

Dr. Tiberius Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 6, God as King

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 6, God as King, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Rata's Old Testament Theology session focuses on the concept of God as King, tracing its significance from ancient Semitic thought through the Old Testament. It highlights that Yahweh's kingship is not a later adoption but a fundamental aspect of His character, evident in His sovereign acts and covenants. **This kingship is linked to the idea of a universal Kingdom of God, encompassing all peoples and characterized by righteousness and future peace.** The session explores the role of the Messiah as God's representative in this kingdom, as proclaimed by Jesus. **While present in Jesus' ministry and within believers, the fullness of this kingdom awaits future realization.** Ultimately, entering this kingdom requires accepting Christ's authority as King.

2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 6 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology → OT Theology, Rata).



Rata_OTTheology_Session06.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 6, God as King

Briefing Document: Dr. Tiberius Rata on God as King in Old Testament Theology

Executive Summary:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Tiberius Rata in Session 6 of his Old Testament Theology course, focusing on the concept of "God as King." Rata argues that the notion of Yahweh as King is fundamental to Semitic thought and the Old Testament, extending beyond a mere title to encompass God's sovereign acts throughout history. He emphasizes the unique nature of Yahweh's kingship compared to other ancient Near Eastern deities, highlighting its eternal nature and its connection to the covenant relationship with Israel and, ultimately, a universal kingdom. The lecture also explores the relationship between God's kingship and the Kingdom of God, its characteristics (universality, righteousness, peace), and the role of the Messiah in this kingdom, both in the present and the future.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Yahweh as King: A Foundational Concept:

- Rata establishes that the concept of God as King ("Malak" in Hebrew) is basic to Semitic thinking, where gods were commonly viewed as kings.
- However, Yahweh's kingship is distinct, denoting "more than simply the head of a monarchical state. It can mean a prince or a leader."
- The term "king" is applied to Yahweh 42 times in the Old Testament, underscoring its significance.
- "The kingship of Yahweh relates to his sovereign acts on behalf of his people through all times."

1. The Eternal and Uncreated Kingship of Yahweh:

- A crucial point is that "there was never a time when Yahweh was not king." This refutes the idea that Israel borrowed this concept from other nations' enthronement festivals.
- The Book of Exodus, specifically the "song of Moses" after the Exodus event (Exodus 15:18: "The Lord will reign forever and ever"), provides early evidence of this belief.

- The Psalms repeatedly affirm Yahweh's eternal reign (e.g., Psalm 97:1, Psalm 10:16, Psalm 93:1, Psalm 96:10, Psalm 146:10, 1 Chronicles 16:31).
- Prophetic texts like Zechariah 14:9 ("the Lord will be king over all the earth") point to a future, eschatological realization of this universal kingship.

1. **The Kingdom of God: The Manifestation of God's Kingship:**

- Rata logically connects God's kingship to the concept of the Kingdom of God: "Well, if there is a kingdom, that means there is a king. And if there is a king, there is a kingdom."
- The Kingdom of God is characterized by its **universality**: "the kingdom of God definitely encounters more than just the nation of Israel." This aligns with the promises to Abraham that "all the families of the earth shall be blessed through Abraham." Prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah also speak of God's kingdom including all nations.
- Another key characteristic is **righteousness**: "the Lord will cleanse his people so their righteousness will be their characteristic." This is linked to the New Covenant and the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying believers. "When you come into the kingdom of God, He changes you. He removes you from the kingdom of darkness and removes you into the kingdom of His Son." Examples from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel illustrate this transformative aspect.
- The kingdom is also marked by **peace**: Isaiah's prophecies of swords turned into plowshares and the harmony in the animal kingdom depict a future eschatological peace associated with God's reign. "Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war no more." This peace is not yet fully realized and awaits Christ's second coming.

1. **The Role of the Messiah:**

- Drawing on the work of Scandinavian scholar Mowinckel, Rata suggests that the Messiah is "the representative of Yahweh in his kingdom in whom Yahweh is present and through whom he acts."
- While "Messiah" could refer to anointed figures like King David in the Old Testament, its ultimate fulfillment is seen in Jesus.
- Jesus' ministry prominently featured the Kingdom of God: "When Jesus comes, when the Messiah comes, he proclaims and says, the time has come; repent; the kingdom of God is near."

- Even the mocking inscription on the cross, "This is the king of the Jews," inadvertently proclaimed the truth of Jesus' kingship.
- Jesus' understanding of his kingship differed from the expectations of his time, focusing on spiritual transformation rather than immediate political liberation.

1. The Kingdom of God: Present and Future (Already/Not Yet):

- Jesus' teachings indicate that the Kingdom of God has both a present and a future dimension.
- When asked when the kingdom would come, Jesus said, "the kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation. Nor will people say, here it is, or There it is because the kingdom of God is within you." This highlights the inward, present reality of the kingdom.
- However, the Lord's Prayer ("your kingdom come") acknowledges a future aspect, a fulfillment that is yet to be realized.
- This "already/not-yet concept" is central to understanding the Kingdom of God.

1. Entrance into the Kingdom and its Nature:

- The Kingdom of God is not a universalist concept where everyone is automatically included. Jesus' parables and teachings about the "feast" and those "thrown outside into darkness" indicate judgment and exclusion.
- Entrance into the kingdom is not based on outward declarations or attempts to earn it, but through submission to Christ as King and acceptance of his authority. "The only way into the kingdom is to accept Christ the King as our sovereign and to submit to his authority."
- Matthew's use of "the kingdom of heaven" is presented as synonymous with "the kingdom of God," both referring to God's sovereign reign.

Key Quotes:

- "The kingship of Yahweh relates to his sovereign acts on behalf of his people through all times."
- "There was never a time when Yahweh was not king."
- "The Lord will reign forever and ever." (Exodus 15:18)

- "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation. Nor will people say, here it is, or There it is because the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-21)
- "The only way into the kingdom is to accept Christ the King as our sovereign and to submit to his authority."

Conclusion:

Dr. Rata's session provides a comprehensive overview of the concept of God as King in the Old Testament. He effectively demonstrates its foundational importance, its unique characteristics compared to other ancient Near Eastern beliefs, and its intimate connection to the unfolding Kingdom of God. The lecture highlights the eternal nature of God's reign, the universal scope and ethical demands of his kingdom, the pivotal role of the Messiah, and the dynamic "already/not yet" reality of God's sovereign rule in the world and in the hearts of believers. The session concludes with a clear call to personal submission to Christ as King as the means of entering this eternal kingdom.

4. Study Guide: Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 6, God as King

Study Guide: God as King in Old Testament Theology

Key Concepts and Themes

- **Yahweh as King:** Explore the significance of the title "King" (Malak) when applied to Yahweh in the Old Testament. Understand how this concept differs from the understanding of kingship in surrounding ancient Near Eastern cultures.
- **Sovereignty of God:** Analyze how the kingship of Yahweh underscores his sovereign acts throughout history, impacting his people.
- **Theocracy and Monarchy in Israel:** Understand the initial concept of Israel as a theocracy (ruled by God) and its transition to a monarchy. Connect this transition to the underlying reality of God's continued kingship.
- **Covenant and Kingship:** Examine the relationship between God as the covenant maker (suzerain) and his role as king. How does the covenant formula ("I will be their God, and they will be my people") reflect his kingship?
- **Timeless Kingship:** Recognize the Old Testament assertion that Yahweh's kingship has no beginning or end, contrasting this with potential influences from surrounding cultures.
- **The Kingdom of God: Universality:** Understand the expansive nature of God's kingdom, extending beyond the nation of Israel to include all families of the earth, as seen in promises to Abraham and prophetic visions.
- **The Kingdom of God: Righteousness:** Analyze how righteousness is a defining characteristic of God's kingdom, involving God's cleansing and transformation of his people.
- **The Kingdom of God: Peace:** Explore the eschatological expectation of peace within God's kingdom, including the absence of war and harmony in creation.
- **The Role of the Messiah:** Understand the Messiah as Yahweh's representative in his kingdom and how this relates to both historical figures and the person of Jesus Christ.

- **The Kingdom of God: Present and Future:** Grasp the "already/not-yet" aspect of the kingdom of God, as proclaimed by Jesus. Recognize its present reality (inward transformation) and its future consummation.
- **Entering the Kingdom:** Understand the requirements for entering God's kingdom, emphasizing submission to Christ's authority rather than earthly means.
- **Kingdom of God vs. Kingdom of Heaven:** Note the interchangeable use of these terms, particularly in Matthew's Gospel.

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. In Semitic thought, what was a common understanding of deities, and how did this sometimes relate to earthly rulers?
2. How does the Old Testament usage of the term "king" (Malak) when referring to Yahweh go beyond the typical understanding of a monarch in the ancient Near East?
3. Explain the connection between God as the covenant maker and the concept of his kingship, referencing the idea of suzerain treaties.
4. According to the Old Testament, was there ever a time when Yahweh was not considered king? Provide a specific example from the text that supports your answer.
5. Describe the universal nature of God's kingdom as it is presented in the Old Testament, referencing the promises to Abraham.
6. What is identified as a key characteristic of God's kingdom concerning his people, and how does God bring about this characteristic?
7. What is the eschatological expectation of peace within God's kingdom, and are there any examples given in the text to illustrate this?
8. According to the provided text, what role does the Messiah play in relation to Yahweh's kingdom?
9. Explain the "already/not-yet" concept of the kingdom of God as taught by Jesus, providing an example of each aspect from the text.
10. According to the text, how does one enter the kingdom of God, and what does this entail regarding submission to Jesus?

Quiz: Answer Key

1. Semitic peoples generally thought of their gods as kings, and in some instances, this led to the idea that the earthly king was also divine or had a divine connection, blurring the lines between the two. They shared a basic understanding of deities holding royal authority.
2. When the Old Testament refers to Yahweh as king, it denotes more than just the head of a monarchical state. It signifies his sovereign acts on behalf of his people throughout all of time, highlighting his ultimate authority and power.
3. God's covenants are presented as suzerain treaties, where God, the greater king, establishes an agreement with his people. This perspective highlights God's kingly authority and his right to set the terms of the relationship, thus portraying him as the king through his covenant-making.
4. No, according to the Bible, there was never a time when Yahweh was not king. The book of Exodus, in the song of Moses after the Exodus event, declares, "The Lord will reign forever and ever," indicating an eternal kingship with no beginning.
5. The Old Testament reveals that God's kingdom is universal, meaning it extends beyond the nation of Israel to include all families of the earth. This is evident in the promises given to Abraham, through whom all families of the earth were to be blessed.
6. Righteousness is a key characteristic of God's kingdom. God brings about this righteousness by cleansing his people from their impurities and giving them a new heart and spirit through his Holy Spirit, leading to a process of sanctification.
7. The eschatological expectation of peace in God's kingdom includes the transformation of weapons into tools of agriculture and an end to nations training for war. Additionally, Isaiah describes a miraculous peace within the animal kingdom, where predators and prey will live harmoniously.
8. The Messiah is described as the representative of Yahweh in his kingdom, in whom Yahweh is present and through whom he acts. While the term could refer to anointed figures like King David, it ultimately points towards Jesus Christ.
9. The "already" aspect of the kingdom of God is seen in Jesus' statement that "the kingdom of God is within you," indicating a present, inward reality. The "not-yet" aspect is evident in Jesus' teaching in the Lord's Prayer to pray, "your kingdom come," signifying a future fulfillment that is still awaited.

10. One enters the kingdom of God by accepting Christ the King as their sovereign and submitting to his authority. It is not earned or bought but is a matter of recognizing Jesus as Lord, Savior, and King and choosing to live under his rule.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the title "King" as applied to Yahweh in the Old Testament. How does this concept shape our understanding of God's relationship with his people and the world?
2. Analyze the concept of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament, paying particular attention to its universal scope and the characteristics of righteousness and peace associated with it.
3. Explore the relationship between God's role as covenant maker and his kingship in the Old Testament. How do these two concepts intertwine to reveal God's sovereign authority and his engagement with humanity?
4. Examine the tension between the "already" and "not-yet" aspects of the kingdom of God as presented in the teachings of Jesus. How does this understanding inform the Christian life and hope?
5. Discuss the role of the Messiah in the kingdom of God, drawing connections between Old Testament expectations and the fulfillment seen in Jesus Christ. How does acknowledging Christ as King impact one's understanding of salvation and discipleship?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Malak (מַלְאֲכִי):** The Hebrew word for "king." In the Old Testament, it is frequently used to refer to Yahweh, signifying his sovereign rule and authority.
- **Theocracy:** A system of government in which God is recognized as the supreme ruling authority, and religious law is used to govern the state. Israel was initially intended to be a theocracy.
- **Monarchy:** A form of government with a single ruler, such as a king or queen, who typically inherits their position. Israel transitioned from a theocracy to a monarchy.
- **Suzerain Treaty:** An ancient Near Eastern treaty between a more powerful king (suzerain) and a less powerful vassal king. God's covenants with Israel are often understood in this framework, highlighting his authority.
- **Eschatology:** The branch of theology concerned with the final events of history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity and the universe. Prophetic passages about the future kingdom of God fall under eschatology.
- **Messiah (מָשִׁיחַ):** The Hebrew term meaning "anointed one." In the Old Testament, it referred to individuals consecrated for a special role, such as kings and priests. It came to have a specific eschatological meaning, referring to the promised deliverer of Israel, fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- **Sanctification:** The process of being made holy or set apart for God. In the context of God's kingdom, it refers to the ongoing transformation of believers into the likeness of Christ through the Holy Spirit.
- **Universalism:** The theological belief that all people will ultimately be saved. The provided text clarifies that the universality of God's kingdom does not equate to universalism in salvation.
- **Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven:** Terms used to describe God's reign and rule. While Matthew often uses "Kingdom of Heaven," the text suggests these terms refer to the same reality of God's sovereign dominion.
- **Already/Not-Yet:** A theological concept describing the inaugurated but not yet fully realized nature of God's kingdom. It is present in the ministry of Jesus and the lives of believers, but its complete fulfillment awaits future events.

5. FAQs on Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 6, God as King, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: God as King in the Old Testament

1. How is the concept of God as King fundamental in Old Testament theology? The idea of God as King (Hebrew: *Malak*) is deeply ingrained in Semitic thought and is a crucial aspect of how God reveals Himself in the Old Testament. Beyond being Creator, Covenant Maker, Redeemer, and Lawgiver, God is consistently portrayed as the sovereign ruler over all. This kingship signifies His active authority and power exercised on behalf of His people throughout history, emphasizing that Yahweh's reign has no beginning or end.

2. How does the Old Testament understanding of God's kingship differ from that of other ancient Near Eastern cultures? While other Semitic cultures also viewed their deities as kings, associating the human king with the divine, the Old Testament presents Yahweh's kingship as unique. It transcends the mere head of a monarchical state or a temporary enthronement. Yahweh was always King; His sovereignty was not a copied concept but an intrinsic aspect of His being and actions from the earliest times.

3. How does the covenant relationship between God and Israel relate to God's kingship? The covenant formula, "I will be their God and they will be my people," not only signifies God's covenant-making and keeping nature but also portrays Him as King. Old Testament covenants are presented as suzerain treaties, where God, the suzerain or greater king, establishes the terms with His people. Therefore, God's act of making a covenant is an expression of His royal authority and governance.

4. What is the scope of God's kingdom according to the Old Testament? God's kingdom is not limited to the nation of Israel; it is universal in scope. The promises to Abraham included the blessing of all families of the earth through him. Prophetic texts further emphasize that God's reign will eventually encompass all nations, with Jerusalem becoming the throne of the Lord and all peoples gathering to honor Him.

5. What are some key characteristics of God's kingdom as revealed in the Old Testament? The righteousness of God's kingdom is a defining characteristic. God cleanses His people so that righteousness becomes their distinguishing feature. Additionally, the kingdom is associated with peace, an eschatological hope for a time when war will cease and even nature will be at peace. These characteristics point towards a transformative and restorative reign.

6. What role does the Messiah play in the context of God's kingship? The Messiah is presented as Yahweh's representative in His kingdom, the one in whom Yahweh is present and through whom He acts. While the term "Messiah" could refer to various anointed figures in the Old Testament, it ultimately points towards Jesus Christ, who proclaimed the nearness of the kingdom of God during his ministry and demonstrated his kingship through his works.

7. How is the kingdom of God understood in the present and the future according to the New Testament, building upon the Old Testament foundation? Jesus' teachings reveal that the kingdom of God is both present ("within you") and future ("your kingdom come"). This "already/not-yet" concept highlights that while God's reign is inaugurated through Christ and experienced in the hearts of believers, its full manifestation awaits a future fulfillment, such as the Messianic feast described in both the Gospels and Revelation.

8. How does one enter God's kingdom, and what are the implications of being a subject of this King? Entry into God's kingdom is not based on lineage, wealth, or outward religious practice, but through accepting Jesus Christ as the sovereign King and submitting to His authority. This involves a personal decision to acknowledge His Lordship and Saviorhood. Being part of God's kingdom signifies a transformation, where believers are made holy through the Holy Spirit and live under the reign of a King whose dominion is eternal and universal.