

## **The Books of Samuel and Kings**

Luke 18:31-43

Quinquagesima, March 3, 2019

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

The Kingdom of God does not come by your careful observation. No one will say, "Look, there it is," or "Look, here it is." The reason that the Kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation is that the Kingdom of God is among you.

It is the same way with the Christ. Do not believe people when they say, "Look, here is the Christ!" or "Look, there He is," as if the Christ were someone visible that you could behold with your eyes.

Oh, there will come a time when the Christ will become visible. The Last Day will come. When the Last Day comes, the Christ will come on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He will come with the glory of His Father. All of His Father's holy angels will be with Him. He will come with a voice of an archangel and with the trumpet call of God. He will come with a command and raise the dead. The nations will be gathered before Him. He will sit on the throne of His glory. Heaven and earth will recede before Him and no place will be found for them.

On that day He will be visible. You will see Him then. Even those who pierced Him will see Him. He will be visible to all. As the lightning that flashes in the west is visible also in the east so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

On that day not only will He be visible, but His kingdom will be visible. When the nations gather before the throne of His glory, He will separate the nations one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. That separation will be visible. Some He will banish from Himself into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Others He will welcome into the everlasting inheritance prepared for them from before the foundation of the world.

Some of you have wondered why there is a final judgment when heaven and hell according to our Lord's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is bestowed immediately after death. The reason that there is a final judgment in spite of heaven and hell bestowed immediately after death is so that the judgment of the Lord may be visible to all. When His judgment is visible to all, the ones whom He welcomes into the everlasting inheritance prepared for them from before the foundation of the world will also be visible. When those people are visible to all, then the Kingdom of God will be visible for the Kingdom of God is none other than those people in whose hearts God reigned and reigns.

Until then the Kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation. No one will say, "Look, here it is," or, "Look, there it is," because the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

Now when our Lord says that the Kingdom of God is in the midst of the people whom He addressed so long ago, He is saying that the Kingdom of God has entered into their midst. If the Kingdom of God had entered into their midst then the King had come into their midst. They could not see the King with their careful observation even though the King was in the midst of them.

In order to see the King one would have to read the books of Kings in the Old Testament. If you are going to read the books of Kings in the Old Testament, you may as well read the books of Samuel also because they are all part of the same account. The books of Samuel and Kings tell you how to identify the king when He is in the midst of you even though once you have identified Him it still will not be possible to say, "Look, there He is," or, "Look, here He is," in the way that we typically talk about seeing something or looking at something.

In the books of Samuel God establishes a monarchy in Israel. When David is king over Israel, God promises David that the kingdom of David would be an everlasting kingdom. That meant first of all that David would always have a descendent to sit on the throne of Israel forever. That meant second of all that the kingdom of Israel would endure forever. Since God is the one who would make the Kingdom of Israel endure forever, the kingdom of Israel is the kingdom of God.

David dies. God keeps His promise to David. David's son, Solomon, ascends to the throne of Israel and reigns over Israel. So far so good. God has kept His promise for one generation. Solomon builds the temple, and then something important takes place. God appears to Solomon and tells Solomon that David would always have a descendent to sit on the throne of David as long as the descendent of David kept the commandments, statutes, and rules of God. Now the promise is conditional. David will not automatically have an everlasting dynasty of descendants who sit on the throne of Israel, nor will Israel be an everlasting Kingdom automatically. It depends. It depends on whether or not the descendent of David in question keeps the commandments, statutes, and rules of God. Considering that God became angry with Saul when Saul was king because Saul failed to carry out the judgments of God on God's behalf, in addition to keeping the commandments, statutes, and rules of God, the king of Israel shall also administer God's judgments in the world in accord with God's will. When all of this was done, then God would keep the promise that He made to David. Once a King was found that would keep the commandments, statutes, and rules of God and

administer God's judgments on God's behalf in accord with God's will, then God would make David's descendents permanent on the throne of Israel and God would make Israel the everlasting kingdom.

That is why the books of Kings were written. The books of Kings then examine every descendent of David to see if he is this king who will establish the everlasting kingdom of their father David.

So what about Solomon? Solomon started out promising enough, but at the end of his life, his wives led him astray to worship foreign gods. So he gets a B+.

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, takes over. Solomon's son worships false gods, so no keeping of God's commandments here. And in his arrogance the kingdom of Israel is divided. He gets a F. And now the king who would keep the commandments, statutes, and rules of the Lord must not only administer God's judgments in accordance with God's will, but must now also reunite the Kingdom of Israel.

Rehoboam's son was Abijam. Abijam continued to worship false gods like his father. He gets an F.

Abijam's son was Asa. Asa got rid of most of the false gods in Israel. In so doing he demonstrated his faithfulness to the Lord. He even won great victories against God's enemies. But he did not get rid of all of the false gods. He gets a B.

Asa's son was Jehoshaphat. He performed about as well as his father. He gets a B.

Jehoshaphat's son was Jehoram. He worshipped Baal! He gets an F.

Jehoram's son was Ahaziah. Ahaziah also worshipped Baal. He gets an F.

Jeroram's son was Joash. Because Joash was brought up by the priests, Joash worshipped the Lord. He repaired the temple. But when faced with attack by Syria instead of relying on God, he bribed Syria by giving Syria all of the sacred gifts that had been dedicated to God. He gets a B.

Joash' son was Amaziah. Amaziah worshipped the Lord, but did not get rid of all of the false gods. In his arrogance Amaziah picked a fight with the northern tribes of Israel and as a result Jerusalem was attacked and partially destroyed. He gets a B.

Amaziah's son was Azariah. Azariah did all right. He worshipped the Lord, but did not get rid of all the false gods in the land. He gets a B.

Azariah's son was Jotham. He worshipped the Lord, but did not get rid of all of the false gods in the land. He gets a B.

Jotham's son was Ahaz. Ahaz was a terrible king. He worshipped false gods. He relied on them and built altars and made sacrifices to them. He introduced idols into the temple. He even burned one of his sons as an offering to a false god. He gets an F.

Ahaz' son was Hezekiah. Hezekiah worshipped the Lord. He relied on the Lord to rescue him. He got rid of the false gods in the land, finally someone who got rid of the false gods in the land. Hezekiah even relied on the Lord to heal him of his illness. The only problem with Hezekiah was that when Babylonian envoys came to him he showed them everything which opened the way for Babylon to come and destroy the kingdom of Judah. Hezekiah gets a B+

Hezekiah's son was Manasseh. Manasseh was the worst king of them all. He put back all of the false gods and idols that his father, Hezekiah, had taken down. He worshipped Asherah and Baal. He built altars to false gods in the temple itself. He also burned one of his sons to a false god as an offering. He consulted diviners and fortune tellers. He built an idol to Asherah and placed it in the temple. Under his reign murder became common in Israel and the poor were oppressed. In fact Manasseh was so bad that the Lord determined to destroy the kingdom and no matter how good any king came after Manasseh, the Lord was going to carry out His judgment anyway. Manasseh gets an F.

Manasseh's son was Amon. Amon was bad too. He got an F.

Amon's son was Josiah. Josiah was a good king. He went into the temple and repaired it. He got rid of all of the altars to false gods and all of the idols that were in the temple. He put the temple back according to its specifications. He got rid of all of the idols in the land. He found the Book of the Law of Moses which had been lost. Once he found it, he realized just how bad Israel was. He began to lead Israel in the proper keeping of the Lord's commandments, statutes, and rules. He even led them in celebrating the Passover. But in his arrogance Josiah went up against the king of Egypt in battle and was killed. He gets a B+.

Josiah had several sons reign on the throne of Israel. None of them were really very good. The only one that amounted to anything was Jehoichin who in the New Testament is called Jeconiah, but even he gets an F.

So at the end of the book of Kings we have examined every descendent of David to sit on David's throne. While some of them showed some promise of being the king who would keep the commandments, statutes, and rules of the Lord, none of them kept all of the commandments, statutes, and rules of the Lord. While some of them executed God's judgment on false gods, none of them executed that judgment completely.

If we had only the book of Kings to go on, one would think that God's promise would never get fulfilled because we still do not have a king that met God's conditions for establishing an everlasting kingdom.

After Jeconiah was Shealtiel. After Shealtiel was Zerubabbel. He at least led the children of Israel back to Israel after the exile. And even though God promises

Zerubabbel that Zerubabbel will be a signet ring on God's hand, Zerubabbel passes from history without establishing the everlasting kingdom. After Zerubabbel comes Abiud. After Abiud comes Eliakim. After Eliakim comes Azor, Zadok, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob. Now these men were descendents of David. As descendents of David God would have analyzed them to see if any of them kept God's commandments, statutes, rules and administered God's judgment in accord with God's will. While the Bible does not record a specific record of how well these men did, none of them established the everlasting kingdom that God has promised David and therefore they must not be the one, after Jacob came Joseph. And Joseph had a son named Jesus.

Now a word about Jesus and inheritance rights in Israel. It concerns some of you that Jesus is not a blood descendent of Joseph and some of you figure that if Jesus is not a blood descendent of Joseph, then Jesus is not a proper heir of Joseph and therefore does not inherit the throne of David through Joseph.

Some have tried to make Mary a descendent of David and have Jesus inherit the throne of David through Mary. The problem with that is that according to the Law inheritance passed from father to son, not from mother to son. Women did not inherit and did not bequeath. Men were expected to care for them either as fathers, husbands, or sons. So legally Jesus could not have inherited the throne of David from Mary.

Ancient Law did allow for adoption. Adoptions in the ancient world were primarily for inheritance as you can see in the original movie Ben Hur where a Roman adopts Judah Ben Hur in order to bequeath to Ben Hur the Roman's estate. Since Joseph takes Mary as his wife and Jesus is conceived by the Holy Spirit after Joseph was already betrothed to Mary, Jesus is born with Joseph's name. So if I may say it this way, Jesus inherits Joseph's estate the same way that any adopted child in our own day and age inherits his father's estate. Therefore Jesus inherited Joseph's estate and that included the throne of David because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David.

Therefore Jesus comes under the examination of God. Is He the descendent of David who will keep the commandments, statutes, and rules of God without failing? The fact of the matter is that He is! He was tempted in every way even as we are, yet was without sin. Did He execute God's judgment in accord with God's will? In fact He did. He bestowed condemnation where it was required. He bestowed forgiveness where it was required in accord with God's will. He even tore down idols in the self-righteous and arrogant who did not look like they were worshipping idols at all!

He executed God's judgments as the royal Son of David when He entered into Jerusalem and like Josiah before Him, He purified the temple. He threw out the temple administration. And in the greatest act of divine judgment which He executed on earth,

He died in place of sinful humanity and God's mercy was irrevocably administered to humankind.

Jesus is therefore the king, the descendent of David, who fulfills God's conditions. Once Jesus does so, God makes the kingdom of Israel an everlasting kingdom. By so doing God makes the kingdom of Israel God's Kingdom. It is the place where God reigns through the King that God has chosen. The King that God has chosen is Jesus, the son of Joseph, the son of David, who has fulfilled God's reign.

So it is a misreading of the book of Kings if you read how God treats those kings and you figure to yourself that is how God will treat you. That is not what the books of kings are about. The books of kings rather set forth the standards of God's king so that you may read through Israel's history to see whether any of the sons of David measured up. None of them did until you read one of the Gospels.

This is why the Kingdom of God does not come by your careful observation. Even though the throne is established, and even though the son of David is sitting on it, you cannot see it. And this is why so many people miss it.

Since the kingdom does not come by your careful observation it is easy to miss it. It is easy to miss the king. It is easy to miss his kingdom. As long as you are looking for something that can be seen you will miss it. The things that are seen are temporary. The things that are unseen are eternal.

And perhaps it is our eyes that mess us up. The fact that we are sighted messes us up. Because we are blessed with sight we keep assuming that the kingdom of God must be something that we can see.

Perhaps that is why when the Pharisees dispute with Jesus about the healing of the blind man Jesus tells them that if they had been blind they would be free from guilt, but since they claimed to be able to see, their guilt remained.

Thus our sight cannot be trusted. It is better to ask a blind man. Let us ask the blind man who encountered Jesus just before He entered Jerusalem to take His throne by crucifixion and resurrection. The blind man is not hindered by physical sight that can mislead him. And sure as a world, the blind man is the only one besides the angel Gabriel who says it in Luke's Gospel: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!

He knows the Son of David when he hears about him. And when he cries to the Son of David for mercy, it is then together with you, that he sees!

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.