

314.1 Kingdom of God on Earth (OT Gospel Doctrine Lessons 46-48, Updated)

46: Inbreaking of God's kingdom

47: Our role in building the kingdom

48: The full triumph of God

Dominion of God: Lesson 46 (the inbreaking of God's kingdom)

[“A Kingdom, Which Shall Never Be Destroyed”](#)

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1. Reading Review
2. Kingdom of God
 - a. Kingdom of God filling the earth (when? How? Russia? China? Doesn't matter!)
 - b. Kingdom of God filling our soul (THIS is what matters. How much dominion does God have in our souls? In our lives)
 - c. We are rough stones rolling (trials, challenges, weakness, demons)
3. Conclusion: The kingdom of God is within/among you (talk about both)

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Reading Review

Daniel 2 We all know the story... king dreams about kingdoms, different part of the statue represents different kingdoms, but then there is the “stone cut out of the mountain without hands” that will fill the earth, and represents the kingdom of God.

D&C 65:2 “The gospel” is what rolls forth and fills the earth

Additional Reading: D&C 65 Only six verses. I LOVE the idea of the kingdom of God in heaven coming down and joining the kingdom of God that we have worked to build on earth.

Other Reading: Moses 7:62-64 Beautiful verses. God sends righteousness out of heaven and truth out of the earth. Righteousness and truth are what sweep the earth and gather the elect.

Enoch and his city with Jesus will “fall upon the necks” and kiss the righteousness with love and tears.

Kingdom of God

Kingdom of God filling the earth (when? How? Russia? China? Doesn't matter!)

Kingdom of God filling our soul (THIS is what matters. How much dominion does God have in our souls? In our lives. Jesus “lived as if the kingdom had already come”)

We are rough stones rolling (trials, challenges, weakness, demons)

“I am like a huge, rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; and the only polishing I get is when some corner gets rubbed off by coming in contact with something else, striking with accelerated force against religious bigotry, priestcraft, lawyer-craft, doctor-craft, lying editors, suborned judges and jurors, and the authority of perjured executives, backed by mobs, blasphemers, licentious and corrupt men and women—all hell knocking off a corner here and a corner there. Thus I will become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty, who will give me dominion over all and every one of them, when their refuge of lies shall fail, and their hiding place shall be destroyed, while these smooth-polished stones with which I come in contact become marred.”⁴¹

Conclusion: The kingdom of God is within/among you (talk about both)

Action and Investment: Lesson 47 (our role in building the kingdom)

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1. Reading review
2. External opposition
3. Internal opposition
4. Correct diagnosis (Being honest about where we are! If we cannot be courageously honest about where we are, everything else will be off. Our solution and approach can't be right if our diagnosis and assessment is not correct)
5. Priorities and expectations, restoration and moving forward
6. Life lessons, win-win, can't lose (Right Relationship. Right Target. Right Order. Right Work)
7. Conclusion: Zion, building, focus on principles and practice

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Reading review

Ezra

1 Cyrus ends the exile, says Jews can return home and rebuild the temple

2 Lots of names, not all referring to the same time period. Nehemiah is mentioned. Zerubbabel was governor, a grandson of the king, laid the foundations of the temple, and Jeshua was the high priest. His father was high priest when Jerusalem was destroyed.

3 Restoration of the altar was a really big deal. Note that the elites fear both the “people of the landers” meaning the neighboring people, and the “people of the land” who likely were those who remained behind in Judah! Continuity between the old and new temple and worship is emphasized. Worship is prioritized over the temple building itself. The end of the chapter suggests that the younger generations were excited, but the older returnees who knew the glory of the previous temple wept, perhaps from disappointment.

4 One oppositional group wants to build and worship with the returnees, and the other wants the temple not to be built at all. The reference to Esarhaddon suggests these were people from the Northern Kingdom, who later became known as Samaritans. Those who oppose the temple write to the king of Persia and warn if the temple is built, it will lead to rebellion. Construction stops for 17 years.

5 Lots of back and forth and intrigue in this story. Haggai and Zechariah seem to be among those who inspire the people to resume building the temple, and adversaries again warn the Persian king. Leaders of neighboring provinces are included among those who oppose the temple. Samaria and Judea were both part of the larger polity of the “Province beyond the River”

6 Darius searches the archives, finds Cyrus’ decree, and when he finds that Cyrus allowed the building of the temple, forbids opposition (with a pretty grim curse). Strikingly, he dedicates Persian resources to the building project. The temple is finished (in about 515), there is a grand celebration and sacrifice, and Passover is observed.

7 “Ezra the scribe” comes from Babylon, which is interesting, considering this chapter is set at the earliest in 458, almost a hundred years after the first exiles returned and about sixty years after the temple was finished. Of course the Jews never leave Babylon... the most authoritative version of the Talmud compiled in the middle ages is from Babylon! The Persian king’s level of support and devotion seems implausibly high. “The Law” in v. 26 is likely some form of the core or first five books of the Bible (Pentateuch/Torah)

8 Amusing comment that Ezra felt he couldn’t ask for guards because he had boasted his God would protect his people. Ezra’s return is once again a symbolic restoration of Israel.

Nehemiah

1 First person account is striking. The book seems to be a lightly edited version of his memoir. We meet Nehemiah and he is grieved for Jerusalem and talks to the king. The request to rebuild the city walls was a big deal because it potentially allows for revolts (Which Judea had a history of). Nehemiah serves as implicit governor of Judah, and the other governors complain.

2 Title of the lesson, “Let us rise up and build” Motivation comes from realistically assessing the situation and seeing what needs to be done, determining to do it. Others interpreted this action as rebellion. Note Nehemiah doesn’t even mention the name Jerusalem, which was synonymous with rebellion.

4 Each person repairs their portion, in their area. These seem to be attempts to build morale in the face of a possible attack from the enemies that surrounded them (v. 7) (each doing your part, seeing what you can do)

6 Nehemiah succeeds despite those trying to discredit and endanger him. Nehemiah condemns people for putting each other in debt. He himself does not benefit from his position, but uses his stipend to care for others. (what do we do with our opportunities and privilege?)

8 Ezra reads the Law (Torah). The people celebrate Succot, the festival of booths. Note the pattern of restoration of temple, scripture, and worship. (Do we rejoice or weep? Doing good can be more constructive than grief (New moon festival they should give to poor and foreigners, Deut. 26:12-13)

External opposition (misunderstanding, comparison, lack of life skills)

Internal opposition (self-delusion, ignorance, self-doubt. Know yourself, love yourself, relationship yourself, know strengths and weaknesses)

Correct diagnosis (Being honest about where we are! If we cannot be courageously honest about where we are, everything else will be off. Our solution and approach can't be right if our diagnosis and assessment is not correct)

Priorities and expectations, restoration and moving forward
(David Whyte, ambition)

AMBITION

is a word that strangely, lacks any real ambition, ambition is frozen desire, the current of a vocational life immobilized and over-concretized to set, unforgiving goals.

Ambition may be essential for the young but becomes the essential obstacle of any mature life. Ambition abstracts us from the underlying elemental nature of the creative conversation while providing us the cover of a target that becomes false through over description, over familiarity or too much understanding.

The ease of having an ambition is that it can be explained to others; the very disease of ambition is that it can be so easily explained to others. What is worthy of a life's dedication does not want to be known by us in ways that diminish its actual sense of presence. Everything true to itself has its own secret language and an internal intentionality with a secret surprising flow, even to the person who supposedly puts it all in motion. Ambition ultimately withers all secrets in its glare before those secrets have had time to come to life from within and then thwarts the generosity and maturity that ripens the discourse of a lifetime's dedication to a work.

We may direct the beam of ambition to illuminate a certain corner of the future world but ultimately it can reveal to us only those dreams with which we have already become familiar. Ambition left to itself, like a Rupert Murdoch, always becomes tedious, its only object, the creation of larger and larger empires of control; but a true vocation calls us out beyond ourselves; breaks our heart in the process and then

humbles, simplifies and enlightens us about the hidden, core nature of the work that enticed us in the first place. We find that all along, we had what we needed from the beginning and that in the end we have returned to its essence, an essence we could not understand until we had undertaken the journey.

No matter the self-conceited importance of our labors we are all compost for worlds we cannot yet imagine. Ambition takes us toward that horizon, but not over it - that line will always recede before our controlling hands. But a calling is a conversation between our physical bodies, our work, our intellects and imaginations, and a new world that is itself the territory we seek. A vocation always includes the specific, heart-rending way we will fail at our attempt to live our lives fully.

A true vocation always metamorphoses both ambition and failure into compassion and understanding for others....

Life lessons, win-win, can't lose (Right Relationship. Right Target. Right Order. Right Work)
Conclusion: Zion, building, focus on principles and practice

Cultivate practice that allows for but does not require the fulfilling of specific dreams, be open to a range (working in prison and how that fits in) Talk about restoration, moving forward, we never get back what was lost, talk about expectations and disappointment

Priorities (worship over buildings)

Volunteer training, think outside the box, work within the box, change the box as possible.

Dreams, goals, ambition (Read David Whyte's ambition)

Triumph of God: Lesson 48 (the full triumph of God... but WHEN?)

[“The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord”](#)

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1. Reading Review
2. Lesson
 - a. What is an apocalypse?

- b. Why do we like them? (excitement and avoidance at the same time)
 - c. Apocalypse now (are our lives sustainable? Are we prepared for whatever will come? One of stronger aspects of Latter-day saint culture)
 - d. Irony: Focus on God's victory can decrease ours
 - e. Climateapocalypse (talk about why we don't like thinking about it, it's real, race to the death between cataclysm and innovation, but the way things have been is over)
3. Conclusion: If you are prepared, ye shall not fear

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Reading Review

Class Member Reading:

Zechariah 10 Exodus imagery. God promises that because the leaders have failed, God will personally shepherd Israel. "The focus will be on the culminating day of God's victory as Divine Warrior and on the paradisiacal aftermath of that victory"

11 the prophet condemns the leadership of Judah. Symbolic actions reflect despair.

12 Judah will face destruction, but in a powerful passage, it is described they will "look on the one they have pierced" (in this period there seems to have been tension between prophets and priests)

13 Zechariah's condemnation of false prophets is so strong that he predicts no one will even try to prophesy. We have the theme of a purifying purge of the people.

14 A powerfully dramatic chapter that describes the "great and terrible" process by which God destroys current creation to create a new one. Heaven and earth will come together. The whole world will become as holy as the temple.

Malachi 1 Malachi was likely written before Nehemiah's return (465-424) Malachi condemns corrupt religious worship (in the temple)

2 The prophet condemns priests, as well as divorce.

3 the tithes supported resident foreigners, widows, orphans, and the levitical priests. Both Zechariah and Malachi are apocalypses, a genre that teaches that however bad things are now, God will vindicate the elect by overthrowing the current order and making all things right. The "book of remembrance" is a book of good deeds of the righteous.

4 Everything is set right. The wicked will burn and the righteous will be lovingly cared for All relationships will be healed and restored.

1 Nephi 22:15-17, 19;

D&C 2;

D&C 110:13-16

Lesson

What is an apocalypse?

Why do we like them? (excitement and avoidance at the same time) (we love zombie apocalypses, or Bible apocalypse, but don't want to hear or talk about the issues that genuinely threaten our infrastructure, civilization, and way of life)

Apocalypse now (are our lives sustainable? Are we prepared for whatever will come?)

One of stronger aspects of Latter-day saint culture)

Irony: Focus on God's victory can decrease ours

Climateapocalypse (talk about why we don't like thinking about it, it's real, race to the death between cataclysm and innovation, but the way things have been is over)

Conclusion: If you are prepared, ye shall not fear (if we can live sustainable and well, it doesn't matter when or whether God rescues us and fixes everything)

Apocalypse (Why are we so interested in the zombie apocalypse, or Bible apocalypse, but we aren't

NASA on climate change: <https://climate.nasa.gov/> (yes, freaking NASA)

<https://theanthropocene.org/#chapter-0>

Living in the now, the real world. Not waiting for ideas to make it all better (dig into this) I struggle with this. To be present in the now, the real, find redemption in it. I LOVE the idea of god crashing in and making everything better.