

Authority – God’s Loving Rule: Joshua to 2 Samuel

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[0 : 00] If you could turn in your Bibles to Joshua. I haven't got a page number. I always encourage people to have a Bible.

And today we, I don't want to say especially need a Bible, we always need a Bible, but we're going to be looking at a lot today.

We're going to be covering a thousand years, at least, and about six books. So that's why you need a Bible to be able to follow along as we look at God's big story.

So a thousand years in 30 minutes, thereabouts. Well, let's pray and ask for God's help.

As we look at his word together. Our Father God, we thank you for your word, the Bible.

[1 : 10] We thank you for the way in which it has been preserved over many hundreds and thousands of years for us today. Your word written down in our language.

So that we today can hear the voice of God speaking to us. Father, we ask for the help of your Holy Spirit that we may understand better the big story of God.

And what it teaches us about you. And what it says to us about us. And that we would be people who are shaped by this story.

And who learn what it is to live as your subjects. People who follow the King of Kings. We ask for your help this morning in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, to us, it's just another death notice that you would read in the local newspaper.

[2 : 22] But for the people of Israel, it was absolutely devastating. Look at Joshua chapter 1, verse 1. See what it says?

After the death of Moses. Now we only need to read his obituary to see what a loss Moses was to the people.

Just look back one page to the very end of Deuteronomy, the book before. Deuteronomy 34, verse 10. Here's what appeared in the Israelite daily news the day Moses died, if you like.

Verse 10. Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land.

For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

[3 : 34] So this great leader who had led the people for over 40 years, bringing them out of slavery from Egypt into a new place, their leader Moses is now dead.

So what are God's people going to do? Who's going to lead them now? Who's going to be the one to speak God's word to them? Who's going to step in when they fail and fall?

Well, Moses may die, but God in his love continues to rule over his people through the person he has chosen. So let's read Joshua chapter 1, verses 1 to 3.

It's like a new big section in the story. Moses has died. Enter Joshua. Verse 1. After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua, son of Nun, Moses' assistant, Moses, my servant, is dead.

Now then, you and all these people get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give them to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot as I promised Moses.

[4 : 51] So leaders may die, but God in his love continues to provide his people. And look what happens when God's leaders and his rule is followed.

If you go to the very end of Joshua, chapter 23, verse 14. The very end of the book. So Moses has died.

Joshua has raised up. And God's promises continue. So look what it says, chapter 23, verse 14. Now I am about to go to the way of all the earth.

In other words, I am about to die. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed.

Every promise has been fulfilled. Not one has failed. You see, when God's rule is in place, when his chosen leader is in place, there is great blessing.

[6 : 03] God's rule is always best and always right for his people. But, when his rule is absent or ignored, it is disastrous.

Have a look in the next book, Judges, chapter 2, verse 8. Joshua, or Judges, chapter 2, verse 8. Joshua, son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, but he died at the age of 110. So, another leader has died, and we're asking the same question again. Now what are the people going to do?

Well, look down at verse 10. After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel.

Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshipped various gods of the peoples around them.

[7 : 11] They provoked the Lord to anger, because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. In his anger against Israel, the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them.

He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the Lord was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them.

They were in great distress. Do you see what happens when God's loving rule is ignored and rejected? When there's no leader in place, it's just chaos and disorder.

But as we know with the story that we've been looking at so far, God always continues to provide for his people. And he continues to restore when things have been broken.

So look down at verse 16 of chapter 2. Then the Lord raised up judges. So here come new leaders, new people, who saved them out of the hands of the raiders.

[8 : 17] Verse 18. Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge, and he saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived.

For the Lord had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them. But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshipping them.

They refused to give up their evil practices and their stubborn ways. You see, without a leader, without the rule of God, the people rebel.

In fact, the book of Judges ends in absolute anarchy. Have a look at chapter 21, verse 25, right at the very end of the book of Judges.

Chapter 21, verse 25. When God's loving rule is rejected, it just brings chaos and disorder, and it ends in absolute anarchy.

[9 : 32] Chapter 21, verse 25. In those days, Israel had no king. Everyone did as he saw fit.

It's a terrible end to what has been going on. Now, I know some people are studying for their leaving cert. When I did my leaving cert a few years ago, on the English syllabus was William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

I don't know if any of you have ever read it. It's a fictional story about a group of well-educated English schoolboys who get marooned on an island, on this desert island, a tropical island.

They're without adult supervision. There's no leadership. And very quickly, disorder and chaos begin to reign. The children, who are all young teenagers, all begin to bully each other.

They start fighting with each other, and they form rival groups. One of the children stands out amongst all the rest. He's given a nickname, Piggy.

[10 : 40] And he kept insisting to everybody else, we need rules. And here's what he says. We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages.

Which is better, to have rules and agree, or go hunting and smashing and breaking things up? Well, he got his answer.

Not long after his desire for rules, Piggy is violently killed by the other children. You see, it's a social comment of what happens when you remove authority from society.

Anarchy. All hell breaks loose. And this is what we see around us every single day. Everyone, just as it was at the end of Judges, everyone does as they see fit.

The only rules are, there are no rules. Whether it's the gang lords in Dublin streets, or our breaking of the speed limit. Whether it's people's desire to change the Eighth Amendment, or refusing to pay our water tax.

[11:53] We don't want to be told what to do. We want to live as we please. And all of this is a reflection of a much deeper and more serious issue.

It's a rejection of God's loving rule. You see, life for the nation of Israel has spiraled into complete disorder.

From the time of Moses, as they'd come out into the promised land, or towards it, things were going well. But as soon as they start rejecting leadership, as they start pushing God out the way, everything descends into chaos.

So they turn to one of the last remaining priests, whose name is Samuel. Have a look at 1 Samuel, chapter 8.

So it's a few pages on from Joshua. You go from Joshua to Ruth, and then into 1 Samuel, chapter 8. 1 Samuel, chapter 8, verse 4.

[13:00] So all the elders of Israel gathered together, and they came to Samuel at Ramah.

They said to him, Samuel, you're old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.

Now it seems very honourable, doesn't it? Give us a king. Maybe they want to get their act together and start living in a right way. Well, let's read on.

Verse 6. 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.

[14:09] You see, the request appears to be good. But deep down, it's just another attempt to get rid of God's rule and authority. Do you see what the people are asking for?

Look back at the end of verse 5. They say, we want a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have. You see, we don't want to be God's people anymore.

We want to be like all the other nations. We want to have a king of our choice. A king who will do what we tell him to do. We want to do things our way. Verse 9.

God responds to them. Now listen to them. But warn them solemnly, and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do. It will be brutal if they get the king of their choice.

It will be like them going back into Egypt all over again. We're told what the king would be like.

Verse 17. Talking about taxes.

[15:10] He will take a tenth of your flocks, and yourselves will become his slaves. When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day.

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

Their persistence to get rid of God is frighteningly similar to today. Why is it that nations around the world, nations like North Korea, Iraq, or Eritrea, if you read the magazine I referred to earlier, why have they made it illegal to worship and to meet as we are right now?

Why is our media open to every kind of worldview, but silences a biblical view?

Why do our universities and colleges champion tolerance, but encourage intolerance towards Christians?

[16:27] Well, I don't think it's any difference to what is going on in chapter 8 here, because we want to be like everyone else. We don't want God as king. We want to live as we want and do as we please and make rules that we like and live as ever we want.

Look at verse 21. When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the Lord. And the Lord answered, listen to them and give them a king.

You see, sometimes God in his judgment gives us what we keep asking for. You want a king? You want to live life without me?

Well, here's your king. And you can live under your own rules. And it brought further chaos and disorder and destruction. You see, if we persist long enough in wanting to live life our own way, we get what we deserve.

And I think as we look across even our own nation, across the nations of the world, why are there in so much turmoil? Why are nations fighting against others?

[17:47] Why is there terrorism? Why is there brokenness? Because God gives us what we ask for. A world where there is no king.

Rather a king of our own choice. A king that we want. Well, as the story goes on, they get the king as God had promised.

It was King Saul. He was a brutal king who treated them harshly. But even though God has been rejected by the people, God's authority over the people remains.

So look what God has to say about it in chapter 13, verse 13. 1 Samuel chapter 13. So God is speaking to Saul through Samuel.

Saul is the one who's the king. But he has something to say to him. Verse 13. You acted foolishly, Samuel said. You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you.

[18:53] If you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people because you have not kept the Lord's command.

Do you see this ongoing theme that we've come across time after time? God loves his people. He's jealous for his people. He will not give up on the world that he has created.

So God promises. He says, I'm going to step in once again and I'm going to provide for you a king of my choice. A king who has a heart like God.

A king who's going to restore order. A king who's going to bring blessing. And that's what we find that happens.

God installs his own king. Have a look at 1 Samuel chapter 16 and verse 1. The Lord said to Samuel, How long will you mourn for Saul since I have rejected him as king over Israel?

[20:12] Fill your horn with oil and be on your way. I'm sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.

So Jesse, the father, goes and gets all his sons together except for one, if you remember the story, and brings them before Samuel. Look at verse 7.

But the Lord said to Samuel, Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at.

Man looks at the outward appearance. But the Lord looks at the heart. And so all these brothers, strong and as rugged and as brilliant as they are, they're all rejected.

And one is chosen. David. Verse 13. So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him, that's David, in the presence of his brothers.

[21:17] And from that day on, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah. You see, this is how God works.

He provides the king of his choice. He had called Moses. He had called Joshua. He had raised up judges to rescue and deliver.

And now he brings his own king, David, and puts him in place. And when David became king, well, life under King David was great.

It was a time of peace and prosperity. The people were living under God's loving rule. They had rest from all their enemies. Things were the way they were meant to be.

It was almost as if they were back in the Garden of Eden all over again. Living under God's rule. In relationship with God.

[22:17] Enjoying rest and prosperity. But what God was going to do through David was only a taste of something greater to come.

For God would make a promise to David. Go on to 2 Samuel chapter 7. 2 Samuel chapter 7. And here God makes this amazing promise to King David.

We'll pick it up in verse 11. Halfway through verse 11. The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you.

Not a physical building made of bricks and mortar and wood but a dynasty. A family. The Lord himself will establish a house for you.

[23:23] When your days are over and you rest with your fathers I will raise up your offspring to succeed you. He will come from your own body and I will establish his kingdom.

He is the one who will build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he shall be my son.

When he does wrong I will punish him with the rod of men with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him as I took it away from Saul whom I removed from before you.

Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever. You see it's the promise of another king to come.

But this king is going to be different to every other kind of king that there's been. First he's going to be a king like God.

[24 : 31] He's going to be a king like God. Look back at verse 14. He says, I will be his father and he shall be my son.

Now years ago going back a long long way sons usually did what their fathers did. So if your father happened to be a blacksmith well there was a good chance that your son would become a blacksmith or if he was a baker he would become a baker.

sons did what their fathers did. And that's the idea that we have in verse 14. The son is going to do what the father does.

In other words God is saying a king is going to come who will be just like me. Just as God rules over his people so this son who comes will rule just like God.

He will act justly and fairly. He will be a king with absolute power and supreme authority. So this promise is going to be a king like God.

[25 : 40] Second this is a king who will endure forever. Look at verse 16. He says to David your house your kingdom shall endure forever before me.

Your throne shall be established forever. Now if we know anything about this we read this and we go David that his kingdom is going to reign forever and ever.

Well we only need to read on a little bit longer and we realize that David dies. So how can this go on forever and ever? Well the only way it can go on forever and ever is for a king who would come who would live forever and ever.

A king without end. A king who is eternal and whose rule never comes to an end. And for us reading it it seems impossible that that could happen. But on the basis of everything that God has promised and fulfilled so far in the story we would be silly to discount it.

So there's going to come a king like God. A king who will rule forever. And a king who's going to bring blessing. If you flick on to verse 28 look at how David responds to what God promises.

[27 : 01] In verse 28 David says this, O sovereign Lord you are God. Your words are trustworthy and you have promised these things these good things to your servant.

Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant that it may continue forever in your sight. For you O sovereign Lord have spoken and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever.

forever. So this king like God who's going to rule forever is going to bring eternal blessing. So instead of the curse of death there's going to be the blessing of life.

Instead of disorder and chaos there's going to be beauty and harmony. Everything is going to be put right again when this king comes. But there's something else about this king that strikes us as very very disturbing.

You might have picked it up if you go back to verse 14. Read carefully what verse 14 says. I will be his father and he shall be my son.

[28 : 16] When he does wrong I will punish him with the rod of men with floggings inflicted by men. the father will punish his son who is a king.

Now it seems completely out of place doesn't it? How could a king like God who rules forever and brings eternal blessing be punished? Why would the father do that?

And what would the son do that was so wrong that he deserves punishment? Well as we follow through the story in search of this promise God does raise up new kings to take the place of David and all seems to be going well.

The kingdom gets bigger and stronger. The blessings keep coming. Everything is right and good but within two generations everything is once again falling apart.

The great big kingdom gets divided in two as the families begin to fight against each other. We have Israel to the north and Judah to the south and each kingdom have their own kings but the vast majority of these kings turn against God and they reject his loving rule and instead of leading the people back to God they lead them into further rebellion and God is watching out throughout these

day this king is going to come again king Jesus will burst into this world and he will bring his judgment on all those who refuse him and that separation will not just be slavery in a country but it will be slavery for eternity in hell itself but if we turn and we trust in this king just as the criminal did those words are true for us you will be with me in paradise forever you will be part of

[38 : 21] God's eternal kingdom where everything is put right where there is no more death no more suffering no more pain the home of blessing the garden of Eden just as it's meant to be and so we stay here today because God has us in place if you flick over to Luke chapter 24 he tells his disciples in verse 48 sorry verse 46 Jesus said to his disciples this is what is written that Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem and you are witnesses of these things and I am going to send you what my father has promised but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high so just as those disciples were sent by the risen

King Jesus to go and declare the message of the King so we are here today as the subjects of the King sent with that same message into our community to our nation to the nations of the world calling on people to repent to be forgiven that they too might enter into God's eternal kingdom one day King Jesus will return are we ready to meet him but more importantly maybe we should be asking are we ready to bring that message so that our friends our family our community is ready to meet the King let's pray together father while we have traveled through a thousand years and more of history through it all and even now you remain

King and Lord over all you are in charge and so we bow and we submit before you today we thank you that you have given to us the perfect King the one who has died in our place risen again with all power and authority sending us as subjects into the world to do the King's work of reaching out into the nations we pray father for the power of your Holy Spirit that we might have courage to speak confidence to share and a willingness to get out of our comfort zone and declare the message of King Jesus we pray that many people will one day be in paradise the eternal kingdom because we shared who

Jesus is help us we pray in Jesus name amen we're going to sing together a song which reminds us of our great King the one who's created all who has everything in his hands who controls everything behold our God nothing can compare come let us adore him let's stand together as we sing