

Living Way Church
Biblical Studies Program – April 2013
God’s Unfolding Revelation: An Introduction to Biblical Theology
Lesson Four

- I. Review
 - A. We began the lesson with an overview of Vaughan Roberts’ division of the Bible into eight main epochs (from his book, *God’s Big Picture*), that describe God’s unfolding plan to restore the kingdom
 - B. The outline for this review can be found in Lesson Two, section III. A Bible Overview, pages 2-5
 - C. Lesson four then began with a more detailed examination, beginning with “The Prophesied Kingdom”
- II. The Prophesied Kingdom
 - A. Introduction
 - 1. Moses was the definitive prophet, through whom God revealed His law at Mount Sinai
 - 2. From the time God establishes Israel as His chosen people under the terms of the covenant, there existed the warning against covenant-breaking disloyalty
 - a. In the book of Deuteronomy (in particular), there are stern warnings against turning away from the covenant
 - b. Israel is saved by grace alone, but to be saved is not merely to be acquitted of guilt – it is also a positive restoration to fellowship with the living God
 - 3. There was always a real choice in front of the people of God: the way of life or the way of death, covenant blessings or covenant curses (see Deut 8:11-20; 28; 30:15-20)
 - 4. The prophetic word makes it clear that Israel cannot as a nation go on enjoying the blessings of the covenant, while she refuses the responsibilities of covenant life
 - 5. The role of the prophets who succeeded Moses was to enforce the covenant, urging the people to obey it and reminding them of the blessings that followed obedience and the curses that followed disobedience
 - B. The first great prophets (notable) after Moses include the following:
 - 1. Samuel, who has the task of leading Israel into a correct understanding of the kingship
 - 2. Nathan (2 Samuel; 1 Kings) and Gad (1 Sam 22:5; 1 Chr 21)
 - 3. Elijah (1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 2) and Elisha (1 Kings – 2 Kings 13) perform a combined ministry to the northern kingdom of Israel after the schism from Judah (early ninth century BC)

- a. Elijah – 875-848 B.C.
 - b. Elisha – 848-797 B.C.
- C. In the eighth century B.C., we have the rise of the classical prophets – the prophets whose prophetic words were written down and collected into the prophetic books of the Old Testament
 - 1. It is once the decline of the nation begins, that a new perspective emerges
 - 2. The prophets continue to denounce Israel’s failure to keep the covenant and threatened the judgment of God upon their sins
 - 3. But there is also the recognition that Israel is incapable of true repentance, and that God must do a new work of salvation
- D. In the progressive revelation of the Old Testament, the first hints are given that Israel’s experience of the exodus from Egypt and the possession of the promised land are only a shadow of the reality of salvation
- E. By means of tangible realities of captivity by an earthly king in a foreign land, of released from bondage, conquest of the promised land, and so on; God shows His people the nature of their plight in bondage to sin and death, the structure of salvation, and the kingdom of God
- F. The classical prophets
 - 1. Sixteen prophets (the “major” and “minor” prophetic books total seventeen in the Old Testament)
 - a. Four major prophets:
 - (1) Isaiah
 - (2) Jeremiah
 - (3) Ezekiel
 - (4) Daniel
 - b. Twelve minor prophets
 - 2. A breakdown of the prophets
 - a. Pre-exilic prophets
 - (1) Prophets of Israel
 - (a) Jonah 800-750 B.C.
 - (b) Amos 760-750 B.C.
 - (c) Hosea 750-715 B.C.
 - (2) Prophets of Judah
 - (a) Micah 735-700 B.C.
 - (b) Isaiah 740-681 B.C.
 - (c) Nahum 645-620 B.C.
 - (d) Zephaniah 630 B.C.
 - (e) Jeremiah 626-585 B.C.
 - (f) Habakkuk 620-610 B.C.
 - (g) Obadiah (?) 605-585 B.C.
 - (h) Joel 586 B.C.

- b. Exilic prophets
 - c. Ezekiel 593-571 B.C.
 - (1) Daniel 605-530 B.C.
 - d. Post-exilic prophets
 - (1) Zechariah 520-480 B.C.
 - (2) Haggai 520 B.C.
 - (3) Malachi 440-420 B.C.
- G. The classical (or writing) prophets all do three things:
 - 1. First, they identify the specific ways in which Israel has broken the covenant
 - a. Social injustice and oppression
 - b. Insincere worship of God
 - c. Mixing pagan religion with the true faith
 - d. The worship of false gods
 - 2. Second, they pronounced the judgment of God on this unfaithfulness to the covenant
 - 3. Third, they speak a message of comfort to the faithful – God will yet save them completely, finally, and gloriously
- H. Two dominant themes: judgment and hope, both of which are based on God’s covenant
- I. Long sections in the prophetic books are devoted to exposing the peoples’ sin and announcing God’s judgment against it
- J. The prophets stress that the judgments against God’s people are not historical accidents; they are acts of God’s judgment in fulfillment of His word to them when He inaugurated the covenant at the time of Moses
- K. Although God will judge His people, that judgment will not be the end of His dealings with them
 - 1. God has made a promise to Abraham
 - 2. Therefore God’s covenant, which is the basis of the prophets’ message of judgment, is also the basis of the other major theme in their books: hope
 - 3. While their history proclaimed the failure of Israel, the prophets proclaimed the future of Israel
- L. Kingdom realities
 - 1. God’s people
 - a. The remnant (Isaiah 10:20-21)
 - b. The new Exodus (Jer 16:14-15)
 - c. The servant (Isaiah 53:5-6) – this person is both the true Israel and the one who dies for the remnant of Israel, so that God’s people can be rescued from their sin
 - d. The inclusion of the nations (Isaiah 49:6)
 - 2. God’s place

- a. The new temple (Ezekiel 40-48)
 - b. The new creation (Isaiah 65:17-18)
 - 3. God's rule and blessing
 - a. The new covenant (Jer 31:31-34; also Ezek 36:26-27; Joel 2:28-32)
 - b. The new king (2 Sam 7:12-16; also Isa 9:6-7; Dan 7:13-14; Ps 110:1)
 - c. Great blessing (Amos 9:13-14; Isa 11:6)
 - M. After seventy years in exile, a remnant returns from exile to the land of Judah in 538 B.C.
 - 1. Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai communicate the problems in the new community
 - 2. There is great opposition from without to the restoration of the Jews in the land, along with carelessness within the Jewish community with regard to the law of God
 - a. From human point of view, the Jews are largely unrepentant – the prophets continue to charge them with covenant breaking and to warn of judgment
 - b. From the divine point of view, the time is not yet right for the coming of the kingdom, and the believing people must continue to live in hope of the future
 - 3. The restored nation is not the kingdom of God
 - N. The Old Testament ends with the people of God waiting for the Lord to return to them and fulfill all His promises of salvation
- III. The Present Kingdom
- A. The New Testament never leads us to expect that there will be any other fulfillment of the Old Testament promises other than their fulfillment in Christ (Matt 1:1; Mark 1:2-3)
 - B. In the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the kingdom penetrates this present age; yet, the fullness of the kingdom is not yet consummated
 - C. Kingdom realities:
 - 1. God's people
 - a. Jesus is the true Adam (Rom 5:19)
 - b. And the true Israel (Matt 2:15 – “my Son”; also, the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness)
 - 2. God' place
 - a. Jesus is the true tabernacle (Jn 1:14)
 - b. Jesus is the true temple (Jn 2:19)
 - 3. God's rule and blessing
 - a. Jesus introduces the new covenant
 - b. Jesus is the new king
 - c. Jesus is the source of God's blessing (Matt 11:28)

- D. The Cross: salvation through substitution (1 Peter 3:18)
 - E. The four Gospels each provide their own distinctive contributions to our understanding of Jesus
 - 1. Matthew: Jesus is the promised messiah of the Old Testament Scriptures
 - 2. Mark: Jesus is the suffering Servant
 - 3. Luke: Jesus is the Savior of the world
 - 4. John: Jesus is the Son of God who gives eternal life
 - F. The kingdom of God has come, and yet it is not come in all its fullness
 - G. It is only when Jesus comes again that everything will be put right and all discord will be banished forever
- IV. The Proclaimed Kingdom
- A. The time in which we live (between His first and second coming)
 - B. The “already” and the “not yet”
 - 1. All those who have placed their trust in Christ belong to the new creation, but they have not yet received all its blessings
 - 2. For the time being, we must live in a fallen world, which bears the marks of sin and of God’s judgment against it
 - C. God has deliberately delayed the return of the Lord Jesus Christ so that more people have a chance to share the gospel and repent before it is too late
 - D. We are given the commission to proclaim the Gospel in all the world
 - 1. Matt 24:14 – *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*
 - 2. Matt 28:18-20 – *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*
 - 3. Luke 24:46-48 – *“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, (47) and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (48) You are witnesses of these things.”*
 - E. The Holy Spirit has been poured out for this purpose
 - 1. Luke 24:49 – *“behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you”*
 - 2. Acts 1:8 – *“...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*
 - F. The work of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. He brings new birth
 - 2. He produces holiness

3. He equips us to serve Christ
- G. Kingdom realities in this period of the proclaimed kingdom
 1. God's people: His church
 2. God's place
 - a. The Holy Spirit lives within each of us individually (1 Cor 6:19-20)
 - b. God is present by His Spirit as we gather together in His name (Matt 18:20)
 3. God's rule and blessing
 - a. We have been given the wonderful gifts of forgiveness for all our sins, adoption into His family, fellowship with the Holy Spirit, and the certain hope of heaven
 - b. We continue to struggle against sin and to face opposition for our faith
- H. In this present age, the Christian life is hard work; it is a fight and a race
 1. We have the first fruits of the Spirit: a taste of the blessings of heaven
 2. Yet, we also groaned inwardly frustrated with the sin that is so prevalent in our lives and in the world
- V. The Perfected Kingdom
 - A. Jesus will come again and complete God's eternal plan of salvation
 - B. He will introduce the perfected kingdom
 1. The new creation (Rev 21:1)
 2. The new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2)
 - a. Heaven is described as a "city"
 - b. A perfect community united in Christ
 3. The new temple (Rev 21:3)
 - C. The city John sees is a perfect cube, just like the holy of holies in the temple, where God's presence had been focused
 1. The point: there will be no special place in the new creation where God's presence will be concentrated
 2. No holy building to go to if we want to meet with Him (Rev 21:22)
 - D. The promises of the kingdom will all be completely fulfilled at the end of time
 1. God's people will consist of all those, from every nation, who trust in Christ
 2. They will be united together in God's place - the new creation and the new Jerusalem, which is the new temple
 3. They will all submit to God's rule and, therefore, know His perfect blessing
 - E. The throne of God and of the land is right at the center of everything in from in a river flows, bringing life and prosperity to everyone (22:1-2)