

THE KING'S STORY (14)¹

The King Sends

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.

2. The first two kingdoms God established were the kingdom of creation and the kingdom of Israel².

The kingdom of creation, established and ruled over by the covenant of works and the Noahic covenant, is cursed and destined for destruction, but has been preserved, while God keeps the promise He made to send a Saviour.

The kingdom of Israel, within the kingdom of creation, established and ruled over by the Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenant, was concerned with the inheritance and enjoyment of the Promised Land by Abraham's offspring, of which one would be the Saviour promised. The kingdom ended with exile from the land because Israel's king and the people with them were unfaithful.

But God's promise of a Saviour remained, and so He preserved a remnant from the people of Israel, from whom He would come, who returned to the Promised Land after exile to wait for His arrival. This remnant was encouraged by the words of the prophets that spoke of a new King that would bring salvation to His people by establishing a new kingdom, the kingdom of Christ, and by ruling over it by means of a new covenant.

3. In this new covenant, God promises to give His people a new heart, a new relationship, and a new forgiveness.

A new heart that will enable them to obey God's law which they had not been able to do.

A new relationship so that this new kingdom will now only be made up of people whose trust in the new King.

A new forgiveness where sin will be fully and finally dealt with.

But how will God forgive His people's sin and change their hearts?

This new King will atone for their sins, and also put His Spirit in them so that they can obey God's law.

4. In Jesus Christ, the new King and new kingdom, God promised, arrived.

But for sinful people to be part of this new kingdom ruled over by Christ, a new covenant needs to be established.

How will this happen?

Jesus announced to His disciples that His death was going to initiate the new covenant.

"And he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he also took the cup after supper and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:19-20)

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.

Jesus' death will initiate the new covenant because His death will be both substitutionary (in the place of His people) and sacrificial (for the sins of His people).

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

His death will rescue sinners from the curse and bring them forgiveness as well as back into relationship with God.

"For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3)

"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 53:5-6)

"For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God." (1 Peter 3:18)

But forgiving the sins of His people is only one part of the new covenant.

How will Christ change His people's hearts so that they are able to obey God's law?

B. The King sends His Spirit

1. In the time of the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was active in the lives of people in regenerating them.

Regeneration refers to the Holy Spirit's work of enabling people to hear, understand, believe and obey God's Word, or have faith in God.

All Old Testament believers were regenerated (had their hearts circumcised) for there was no other way for them to be saved.

"The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the hearts of your descendants, and you will love him with all your heart and all your soul so that you will live." (Deuteronomy 30:6)

But no Old Testament believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, which is what was promised in the new covenant.

God was present with His people but not in His people.

His presence resulted in their physical well-being, made them holy, and inclined them towards obedience.

His presence with them should have been enough to keep them faithful to Him.

Sadly, it wasn't, which is why the new covenant was necessary.

"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)

It will be the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer that will enable them to remain as Christians and lives of obedience.

2. Jesus promised that those who believe in Him would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. The one who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him." He said this about the Spirit. Those who believed in Jesus were going to receive the Spirit, for the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified." (John 7:37-39)

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn’t see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you.” (John 14:16-17)

“Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counsellor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:7)

After Jesus died and rose from the dead (when He was glorified), the time had come when He would no longer be with His disciples, and He kept His promise and gave His people the Spirit.

“Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I also send you.” After saying this, he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” (John 20:21-23)

All believers now have the Spirit of God living in them.

“You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.” (Romans 8:9)

The presence of the Spirit enables believers to bear the fruit of the Spirit, to grow in understanding and obedience, to put to death remaining sin and become more like Jesus, and to live faithfully as followers of Jesus.

Living faithfully as followers of Jesus means also being sent out on a mission by the King.

C. The King sends His people

1. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave His disciples a command.

The command was to proclaim the gospel and make disciples.

“Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

“He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high.” (Luke 24:46-49)

This was an enormous task and impossible for them to accomplish on their own.

2. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave His disciples a promise.

He promised that He will send His Spirit to empower them.

In the Old Testament it was only certain believers who were filled with the Spirit to serve in a specific way – prophets, priests, kings.

Yet a time was coming when all believers would be.

“After this I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions. I will even pour out my Spirit on the male and female slaves in those days.” (Joel 2:28-29)

That time was now as Jesus says that His disciples will receive power to be His witnesses.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

3. On the Day of Pentecost, Jesus and God the Father poured out the promised Holy Spirit upon the church.

The believers spoke in tongues/languages as a sign that the Spirit had been given to help them spread the good news about Christ throughout the world.

The Spirit empowered believers to proclaim the gospel and be lights in the dark world.

"Fellow Israelites, listen to these words: This Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through him, just as you yourselves know. Though he was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him. God raised him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by death." (Acts 2:22-24)

"You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)

"...so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world." (Philippians 2:15)

"Conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits." (1 Peter 2:12)

The Spirit also equips believers to serve one another.

"A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:7)

3. Since then, the King has been sending His followers out empowered by the Spirit and His church is being built.

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." (Matthew 16:18)

Even though the church has and will face opposition within and without – false teaching, immorality, persecution – it will continue to grow and expand.

Nothing will stop the progress of the gospel, as we see in the book of Acts it move from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

"Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)

"So the word of God spread, the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly in number, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7)

"So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers." (Acts 9:31)

"But the word of God spread and multiplied." (Acts 12:24)

"So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers." (Acts 16:5)

"In this way the word of the Lord spread and prevailed." (Acts 19:20)

"Paul stayed two whole years in his own rented house. And he welcomed all who visited him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance." (Acts 28:30-31)