



STAGE 5

LONG LIVE THE KING



PERSONAL PREPARATION DAY 1—LEVITICUS—DEUTERONOMY

After the rescue out of Egypt, God gathers his people around Mount Sinai and gives them various law relating to their life as the people of God. This is known as the Sinai Covenant. See Exodus 24:3-7. In particular, a great deal of attention is given to the planning and construction of a moveable tabernacle [tent] in which God will dwell as his people move towards the promised land. The tabernacle was sign of God's deep desire to involve himself with his people and bless them.

God's law's carry on through Leviticus as Moses teaches the people how to stand in proper awe of God's mercy and holiness. If Israel is to be a nation with God living within it as King, there are certain matters of 'royal protocol' which must be observed.

In the book of Numbers, the Israelites finally leave Mount Sinai and move to the edge of the promised land. Spies are sent into the promised land to help plan the invasion. But things don't go well. The spies bring back stories of fierce inhabitants in the land, and the Israelites become afraid. Out of fear they refuse to enter the land God has promised them. This is essentially an act of mistrust in God, and so, as discipline, Israel is made to wander the desert for forty years.

At the end of this time Israel again gathers at the edge of the promised land for a second attempt at entering. The book of Deuteronomy is made up of three speeches which Moses gives just before this second attempt.

Read Deuteronomy 7:7-9. Why is God doing what he is doing?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-15. What should Israel's response be?

As they prepare to enter the promised land, the Israelites need to be reminded that their permanent possession of the land isn't automatic. In fact, in Deuteronomy 29, Moses paints a vivid picture of the possible horrors of exile from the land. He imagines a future where horrified onlookers will ask "Why has the Lord done this?" If these terrible things actually happened, what would be the answer to this question—Deuteronomy 29:25-28?



PERSONAL PREPARATION DAY 2—JOSHUA & JUDGES

The book of Joshua is all about the Israelites' entry into the promised land. City after city is conquered and the promised land is carved up according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Read Joshua 21:41-54. How much of God's promises to Abraham now seems to be fulfilled?

At first glance the book looks so positive—the promised land is theirs! Finally, they would be God's people in God's place under God's rule. But what you notice in the book of Joshua is that eagerness on the part of Israel turns to apathy. They fail to remove all the Canaanite people as God commanded, with the consequence that their new start in the new land is tainted from the very beginning.

The book of Joshua describes the 'mopping up operations' in the land of Canaan. There are still plenty of idolatrous and pagan tribes to be driven out. Throughout this time, Israel is unique among the nations because it doesn't have a political king. Instead it is led by 'judges'. There were many judges as a quick skim of the book will show, but perhaps the most famous judge is Samson.

Read Judges 2:10-19. How would you describe what's happening during this period of history?

What a cycle! The Israelites disobey God and worship other gods (which is a result of not ridding the land of the various tribes with their gods). So God sends raiders to punish them. Under the strain, finally Israel wakes up to itself and calls on God for help. So God then sends a judge to save them and draw them back to obedience. But after the judge dies, it all begins again!

With such high hopes for the nation in the beginning, it's obvious that things are now starting to unravel. Because of Israel's sin, will God's promises to Abraham truly ever be fulfilled? We still need to keep looking ahead in the history of the Old Testament story to see what happens, but what we find even in the period of the Judges is that God is not giving up. Despite Israel's unfaithfulness, God is faithful to save and provide for his people.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - LONG LIVE THE KING

Review: We've already reached half way in our scenic flight over the Old Testament. Have someone in the group use the 'big pictures' from the last 4 stages to give a summary of the Old Testament story so far.



Stage 5 Big Idea: The time of King David is 'the golden era' in Israel's history. It is almost 'Eden revisited' with God's people living in God's special land, under His rule. God's promises David that a king will come from him who will rule forever and establish an everlasting kingdom.

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel take their name after the person of Samuel who is like a bridge between the time of the judges and the time of kings. He is a priest and prophet of God.

1. **Read 1 Samuel 8:1-5.** Why do the people ask Samuel to appoint a king?

2. **Read 1 Samuel 8:6-21.** Why is their request for a king so bad?

3. **Read 1 Samuel 10:17-24** which is the appointing of Saul as the first king of Israel. When you compare Saul's ancestry with the promise made in Genesis 49:8-10 (see p10 of this booklet) do you think this will be the great ruler that God has long promised?

Saul is like the 'first-go prototype' king. And like lots of first-go prototypes, this one didn't really work. Saul constantly disobeys God and Samuel says these final words to him, 'Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king'. (1 Samuel 15:23). Saul ends up going half-crazy and out of jealousy spends most of his time chasing David across the countryside trying to kill him.

David, the man from Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah, is eventually appointed king (1 Sam1:16-13; 2 Sam 2:1-7; 2 Sam 5:1-5) and he conquers the city of Jerusalem and makes it his capital. From then on it is known as 'the City of David'. Once David has established his rule God promises something amazing to David.

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17

4. What does David want to build?...What does God want to do first?

5. Who has been responsible for David's 'good fortune' so far? v8-9

6. What does the future hold for David and his family (v9, 11-15)...for Israel? (v10)

7. What similarities can you see between the promises God is making to David, and his earlier promise to Abraham? What new features have been added?

Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29

8. How would you summarise David's response?

9. In praising God's generosity, how does David summarise the Old Testament story so far?

Read 1 Kings 3:1-15

10. Sounds promising doesn't it?! Under Solomon (David's son), God's promises are coming to fulfilment. Note which promise of God is being fulfilled in each of these verses:

1 Kings 4:20 1 Kings 4:21 1 Kings 6:1-3 1 Kings 10:4-9

Perhaps Solomon will succeed where Adam had failed—making sure he and all God's people follow God's rule. We'll have to keep following the story to see what happens.

Read Matthew 12:42, 27:37, 28:18

11. How does Solomon's glorious reign compare with Jesus?

12. Under the rule of David and Solomon, the borders of Israel grew to encompass the small surrounding nations. What is the scope of the rule of King Jesus?

13. What does it mean in practical terms that Jesus has authority over you?

14. What does Jesus call his disciples to do in light of this great authority that has been given to him through his death and resurrection?

We have been following the Bible story through the idea of,

God's People in God's Place under God's Rule

.....or in other words 'The Kingdom of God'. So although Israel now have a human king, his job is to get all God's people to live under God's rule. And under Solomon it's so far so good:...Could this be it?....Could this be God's Kingdom?....Or will Solomon and Israel make the same mistake that Adam and Eve made?.....

But for now, the table below brings us up to date with what we've seen so far:

The Kingdom of God	God's People	God's Place	God's Rule
Established at Creation, Genesis 1 & 2	Adam & Eve	The Garden	God's Word.
Lost at The Fall, Genesis 3			
Promised in in Genesis 12	Abraham	Canaan	Covenant
Foreshadowed in 2 Samuel 7	David-Solomon	Land, Jerusalem, Temple	Sinai Covenant

What can you pray about—arising from this study?