

Life: A kingdom for God's people

June 20, 2013

- *The Bible Studies for Life lesson for July 7 focuses on 2 Samuel 7:8-17,22-24.*

Throughout the Old Testament, God's people ask him for a king. They want a ruler. They want someone to be in charge. They long to be part of a community and a kingdom, affording them more power than they have as individuals. They want to feel safe and protected. They want to ensure they never are slaves to another empire or country. The Israelites, like you and me, wanted to be part of a kingdom and wanted to have power in the world.

In 2 Samuel 7, God tells David about his plan for the kingdom of Israel. David had been chosen as king, but David was not the one chosen to build a temple. God tells David his son, Solomon, would build the temple for God to dwell. God tells David he will make his name great and will give his people a home where they can live and have security (7:9-10).

A kingdom to endure forever

God said he would empower and love David's offspring, and his kingdom would endure forever (7:12,16). David is overcome by gratitude and praise for the Redeemer of his nation, his people. He gives God glory and praise for the promises he has made.

We know from Scripture, David's kingdom did advance. David led a military powerhouse, and they knew many victories. However, the years of military strength and might were short lived. Israel found itself, once again, oppressed by other nations. Many wondered where God had gone, and why he hadn't kept his promise? They found themselves looking and waiting for

a king, again.

The birth of Jesus brought news of a new kingdom—the kingdom of God. This kingdom had been described to David but had been misunderstood by the people as one confined to the Earth. The new kingdom was not of earthly territory or a particular nation. This kingdom was marked by a new way of living and a new way of dying.

This kingdom came with a King, but not one with earthly wealth or military might. Jesus did not come to remove the perils of Roman rule, and he did not make changes in the political order of things. Instead, Jesus came to conquer death and to change lives, one by one.

A new purpose

Jesus spoke about his purpose: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom from the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus’ kingdom was one of power, might and victory, but not the kind to which we are accustomed.

This new kingdom is known here on Earth, but only in part. We see glimpses of the way this kingdom works—forgiveness from sin, healing from sickness and restored relationships. Each victory comes as a result of a great battle.

Although the enemy’s power has been curbed, he is not powerless. He roams the Earth looking for people to devour, one by one (1 Peter 5:8). But all the while, the King of this new kingdom is in control and is guiding, teaching, correcting and healing. We know this kingdom will endure and ultimately will triumph when Jesus returns.

A promised victory

Today, we still want a king. We want a ruler. We want someone to be in charge. We want to feel safe and protected. Jesus has come and claimed the title of King. He has promised ultimate victory, relentless love and continual forgiveness to those who follow him. God promises us security and safety when we trust him because this kingdom will endure forever.

Every morning when we wake, we are faced with the question of loyalty. Will we bow down and worship an earthly “king” or “kingdom”? Or will we trust the King of Kings to continue to show us glimpses of his purposes? Will he use you and me to bring pieces of his kingdom to our families, friends and communities?

“... Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).