

Date: 2012-12-30

West Valley Presbyterian Church

AKA: King

Preaching today: Matt Hall

In this past season we have sung a lot of songs that reference Jesus as King. The song Angels we Have Heard on High ask us to “adore on bended knee, Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.” The song “Hark! The Herald Angels sing have the angels singing, “Glory to the Newborn King.” My favorite, Joy to the World, declares “The Lord Has come! Let earth receive her King.”

In this season we are reminded that Israel had long been waiting for their King. We are told of the faithfulness of Simeon in Luke 2, who had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would see the King before his death. We are reminded of the prophecies that spoke such great expectations into this King.

We all understand these stories of waiting and expectation. We understand what it means to long for something. We remember the torture of waiting for Christmas day as a child, and then when Christmas finally arrived, the torture of waiting for our parents to allow us to open our gifts. But,

what I think we struggle to understand in this season more than anything else is Jesus as King. ///

In our country we have rejected the idea of King. We have an elected official, a President, that we choose. Our best known example of a Monarch, Queen Elizabeth, has no real political power. She is a pale shadow of what it once meant to be a Sovereign leader. I think our culture's push towards democracy has caused us to miss some of the richness of having Jesus as our King. We miss what it means to have a King, and we miss what it means to be a loyal subject to the King. But maybe, maybe if we can understand God's role as King and our role as Subject we might find something beautiful, a gift that will change the way we look at our relationship with God, and the troubles of the world.

We begin with a young woman with great trouble. She was barren. But she also had great faith. Her name was Hannah. One day when offering her yearly sacrifice the Priest Eli prophesied that she would have a child. Samuel was born and Hannah brings him to the temple and dedicates him to the Lord. Among the amazing things that Hannah says in her prayer is this in [1 Samuel 2:10](#)—and remember, this is before there was any king in Israel. She says, “those who oppose the Lord will be broken. The Most High will thunder from heaven;

the Lord will judge the ends of the earth.

“He will give strength to his king  
and exalt the horn of his anointed.”<sup>1</sup>

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-- Sounds a little like Jesus right?

I’m getting ahead of myself... Samuel will grow up in Eli’s house. Hannah gives her son to the Lord, who will raise him up as Prophet and Priest of Israel. He will be a great leader, but he will not be King. Rather, God will use him to install the first human King of the nation of Israel.

<sup>1</sup> Samuel 8:5-8 reads; “[The Elders], “You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.” But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.”

God is being rejected.

Just like he knew he would.

Just like he planned.

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<sup>1</sup> *The New International Version*. 2011 (1 Sa 2:10). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Is this surprising to God? No. Because 250 years earlier, when Moses met with God on Mount Sinai. God foresees his people rejecting him and demanding a human king so he lays out principles for how that should be done within the Mosaic Covenant.

Deuteronomy 17:14-15 reads, “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,” <sup>15</sup> be sure to appoint over you a king the Lord your God chooses.”

What’s interesting is that God knows that his people will reject him as King, but he does not give us a human king from the start. Moses, despite being a prince of Egypt, is not a King of the Hebrew People. God still holds onto that title. Neither Moses, Joshua, Deborah or Samuel are made King. God, rather remains King of his people from Abram to Egypt, and after Moses for 250 years until his people rejected him as he planned.

Moving forward into Chapter 12 we read, beginning in verse 8: After Jacob entered Egypt, they cried to the Lord for help, and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your ancestors out of Egypt and settled them in this place. “But they forgot the Lord their God; so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against them.

They cried out to the Lord and said, ‘We have sinned; we have forsaken the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.’<sup>11</sup> Then the Lord sent Jerub-Baal,<sup>o</sup> Barak,<sup>p</sup> Jephthah and Samuel,<sup>r</sup> and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around you, so that you lived in safety.<sup>2</sup>

The point of those verses is that God was faithful as their divine King. When they needed him, he saved them. That’s the point of a King - to provide peace for the people. And their response? Verse 12: ““But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, ‘No, we want a king to rule over us’—even though the Lord your God was your king.

Can you hear the pain in Samuel’s voice? You asked for a king, when God was your king! /// Pastor John Piper once said, “The kingship of Israel—the fact that Israel had kings—was owing to sin. It was a spectacular sin for the people of God to say to their Maker and Redeemer, “We want to be like the nations. We do not want you to be our king. We want a human king.”

Samuel calls it, in verse 17, a great wickedness. This, this is something that I think we can all relate to. We know the great wickedness of re-

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<sup>2</sup> *The New International Version*. 2011 (1 Sa 12:8–11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

jecting God as King. We do it every time we turn our back on God's blessing. We do it every time we sin. We do it when we don't trust his ways, don't trust his wisdom, but instead seek our own, or seek the wisdom of the world.

Israel had a King who saved them from slavery in Egypt, guided them through the desert, fed them miraculously, gave them the promised land, a land of wealth and prosperity, protected their borders from constant attack of their neighbors, and still they rejected him. ///

You and I have a King who gave us our wealth, our safety, our provisions, our nation, our family, our very life and we reject him too. We are no better than the nation of Israel. We too reject God as our King.

John Piper teaches, "Nevertheless, if Israel had had no kingship, Jesus Christ would not have come as the king of Israel and the Son of David and King of kings. But Christ's kingship over Israel and over the world is not an afterthought in the mind of God. It was not an unplanned response to the sin of Israel. It was part of his plan."

You see, when we look at the history of God's Kingdom, we see that he knew he was going to be rejected by Israel, in the same way that he knew we were going to reject him. And God's plan was not to abandon his people, but to prepare a way for his people to continue.

God allowed Israel to have a human King, so that he could use that Kingship to bring about a God-Man King; King Jesus. God wanted his throne back and he set in motion, before the rejection even happened, a plan to restore his Kingdom to his Rule.

This is crucial. I don't want you to miss it. God was not surprised by the rejection of Israel. God was planning for it. God knew it was going to happen, he allowed it to happen, and he allowed it to happen so that he could demonstrate his glory to us. The fact that God would provide for a wayward people, the fact that God would remain faithful when they wouldn't shows us how magnificent a God we serve.

God started his relationship with Israel without a human King to show us that he was the only rightful King of Israel. When Israel asked for a King they rejected his truth. In giving Israel a human King, God did not change his mind about being the only rightful King of Israel. Because God knew that he needed a man to be King. This was part of his plan.

Why? Because our rejection of God comes at a great cost. Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages of our sin is death. In order for God to have kingdom, he had to have people who were not in hell. And the only way that God could have his people, would be to redeem his people. Jesus had to be a man, so that he could die for our sins.

Now some may ask, why God died for us? For us sinners? Samuel knows the answer. Because he comforts the nation of Israel after their rejection of God by saying, “Do not be afraid, you rebellious, stiff-necked, ungrateful sinners; you have done all this evil. ... “The LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name’s sake.” Meaning, that God’s own Glory is the basis of Grace. And just like God continued to walk along side the nation of Israel, God continues to walk alongside us. Romans 3:25 reads, God put [Christ] forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.”

Indeed he had. On this very day when the people deserved to be destroyed for asking for a king, God forgave them and passed over their sins—for his name’s sake. But you can’t sweep sin under the rug of the universe and still uphold your name as a righteous and holy God. Sin must be dealt with. And it was, when Jesus died. Jesus died to appease the wrath of God. Jesus died so that God could continue to be just, to have the cost of sins paid for. Jesus died so that God could demonstrate his grace.

The only reason that sinful people like us can have a king as great and glorious and powerful and good and holy and wise as Jesus without being consumed for our sin is that God planned for the king to die for his

subjects and rise again. In every Gospel, Jesus is asked just before he dies, “Are you the king of the Jews?” And he answers, “You have said so” .

And not just the king of the Jews, but the king of all—especially those who trust him. He is seated at the right hand of the Father today until all his enemies are put under his feet and all his elect are gathered in from the all the peoples of the earth. Then the end will come. And Christ “Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.” ([Hebrews 9:28](#)). And “on his robe and on his thigh he has a name written”—not king of the Jews, but “King of kings and Lord of lords” ([Revelation 19:16](#)).

So how do we today be good subjects of King Jesus? First, we need to recognize that he is a good king. He is a good King who plans for our safety, our prosperity, and our holiness. Then we need to recognize that he is an all-knowing God. God knows how to bless us and he knows how we will reject him just as he knew that he would be rejected by the people of Israel.

Today, people do not believe in the name of Jesus, but worse, those that do believe in the name of Jesus willfully disobey and reject his teach-

ing. We toss out the truth of scripture for the sinful ideals of our culture. In order to be subjects we need to recognize that God knows what's best for us. But rather than lay guilt, let me offer his grace. Just as he knows what's best for us, he knows what we will fail, and he has planned a solution.

When we trust in the solution of the cross we become Christians. We worship Jesus as King when we take faith in the solution of the cross everyday as we lay our sins before him and rely on his power to do better in the future.

Today you might not feel like subjects of the King. Maybe today you trust in Jesus for the first time. Maybe today you recognize the goodness of God, and come back to serve him humbly. To restore his place as King in your life, recognizing that he has a good plan for your future. Jesus once told his disciples "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

We serve a good king who wants us to have a full life.

Will you pray with me?