

## THE KING'S STORY (8)<sup>1</sup>

### The King Leads

#### A. Introduction

1. The Bible is a story.

It is the 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 Israel<sup>2</sup>.

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

In the covenant of works, God promised eternal life for obedience, and eternal death for disobedience.

When Adam broke this covenant, so did all humanity with him, and the covenant of works condemned and cursed everyone.

No longer is eternal life possible through obedience to this covenant.

However, before God unleashed His curse upon creation, He made a promise that one day a Saviour would come who would be an offspring of the woman.

The Noahic covenant, made with all creation after the flood, ensured that this world would not be destroyed again before the Saviour's arrival.

But where would this Saviour come from?

He will come out of a new kingdom which God established within the kingdom of creation, the kingdom of Israel.

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

In the Abrahamic covenant, God promises Abraham, that he will be a great nation and a great blessing.

He will have a vast number of descendants who will possess the Promised Land of Canaan and one of his offspring will be the promised Saviour.

Within the covenant, God demands that Abraham (and his descendants) live under His rule.

"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in my presence and be blameless. I will set up my covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you greatly." (Genesis 17:1-2)

The Mosaic covenant, made with Moses and the people of Israel, after they were rescued from slavery in Egypt, explained what it meant to live under God's rule, especially once they had taken possession of the land.

What neither the Abrahamic nor the Mosaic covenant promised to the people of Israel, was eternal life if they lived under God's rule by obeying His commands.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

Rather, they both promised ongoing life in God's presence in the land of Canaan if the people obeyed, and threatened exile from the land and the presence of God if the people disobeyed.

"If any male is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that man will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." (Genesis 17:14)

"Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself I have sworn," this is the LORD's declaration: "Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies. And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command." (Genesis 22:15-18)

"Listen to the words of this covenant and tell them to the men of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem. Tell them, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: "Let a curse be on the man who does not obey the words of this covenant, which I commanded your ancestors when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace." I declared, "Obey me, and do everything that I command you, and you will be my people, and I will be your God," in order to establish the oath I swore to your ancestors, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is today.'" (Jeremiah 11:2-5)

4. In addition to promising long life in the land of Canaan if Abraham's descendants obeyed God, both the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants hinted that once Israel was settled in the land, they will be ruled by kings.

"I will make you extremely fruitful and will make nations and kings come from you." (Genesis 17:6)

"I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will produce nations; kings of peoples will come from her." (Genesis 17:17)

"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 49:10)

"When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, take possession of it, live in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations around me,' you are to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. Appoint a king from your brothers. You are not to set a foreigner over you, or one who is not of your people. However, he must not acquire many horses for himself or send the people back to Egypt to acquire many horses, for the LORD has told you, 'You are never to go back that way again.' He must not acquire many wives for himself so that his heart won't go astray. He must not acquire very large amounts of silver and gold for himself. When he is seated on his royal throne, he is to write a copy of this instruction for himself on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It is to remain with him, and he is to read from it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to observe all the words of this instruction, and to do these statutes. Then his heart will not be exalted above his countrymen, he will not turn from this command to the right or the left, and he and his sons will continue reigning many years in Israel." (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)

God says He will give to them a King of His choosing, from the tribe of Judah, who will trust and obey Him.

But they were not yet in the land.

This would change when Joshua takes over leadership of Israel from Moses.

Under Joshua, God led the people of Israel to enter and take the land of Canaan just as He had promised.

"Moses my servant is dead. Now you and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan to the land I am giving the Israelites. I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, just as I promised Moses." (Joshua 1:2-3)

"So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. The LORD gave them rest on every side according to all he had

sworn to their ancestors. None of their enemies were able to stand against them, for the LORD handed over all their enemies to them. None of the good promises the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed. Everything was fulfilled." (Joshua 21:43-45)

It was the LORD who led them to victory over their enemies, and who led them to take possession of the land as they obeyed His commands.

However, they would only remain in the land, if they continued to live under His rule.

"Therefore, fear the LORD and worship him in sincerity and truth. Get rid of the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and worship the LORD. But if it doesn't please you to worship the LORD, choose for yourselves today: Which will you worship—the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living? As for me and my family, we will worship the LORD." The people replied, "We will certainly not abandon the LORD to worship other gods! For the LORD our God brought us and our ancestors out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, and performed these great signs before our eyes. He also protected us all along the way we went and among all the peoples whose lands we traveled through. The LORD drove out before us all the peoples, including the Amorites who lived in the land. We too will worship the LORD, because he is our God." But Joshua told the people, "You will not be able to worship the LORD, because he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions and sins. If you abandon the LORD and worship foreign gods, he will turn against you, harm you, and completely destroy you, after he has been good to you." "No!" the people answered Joshua. "We will worship the LORD." (Joshua 24:14-21)

## **B. God led Israel without a king**

1. After Joshua and the generation of Israelites who entered the land died, God's people chose to reject His rule.

They forgot all that God had done for them.

They preferred to do what was right in their own eyes and broke God's law.

"That whole generation was also gathered to their ancestors. After them another generation rose up who did not know the LORD or the works he had done for Israel. The Israelites did what was evil in the LORD's sight. They worshiped the Baals and abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed other gods from the surrounding peoples and bowed down to them. They angered the LORD, for they abandoned him and worshiped Baal and the Ashtoreths." (Judges 2:10-13)

"The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he declared, "Because this nation has violated my covenant that I made with their ancestors and disobeyed me, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died." (Judges 2:20-21)

Because the people disobeyed the law of the Mosaic covenant, God would not allow them to enjoy the blessings promised in the Abrahamic covenant.

2. As individual tribes rejected Him, God allowed neighbouring tribes to attack and take them captive.

"The LORD left them to test Israel, to determine if they would keep the LORD's commands he had given their ancestors through Moses. But they settled among the Canaanites, Hethites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. The Israelites took their daughters as wives for themselves, gave their own daughters to their sons, and worshiped their gods. The Israelites did what was evil in the LORD's sight; they forgot the LORD their God and worshiped the Baals and the Asherahs. The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he sold them to King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim, and the Israelites served him eight years. The Israelites cried out to the LORD. So the LORD raised up Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's youngest brother, as a deliverer to save the Israelites." (Judges 3:4-9)

In response to the cries for rescue from the people, God was gracious and sent a saviour, a judge, who was victorious over their enemy.

But these judges were only given during times of crisis.

While there was no judge, the people needed to trust God to lead them into battle, and to bless them in the land, because God had not yet provided them a king.

"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him." (Judges 17:6)

"In those days, there was no king in Israel." (Judges 18:1)

"In those days, when there was no king in Israel." (Judges 19:1)

"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him." (Judges 21:25)

The people could not and would not do that.

They were not happy with God doing everything that a king would do for his people.

They were not happy about waiting for God to raise up a king for them.

### **C. God led Israel with a king**

1. The elders of Israel came to Samuel, the last judge and prophet of the LORD, and asked him to appoint a king.

"So all the elders of Israel gathered together and went to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Therefore, appoint a king to judge us the same as all the other nations have." (1 Samuel 8:4-5)

They did not want a king that fitted the profile found in the law of Moses.

They did not want a king to lead them under God.

They wanted a king like all the nations have – a king of their own choosing.

"The people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We must have a king over us. Then we'll be like all the other nations: our king will judge us, go out before us, and fight our battles." (1 Samuel 8:19-20)

2. God gave them the king that they wanted.

"They ran and got him from there. When he stood among the people, he stood a head taller than anyone else. Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the one the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among the entire population." And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!" Samuel proclaimed to the people the rights of kingship. He wrote them on a scroll, which he placed in the presence of the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people home." (1 Samuel 10:23-25)

Saul was impressive but was not God's choice – no wonder he was a failure.

Like Adam, Saul began by trusting in the LORD, but it wasn't long before he turned away from God and disobeyed His commands.

"but now your reign will not endure. The LORD has found a man after his own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over his people, because you have not done what the LORD commanded." (1 Samuel 13:14)

3. God gave them the king that He wanted, to show them what a good king would be like.

"So Jesse sent for him. He had beautiful eyes and a healthy, handsome appearance. Then the LORD said, "Anoint him, for he is the one." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the

presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on David from that day forward. Then Samuel set out and went to Ramah." (1 Samuel 16:12-13)

David was the greatest Israel's kings, yet even He didn't live up to what God said a king must be.