

The Kingdom of God

The Messiah was promised to Israel as a Son of Judah in the Old Testament

Genesis 49:10 & 11

¹⁰ “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh (Him to whom it belongs) comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. ¹¹ Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.”

He was also promised by Moses

Deuteronomy 18:15

The Lord your God will raise up a prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.

He was also promised time and again by the Prophets. Isaiah chapter nine pretty well sums up the significance of the promise to Israel. The eighth chapter describes the condition of the Lord’s chosen people because of their Godlessness & Idolatry and the sin and immorality associated with them:

Isaiah 8:21-22

²¹ They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. ²² Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness.

Isaiah 9:1-5 Promises them deliverance from their Gentile oppressors

¹ Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. ² The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.

³ You have multiplied the nation And increased its joy; They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil. ⁴ For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian. ⁵ For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and fuel of fire.

Isaiah 9:6 Describes the Deliverer

⁶ For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

He would be The Lord Himself!

Isaiah 9:7 Describes the kingdom of the Lord

⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Judgment and justice would characterize it

The Kingdom was described in glowing terms by the prophets:

Zechariah 14:16-17

¹⁶ And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁷ And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.

And finally, The Old Testament finishes with a promise to send "Elijah the Prophet" to prepare the people for the kingdom

Malachi 4:5-6

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ⁶ And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

The Anticipation of the Jews, who were under a cruel Roman occupation when Christ was born, then, was for the Messiah to come and deliver them from the Romans and set up an Empire where He would rule the world from Jerusalem. After centuries of oppression by the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and now the Romans, they were more than ready to be the oppressors for a while.

Enter John the Baptist:

He was a man of the desert that wore a leather girdle and ate locusts and wild honey. This answers to the description of Elijah in **2 Kings 1:8**

He was "A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist"

In **Matthew 3:1** John the Baptist began his ministry with the message, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"

The Messiah's kingdom was to be a righteous kingdom, and folks would have to repent of their sins to be allowed to be a part of it.

And in **Matthew 4:17**, After John was imprisoned, Jesus himself preached the same message:

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

But by and large, the people wanted deliverance from the Roman government and the glory of the kingdom, but they didn't want to give up their sins. They enjoyed the miracles that Jesus did, like the healings and the feedings, but most of them rejected the concept that they were so bad that they needed to repent. They were not ready to receive the kingdom yet. As John's Gospel says.

John 1:11-13

¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

Nevertheless, although they didn't want deliverance from their sinfulness, they desperately wanted a Messiah who could deliver them from the Romans. I personally believe this is why Jesus said:

In **Luke 16:16**: ¹⁶ "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.

And in **Matthew 11:12**: ¹² And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force,

Some of them were contemplating virtually forcing this man who could work so many miracles to become their king and deliverer.

John 6:14-15

¹⁴ Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

¹⁵ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

All this sets the stage for the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem on the very week of the crucifixion

John 12:12-15

¹² The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³ took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!"

¹⁴ Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt."

So the King of Israel arrived at Jerusalem according to the prophecies of the Old Testament.

But look at what He did there:

Matthew 21:12-13

¹² Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³ And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

He started the reforms of the kingdom. That's the part most of them were not ready for.

Continuing with Matthew 21:

¹⁴ Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant ¹⁶ and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?"

And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read,

'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise!'"

And by the end of the week, the vast majority of the crowd were calling for His crucifixion.

So, was the crucifixion the end of the kingdom? No way!

The Apostles and followers of Christ were totally devastated, but if they had known their own Scriptures, they would have found that the Messiah was supposed to be rejected and crucified.

And Jesus told them at least three times on the way to Jerusalem that he was going to be rejected and crucified, but they just couldn't reconcile that with what they thought was supposed to happen, so it simply didn't register on their minds

But when the Pharisees had asked Jesus when the kingdom would come, He told them,

Luke 17:20b-21

^{20b} "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

When John wrote, He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him, 'he continued:

John 1:12-13

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Jesus explained this being born of God In the third chapter of John,

John 3:1-3

¹ There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:16-17

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Those who repent of their sins and put their trust in Christ are born again by the Spirit of God They become part of the spiritual Kingdom of God. Their ultimate loyalties are to God instead of to the unrepentant cultures and ungodly governments of men.

So, What about all those promises of a kingdom in Israel ruled by the Son of Judah as Son of God?

Go back to that first prophecy of that king

Genesis 49:10 & 11

¹⁰ "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh (Him to whom it belongs) comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. ¹¹ Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes."

Folks, when He was crucified, he sort of tied that donkey to the vine of Israel.

Israel as a Nation was set aside and His triumphal entry to accept the throne of the visible kingdom was delayed.

We live in the church age where Christ is the head of the spiritual Kingdom of God

We live in the world that crucified Christ, but our loyalty is to Him

Hebrews 2:8-9

^{8b} We do not yet see all things put under him. ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor

But **Hebrews 10:12-13** assures us,

¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

He is still patiently awaiting His Father's time for Him to step back down to the world that rejected Him and claim the crown of the visible Kingdom of God.

Any day now, we might hear that shout that calls us up to heaven to be with the Lord

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

After the rapture comes the tribulation period where God proves absolute sinfulness of those who refused to repent before he sets them aside for judgment. At the end of the Tribulation, when the whole world gathers together to annihilate the Nation of Israel, The Lord Jesus will return as their Deliverer and they will indeed repent

Matthew 24:29-30

²⁹ "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory

You want to see Him begin to take the throne of that kingdom? Go to **Revelation 19:11-16:**

¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

There, my friends, is Act II of the triumphal entry of Christ to the world.

As prophesied all along:

Christ came as the Lamb of God on a donkey and established the invisible kingdom of God that is within all those who believe in Him

He is coming again as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah on a white horse to initiate the visible kingdom of God where He will rule the world in righteousness from Jerusalem.

But I'm guessing He'll ride into Jerusalem to accept the crown on a donkey!