

The Eternal Kingdom

Advent 4

Pastor Josh Frazee

2 Sam. 7:1-11,16

Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

How does Jesus' reign differ from that of earthly kings? For one thing, Jesus rules over three separate kingdoms. These are the kingdom of power, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of glory is His reign over the heavenly realms where the cherubim and seraphim, the angels and archangels, and those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb all reside in God's throne room. The kingdom of grace is His rule over the Church, where He gives His forgiveness earned on the cross through the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. And the kingdom of power is His rule over all the created things, from the people and rulers of earth to the plants and animals to the planet itself and even to the entire universe. No earthly king rules over all three of these kingdoms like Jesus. At best, one might rule over almost all of the earth; but generally speaking, they only rule over a small part of the earth.

Jesus also rules as one without sin. No earthly ruler is without sin, no matter how good that ruler may be. Whether you are a fan of President Donald Trump or if you liked President Barack Obama, or if you liked one of their predecessors, you know that none of these men have been without sin. They have made mistakes, and some have been found guilty of sins which got them in trouble while in office.

But one big way that Jesus' rule is different than that of our earthly kings and rulers is that His rule is an eternal one, one without end. This rule was promised for Him back in our Old Testament text. In 2 Samuel chapter seven, the rule which Christ would have was promised to King David, the one whose line Jesus would enter. Let's turn to our text and hear about this rule.

Verse 1

Our text began: “(W)hen the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, ‘See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.’” Nathan replied to go ahead and build what David had on his mind. “But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, ‘Go and tell my servant David, “Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’””

In these first verses, it occurred to David that the Lord God had blessed him by delivering him from his enemies, and by giving him a house of cedar in which to live. He didn't feel that it was right for him to live in such a place while the ark of the Lord was in nothing but a tent. Going to consult Nathan, who, as the prophet of God, was the one to consult about the will of the Lord, Nathan encouraged him to do what he had said. But Nathan did not first consult with the Lord. So that night, the Lord spoke to Nathan about the topic. The Lord reminded David, and Nathan as His speaker, that throughout His time with the Israelites, the Lord had not commanded for a house to be built of cedar for His ark.

In all of the places that the Lord led His people Israel, the Lord was with them. He had promised to be with them as they carried the ark with them; but ultimately He was with them in the same way He is present with us. He was, and is, “specially present with His saving power and grace where He promises to be present, in His Word...These promises (to be with His people) anticipate(d) the greater day of Immanuel, which means

‘God with us’ (in the days of David and Nathan, and was later fulfilled when God entered humanity in the flesh of His Son.)...(Today) Jesus (continues to be) present according to His grace wherever His Gospel and Sacraments are present (ESV Study Bible, p. 5).”

As we learned in our catechism classes and from the Creeds, Jesus is the Second Person of God. Like God the Father and God the Spirit are eternal, Jesus is also eternal, and was present with the Israelites as part of the Godhead in the Old Testament. His presence with humanity would be more fully understood in His incarnation, His coming to dwell in the flesh, at Christmas two thousand years ago (ESV Study Bible, p.5). So Jesus was present with His people in the ark and did not need a cedar house in which to live.

Verse 2

He continued speaking to Nathan, “‘Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.”’”

In these words, God reminded David of his calling from being a lowly shepherd to being the king of Israel. He brought to mind that He had been with David and kept him safe from his enemies. But that was not all God was going to do; He was going to continue to be with His people, and He would plant them in a good land. And what is more, God would be giving David a house instead. Yet the house God promised would not be a structure made with human hands, but a dynasty.

God did not and does not need the works of man; instead He does work for them. He gave David his kingdom, as well as relief from his enemies. He would be the one who would “appoint a place for (His) people Israel and (He would) plant them, so that they (might) dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more.”

The same is true today: God doesn’t need our works; we need Him and His. God doesn’t need our music or our offerings or our works. Instead of making us work to save ourselves, He would be sending one in the line of King David, His Son Jesus, to save us from our sins. It is still good, right, and salutary to sing and play instruments to the Lord, to give Him our tithes and offerings, and to do everything to His glory, but not because He needs it, but out of thanksgiving for what He would be doing, and has done, in sending Jesus to save us.

Verse 3

God concluded His words for David saying, “‘(Y)our house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’”

God’s Word would be fulfilled in Jesus, the last in the line of King David. Jesus would be a king like no other. Many who would come across Him in His earthly life believed that He would be a king after His forefather David, establishing an earthly kingdom. But Jesus would say “‘My kingdom is not of this world.’”

God does not do things the ways we might expect. Jesus did not come to set up an earthly kingdom. He was not born into royalty in a great mansion or castle. He promised David an eternal kingdom, but it would be

one which he himself would not rule. And rather than permit David to build His ark a house, God promised to give David one—a house and dynasty that would last forever. One which no enemies would be able to withstand or attack.

We, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, cannot put God into a box. We don't know His mind. But what we do know is what He has revealed to us; and that is His plan of salvation. Jesus would come from the line of David to rule the eternal kingdom, not as a sinner, but as one who would save sinners from the punishment they deserve. And Jesus has done it. In Jesus' Name. Amen.