

THE KING'S STORY (11)¹

The King Promises

A. Introduction

1. The Bible is a story of a King, God, who makes His glory known in His Son Jesus Christ.

Two prominent themes in this story are that this King:

- a) saves His people through judgment;
- b) establishes kingdoms and rules over them by means of covenants.

Two of the kingdoms that God the King establishes and rules over by means of covenants are the kingdom of creation and the kingdom of Israel².

2. The kingdom of creation was established through the covenant of works and the Noahic covenant.

In the covenant of works, God gave responsibility of ruling over creation to Adam and his descendants promising eternal life for obedience.

But Adam broke the covenant and the world became cursed.

In His grace, God made a promise that a Saviour would come, and through the covenant with Noah promised to restrain His wrath against human sin, until this promise was kept.

3. The kingdom of Israel was established through the Abrahamic covenant and was expanded by the Mosaic and Davidic covenants.

In the Abrahamic covenant, God promises Abraham that his offspring would inherit the Promised Land and live in His presence if they obey His rule, and through one of his descendants the nations will be saved.

In the Mosaic covenant, what it means for Abraham's descendants, the people of Israel, to live in God's presence and under His rule in the land, is spelled out by the law of God. If Israel obeyed God's commands, they will enjoy the blessing of life in the land, whereas if they disobeyed, they will be cursed by God, including exile from the land.

In the Davidic covenant, the kingdom of Israel is focused into one person, the king, who was commanded to keep the law of God on behalf of the nation. So now, if the king is righteous and keeps the law, the people and the land will be blessed, but if the king is wicked and breaks the law, the people and the land will be cursed.

As the Davidic kings keep the Mosaic covenant the kingdom of Israel will enjoy the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. However, if the Davidic kings fail to keep the Mosaic covenant, the kingdom of Israel will suffer the curses of the covenant.

Sadly, like Adam, Israel's kings were unfaithful to God's covenant, and the people with them.

"But they, like Adam, have violated the covenant; there they have betrayed me." (Hosea 6:7)

Even after the prophets warned the king and the people of God's judgment, calling them to repent, they did not, and so Israel (first Israel then Judah) was exiled for its wickedness.

4. It is as if the Fall has happened all over again.

But the promise of salvation still remains, and God will not break this promise.

¹ The titles for this series are taken from Biblical Theology by Nick Roark & Robert Cline

² Throughout this series I will refer to 3 kingdoms, the kingdom of creation, Israel, Christ, which is an idea taken from The Mystery of Christ by Samuel Renihan.

He will be faithful to the promises He made to Adam and Eve, to Abraham, and to David.

"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15)
"And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command." (Genesis 22:18)

"Your house and kingdom will endure before me forever, and your throne will be established forever." (2 Samuel 7:16)

The prophets as well as announcing God's judgment upon Israel, also looked forward to this promise being kept.

They gave the people of Israel hope by announcing that there will be a new king who will bring salvation to people by establishing a new kingdom and ruling over it by means of a new covenant.

They were looking ahead to the kingdom of Christ.

B. God promises a new King

1. This King will be the son of David.

This son of David will be given divine titles.

"For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now on and forever. The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

This son of David will be equipped by the Spirit.

"Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight will be in the fear of the LORD." (Isaiah 11:1-3)

This son of David will be the son of man.

"I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14)

2. This King will be the shepherd.

God will shepherd His people.

"As a shepherd looks for his sheep on the day he is among his scattered flock, so I will look for my flock. I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and total darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries, and bring them to their own soil. I will shepherd them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the land. I will tend them in good pasture, and their grazing place will be on Israel's lofty mountains. There they will lie down in a good grazing place; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will tend my flock and let them lie down. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, bring back the strays, bandage the injured, and strengthen the weak, but I will destroy the fat and the strong. I will shepherd them with justice." (Ezekiel 34:12-16)

David will shepherd His people.

"I will establish over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will shepherd them. He will tend them himself and will be their shepherd. I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David will be a prince among them. I, the LORD, have spoken." (Ezekiel 34:23-24)

"My servant David will be king over them, and there will be one shepherd for all of them. They will follow my ordinances, and keep my statutes and obey them." (Ezekiel 37:24)

3. The King will be the servant.

The servant is Israel.

"And now listen, Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen. This is the word of the LORD your Maker, the one who formed you from the womb: He will help you. Do not fear, Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen." (Isaiah 44:1-2)

"He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." (Isaiah 49:3)

But Israel is unfaithful and needs saving.

"Who is blind but my servant, or deaf like my messenger I am sending? Who is blind like my dedicated one, or blind like the servant of the LORD?" (Isaiah 42:19)

"But, Jacob, you have not called on me, because, Israel, you have become weary of me. You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings or honoured me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings or wearied you with incense. You have not bought me aromatic cane with silver, or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities." (Isaiah 43:22-24)

The servant will rescue Israel.

"And now, says the LORD, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him so that Israel might be gathered to him; for I am honoured in the sight of the LORD, and my God is my strength—he says, "It is not enough for you to be my servant raising up the tribes of Jacob and restoring the protected ones of Israel. I will also make you a light for the nations, to be my salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:5-6)

"This is my servant; I strengthen him, this is my chosen one; I delight in him. I have put my Spirit on him; he will bring justice to the nations." (Isaiah 42:1)

4. Who is this new King?

He will be the seed of the woman, the offspring of Abraham, the son of David, the shepherd of God's people and the servant of the LORD.

He will bring salvation to people (including Gentiles) by establishing a new kingdom.

C. God promises a new Kingdom

1. This kingdom will be a people.

It will be made up people from Judah and Israel (and the nations).

"On that day the root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples. The nations will look to him for guidance, and his resting place will be glorious. On that day the Lord will extend his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people who survive—from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the coasts and islands of the west. He will lift up a banner for the nations and gather the dispersed of Israel; he will collect the scattered of Judah from the four corners of the earth." (Isaiah 11:10-12)

"As for the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to become his servants—all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold firmly to my covenant—I will bring them to my holy mountain and let them rejoice in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar, for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD, who

gathers the dispersed of Israel: "I will gather to them still others besides those already gathered." (Isaiah 56:6-8)

"Knowing their works and their thoughts, I have come to gather all nations and languages; they will come and see my glory. I will establish a sign among them, and I will send survivors from them to the nations—to Tarshish, Put, Lud (who are archers), Tubal, Javan, and the coasts and islands far away—who have not heard about me or seen my glory. And they will proclaim my glory among the nations. They will bring all your brothers from all the nations as a gift to the LORD on horses and chariots, in litters, and on mules and camels, to my holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "just as the Israelites bring an offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. I will also take some of them as priests and Levites," says the LORD." (Isaiah 66:18-21)

2. This kingdom will be a place.

It will be a new creation (God will remake, renew, and restore this world).

"For I will create new heavens and a new earth; the past events will not be remembered or come to mind." (Isaiah 65:17)

"For just as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, will remain before me"—this is the LORD's declaration—"so your offspring and your name will remain. All humanity will come to worship me from one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another," says the LORD." (Isaiah 66:22-23)

"For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would inherit the world." (Romans 4:13)

It will be a new Jerusalem (the place no longer under God's curse where God's people will live).

"Then be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I will create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people. The sound of weeping and crying will no longer be heard in her." (Isaiah 65:18-19)

"The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like cattle, but the serpent's food will be dust! They will not do what is evil or destroy on my entire holy mountain," says the LORD." (Isaiah 65:25)

It will be a new temple (where God will dwell with His people).

"Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple and there was water flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the temple faced east. The water was coming down from under the south side of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar." (Ezekiel 47:1 see Ezekiel 40-48)

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD's glory, as the water covers the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)

3. This new Kingdom over which this new King will rule will come about because God promised a new covenant.

"Look, the days are coming"—this is the LORD's declaration—"when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. This one will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—my covenant that they broke even though I am their master"—the LORD's declaration. "Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days"—the LORD's declaration." (Jeremiah 31:31-32)

D. God promises a new covenant

1. The new covenant promises God's people a new heart.

A new heart that will enable them to obey God's law.

"Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days"—the LORD's declaration. "I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people." (Jeremiah 31:33)

2. The new covenant promises God's people a new relationship.

"I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will one teach his neighbour or his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know me, from the least to the greatest of them"—this is the LORD's declaration." (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

This new Kingdom will now only be made up of people whose trust is in the King.

3. The new covenant promises God's people a new forgiveness.

Sin will be fully and finally dealt with.

"For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin." (Jeremiah 31:34)

4. How will God forgive His people's sin and change their hearts?

This new King who is the perfect Adam and the perfect Israel will represent them and atone for their sins.

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like someone people turned away from; he was despised, and we didn't value him. Yet he himself bore our sicknesses, and he carried our pains; but we in turn regarded him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD has punished him for the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:3-6)

This new King will put His Spirit in them so they can obey God's law.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances." (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

5. By the end of the Old Testament the new kingdom had not yet come.

Though the people of Israel had returned from exile, and Jerusalem and the temple had been rebuilt, the people did not have new hearts.

The new kingdom had not yet come because the new King had not yet arrived.

"See, I am going to send my messenger, and he will clear the way before me. Then the Lord you seek will suddenly come to his temple, the Messenger of the covenant you delight in—see, he is coming," says the LORD of Armies." (Malachi 3:1)

The Writings were the books of Scripture that looked forward to the coming kingdom and King like David and showed God's people how to live faithfully in all of life's circumstances, giving them hope and guidance as they waited for His arrival.

All they could do was trust and obey while they waited... and waited... and waited.