

Coming King, Coming Kingdom

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Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm the pastor here at Shine Mountain Presbyterian Church and it's my joy to bring God's Word to you today. A special welcome if you're new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here and we're glad that you're here.

Not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community. And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced there's no one so good, they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it.

Which is why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say to us in His Word. We're finishing this morning our series for Advent in the book of Genesis and we're jumping forward.

Last Sunday we were in Genesis chapter 22 and now we're going forward all the way to chapter 49. So it means that we've skipped a large part of the story, but if you're familiar with the book of Genesis, you know that we've tracked the story of Abraham, followed by Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

And we're coming to this story now where Jacob, also called Israel, calls his sons to him to give them a blessing. And so I'm going to invite you to turn there with me, Genesis chapter 49.

[1 : 1 2] You can turn in your worship guide or in your Bible or in your phone. No matter where you turn, remember that this is God's Word and God tells us that His Word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold.

And it's sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb. And so that's why we read now Genesis chapter 49, starting at verse 1. And now we're going to skip to verse 8.

Verse 9.

Verse 11. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's Word.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you again that you speak to us as you always do through your Word. And we also confess that we come this morning with many distractions.

[3 : 0 1] We come with the normal, everyday distractions that hit us week by week of work and family and emails and phone calls and text messages. And we also come to you with the special distractions of this season.

As we rush from event to event, as we worry about what to buy and who to buy it for, as we look forward and plan all the details of our celebrations later this week.

We ask that you would help us this morning. That you would help us to reorient our minds and to fix our eyes on you. That no matter the distractions that face us, we would see Jesus now as you show him to us in your Word.

That we wouldn't miss his glory and his beauty. We ask that you would show us our desperate need for your grace. And you'd also show us how you meet us at that very same point of need.

And we ask all these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. In October of 2019, feels like more than two years ago, but only about two years ago, the national news broke with shock and curiosity and amusement because the rapper and fashion designer, Kanye West, came out with his new album, which he called Jesus is King.

[4 : 22] Now, if you're familiar with Kanye, you know this was partially surprising because most of his albums had been about him worshipping himself more than anyone else. But this album got a lot of attention as people questioned whether Kanye's conversion to Christianity was true and authentic.

Now, for many people, the surprising part was the fact that Kanye was the one who had come out with this album. I'm going to suggest for you this morning, though, that there is at least one other very surprising element of this that was overlooked, perhaps, by many, and that is this.

Kanye tells us that his album was meant to be an expression of the gospel. And if his album was meant to be that, we would have expected a different title, right? In America, we would have said, Jesus is Savior, right?

Or Jesus saves. That's the phrase that we're familiar with. That's the way that Christians in America talk. If we saw a billboard or a bumper sticker, that's what it would read for us. It would just say, Jesus saves.

Come to salvation in Jesus. But in fact, Kanye is highlighting something for us that's important to remember, which is that Jesus' salvation cannot be separated from his kingship. Jesus as king is actually an essential part of the proclamation of the gospel.

[5 : 36] And so as we've gone through the book of Genesis together, we've seen a variety of categories. Remember Genesis 3. Genesis 3.

We see one of the most neglected aspects of Jesus today, and that is Jesus as our king. And in fact, that's something that we maybe overlook, but we celebrate and sing about during Christmas.

It's one of the reasons, by the way, that we sing and why songs are important. They shape our theology. So this morning, we sang, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, which says this, O Come, O King of Nations, find.

We also sang the first Noel, where we said over and over, Born is the king of Israel. If you come on Christmas Eve this Friday, we're going to sing Joy to the World, which says this, Let the earth receive her king.

We're also going to sing Joyful Joyful We Adore You, which says, Praise resounds as earth rejoices in the birth of Christ the king. And so we're going to do something simple this morning.

[7 : 06] As we look at Genesis chapter 49, we're simply going to dream together. We're going to be reminded of what type of king Jesus is. And we're going to dream together and be reminded of what kind of kingdom it is that he brings.

What is it going to look like? Why is this promise in prediction that we find here? Why is it actually good news? We're going to have something of a movie preview here.

We're going to get a taste. We're going to get a small picture of what it is that we're looking forward to, what it is that we're longing for and celebrating and singing about at Advent. We're going to get a contour, a bit of an outline of what is to come.

And as we do this, it's important to remember that we, as we live our lives in this world, we look to all sorts of kings and places and people and experiences to bring in a perfect world.

But what the Bible reminds us of is that it is Jesus who is our only hope to bring a world without suffering and without pain. And so it's tempting to walk around looking 20 feet ahead of us, just seeing what's before our feet.

[8 : 10] What we're going to do this morning is actually look up. We're going to bring our eyes up and look up at the horizon. That we would have a greater and broader perspective of this world and Jesus' role in it. That we would know the great hope that we have as we look forward to the King who has come and also the King who is coming.

And Genesis chapter 49 is going to help us with that. So I'm going to jump right in. We're given this prediction by Jacob, also known as Israel, as what's going to happen with the tribe of Judah.

And you might be wondering what in the world this has to do with Jesus. And in a sense, that's a fair question because he's talking about something that's going to have some fulfillment in the near future rather than the far future.

But Judah is also the tribe from which Jesus comes. And so there's multiple layers to this prophecy that he gives us about his son Judah, this tribe that's going to become great in Israel.

Some of it we're going to see fulfilled in King David, the greatest king of Israel. King David, however, points us forward to King Jesus. And so when we see these things, they are true in one sense of David, true in an ultimate and fuller sense in Jesus.

[9 : 19] And so we see first in chapter 8 that we are going to have this king who is going to be ruling here over Judah.

He's going to be the greatest of all the tribes of Israel. In fact, this is something that we know as you read the genealogies around Advent. If you read Matthew chapter 1, verse 1, what does it say about Jesus?

It says he's the son of David, the son of Abraham. So we're meant to be reminded that Jesus is the one who is pointing us back to these promises made to Judah. Jesus is born in Bethlehem, also known as the city of David.

So he shares a birthplace with the great king. He shares that origin of the tribe of Judah. And so David for us is the proximate king of Israel. He's the proximate fulfillment of this.

He is not the ultimate king from the tribe of Judah. We're told who that is in the book of Revelation, the very end of the Bible. Revelation chapter 5, verse 5 tells us this, and one of the elders said to me, weep no more.

[10 : 21] Behold, the line of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals. In other words, Jesus is the lion from the tribe of Judah.

He comes as the tribe that's greatest among all the tribes of Israel. That's what we're told here in verse 8. Your brothers shall praise you. Your father's sons shall bow down before you.

We find out here, though, he's not just a leader over Judah. He's also going to be victorious over many enemies. So we see the first picture again in verse 8. We're told your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies.

Now, if your hand is on the neck of your enemies, this is a way of saying that the battle is over. It is time for that person to tap out. They are on the ground. This is a picture that we're being given of dominance and power and victory.

And if that weren't enough, we see the same thing in verse 9. We have this picture of this lion who's going out and is successful in killing prey. He's a wonderful predator. Verse 9, Judah is a lion's cub.

[11 : 22] From the prey, my son, you have gone up, which is a way of saying this lion has killed another animal. Now he's going to go on the hunt again. He stooped down.

He crouched as a lion. In other words, this lion has finished with one prey. He's sitting and waiting for another. No one wants to mess with him.

That's why we're told at the very end of verse 9, who dares rouse him? In other words, leave this lion alone. He is not just the king of Israel.

He's also victorious in battle. And so this gives us our first picture here of what it is that we're longing for as we lift our eyes up from 20 feet in front of us and we look up at the horizon to get a bigger picture of this world and what is coming for it.

You know that if you've ever been in a foreign country for any amount of time, you begin to think about all the things that you miss in your home country. You begin to think about all the things that you long for.

[12 : 24] Maybe you even make a list of what you can't wait to get back to. Maybe it's Reese's peanut butter cups. Maybe it's the large variety of soft drinks that we have access to in America.

Maybe it's simply being back in a place where the language of the country is also your language. As Christians, we want to have this same sort of longing for our true home, the home where Jesus reigns and rules as king.

And so if we're going to make a list of what we long for, what we learn about this lion is he's going to rule a place that looks like this. It's going to be a place where bullies don't win anymore. That's what his kingdom is going to look like.

It's going to look like a place where the powerful don't oppress the weak. Instead, they use their power to protect them. One of my favorite definitions of authority is this.

Good and true authority is when the person who has authority over you cares about you more than you care about yourself. They love you more than you love you.

[13 : 27] That's what this king is going to be like. This kingdom where this lion conquers all his enemies is going to be the type of kingdom where when you go to check on your relatives in the nursing home, you're not going to worry about whether someone stole something from them or took advantage of them.

In fact, there won't be nursing homes. We'll have restored and full bodies. This is going to be the kind of kingdom, the kingdom ruled by this powerful lion where when you walk to your car at night, you don't worry about who might be lurking in the dark.

This is the sort of kingdom when you're driving around, you don't wonder if you remember to lock your door. This is the sort of kingdom where you're not going to buy insurance for identity theft.

LifeLock is going to be out of business. You're not going to worry about how secure your passwords are. You're not going to worry about changing them every three months, and you're not going to be concerned of whether they have the right number of letters and symbols and exclamation marks.

You're not going to worry about whether the police show up in time. You're not going to feel any need as you go through your life to conceal carry. That's going to be the type of kingdom that Jesus rules over.

[14 : 42] That's what we see in this lion. Yes, he is gracious and kind, and he is powerful and ferocious. The king who comes from Judah, verse 9, is a lion's cub.

He crouches down as a lion. And so no one dares to rouse him. This king, however, is not just going to be powerful.

He's also going to be a worldwide king. We see this expansion from just ruling over tribes to ruling over the entire world in verse 10. The scepter shall not depart from Judah or the ruler's staff from between his feet until tribute comes to him.

And here's the key part. And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. Tribute comes to him. This is something that's going to happen for the worldwide king.

All the nations are going to come and worship him. The Davidic king, the one who's meant to be the great ruler over all of Israel, is not just going to rule Israel. He is going to rule the entire world.

[15 : 47] This rule is going to expand. It's going to grow. And again, we see this in Matthew's genealogy. After we're told where Jesus comes from, that he's the descendant of Abraham and David, we see wise men who come to visit him, bringing gifts from afar, which is the first fulfillment of this king receiving tribute from the nations.

Okay? Yes, Jesus is a man come to earth to die for our sins, and he's also the king. That's what the magi know and understand. They're bringing tribute as people from other nations.

And so that's the beginning of the fulfillment of this promise. We see it in a small part in King David from the tribe of Judah, but of course, he doesn't fulfill it, right?

David does not rule over the entire world. Instead, we look to the great and glorious future that only comes with Jesus, often referred to as David's greater son.

And so there's going to be this worldwide kingdom. In fact, we're told about it in Revelation chapter 7. There's a part that we still look forward to, right, as we're longing and thinking about what the kingdom will be.

[17 : 04] Revelation chapter 7 says this, This is this picture of the entire world coming to worship God.

We get a similar vision in Revelation chapter 21. We're told this, The city, that is the New Jerusalem, has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. It's another picture of the tribute coming in. And its gates will never be shut by day, and there will be no night there.

They will bring into it the glory and honor of the nations, but nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

So John in Revelation is giving us another picture of all the nations coming to worship this worldwide king. He's helping us see what we've already been told in verse 10, Until tribute comes to him, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

[18 : 25] And so what do we dream about then as we look at Jesus' kingdom? Well, it's going to be the end of wars. It's going to be the end of international politics. When Jesus is king, we're not going to worry about problems between Russia and the Ukraine.

When Jesus is king, we're not going to worry about the rise of rogue states. All the nations are simply going to come and bring their tribute to him.

He is going to be the worldwide king. This passage, though, doesn't just tell us about Jesus' glory and his rule, his power, his dominion.

It also gives us one final picture of what this world is going to look like, what the kingdom of the Lion of Judah is going to offer to us. And it's going to be a place of great and tremendous wealth.

And so look with me at verses 11 and 12. In verse 11, we're told he's going to bind his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, which may seem enigmatic at first, but what the author of Genesis is trying to tell us is this.

[19 : 35] There's going to be an incredible grape harvest. Okay? This grape harvest is going to be so great that the man in charge of it is not going to hesitate to tie his donkey to one of the grape vines.

In other words, he has so many grapes and so many grape vines, he couldn't care less if the donkey eats up some of his best. He has more of the best than he knows what to do with.

So he ties a donkey to it and doesn't even think about it. And it's shocking here, right? Because we, if we're people living and receiving this message for the first time, we're thinking as agricultural farmers, what a reckless thing it is to tie your donkey to your grape vine.

There's so much wealth, it just doesn't matter. There's always going to be more precious grapes. So you can let the donkey run free and eat the finest things you have.

It would be like this. It would be like someone in America, me telling you, you know what? The kingdom is going to be so great that people are going to cook up whole wagyu steaks and give them to their dog.

[20 : 38] Okay? Not just the scraps. No. The dog is going to get his own steak. Okay? That's how much abundance and wealth is here. People are going to buy filet mignons, they're going to cut them in fine strips and they're going to put them in the cat bowl.

That's how much abundance there is in this world. Okay? That's the image we're given here of the wine. What would you know about that person? If that person was cooking up whole wagyu steaks and giving them to the dog and cooking up a filet mignon and putting it in the cat's bowl, what would you say about that person?

Yeah, you could say they're crazy. You could also say, wow, that person has a lot of money. Right? In this kingdom, there is going to be an overabundance.

That's going to be how much wealth this kingdom has. People are going to tie their donkeys to great grapevines. They're going to let their animals eat their finest food.

That's the same image we have here in verses 11 and 12. So verse 11, at the end, he's washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. Now there's two ways of taking this.

[21 : 49] One is, there's so much wine, they're treating it like water. So they're washing their clothes in \$500 bottles of wine because they just have so many of them. The other possibility is that they're threshing out this wine, they're stomping on it to make wine, and there's so many grapes, it's just squirting up all over their clothes and it's washing it.

That's how abundant it is. Either way, the point is the same. There's this unprecedented wealth. There's just everything that you would need and more, right? Verse 12, also some debate over what this means.

The big point of verse 12 is that they are full of health and vitality. Okay? They have this food that is making them strong. It's been pointed out that the Bible begins and ends in this place of great wealth.

Genesis chapter 1, the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve are given dominion over the whole earth and they're told that every plant and tree is theirs for food. And then if we fast forward to the last book of the Bible, Revelation chapter 21, the New Jerusalem as it's described is a place of incredible wealth.

Now one of the most famous descriptions comes from verse 21 which tells us this, the street of the city was pure gold like transparent glass. There's so much gold, they're paving the streets with it.

[23 : 11] There's so much wine and good grapes, they're letting their animals eat the very best food. We want an age of prosperity, right?

It's common for there to be talk about the end of poverty or the end of hunger. We want abundance to be normalized. We want to have enough that we don't worry about budgeting, right?

Bad news is this, that's not going to happen in this world. No one who tells you that they have a plan to make it happen understands the state of humanity.

Good news, it will happen. It's just not going to happen with an earthly king. We can't have it with a mere human.

And so again, as we dream together, as we work our imagination, I want you to think about this. This is what the kingdom that the lion from the tribe of Judah is going to look like.

[24 : 21] People are going to work simply for the joy of it. You're not going to worry about whether you've worked enough or whether you've saved enough. You're not going to worry about whether you have enough to retire.

couples will not argue about finances. In fact, Matthew chapter 22 tells us there won't be marriage in heaven. You're not going to worry about college funds.

There's going to be plenty and more than plenty. You're not going to feel shame about not having as much as other people in the community around you.

You're not going to feel shame about not being able to afford the same experiences or provide the same things for your family. There is not going to be any more poverty.

Poverty is not an issue when people are washing their clothes in fine wine, right? Parents won't pressure their kids into lucrative careers. People won't be chasing their dreams by trying to leverage assets and generate passive income.

[25 : 26] There's just going to be this abundance. There's going to be this overflowing in the kingdom. There aren't going to be arguments about which money belongs to who. Lawyers will not be helping resolve inheritance disputes.

They're going to have a lot less business. There's just going to be more than enough in every category. There's going to be more than you can ask or imagine. As you know, presidents love to take credit for economic growth.

Anything good that happens while they're in office? Brag about a booming economy, right? This kingdom is going to be the pinnacle. It's going to be the most booming economy.

It's going to be when we see the greatest economy of all time. Now at this point you might be wondering what in the world does any of this have to do with the gospel?

Gospel, right? Our belief that Jesus comes to die and save sinners. Well, Jesus is the Savior and he is saving you from something. He is saving you from God's wrath and his punishment.

[26 : 32] However, Jesus is not just saving you from something. Jesus is saving you into something. Jesus is saving you into a kingdom where he is king.

He's saving you into a kingdom where he is king. And so we get to see this picture here of how the story ends. If you're a Christian, you don't know the future in one sense.

You don't know what the rest of your life is going to look like. You do know the future in another sense. You know, no matter what happens to you in this world, how your story is going to end.

Your story is going to end in this kingdom that we've been dreaming about. Your story is going to end in a place that is ruled by this king.

And so that's what we sang right before the sermon, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem. It's a story of longing. It's a song of longing. It's a song of looking forward to the future that we know is coming.

[27 : 33] And so we talked about the wealth together when we sang this. They have told us of a table where the poor are honored guests, where all the weary wanderers come in to bless and rest.

That's the place where people tie their donkeys to the finest grapevines. that's the place where people serve steaks to their pets.

It's going to be a feast. Now Jesus, our Lord Jesus also tells us about a feast in Matthew chapter 22. He tells this parable of the wedding feast.

You're welcome to turn there with me now. It's in Matthew chapter 22 verses 1 through 14. And he tells them this. The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.

Again, he sent other servants saying, tell those who are invited, see, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen, and my fat calves have been slaughtered and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.

[28 : 44] So Jesus has a feast. He's inviting people. Many aren't listening. Verse 5. But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.

The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, the wedding feast is ready, but those invited are not worthy.

Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find. And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

In other words, Jesus is telling us this. There is a feast and a kingdom that he has prepared. And it is for those who accept his invitation to the wedding.

This kingdom is for and is only for those who have faith and hope in Jesus Christ. It is for and only for those who have looked to Christ and seen that he is the one who lived the perfect life that they should have lived.

[29 : 53] He is the one who died the death that they should have died accepting his sacrifice on their behalf, knowing that when he died, he took the wrath of God that we deserve.

For anyone and everyone who has faith in Jesus Christ, this is the feast that is waiting for them. This is the wedding feast. This is the picture that we're given about the kingdom that is ruled by the lion from the tribe of Judah.

And so the final question for us this morning is this, will you be at the feast? Will you come when the king invites you?

If you have more questions about that, one of the things that we've done recently in our worship guide, you'll see near the end, we have a long explanation of what it means to be someone who follows after the king on page 10.

And so, not necessarily now, but I invite you to take your worship guide home with you to review it. If you have more questions about this king or this kingdom, of course, we're happy to talk with you. And I invite you to look through that page and think about whether Jesus is your king, what it means for you to follow him and to trust him so that you can be someone who shows up to the wedding feast.

[31 : 13] Now, earlier, I gave you a list of Christmas hymns that we sang this morning that pointed to Jesus as our king. And there's one hymn that I didn't mention on page 6 because we haven't sung it yet.

But we're about to sing it. It's called What Child Is This? And first, it tells us in the chorus, this is Christ, the king whom shepherds guard and angels sing. And then we're told this in the final verse.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh. Come, peasant king, to own him. The king of kings salvation brings. Let loving hearts enthrone him.

And so that's the hope and command for us as well, that our hearts would enthrone this baby who comes into the world not just as one to die, but one who comes to rule and reign as the king.

As the lion from the tribe of Judah. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we praise you and thank you this morning that you give us hope that no matter what happens in this world, you are a king who's bringing a kingdom.

[32 : 20] We ask that you would use that truth in our lives to keep us from despair and to grow our hope. We ask that you would remind us of that, that it would be for the front of our minds, Father, in the many distractions that come against us this week and this coming year that we would never forget that you are our great savior and our great king.

We ask all these things in the mighty name of our king, Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. I invite you to stand for our closing hymn. Amen.