

and is their true king. Yet the LORD is the master of bringing good out of evil, and works in this situation to teach Israel more about his plans. He gives them a human king, but of course this human king is purely a stand-in king for he would sit on the LORD's throne (1 Chronicles 29:23). God's plan is that one day the Angel of the LORD would be born into the human race - if the people would only listen to a human king, so Israel's true king, the LORD, would become a man!

The Ideal King

The LORD first makes a man called Saul the king (1 Samuel 10). Saul is the kind of king the people want and shows why such a king is a problem. After the LORD rejects Saul as king (1 Samuel 15), Samuel anoints another man as king. He is from the tribe of Judah and he is the kind of king the LORD desires - he is the ideal king. David is described as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14 cf. 16:7).

The Temple

David establishes Jerusalem (Zion) as the capital of Israel and builds a palace. He then has an idea to build the LORD a palace (a temple to replace the tabernacle). But the LORD has a bigger plan, he responds by transferring the promise of the seed to David and says this seed will build the temple (2 Samuel 7). Also the promises made to Abraham are repeated to David. So now the search for the seed will be for a king from David's line who will build a temple. The book of 1-2 Kings takes up that search.

Solomon and the Golden Age

David's son Solomon comes to the throne (1 Kings 1-2). Solomon was given wisdom by the LORD (note: he wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon). Under the reign of this wise king, Israel is even more glorious than under David. This is the golden age of Israel's history. All the promises made to Abraham appear to be fulfilled:

- **Land** - Canaan is now fully under Solomon's control (1 Kings 4:21; 8:65).
- **Blessing** - Israel under Solomon enjoys immense material prosperity (1 Kings 4:25) and even other nations find blessing in Israel's king (1 Kings 4:34; 10:1-13).
- **Seed** - Israel is numerous (1 Kings 3:8; 4:20) under the rule of the promised seed. The promises made to David also appear to be fulfilled: the LORD has raised up one of David's sons to sit on his throne and he has built a magnificent temple. The LORD lives and rules at the heart of the nation (1 Kings 6-8).

Reading for next week...

If you get chance before next week you might like to read: 1 Kings 11-12, 2 Kings 17, 2 Kings 25, Ezra 1, Nehemiah 5 and Nehemiah 13. If you want to read even more then read: Isaiah 11, Isaiah 52:12-54:17 and Ezekiel 36-37.

The Exodus and the King of Israel

Part 2: Exodus-1 Kings 10

Read Exodus 2:23-3:17

What do we learn about the Angel of the LORD and why he has been sent to Moses?

The Exodus

Exodus starts by telling us that the descendants of Abraham have become very numerous (Exodus 1:1-7), but are slaves in Egypt under the Pharaoh (1:8-14). So the Angel of the LORD appears to Moses in a burning bush (3:1-22). He is the LORD God who walked in Eden - he is called both God (3:6) and the LORD (4:5). As the Angel (=messenger) of the LORD he has been sent by the Unseen LORD in heaven to rescue Israel and to bring them to meet that Unseen LORD at Mount Sinai (3:12) and then on to the promised land. In NT terms, the Father has sent the Son to rescue Israel (John 4-5; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13). It is this rescue from slavery is the story of Exodus.

The Passover

Moses confronts Pharaoh, but Pharaoh refuses to let Israel leave and so the LORD brings a series of plagues on the Egyptians. Pharaoh refuses and so in the end the LORD announces the plague of the firstborn (11:1-10). The firstborn in every household would die. Exodus 12:1-30 sets out how the Israelites can escape this judgement: each family was to take a lamb that would be killed, eaten and its blood sprinkled on the door posts of the house. As the LORD passed through the land in judgement, he would pass-over all those families with blood on their door. The lamb dies in place of the firstborn, taking the judgement in his place.

Leaving Egypt

The result was that the Egyptians urged the people to leave (12:31-33), giving them much wealth (12:35-36). It is vital to remember that this rescue was not exclusive to ethnic Israelites, even some Egyptians left with them (12:38)! There were about 600,000 men plus women and children (12:37). The Angel of the LORD led the people, going before them in a pillar of cloud/fire (13:21-22, 14:19, 14:24). When Pharaoh changes his mind and chases after the Israelites with his army, the Angel splits the Red Sea allowing the Israelites to pass through safely. We're told that as a result

the people put their trust in this LORD who travels with them (14:31). Yet despite seeing him defeat the Egyptian army, they keep doubting him. So in the wilderness the LORD teaches them to learn to trust in him even for basic things like food and water (15:22-17:7). He always faithfully provides for them.

At Mount Sinai

By Exodus 19, Israel is camped at the foot of Mount Sinai. The LORD (the Angel of the LORD) reminds the people of how he rescued them from Egypt (19:1-5). In v10, he now warns the people to prepare to meet another person called the LORD. This LORD would come down in a thick cloud on top of the mountain. He could not be seen, only his voice could be heard (Deuteronomy 4:12-15). This Unseen LORD is the Father and if anyone approaches him they would die (19:24). The reason is that he is so pure and holy that sinners cannot come near him. This Unseen LORD speaks the 10 commandments (20:1-21) and then Moses goes up the mountain to receive the law.

Read Exodus 32:1-10 and 40:34-38

What do we learn about the relationship between the LORD and his people?

The Tabernacle

While Moses is up the mountain, the people already fall into gross sin by making a Golden Calf (32:1-33:6). The Unseen LORD cannot travel on with Israel otherwise he would destroy them (33:5). But he does promise to send his Angel with them (33:14). The Israelites are to construct a beautiful tent (Exodus 25-31), called the tabernacle, and put it in the middle of the camp. In the inner most part, an Ark (= a throne) would be placed where the Angel of the LORD would be enthroned - here is Israel's king ruling his people (40:34-38). The tribe of Levi was appointed as priests to serve at the tabernacle. Only they were allowed to enter the tent, and only the High Priest once a year into the inner most part. This was intended to be a model of creation, showing how sinful people cannot approach a holy God without a High Priest.

Journeying through the Wilderness

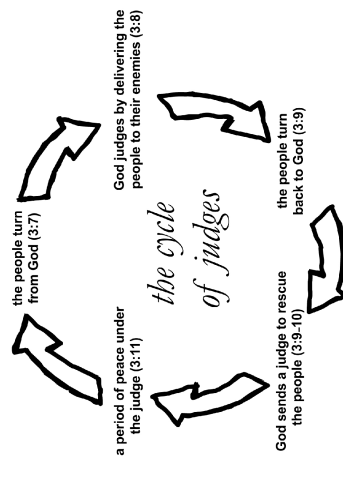
The Israelites leave Sinai but repeatedly rebel against the LORD their king who travels with them. Eventually, the LORD swears that none of the Israelites will enter the land, so Israel wander around in the desert for 40 years sustained by the LORD's provision (Numbers 14). Once a new generation has risen up, Joshua takes over from Moses.

Entering the Land

Numbers 1-10 sets out how the people were to be organised ready for battle. So when the people cross into the promised land, the Ark of the LORD is carried in front of them. Under Joshua the land of Canaan is conquered. It is important to note that this was judgement on the Canaanites for they had become a wicked people (Genesis 15:16). Of course individuals could and did join Israel! Once the land had been taken, each of the 12 tribes was assigned part of the land as their inheritance. The tabernacle was set up in the land, with the LORD as their king.

The Period of the Judges

The book of Judges records the first 200 years in the land. During this time the LORD raises up a series of judges, but at the start of the book we are shown the true judge, the true king of Israel - the Angel of the LORD (Judges 2:1-4). His words at the beginning of the book show what was really going on in the life of the nation. Yes, Israel had taken the land, but they kept turning away from the LORD and so he would raise up enemies to bring the people back to himself. The people would cry out and he would raise up a judge. Israel then followed the LORD as long as that judge lived. But then the cycle would occur again. In fact it repeats itself until by the end of the book Israel's sin has reached new depths. The closing line is highly significant: the reason for this rebellion is that the people had no king (21:24-25 cf. 17:5-6, 18:1, 19:1).



Read 1 Samuel 8

What was wrong with the people's request for a king?

Rejecting the LORD as King

The books of 1-2 Samuel tell us what happened next: the people of Israel demand a king (1 Samuel 8). The problem with Israel's request is their motives. They don't want a human king *under* the LORD, they want a king *instead* of the LORD. This is a dark chapter in Israel's history indeed, they have directly rejected the Angel of the LORD, even though he rescued them from Egypt, brought them safely into the land