

The Kingdom of God, the Community as God Imagines It II

The kingdom was dreamed about by King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 2. The kingdom was prophesied by Daniel by interrupting Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2. The kingdom of God was announced by John the baptizer, the forerunner of Christ. The kingdom of God was made available, taught, and explained by Jesus Christ. The kingdom of God was experienced by men and women from the days of Jesus throughout the first-century disciples of Jesus, and it is experienced now.

The kingdom of God is the community as God imagines it.

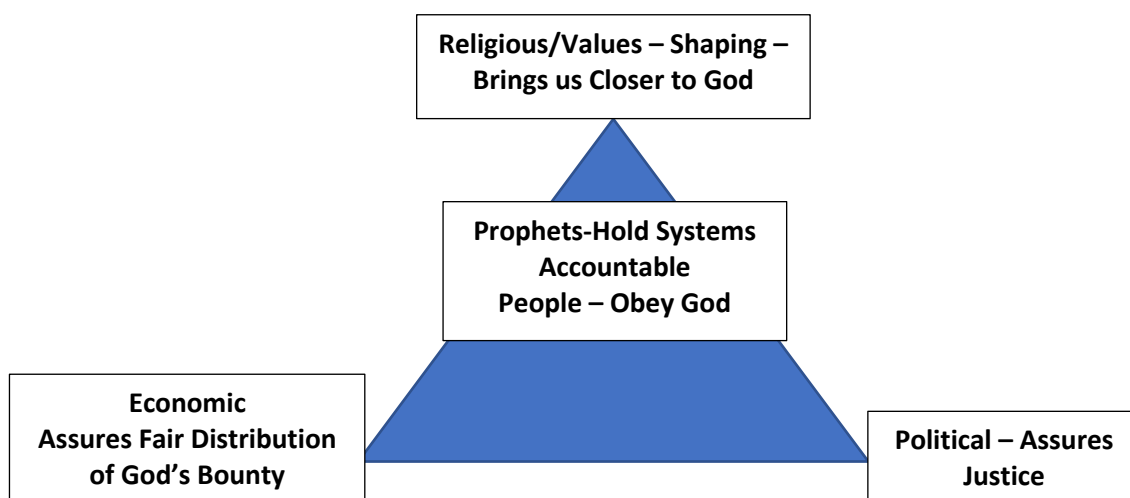
In Deuteronomy, the LORD sets forth a model for the new community.

I

Ezekiel is called to access the cause of their captivity *Ezekiel 22*.

This model was to break Pharaoh's total control over the people.

This model shows us how to live in a community together.



This is the kingdom God set up.

KJV Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the **God of heaven set up a kingdom**, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

II

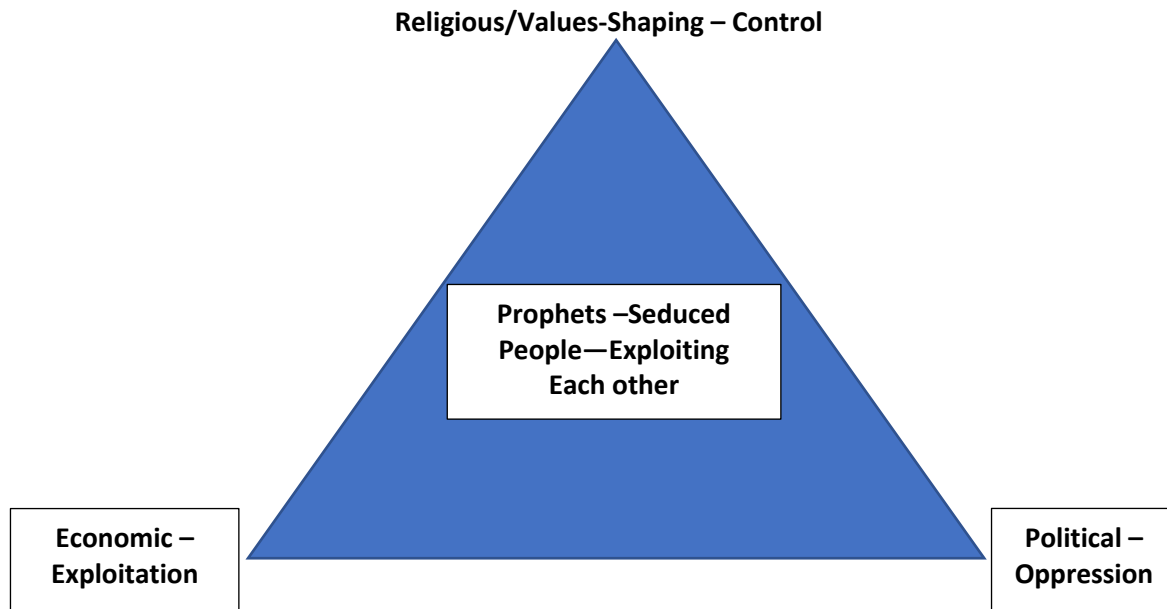
What went wrong?

Ezekiel is called to access the cause of their captivity *Ezekiel 22*.

NRSV Ezekiel 22:23-31

NRSV Ezekiel 22: 23-31 The word of the Lord came to me: ²⁴ Mortal, say to it: You are a land that is not cleansed, not rained upon in the day of indignation. ²⁵ Its **princes** within it are like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured human lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows within it. ²⁶ Its **priests** have done violence to my teaching and have profaned my holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. ²⁷ Its **officials** within it are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain. ²⁸ Its **prophets** have smeared whitewash on their behalf, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, "Thus says the Lord God," when the Lord has not spoken. ²⁹ The **people** of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery; they have oppressed the poor and needy and have extorted from the alien without redress. ³⁰ And **I sought for anyone** among them who would repair the wall and stand in the breach before me on behalf of the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one. ³¹

Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; I have returned their conduct upon their heads, says the Lord God.



III

What went wrong?

The political system – used **oppression**

The religious system – used **control**

The economic system – used **exploitation**

The prophets – used **seduction**

The people – **exploited** one another

NRSV **Matthew 23:13** But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! **For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven.** For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them.

NIV **Matthew 23:23** Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill, and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—**justice, mercy, and faithfulness.**

- The LORD is still looking for someone to see, stand, and speak for Him.

NRSV **Ezekiel 22:30** And I sought for anyone among them who would **repair** the wall and **stand** in the breach before me on behalf of the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.

Will you stand for justice, mercy, and faithfulness?

Will you stand?

Nehemiah Action April 25, 2023
6:15 pm registration and 7:00 pm
Action begins.

Rhema Christian Center
Bishop La Fayette Scales
Saturday & Sunday, April 22 & 23, 2023
9:30 a.m.