulfilled in Him. The reading of the entire Bible as a

coherent and unified revelation forces us to acknowledge that the righteousness we need for acceptance with God is outside of us in the Person of God's Christ.

ⁱ . Hill, Andrew E. & Walton , John H. A Survey of the Old Testament. (Grand rapids: Michigan Zondervan Publishing House, 1991) 325.

ⁱⁱ . Massouh, Samir. Lecture : The kingdom of God.

ⁱⁱⁱ Berkley, warren E. (Taken from the internet).

^{iv} . Ibid.

^v .Bright, John. The Kingdom Of God (Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1953), 92-93.

^{vi} . Massouh, Samir. Class Note: The Letter Prophets

^{vii} .Bright, John. The Kingdom Of God (Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1953), 94.

^{viii} .Hill, Andrew E. & Walton , John H. A Survey of the Old Testament. (Grand rapids: Michigan Zondervan Publishing House, 1991) 329-330.

^{ix} Bright, John. The Kingdom Of God (Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1953), 125.

^x .Ibid., 116.

^{xi} . Ibid., 114.

^{xii} .Hill, Andrew E. & Walton , John H. A Survey of the Old Testament. (Grand rapids: Michigan Zondervan Publishing House, 1991) 343.

^{xiii} Bright, John. The Kingdom Of God (Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1953), 91.

^{xiv} .Ibid., 61.

^{xv} . Ibid., 65-75.

