***Return of the King***

**Ready for Jesus in the Former Prophets: 2 Samuel 7:5-16 December 3, 2023**

***11 “The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself
will establish a house for you . . . .
Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me;
your throne will be established forever.”*2 Samuel 7**

**Favor in the story of kingship**

*5 “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? 6 I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. 7 Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” ’*

*8 “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. 10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning 11 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.*

*“ ‘The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: 12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. 15 But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’ ”*

2 Samuel 7 (see Deuteronomy 17 for God’s expectations for the king)

1. God had always been king (see Genesis 1:26-31) but now he prepares his people for a king who would be far different than anyone living in the ancient Near East would expect
2. David didn’t finally build the temple (see 1 Chronicles 22:8), but God still honors that desire with
an incredible promise
3. David’s son was going to God’s Son (see Psalm 2:7 and its application to Jesus in Hebrews 1:5)
4. “He is the one who will build a house for my Name” is . . . .

 Solomon Jesus

**The problem God addresses**

*19 But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. 20 Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”*

*21 When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the Lord. 22 The Lord answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.”*

1 Samuel 8

1. God had always intended to be represented from among his people

*14 When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,” 15 be sure to appoint over you the king the Lord your God chooses. He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite. 16 The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” 17 He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.*

Deuteronomy 17 (but read this entire passage for the “write for himself” a copy of the law section)

1. God’s people have never done well without an authoritative reminder of God’s word (and often not
even when that word was spoken)

*25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.*

Judges 21

1. Abuse of that authority makes hearing well from God even more difficult

 *When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. 3 But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.*

 *4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. 5 They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”*

1 Samuel 8:1

**Will we make it without a King?**

In our day, the Westminster Catechism answer has been inverted: “the chief end of man is to glorify and enjoy himself forever.” One could even make a case that self-worship is the world’s fastest-growing religion. It is certainly the world’s oldest (just read Genesis 3). Moreover, this religion lies beneath many of the most hot-button social and political issues of our day.

Thaddeus Williams’ “Self-Worship”

1. Robert Bellah called this kind of self-worship “Sheilaism” (*Habits of the Heart*, 1985)
2. God told us that the time would come when even the church would suffer a Judges 21:25
failure (2 Timothy 4:1-5)
3. Never has humanity been more in need of hearing “There is a King and this is what he says”

**Favor revealed to us**

 *26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”*

*29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. 31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”*

*34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”*

*35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. 37 For nothing is impossible with God.”*

Luke 1

1. God finally reveals the fulfillment of his kingship promise to David

2. This kingdom was going to be much different that David’s reign:
 -- all the “citizens” of this kingdom would be priests (Revelation 1:4-6, 5:9-10)
 -- this kingdom would be entered by repentance and faith (Mark 1:15)
 -- this kingdom would reflect God’s value system (Matthew 5:1-12)

3. Key question: Why doesn’t God introduce Mary to work of this new King in redemption?
 Hint: Was the idea of Jesus as Savior already there in Torah, the story of God’s provision?

**Praying with David**

*18 Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said:*

*“Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? 19 And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign Lord?. . .*

*25 “And now, Lord God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, 26 so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, ‘The Lord Almighty is God over Israel!’ And the house of your servant David will be established before you.*

2 Samuel 7

 *9 “This, then, is how you should pray:*

*“ ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,*

*10 your kingdom come,*

*your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

Matthew 6

This means the kingdom story we are telling is not the story of Christ saving His people so that they might change the world or reclaim a nation. Instead, the story is of Christ so ruling over the nations of the world that the church might be built up. As J.G. Vos observes in his commentary on the Larger Catechism, “The kingdom of power is not an end in itself, but a means to the furtherance of the kingdom of grace and the hastening of the kingdom of glory.” We pray, then, for the success of the kingdom of power, but to the end that the kingdom of grace may flourish and the kingdom of glory may be brought near.

Kevin DeYoung, “What Kingdom Story Are We Telling?”

1. Even though David’s reign was chaotic, he humbly looked forward to the fulfillment of
 this promise

 *6 Then he called for his son Solomon and charged him to build a house for the Lord, the God of Israel. 7 David said to Solomon: “My son, I had it in my heart to build a house for the Name of the Lord my God. 8 But this word of the Lord came to me: ‘You have shed much blood and have fought many wars. You are not to build a house for my Name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in my sight. 9 But you will have a son who will be a man of peace and rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side. His name will be Solomon, and I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign. 10 He is the one who will build a house for my Name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.’ ”*

1 Chronicles 22 (I also like Keller’s “Upside Down Kingdom”)

2. “Your kingdom come” is a prayer that Jesus would truly reign in his church (Pastor Fakkema
likes Kevin DeYoung’s discussion of Jesus’ reign)

3. Gabriel’s encounter with Mary was a clear hint that Jesus is going to be a different kind of King

**Resources for further study**

The Bible Project’s video on Luke 1 does a good job of showing how Jesus would be a different kind of king at [*https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/gospel-luke-1/*](https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/gospel-luke-1/)

Alexander Maclaren has a commentary on Genesis 22at [*https://www.ccel.org/ccel/maclaren/gen\_num.ii.i.xxvii.html*](https://www.ccel.org/ccel/maclaren/gen_num.ii.i.xxvii.html%20)

R.C. Sproul has some wonderful “kingship” articles at [*https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/king-kings*](https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/king-kings)

I like this Scott Redd “Tabletalk” article (with all the important texts included) on Kingship at [*https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2021/11/the-king-of-gods-kingdom/*](https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2021/11/the-king-of-gods-kingdom/)

Kevin DeYoung tells the story of the kingdom in “byFaith” at [*https://byfaithonline.com/what-kingdom-story-are-we-telling-kevin-deyoung/*](https://byfaithonline.com/what-kingdom-story-are-we-telling-kevin-deyoung/)

Tim Keller has some important things to say on the Jesus’ kingship:
“Christ is your King” video at [*https://vimeo.com/72213172*](https://vimeo.com/72213172)“Jesus, our King” podcast at [*https://podcast.gospelinlife.com/e/jesus-our-king-1576116271/*](https://podcast.gospelinlife.com/e/jesus-our-king-1576116271/)
“Signs of the King” sermon at [*https://www.monergism.com/signs-king-%E2%80%93-acts-237-47*](https://www.monergism.com/signs-king-%E2%80%93-acts-237-47)
Keller’s classis “Upside Down Kingdom” article at [*https://www.scribd.com/document/258555474/Upside-Down-Kingdom-Tim-Keller*](https://www.scribd.com/document/258555474/Upside-Down-Kingdom-Tim-Keller)

Sermon preached this prayer on David’s response prayer in 2 Samuel 7: [*https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/prayer-found-in-the-heart/#flipbook/*](https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/prayer-found-in-the-heart/%23flipbook/)

I found the Gospel Coalition article helpful: [*https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/self-worship-booms/*](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/self-worship-booms/)

**What Kingdom Story Are We Telling?**

By Kevin DeYoung at [*https://byfaithonline.com/what-kingdom-story-are-we-telling-kevin-deyoung/*](https://byfaithonline.com/what-kingdom-story-are-we-telling-kevin-deyoung/)

August 4, 2021

In classic Reformed theology, Christ’s kingdom is distinguished in three ways.

First, there is the *regnum potentiae*, the kingdom of power. This is the dominion of Jesus Christ over the universe, the providential and judicial administration of all things that Christ exercises by virtue of being the eternal Son of God.

Second, we can speak of the *regnum gratiae*, the kingdom of grace. This refers to Christ’s reign over His saved people, the spiritual kingship which Christ exercises by virtue of being our Mediator and the head of the church.

Finally, there is the *regnum gloriae*, the kingdom of glory. This is Christ’s dominion in the age to come. The kingdom of glory is the kingdom of grace made perfect and complete.

Of course, in one sense Christ’s kingdom is one and only one. We should not think of these distinctions crassly as three different nations. But the distinctions are important. As God, Christ rules over the kingdom of power, to which all creatures belong. As Mediator, He rules over the kingdom of grace on earth, to which the elect belong. And as Conqueror, He rules over the kingdom of glory in heaven, to which angels and the redeemed belong. To be sure, there is not one square inch in all the universe about which Christ does not cry out, “This is mine!” And yet, Christ does not reign over every square inch in the same way.

#### Telling the Right Story

One reason for emphasizing these distinctions is to make sure that we are telling the right story when it comes to the kingdom. In explaining the petition “thy kingdom come,” Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC) [tells us](http://www.paullytle.com/WLC/191.html) to “pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world . . . the church furnished with all gospel-officers and ordinances . . . that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him forever” (Q/A 191). The catechism gives us a magnificent prayer for the growth, strength, and health of the church.

One reason for emphasizing these distinctions is to make sure that we are telling the right story when it comes to the kingdom.

But that’s not the end of the answer. Here’s the last line of WLC 191: “and that [Christ] would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.” Notice the gospel-centered logic of the WLC. Christ rules over all things for the good of the Church. The kingdom of power is subservient to the kingdom of grace (giving way to the kingdom of glory), *not* the other way around.

This means the kingdom story we are telling is not the story of Christ saving His people so that they might change the world or reclaim a nation. Instead, the story is of Christ so ruling over the nations of the world that the church might be built up. As J.G. Vos observes in his commentary on the Larger Catechism, “The kingdom of power is not an end in itself, but a means to the furtherance of the kingdom of grace and the hastening of the kingdom of glory.” We pray, then, for the success of the kingdom of power, but to the end that the kingdom of grace may flourish and the kingdom of glory may be brought near.

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#  The King of God’s Kingdom

by Scott Redd at [*https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2021/11/the-king-of-gods-kingdom/*](https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2021/11/the-king-of-gods-kingdom/)

In the ancient world, the king oversaw public building campaigns, led the nation’s armies in battle, administered a system of justice, and propagated wisdom in all these efforts. The king was the embodiment of the kingdom’s identity, he was the perfect expression of his people, and he was often described as the father of the nation, suggesting a deeper relationship between the king and his people than one that merely involved politics or government. The relationship between the king and his people was, at its best, a glorious possibility for human flourishing and, at its worst, a terrifying opportunity for human suffering.

Humanity was always meant to have a king, because humans were created as part of God’s kingdom. This is what God intended when He made us according to the imago Dei, “the image of God,” forming man from the land to occupy and ultimately fill His earthly domain with His image. In [Genesis 1](https://www.esv.org/Genesis%201/), the earth is depicted as a physical palace that will one day be filled and subdued by human regents who are made after the image of their divine Creator-king (vv. 27–28). This kingly identity informs our human identity at its most foundational level. Even in light of the utter failure and destruction of the fall, humanity is still called to set its sights on this vision of an earth filled with God’s glory, and redeemed images of God are called to pray that God’s kingly rule will be applied to earth just “as it is in heaven” ([Matt. 6:10](https://www.esv.org/Matt.%206%3A10/); see [Isa. 6:3](https://www.esv.org/Isa.%206%3A3/)). Jesus told us to pray that way because He looks forward to that day too.

After the fall, God appointed a family from among all the families of the earth from whom a line of kings would come, now as a part of His work of redemption. Abraham was promised not only that God would make him into a great nation dwelling in a great land but that “kings shall come from you” ([Gen. 17:6](https://www.esv.org/Gen.%2017%3A6/)), an indication that the hope for redemption outlined in the patriarchal era of the Old Testament included the hope for a human king to come from the line of Abraham.

This picture is filled out further in the Mosaic covenant, where we find rules and constraints for a future king intended to encourage him to remain faithful to the Lord ([Deut. 17:14–20](https://www.esv.org/Deut.%2017%3A14%E2%80%9320/)). We ought not to be surprised that such a passage comes before the coronation of an actual king. Much of the Mosaic teaching assumes the blessing that had yet to be provided for the people of Israel. There on the outskirts of the promised land, perched on the steppes of Moab, the grand extent of the Israelite hope was laid out in detail in the book of Deuteronomy, including God’s provision of a sanctuary, the terms for living in the land, the structure of the theocratic state, and the profile of the kind of king Israel should have to rule over her.

The historical books of Joshua through 2 Samuel depict the story of how Israel laid hold of this hope, and so we should not be surprised to see the kingship come up again in another covenant, this time establishing the throne eternally in the line of King David ([2 Sam. 7](https://www.esv.org/2%20Sam.%207/)). Like Abraham and Moses before him, David received the promise whose fulfillment would come many years in the future.

The unified message of the Old Testament is clear: from the beginning, the divine King always intended humanity to be unified under the rule of His appointed human king, one who will subdue the earth under His righteous and bountiful reign. Tragically, as the curtain closes on the Old Testament, an appropriate candidate has not been identified from the line of David, but when the curtain opens on the New Testament, Jesus emerges as the true King and rightful heir of all God’s redemptive promises. Indeed, all the promises of God are “Yes” in Christ and “Amen” for those who are united to Him in His kingship ([2 Cor. 1:20](https://www.esv.org/2%20Cor.%201%3A20/)).

Christ shows Himself to be the King humanity has been waiting for, because He is the only covenant partner who fulfills the requirements that God demands. As such, He is the “last Adam” ([1 Cor. 15:45](https://www.esv.org/1%20Cor.%2015%3A45/); see [Rom. 5:12–21](https://www.esv.org/Rom.%205%3A12%E2%80%9321/); [1 Cor. 15:22](https://www.esv.org/1%20Cor.%2015%3A22/)), the true Israel ([Matt. 2:15](https://www.esv.org/Matt.%202%3A15/); [John 15:1–17](https://www.esv.org/John%2015%3A1%E2%80%9317/)), and the messianic Son of David ([Matt. 1:1; 9:27; 20:30](https://www.esv.org/Matt.%201%3A1%3B%209%3A27%3B%2020%3A30/)), fulfilling the roles and receiving the inheritance anticipated by each of the aforementioned covenants.

Unlike the covenant heads who came before Him, Christ administers His covenant for His people from a position of unique identification with God. The Apostolic writers were hard-pressed to describe Christ’s position of authority in the cosmos in only one soaring, superlative expression. He is “the exact imprint of [God’s] nature” ([Heb. 1:3](https://www.esv.org/Heb.%201%3A3/)), the One in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” ([Col. 2:9](https://www.esv.org/Col.%202%3A9/)), and the One who is placed “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion” ([Eph. 1:21](https://www.esv.org/Eph.%201%3A21/)). In this way, Christ’s covenant not only surpasses all covenants that came before; it is the reality of which all previous covenants were merely a foreshadow ([Rom. 5:14](https://www.esv.org/Rom.%205%3A14/); [Col. 2:7](https://www.esv.org/Col.%202%3A7/); Heb. 8:5; 9:23, 24; 10:1). Whatever and whoever prefigured Christ’s kingship in the Old Testament has now been relegated to the status of anticipation, shadow, and type. They pointed to Christ and now find their meaning in Him.

The kingdom provides a thematic frame for Jesus’ earthly ministry. He begins by bearing witness to His kingdom ([Matt. 4:17](https://www.esv.org/Matt.%204%3A17/); [Mark 1:15](https://www.esv.org/Mark%201%3A15/)), and He commissions the Apostles to continue that kingdom mission after He is gone ([Matt. 28:16–20](https://www.esv.org/Matt.%2028%3A16%E2%80%9320/)). According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Christ executes the office of King by “subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies” (Q&A 26). Those who are counted as the people of God will honor and obey with proper reverence the King whom God has established over them. A person cannot claim to be saved by some other means such as bloodline or moral achievement. He must accept the kingship of Christ. While many of the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day no doubt resisted His teaching because they held to a form of legalism, it is also probable that many were simply not open to the idea of faith in someone like Jesus. Like the various rebellions in the Old Testament, their rejection of God’s appointed authority was rebellion against God Himself ([Num. 16](https://www.esv.org/Num.%2016/); [John 8:19](https://www.esv.org/John%208%3A19/)). It is not enough to embrace the law of Moses or the promises to David if one denies the kingship of Christ. As Jesus warns, “If you had known me, you would have known my Father also” ([John 14:7](https://www.esv.org/John%2014%3A7/)).

To this day, Christ rules from the right hand of God the Father Almighty ([Acts 5:31](https://www.esv.org/Acts%205%3A31/); [Col. 3:1](https://www.esv.org/Col.%203%3A1/)). As a result, the church of Christ does not look to a past saint as our covenant head; nor do we look to earthly relics of a previous generation, but rather we look to a living King as our primary and highest authority.

The members of the universal church are deeply united with one another in Christ just as they are partakers of the fellowship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This spiritual fellowship enables believers, as individuals and as a corporate body, to be free of the corruption of sin that once governed them, while it also binds them one to another as the corporate body of Christ, the living sanctuary of God on earth, and the primary agent of the kingdom of Christ ([Matt. 16:19](https://www.esv.org/Matt.%2016%3A19/)). Christ initiated this aspect of His kingship in His prayer immediately before His betrayal:

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” *(*[*John 17:20–23*](https://www.esv.org/John%2017%3A20%E2%80%9323/)*)*

Christ surely leads His church, and the church is united in Him through the Holy Spirit, whom the Apostles tellingly refer to as “the Spirit of Christ” ([Rom. 8:9](https://www.esv.org/Rom.%208%3A9/); [1 Peter 1:11](https://www.esv.org/1%20Peter%201%3A11/)). The Spirit is not only effective in the regeneration of the believer, but He is also the regular sustenance by which the Christian lives as a citizen of Christ’s kingdom. Christ’s kingship has a two-way application. It establishes an appropriate relationship between God and His people because Christ is truly human, but it also establishes an appropriate relationship between His people and God because Christ is truly divine. Because of Christ, we can be united to God and enjoy all the blessings inherent in that union.

The character and work of the church are founded in Christ, enlivened in His Spirit, and directed toward His kingdom ends. He is in us as we are in Him. Christ is more than a saint in our tradition or a prophet of God; He is the fulfillment of the expectations of the Hebrew Scriptures. Our hearts are conformed to His kingly heart through the work of the Spirit in sanctification, and because of our spiritual union with Him we long for His kingdom to come in its fullness.

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