

THE KING'S STORY (6)¹

The King Rescues

A. Introduction

1. The Bible is a story.

It is a story that makes God's glory known.

It is a story about Jesus Christ.

It is a story of salvation achieved through judgment.

It is a story of the King who establishes kingdoms and rules over them by means of covenants.

2. The story of the Bible begins with God the King creating the kingdom of creation².

After creating humans in His image, He gave them the responsibility of ruling over this kingdom on His behalf by subduing the earth and by filling it as they were fruitful and multiplied.

In addition, God made a covenant of works with Adam promising eternal life if obeyed the command to work and watch over Eden and to refrain from eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam however sinned, breaking this covenant, and brought the God's curse of death upon all humanity.

Before God the King cursed Adam and Eve, driving them out of His presence in the Garden of Eden, He preached the gospel to them.

Eternal life was still possible, but it no longer would come through obedience to the covenant of works.

"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)

A Saviour would come from the offspring of the woman.

This Saviour wouldn't come immediately, but He will come, as after the Flood which wiped out all humanity apart from Noah and his family, God made another covenant, ensuring that world would not be destroyed again before the Saviour arrives and rescues all His people.

After people rebel against God at Babel, we are left wondering how this promise will be kept, as there doesn't appear to be an offspring of the woman.

God's response is to create a new kingdom with the kingdom of creation, the kingdom of Israel, out of which the Saviour will come.

3. The kingdom of Israel begins with God blessing Abram and making a covenant with him.

Abram is promised a great nation and a great blessing.

"The LORD said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:1-3)

"The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." (Genesis 12:7)

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.

The great nation will require Abram to have two things: a place and a people.

Note the link to the original commission to Adam – subdue the earth (place); be fruitful and multiply (people).

The great blessing was not only that Abram's name will be great and he will be a blessing to others; it is that the whole world will be blessed through him.

The promised offspring of the woman will also be an offspring/son of Abram.

There was however a problem.

Abram had no children and was old in years, and Sarai his wife was barren. Abram had no land and there were already people in the Promised Land of Canaan.

Even though God would confirm these promises to Abram by making a covenant with him, which guaranteed that Abram will have numerous offspring who will live in the Promised Land of Canaan, years continue to pass, and he still has no child and no land to speak of.

4. God did keep His promise to Abram, now Abraham.

To Abraham and Sarah, Isaac was born. Isaac and his wife Rebekah had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons, who became the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel.

The promises that were made to Abraham were passed to Isaac and then to Jacob his sons.

"There was another famine in the land in addition to the one that had occurred in Abraham's time. And Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, at Gerar. The LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt. Live in the land that I tell you about; stay in this land as an alien, and I will be with you and bless you. For I will give all these lands to you and your offspring, and I will confirm the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky, I will give your offspring all these lands, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring, because Abraham listened to me and kept my mandate, my commands, my statutes, and my instructions." So Isaac settled in Gerar." (Genesis 26:1-6)

"So Isaac summoned Jacob, blessed him, and commanded him, "Do not marry a Canaanite girl. Go at once to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father. Marry one of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you so that you become an assembly of peoples. May God give you and your offspring the blessing of Abraham so that you may possess the land where you live as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham." So Isaac sent Jacob to Paddan-aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau." (Genesis 28:1-5)

"God appeared to Jacob again after he returned from Paddan-aram, and he blessed him. God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; you will no longer be named Jacob, but your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel. God also said to him, "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation, indeed an assembly of nations, will come from you, and kings will descend from you. I will give to you the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac. And I will give the land to your future descendants." (Genesis 35:9-12)

"Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me. He said to me, 'I will make you fruitful and numerous; I will make many nations come from you, and I will give this land as a permanent possession to your future descendants.'" (Genesis 48:3-4)

Time and time again these promises were threatened in various ways, the greatest being a famine in the land of Canaan where Jacob and his family were living.

But God save their lives, as Jacob's son Joseph, having been sold into slavery by his brothers, is put in charge of the whole land of Egypt (where there is food) by Pharaoh.

"Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please, come near me," and they came near. "I am Joseph, your brother," he said, "the one you sold into Egypt. And now don't be grieved or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because God sent me ahead of you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there will be five more years without ploughing

or harvesting. God sent me ahead of you to establish you as a remnant within the land and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Therefore it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household, and ruler over all the land of Egypt." (Genesis 45:4-8)

"You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people." (Genesis 50:20)

However, the great nation God promised Abraham is still some way off – Israel numbers seventy people, and are living in Egypt not Canaan.

As for the identity of the offspring of the woman, the seed of Abraham, we now know He will come from the tribe of Judah.

"Judah, your brothers will praise you. Your hand will be on the necks of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. Judah is a young lion—my son, you return from the kill. He crouches; he lies down like a lion or a lioness—who dares to rouse him? The sceptre will not depart from Judah or the staff from between his feet until he whose right it is comes and the obedience of the peoples belongs to him." (Genesis 48:8-10)

5. Jacob/Israel's descendants remained in Egypt for the next 400 years, just like God told Abraham they would.

"Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know this for certain: Your offspring will be resident aliens for four hundred years in a land that does not belong to them and will be enslaved and oppressed. However, I will judge the nation they serve, and afterward they will go out with many possessions." (Genesis 15:13-14)

In that time, the seventy people became a nation of around 2 million, as the people of Israel were fruitful and multiplied.

"Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation eventually died. But the Israelites were fruitful, increased rapidly, multiplied, and became extremely numerous so that the land was filled with them." (Exodus 1:6-7)

But a new threat appeared, as the offspring of the serpent again tries to wipe out the offspring of the woman.

"A new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt." (Exodus 1:8)

B. The King shows His might by rescuing His suffering people

1. God hears the cries of His suffering people.

"He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and powerful than we are. Come, let's deal shrewdly with them; otherwise they will multiply further, and when war breaks out, they will join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country." So the Egyptians assigned taskmasters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labour. They built Pithom and Rameses as supply cities for Pharaoh. But the more they oppressed them, the more they multiplied and spread so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. They worked the Israelites ruthlessly and made their lives bitter with difficult labour in brick and mortar and in all kinds of fieldwork. They ruthlessly imposed all this work on them." (Exodus 1:9-14)

"The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives—the first, whose name was Shiphrah, and the second, whose name was Puah— "When you help the Hebrew women give birth, observe them as they deliver. If the child is a son, kill him, but if it's a daughter, she may live." The midwives, however, feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live." (Exodus 1:15-17)

"The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labour, they cried out, and their cry for help because of the difficult labour ascended to God. God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the Israelites, and God knew." (Exodus 2:23-25)

2. God provides a rescuer for His suffering people.

"When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses!" "Here I am," he answered. "Do not come closer," he said. "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he continued, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God. Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people in Egypt, and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors. I know about their sufferings, and I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the territory of the Canaanites, Hethites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. So because the Israelites' cry for help has come to me, and I have also seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them, therefore, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh so that you may lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:4-10)

God promises to rescue the people of Israel from Egypt and bring them into the land He promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

3. God shows that He is the true God to His suffering people.

"Therefore tell the Israelites: I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from the forced labour of the Egyptians and rescue you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great acts of judgment. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from the forced labour of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD." Moses told this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their broken spirit and hard labour." (Exodus 6:6-9)

The point of the ten plagues/signs, is not just that Pharaoh and the Egyptians would know that God is the LORD, but that the Israelites would too.

He judges Egypt so that the Egyptians would know that He is the LORD.

"The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the Israelites from among them." (Exodus 7:5)

He saves Israel through judgment so that they would know that He is the LORD.

"Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may do these miraculous signs of mine among them, and so that you may tell your son and grandson how severely I dealt with the Egyptians and performed miraculous signs among them, and you will know that I am the LORD." (Exodus 10:1-2)

C. The King shows His mercy by rescuing His suffering people

1. God announced in the final plague, that He would pass through Egypt killing the firstborn son of every household.

"So Moses said, "This is what the LORD says: About midnight I will go throughout Egypt, and every firstborn male in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the servant girl who is at the grindstones, as well as every firstborn of the livestock." (Exodus 11:4-5)

But He showed mercy to Israel by giving them instructions about how their firstborn could be kept safe.

They needed to kill the Passover lamb and paint the doorframes of their houses with its blood.

"I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night and strike every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, both people and animals. I am the LORD; I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt. The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:12-13)

"When the LORD passes through to strike Egypt and sees the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, he will pass over the door and not let the destroyer enter your houses to strike you."
(Exodus 12:23)

Although there have been hints of this before, here is the clearest indication that for people to be saved from God's judgment, a substitutionary sacrifice is needed.

2. God showed mercy to Israel because they deserved the same fate as the Egyptians.

Israel was as guilty of rejecting God as the Egyptians were.

They worshipped other gods and doubted God's promise to save them.

"Explain the detestable practices of their ancestors to them. Say to them, 'This is what the Lord God says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore an oath to the descendants of Jacob's house and made myself known to them in the land of Egypt. I swore to them, saying, "I am the LORD your God." On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. I also said to them, "Throw away, each of you, the abhorrent things that you prize, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God." "'But they rebelled against me and were unwilling to listen to me. None of them threw away the abhorrent things that they prized, and they did not abandon the idols of Egypt. So I considered pouring out my wrath on them, exhausting my anger against them within the land of Egypt. But I acted for the sake of my name, so that it would not be profaned in the eyes of the nations they were living among, in whose sight I had made myself known to Israel by bringing them out of Egypt.'" (Ezekiel 20:4-9)

"May the LORD take note of you and judge," they said to [Moses and Aaron], "because you have made us reek to Pharaoh and his officials—putting a sword in their hand to kill us!" (Exodus 5:21)

3. So, God kept His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by showing His might and mercy and rescuing His people from Egypt.

After the final plague, Pharaoh let the people go.

There was however, one more act of judgment to go, before the people would be truly free.

At the Red Sea, God rescued Israel through the waters of judgment that came upon Pharaoh and the Egyptian army.

"When Pharaoh's horses with his chariots and horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought the water of the sea back over them. But the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground."
(Exodus 15:19)

Though the heel of the offspring of the woman had been struck and bruised by the offspring of the serpent, it has not been crushed.