

I. Recap

- A. As Christians, we are first and foremost citizens of the Kingdom of God (Phil. 3:20; Col. 1:13), though we live in nation states (i.e. Canada) in this age.
 - 1. More than citizens, *“we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God”* (2 Cor. 5:20). In other words, ambassadors whose purpose is to call others into the same Kingdom.
- B. The Kingdom of God is:
 - 1. Not *of* this world, but certainly *for* this world.
 - 2. Both here “now” and “not yet” fully here.
 - 3. Eternal, unshakeable.
- C. Kingdoms/nations have constitutions: “the basic principles and laws of a nation, state, or social group that determine the powers and duties of the government and guarantee certain rights to the people in it; the mode in which a state or society is organized; an established law or custom” (Merriam-Webster)
- D. The Bible defines for us the basic principles, laws, expectations of leaders, and benefits for people that find expression in the Kingdom of God.

II. Constitution of the Kingdom in the Old Testament

- A. In the Exodus, Israel went from being a family to being a nation. The Torah contains many laws and guidelines for how the people of Israel were to govern themselves; instructions summed up in *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might”* (Deut. 6:5, ESV) and *“...you shall love your neighbor as yourself...”* (Lev. 19:18, ESV).
- B. Specific to the political conversation, Deut. 17:14-20 included instructions specifically intended for the future kings of Israel:
 - 1. Must be from among the people of Israel (v.15,20) – familiar with the story of God and His people; most likely scenario for Israel to stay faithful to God.
 - 2. Must not amass horses (v.16) – idolizing military strength, Empire.

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.” (Ps. 20:7, ESV)

“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, **but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the LORD!**” (Is. 31:1, ESV)

3. Must not amass wives (v.17) – speaking more specifically to the practice of building alliances with other nations through marriage. The issue is not racial, but religious: foreign women brought foreign gods with them.
4. Must not amass riches (v.17) – “where your treasure is, there your heart will be...”
5. Must make a personal (Levite-approved) copy of the Law (Torah) and read it all the days of his life (v.18) – would serve to cultivate in the king the fear of the Lord, obedience to the Lord’s voice, and humility before his fellow Israelites (v.19-20).
 - a. Solomon ruled over Israel in its greatest era, yet Scripture is very clear that he was in violation of the 3 “must not” laws (1 Kgs 4:26; 10:14,26-28; 11:1-8). We easily look at Solomon’s military, multitude of wives (alliances), and riches as evidence of God’s blessing and favour on his life. Be careful with that.

“³And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. **He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,** ⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth...” (Is. 11:3-4a, ESV)

- C. Psalm 72 is a prayer for King Solomon and his reign, in which we see several themes that make for godly leadership in government.
 1. Prioritizing godly justice and righteousness (v.1-2).
 2. An economy that makes *the people* prosperous (v.3,7,16-17).
 3. Defending the cause of the poor, children specifically mentioned (v.4,12-14).
 4. Righteousness and peace flourish; violence is stamped out (v.7,13-14).
 - a. Governmental leadership that prioritizes these values will attract – from both home and abroad – respect, blessing, gifts, prosperity, growth, the admiration and prayers of many, and demonstrates the goodness of God for all to see (v.5-11,15-19).
- D. Ezekiel 34:1-10 is a prophecy against the Shepherds (leaders) of Israel, condemning leaders who exploit their position for personal gain, showing no concern (if not disdain) for the sheep in their care. In John 10:11, Jesus called Himself “the Good Shepherd”, indicating He is the fulfillment of Ezekiel 34:11-24 – the example of good leadership.

III. Constitution of the Kingdom in the New Testament

- A. Some commentators have referred to the Sermon on the Mount as “the constitution of the Kingdom.”
- B. The Sermon on the Mount mirrors God’s appearance before Israel on Mt. Sinai and the delivery of the Ten Commandments (beginning in Exodus 19). In the Torah, God gave Israel laws written on stone. In the Sermon on the Mount, He gave us the law that would be written on our hearts of flesh (Jer. 31:31-34; Eze. 11:19-20; 36:25-27).
 - 1. There are two key differences between the passages:
 - a. The Ten Commandments gave a list of behaviours to avoid, while the Sermon on the Mount gave a list of heart attitudes to pursue (the Beatitudes).
 - b. The Ten Commandments gave instructions for how to judge openly manifest sin, while the Sermon on the Mount called us to judge (deal with) sin within ourselves before it becomes openly manifest.
 - 2. Jesus was very clear about the nature of this sermon: it was not a departure from the Law of Moses, but the pathway to the fulfillment of that very Law.

*“¹⁷Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them **but to fulfill them**. ¹⁸For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”* (Mt. 5:17-19, ESV)

- 3. Consider the upside-down values of the Kingdom expressed in the Sermon:
 - a. Blessed (“happy”) are the ones who embrace poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hunger & thirst for righteousness, mercy, purity, peacemaking, and persecution – all the things we do everything in our power to avoid (5:1-12).
 - b. Be salt & light – different, stand out, bring change/influence (5:13-16).

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession [“a peculiar people”, KJV], that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who call you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Pet. 2:9), ESV)

- c. Don’t entertain anger or lust – root them out (5:21-30).

- d. Keep your word, even when it's hard (5:31-37).

"¹⁴O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?...⁴(He) who swears to his own hurt and does not change." (Ps. 15:1,4; ESV)

- e. Love those who hate you; repay their evil with good (5:38-48).

"¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them...¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all." (Rom. 12:14,17; ESV)

- f. Give your time, energy, and money to the Lord; and when you do, don't do it to be seen (and approved) by others (6:1-24).

- g. Don't be anxious/strive about your needs (6:25-34).

- h. Judge yourself by the same standard you judge others (7:1-6).

- i. Ask (7:7-11).

- j. Treat others the way you would want to be treated, regardless of how they treat you (7:12-14).

- k. The inner life is more important than the outer life (7:15-27).

- C. The book of James leans heavily on the Sermon on the Mount, reiterating its truths and sometimes even directly quoting it. But in one particular section, it succinctly contrasts the way human nature operates in comparison to the Kingdom of God.

*"¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? By his **good conduct** let him show his works in the **meekness** of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first **pure**, then **peaceable**, **gentle**, **open to reason** [willing to yield], **full of mercy** and **good fruits**, **impartial** and **sincere**. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (Jas. 3:13-18, ESV)*

1. It's not enough to have good policies. How we go about working to enact those policies is just as important, *if not more so*.

- D. Galatians 5 is another passage that gives us a clear contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit:

*¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (Gal. 5:19-24, ESV)*

IV. Conclusion

- A. All these values are backwards from the values of the world. The world prioritizes self-advancement, self-sufficiency, ambition, and believes the ends (goals) justify the means (behaviour on the way to achieve those goals).
- B. The Kingdom of God promotes preferring others above ourselves, weakness in favour of God's strength in us, meekness, and never sacrificing character and integrity (means) for the sake of a righteous cause (ends).

¹⁹...let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger: ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God." (Jas. 1:19b-20, ESV)

- C. Be aware – most of us are so shaped by the culture of the day, we don't even realize it. We tend to measure success by the world's standards, being almost completely ignorant of what God calls successful (as in the example of King Solomon). We are in need of the transformation of the Holy Spirit to see, prioritize, and live by the values and principles – the constitution – of the Kingdom.