

The Story of God

Chapter 6: The Kingdom

(Saul - Solomon)

The story of the Bible is a story about the exaltation of the Son of God as the Hero and ultimate King of the universe, who unites the realms of heaven and earth in Himself. Humanity plays a part in this story: God wants our loving loyalty and offers His loyal love to us. He wants us to join Him in partnership: to work together on this project called "the heavens and the earth."

The Story

Review: God created a world of two realms (heaven and earth) and invited both humans and spirit beings into His Royal Family to rule the world with Him. Instead, humanity joined spirit beings in a great cosmic rebellion, fracturing the Family Kingdom and resulting in death and exile. God has promised a new human who will crush the rebellion (and the original rebel) and restore what was lost, and we are waiting. The rebellion continues to the tragic point where God disinherits humanity and the rebel sons of God (spirit beings), giving them to each other. How will humanity ever recover? God has made a new creation - a new people named Israel. He led them out of the nations and into a new garden land. But the people repeated the sins of Adam and Eve, rebelling against God, and have ended up being ruled by the inhabitants of this land and their gods. When the Israelites turn back to God and ask for deliverance, He raises up a human to rescue them, but each time, their repentance doesn't last long, and they soon turn back to other gods and are ruled again by other nations.

The final judge God raises up is Samuel, and he judges righteously and calls the people back to following YHWH wholeheartedly, and the people do. When Samuel becomes old, he appoints his sons as judges. But Samuel's sons are wicked and corrupt, so the people come to him and say "appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations." (1 Sam 8:5, 19-20) In asking for a king "like all the nations," the people reject God's rule and protection over them and instead want the tallest, strongest guy to fight their battles. (see 1 Sam 12:12,17) God has Samuel warn the people of their foolish demand, but they stubbornly won't listen, so God gives them what they want.

God has Samuel appoint the tallest, most handsome young man in Israel as king. His name is Saul. God fills Saul with His Spirit and gives him a new heart. In a funny twist on the pattern of sin (see, desire, take), when the people try to take Saul as king at the official ceremony, they can't see him anywhere because he hides. Eventually they do see him and appoint him king.

Saul begins his kingship well, rescuing Israel from some Philistines with the help of the Spirit. However, things very quickly devolve. Samuel had told Saul to wait for him at Gilgal, where Samuel would offer sacrifices before they battled the Philistines. Saul waits, but Samuel doesn't

show up. The people begin giving into fear. Instead of encouraging the people to wait in faith, Saul takes matters into his own hands and offers the sacrifices himself. He fails his test of loving loyalty. Right then Samuel shows up. Samuel tells Saul that if he had only obeyed, God would have established his kingdom forever. But because he rejected God's word, God will find a new king, "a man after his own heart." (1 Sam 13:14)

God sends Samuel to Bethlehem, to the house of Jesse, to appoint a new king. Samuel was, of course, a prophet, and in those days was called a "seer." The idea is that a seer would have divine visions, seeing God and the things God wants to show him, but in this story we learn that man doesn't see the same way God does. Samuel the seer has Jesse bring out his sons to a sacrifice (a meal with God). When Samuel sees the oldest son, his good appearance and height, he desires to take him as king (remember the sin pattern of see, desire, take). But God speaks to Samuel and says "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature.... For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." (1 Sam 16:7-8) **(God is not looking for our strength or wisdom or any other merit. He wants our loving loyalty to Him.)** One by one each son is not chosen, until there are no sons left. Samuel asks Jesse if he has any more sons, and yes, the youngest son is out working as a shepherd taking care of the sheep. God tells Samuel that this youngest son, David, is to be the new king. Samuel anoints him, and God's Spirit rushes upon him, but then Samuel leaves, and David is still just a boy watching the family sheep. And he must wait.

David is a musician, and is taken into King Saul's service to play music for him. David's music drives away the harmful spirit that tormented Saul. Later in David's life, he is known for composing many of the Psalms, some of which are associated with deliverance from evil spirits. (This is in part why, when Jesus shows up driving out unclean spirits, He's considered the son of David.) David's songs are prophetic, pointing to the coming Rescuer King. Psalm 110 is the most quoted Psalm in the NT - it's all about an exalted Rescuer King and Jesus claimed to be the one this Psalm was actually about.

Though David is too young to fight in the army, he proves himself by defeating a giant named Goliath who taunts Israel. Goliath is portrayed as a descendant of the wicked sons of God in Gen 6 - He represents the cosmic rebellion of both humanity and spirit beings - a son of the serpent. David declares that YHWH is the weapon he fights with, and he kills Goliath with a sling stone to the head, then chops off his head for good measure - God's chosen one crushing the head of his enemy! Could David be the long-awaited serpent crusher - the promised one who will restore all things? It sure appears like it.

David is given his own test to pass - a really long one. He must wait on God's timing to become king. Like Joseph, he is sent into exile when Saul becomes jealous of him and tries to kill him. Several times David has opportunities to kill Saul and take the kingship for his own, but he sees those things for what they are (testing) and instead waits for God to raise him up. (like Joseph, and unlike Adam and Eve, he trusts in God's wisdom instead of his own.)

Eventually, Saul's own wickedness results in his death, and David is officially made king over Israel. He proves to be a righteous king, who is gracious and compassionate even toward his enemies. He acts as a new priest, bringing the ark of God into the new capital city, Jerusalem, dressed as a priest, offering sacrifices, dancing and worshiping God with all his might, blessing the people, and giving them a divine feast. Adam was the original priest/king, and now David appears to step into that role.

Since its creation, the ark of God has always rested inside a tent. David plans to build God a permanent house/temple, but Jesus (the Word of YHWH) tells him through a prophet that it should be David's son (a man of rest like Noah) who builds the house. Instead, God is going to build David a house - a kingdom dynasty. God gives David the blessings of Adam, Noah, and Abraham - blessing, a great name (divine family), and land to rule. He tells David that He will raise up one of David's descendants to be a king forever. (1 Chron 17:1-15)

David begins to succeed where Adam and Eve, and the people of Israel, had failed. He conquers/subdues and rules over the land (the original mandate to Adam and Eve). He is victorious in many battles, bringing victory and peace to the nation.

David is like a new Moses - Just as God gave Moses plans to build the tabernacle, He now gives David plans to build the temple, and David makes many preparations for it (even though his son will be the one to actually complete it).

However, David doesn't pass every test. While on his roof (think of a garden-like high place - like Eden), he sees, desires, and takes something that is forbidden - a woman named Bathsheba (remember the sin pattern from Gen 3). Like Adam, he then tries to cover up his sin, resulting in the murder of his friend, Bathsheba's husband Uriah. Like his father Adam, David ultimately fails. He isn't the promised one who will crush the serpent.

When confronted with the wickedness of his choices by a prophet, David realizes his evil and repents, but must suffer the consequences - the son born in adultery will die and David's wives will one day be violently taken from him. Indeed, David's oldest son tries and temporarily succeeds in overthrowing his father's rule and has sex with his wives (like Noah's son Ham and Jacob's son Reuben).

David has another son by Bathsheba, named Solomon, whom God declares his love for and who will eventually become King after David. Solomon is called God's beloved son and his coronation ceremony includes riding a donkey from the valley up into Jerusalem with all the people rejoicing and celebrating (Jesus intentionally mimics this at His triumphal entry).

David challenges Solomon to be strong and to remain loyal to YHWH, walking in His ways and keeping his commands. (1 Kings 2:2-4, 1 Chron 28:9-10) David also prepares many of the materials for Solomon to build God a house/temple. Solomon starts off strong. He loves God, walks in His ways, and offers extravagant sacrifices to God.

One night God appears to Solomon in a dream and says "Ask what I shall give you." What an offer, and what a test! Solomon admits that he lacks the wisdom to rule and reign, and asks God for wisdom. Remember the garden of Eden and the original test - would humanity trust in God's wisdom to decide what was good or would they take the forbidden fruit of wisdom for themselves? Over and over, humanity has tried to use their own wisdom apart from God, always to tragic effect. Here, Solomon does what Adam and Eve did not do: He asks for God's wisdom. This answer pleases YHWH, so God blesses Solomon with not only great wisdom, but wealth and honor as well. Solomon's kingdom becomes the envy of the world - peace and prosperity in abundance, ruled by an incredibly wise and just king. (**God desires to bless humanity if we will only partner with Him and give Him our loving loyalty.**)

Solomon builds a house/temple for God in Jerusalem. As he is building it, God tells Him "Concerning this house that you are building, if you will walk in my statutes and obey my rules and keep all my commandments and walk in them, then I will establish my word with you, which I spoke to David your father. And I will dwell among the children of Israel and will not forsake my people Israel." (1 Kings 6:12-13) (**God desires to dwell with us in rich relationship.**)

Solomon finishes the temple in 7 years, then holds a 7 day dedication celebration for all the people. Solomon acts as a priest in both blessing God and blessing the people. Solomon reminds the people of the history of God's loyal love and charges the people with serving YHWH wholeheartedly. God fills the temple with his glory and a thick cloud, confirming that He is, indeed, dwelling in the midst of His people. Then God appears to Solomon a second time and gives him a charge to remain loyal (**1 Kings 9:3-9**).

It appears as if Eden has been restored, at least in part. God is dwelling on earth with His people, with a righteous king/priest ruling under YHWH, in a land of peace and abundance. Is this the new Eden? Is Solomon the serpent crusher? Will his loyalty to YHWH last?

The Promised One

We've learned more about who the new human (the seed of Gen 3) will be.

-REVIEW-

-He will be a new and better Adam, a descendant of Eve, who will pass the test, crush the serpent, undo the rebellion, and rule the world as priest/king.

-He will be a new Noah, bringing rest to the world through his righteous sacrifice and restoring God's blessing to humanity.

-He will be a son of Abraham, displaying faith (loving loyalty) in YHWH and blessing the nations.

-He will be a son of Joseph, who, like Joseph, will be betrayed by his brothers and suffer greatly though he is innocent, but will then be exalted to rescue and care for the people as a Shepherd Rock. All the nations shall somehow become part of His family and he will be a mighty conqueror who will rule the nations.

-He will be a son of Judah, who will offer his life in exchange for others, will crush the head of his enemy (the serpent), and will rule over the nations.

-He will be a prophet like Moses, working signs and wonders, and rescuing the people from slavery.

-He will be a second Joshua who will lead the people victoriously into the promised land.

-He will be a new faithful priest who will do what is on God's heart and mind.

-NEW-

-He will be a son of David, who, like David, will have the power to drive away evil spirits.

-He will be a shepherd like David - a shepherd to God's people who will lead them skillfully.

-He will be an anointed son of David and son of God, who will be a new priest/king - who will build a new temple and will rule on his throne forever over all the nations - an eternal Kingdom.

Application & False Stories:

Lie: In order to succeed in this world, I've got to do things the world's way (Israel wanting a tall & strong king). That's just the price of success.

Truth: God will give us what we want, even if it's destructive, but His ways are better.

Lie: Success in life is about my appearance, or wealth, or social standing, or...

Truth: true success is all about the heart - do we give God our loving loyalty?

Lie: Political Power is true power

Truth: God rules over and above political power

Resources:

VIDEO: "David the Priestly King" <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/david-priestly-king/>

VIDEO: "The Temple" <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/temple/>

VIDEO: "1st Samuel" <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/1-samuel/>

VIDEO: "2nd Samuel" <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/2-samuel/>

The Drama of Scripture pg 90-102

The Unseen Realm pg 221-231

Series Goals

- Evoke wonder & participation (a new supernatural lens)
- It's all about Jesus and His Family Kingdom (relationship and purpose)

- God's story over all other stories (confront lies)

Overarching Plot Focal Points

(each story connects to these)

- God wants to grow and share His Family Kingdom
- Humanity was created for *rich relationship* and *profound purpose* in the Family Kingdom
- A cosmic rebellion fractures the Family Kingdom
- God promises a hero to crush the adversary, rescue humanity, and restore the Family Kingdom
- Humanity must choose between trusting God's promise or continuing in rebellion