

Jesus in Joshua and Judges Why We Need a King

Most people don't know that I majored in music in college; which is as puzzling to me now as it probably is to you – but here's what happened. During my senior year in high school, my orchestra director who was also close family friend gave me some advice about college. He said I should decide now what I would do after college; get a list of all the courses I needed to graduate on time and not deviate from that list – which meant to me that at 18 years old, I had to decide what I was going to do with the rest of my life. Well, the only profession I could think of at the time was maybe teaching high school and since I had been involved in music most of my life, becoming a high school music teacher seemed to be the most logical choice. So I majored in music at Cal State Long Beach and for the next four years, I only took those classes required for a Bachelors degree in Music. This made my parents very happy because their son knew where he was going and how he was going to get there – and keeping them happy was important to me because I didn't want to have leave school to go back home. Halfway through college, a girl I was dating became a Christian and as I began to attend some Christian college student meetings with her, I understood the good news of how much God loved me and what Christ had accomplished for me and one summer night in June of 1968, I prayed a very simple prayer as I lay in my bed, "Lord Jesus, if You are there, please come into my life, forgive my sins and make me the man You've created me to be." My life changed radically and almost immediately. Things which had been natural to me began to feel unnatural and things which I never would have considered doing; reading the Bible, praying and telling others about Christ became natural to me. Most importantly, I began to experience the joy of Christ's presence in my life. The deep emptiness and discontent I had experienced my entire life were gone. Over the next couple of years, the more I grew in my relationship with Christ, the less interest I had in becoming a teacher and the more I simply wanted to serve Jesus; although I had no idea of what form that service might take until one February afternoon as I was reading 2 Tim. 2, I sensed God clearly calling me into a full time ministry of making disciples of Jesus who would make more disciples. At that point, the only Christian ministry I was acquainted with was Campus Crusade for Christ and so I applied to join their staff when I graduated and was accepted. Now all I had to do was to tell my parents who still happily assumed I was on my way to becoming a high school music teacher. This would be the first time in my life that I would be going directly against their wishes. I certainly had not been a perfect son but I was smart enough to keep my rebellion hidden and unlike my younger brother, I had always been the responsible and dutiful older brother – just like the older brother in Jesus' story of the prodigal son. Pleasing my parents was important to me even though I deeply resented the control they exercised over my life. But now, it was either please Jesus or please my parents; I couldn't do both. So during my next visit home, I sat down with Mom and Dad and told them that my plans for the future had changed; that I wouldn't be a high school music teacher after all but that I was joining the staff of Crusade. My mom cried and my dad looked at me like I had lost my mind – and finally said, "Well, it's your life. You'll do what you want." That conversation turned out to be one of the most significant of my life because it marked not only the end of my childhood and the beginning of my life as an adult; but the end of my parents' control over me. For the first time in my life, I was doing what I felt to be right, even though my parents disagreed. Now they eventually became some of my greatest supporters, but in that moment I had to choose whose approval mattered most to me: Mom and Dad or Jesus. Following Jesus as the Lord of my life freed me from a lifelong slavery to my parents' approval to which I otherwise very well may have been enslaved for the rest of my life; and that brings me to our topic for the morning; why paradoxically we all need a king in order to be truly free and why Christ must be our Lord in order to be our Savior.

We entitled this summer's sermon series "*Hero: Jesus in the Old Testament*" because Jesus taught that the entire Bible is about Him; that He is the hero of the great story of how God rescues His creation from evil and from death: that He is the theme which ties the whole Bible together. If we fail to see Jesus and the story of redemption in the Scriptures, we're not reading the Bible as God intended for it to be read; as a seamless story about Christ. We began by looking at Jesus in Genesis where we saw God's very first promise of a savior in Genesis 3:15. In the sad story of Adam and Eve's rebellion against God as the human race and of all creation are distorted by sin and death into something God never intended, there is one note of hope; a promise of eventual restoration and reversal of all the effects of the fall. When God speaks to Adam, Eve and the serpent about the consequences of what each has done, He says to the serpent, *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."* God says there will be ongoing enmity between the woman and the serpent and between her seed (or descendants) and the seed of the serpent; and that one of the woman's descendants will conquer Satan, undoing all the damage which Adam has done; restoring the image of God in people and the creation to what God originally intended. The story of this promised descendant of Eve who will save humanity from evil and from death is the great theme of the book of Genesis and the story line of the Bible as we learn more and more about Him as we follow His line through the generations. The book of Genesis follows the descendants of the woman from generation to generation; from Abel and Seth to Noah to Abraham and to His descendants who become the nation of Israel. Greg taught us how in Exodus and Leviticus we learn that the seed of the woman who will conquer Satan will do it by becoming an atoning sacrifice for sin and Jeff taught us how in Numbers and Deuteronomy how He will become our champion and do what Adam, Eve and all of Israel failed to do; trust and obey God and defeat temptation. This morning we come to the books of Joshua, Judges and Ruth. If the entire Bible is about Jesus, then what do we learn about Jesus here? We learn that not only will the seed of the woman be a conqueror, a sacrifice, a champion and a prophet; He will also be a king. Back to Genesis, as Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, is dying, he blesses each of his sons and foretells what will happen to the descendants of each. When he comes to his son Judah, he says in Genesis 49:10, *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to Him (Shiloh) shall be the obedience of the peoples (nations)."* When Jacob makes this prediction, his family is just becoming a clan; 12 brothers and their wives and children; yet Jacob predicts that the descendants of his son Judah will rule over their brothers and that one of those descendants whom Jacob calls Shiloh will rule over all the nations. And so through Jacob, God gives us some additional information about the seed of the woman: He will be a king from the line of Judah who will rule the world. 400 years later, after Israel has grown into a nation and God has delivered them from their slavery to the Egyptians and gives them His law, it is evident in the Law that **God** intends for Israel to be ruled by a king. Look at Deuteronomy 17:14-16 and 18-20, *"When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,' you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman." (14-16) "Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel."* God intends for His people to be ruled by a king who in turn is ruled by God and by His Word; a king who has authority because he lives under the authority of God; a king who is God's representative to his people. As we make our way through the story of the Bible, we'll find that not only does Israel need this kind of king in order to follow God and to experience His blessing; this king Israel really needs doesn't appear until Jesus comes.

Genesis follows the line of the seed of the woman generation after generation; from Adam to Abraham through whose descendant God promises to bless all the families of the earth and the story of the Bible becomes the story of Abraham's family and the nation which that family will eventually become. Genesis closes with Abraham's grandson Jacob and twelve sons moving to Egypt to escape a great famine. Exodus opens 400 years later in Egypt where Abraham's family has now grown into a large nation whom the Egyptians have enslaved. God calls Moses to lead His people out of Egypt and slavery, through the Red Sea and then out into the wilderness where God gives them the laws spelled out in Exodus and Leviticus and guides them back to the land He promised to give to the descendants of Abraham. However, when Israel comes to the border of the Promised Land, they refuse to enter the land and trust God to fight their battles for them; and so God condemns that generation to wander in the wilderness for the next 40 years until that generation has died off and a new generation is born. That's the book of Numbers. When that new generation of Israelites has grown up, God guides them back to the border of the Promised Land and Moses teaches God's laws to this generation in Deuteronomy. Then God appoints a new leader for Israel named Joshua who will lead them in the conquest of the land God has promised. Joshua and his friend Caleb are the only members of the generation who left Egypt because they alone believed that God would give them the land. The Promised Land does not represent heaven – as some hymn writers assume – because the Promised Land is a place of conflict – unlike what heaven or the restored earth will be like – but it is also a place of rest and victory – if we have the right leader; and in that sense, Joshua foreshadows Jesus. As long as Israel followed Joshua, they were victorious. That's the book of Joshua. After Joshua died, they disintegrated. That's the book of Judges. So this morning, I want to look at three things. First, Joshua as a picture of the king Israel needs; second, Judges and why Israel needed a king; and third, why we need a king.

Jesus and Joshua share the same name. Joshua or "*Yeshua*" in Hebrew is Jesus in Greek. Joshua's original name was Hoshea which means "salvation." But in the wilderness, Moses changed his name to *Yeshua* or *Joshua* meaning "*Yahweh* is salvation" as a reminder to Joshua that victory over their enemies and possession of the land would be by the power of God rather than by Israel's military power just as salvation through Christ is based wholly upon what He does and nothing we do. So Joshua is a foreshadowing of Christ, leading His people into a life of victory and rest. When Israel crosses the Jordan into the land of Canaan, the Promised Land is inhabited by seven Canaanite tribes who live in 31 fortified city-states, each ruled by its own king and it is these city-states which must be conquered. Joshua is a difficult book for 21st century American Christians to understand because it looks like genocide as God tells Israel to wipe out entire tribes of people. There are a couple of things we need to remember. Archaeology tells us that the Canaanites were some of the most depraved and violent people of all history, slaughtering the nations around them, sacrificing their children to their idols and living in utter depravity. And in Genesis, God tells Abraham that He is giving them 400 years to repent; which they do not; so like throughout history, nations which destroy other nations are eventually destroyed themselves. Secondly, we need to remember that any nation in the Promised Land which made peace with Israel was spared. Joshua leads Israel for 28 years and the Book of Joshua records seven years of conquest and then seven years of settlement as the land is divided between the 12 tribes of Israel. However, even though the major battles have been won, not all of their enemies are conquered but Israel will need to continue to battle the remnants of the remaining tribes – which as we'll see in Judges, they fail to do, choosing coexistence to conquest and eventually becoming the slaves of these tribes as a result. The book of Joshua records three major military campaigns; the first in central Canaan with the conquests of Jericho and Ai, the second in Southern Canaan with the conquests of a five nation Southern Confederacy; and finally the Conquest of Northern Canaan as all the city states of the North join together and are defeated by Joshua and his army. In every battle, the Scripture says that Israel did not win because of their own strength or ability as soldiers but because the Lord their God fought for them. Joshua is the leader who not only depends upon the Lord himself but who leads his people in depending upon the Lord.

The New Testament teaches that Joshua foreshadows Jesus. In the letter to the Hebrews, the writer reminds the reader of Israel's experience in the wilderness as a warning to them to not be guilty of the same unbelief that kept an entire generation out of the Promised Land which God calls His rest; a home of their own in a land of milk and honey where God promises in Lev. 26:6, "*I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble,*" as a blessing on those who obey Him.. However in Hebrews 4:8, the writer of Hebrews continues "*For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.*" Joshua was a

picture of Jesus, leading His people into a place of rest and blessing but he was not Jesus and so he failed to lead Israel to a place of permanent rest and safety. Israel was only at rest as long as Joshua was alive. That's why the book of Joshua closes on a positive note while the book of Judges opens on a negative one. Joshua 21:43-45, *"So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass."* The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as He promised. Yet the writer to the Hebrews says that Joshua failed to give them rest. Why? Because Joshua died and Israel no longer had the leader they needed and steadily deteriorated spiritually, militarily, economically and socially; as reported in the book of Judges. Judges covers the 400 years between Joshua and King David. The book opens with *"After the death of Joshua..."* and closes with, *"In those days Israel had no king. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."* (Judges 1:1, 21:25) After Joshua died, there were no great leaders and Israel's society progressively deteriorated as everyone pursued their own interests. Everyone does what is right in his own eyes because there is no leader; no king, no Joshua leading the people in following God. After Joshua dies, Israel moves from the conquest of the remaining tribes of Canaan to peaceful coexistence with those tribes to intermarrying with those tribes to worshiping the gods of those tribes to slavery to those tribes. Finally, when Israel can no longer bear the agony of their slavery, they call out to God and every time they call, out of His divine mercy on the undeserving He raises up a savior-ruler or judge through whom He delivers Israel from their oppressors and Israel enjoys another brief period of rest. But that time of blessing and security is always short-lived because as soon as that judge dies, Israel returns to its old ways and the cycle repeats. Like Joshua, the judges can deliver God's people from their enemies but they cannot deliver them from themselves. And like Joshua, the judges are mortal and as soon as they die, Israel falls back into the ever more deteriorating cycle of Judges and the time of rest ends. At the beginning of Judges, they are a faithful but flawed people. By the end, they are only flawed. Each cycle and generation sees God's people become more depraved, more enslaved to sin and further from the God who delivered them from their slavery in Egypt to be His own people. Even the judges are very flawed individuals whom God uses in spite of who they are rather than because of who they are. Gideon is an idol worshiper, Jephthah kills his own daughter and Sampson is a skirt-chasing thug. Judges is a dark, pessimistic book and it tells us why four different times. *Judges 17:6 "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes."* *Judges 18:1 "In those days there was no king of Israel..."* *Judges 19:1 "Now it came about in those days, when there was no king in Israel..."* *Judges 21:25 "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."* It's as if the writer of Judges is telling us, "We had no king. What would you expect to happen?" The theme of Judges is that Israel needs a king in order to follow God; and this is true throughout their history. Whenever Israel had a king who loved God, the people followed God. When Israel had a king who worshiped idols, the people worshiped idols. And one of the major unsolved problems of the Old Testament is how can an imperfect and temporary king provide the leadership and protection God's people need to be blessed and at rest?

So the story of the Bible introduces a new idea about the seed of the woman who will conquer the serpent, the Lamb which will take away the sin of the world and the Champion who will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He will also be king and that is why when Jesus arrives, He preaches the arrival of the promised kingdom of God and of the promised King. We'll talk more about the promised king next week as we look at Jesus in 1 and 2 Samuel but the thing I want you to see today is that Jesus cannot be Savior without also being king. Why? Well, this brings us to our third point, why do we need a king? As Americans we don't like the idea of a monarchy or of living under anyone's authority. For us, freedom is being able to do whatever we want to do and so we have a hard time thinking of Jesus as our king. We like Jesus as our Savior or as our Friend or as our Protector – but we struggle with Jesus as our King because we instinctively think – just like Israel – that we will be happier when we can do what is right in our own eyes; and that is because we have not yet really believed the gospel. The gospel has two great enemies: religion and irreligion. Religion says, "I obey God; therefore He accepts me and loves me." Irreligion says, "I am accepted and loved by God; therefore I don't have to obey Him." Religion is based upon the error of legalism; that I can earn God's favor by keeping God's laws. Irreligion is based upon the error of license; that because Christ died for all my sins, I am free to live anyway I choose. Religion believes in a Jesus who is Lord but not Savior. I have to save myself. Irreligion believes in a Jesus who is Savior but not Lord. His job is to save me; not to tell me what to do. But the gospel says that Jesus is both Savior and Lord; that I'm saved by what Christ has

accomplished for me at the cross; and the more I understand and believe in that salvation, the more I will obey Christ out of gratitude for all He has done for me and out of faith that He knows what is best for me and that the best thing I can do is to live under His Lordship. Why will faith in the gospel lead me to obey Jesus as my king? Two reasons: the Bible says that if I love Jesus, I will obey Him. And if I love myself, I will obey Him.

Why does real faith in the gospel lead inevitably to obeying Jesus as Lord? First, if I love Jesus, I will obey Him. Look at what Jesus says in John 14:15 *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."* Jesus says that if we truly love Him, we will obey Him. If I don't obey Him, I don't really love Him. Notice that the motivation for obedience is not duty but delight. I obey not because I have to but because I want to. Disobedience is not the result of a lack of knowledge but the result of a lack of affection. If I don't want to obey Jesus; if I can't let go of my stubborn independence and follow Him wherever He leads me, then I need to ask myself, why should I love Him? 1 John 4:19 says *"We love because He first loved us."* My love for Him is the result of my faith in His love for me which was displayed on the cross. The more I understand what Jesus has done for me, suffered for me, gave up for me and endured for me, the more I will appreciate and value and be consumed by His great love for me and will love Him in return. And the more I love Him, the more I will obey Him. Obedience is not a duty but rather a delight when obedience is motivated by faith in the incomparable and unconditional love which Jesus has for me; which means that obedience is the natural result of faith in the gospel. That's why Paul writes in Galatians 2:20, *"I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me; (that's the gospel) and the life I live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me."* (Gal. 2:20) When I am not motivated to obey Him, I need to go back to the beginning; to the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world for me and to the love which Father, Son and Spirit have for me and draw my motivation from that deep well. There are many motives for following Christ; avoiding guilt and pain, impressing people, succeeding in what Christ has called me to do; and I've found that those motives work for awhile. But they eventually fail me. Only the motivation of thinking about Christ's great love for me and responding to His love keeps me following Him. I've found recently when I am tempted to sin, if I will remember Christ enduring the cross for the joy set before Him – the joy of saving me from eternal death and ruin – that temptation evaporates. How can I do the thing that caused the One who loves me best such pain in order to save me and to bless me? The first reason faith in the gospel leads to obedience to Christ as king is because the more I truly believe the gospel, the more I will love Jesus and the more I love Jesus, the more I will obey Jesus. The second reason faith in the gospel leads to obedience to Christ as king is because the more I believe the gospel, the more clearly I see that obedience to Jesus is to my great benefit. I obey Jesus because I love Him and I obey Jesus because I love myself. Look at the results Jesus promises when we obey Him out of love. *"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to Him."* (John 14:21) When I obey Jesus out of love, I experience His and His Father's love to a deeper and deeper degree. That's why Jesus promises in John 14:23, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him."* (John 14:23) Want to experience God's presence and blessing more than you do? Obey. That's why Jesus promises in John 15:10-11, *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full."* (John 15:10) Jesus promises that the more I obey Him, the more of His love and joy I experience; that the path to fullness of joy is the path of obedience. Why? The gospel teaches me that my problem is my sinful independence and self-will which I inherited from Adam; and that Christ, the seed of the woman, came to destroy the works of the devil and to take away sin. Salvation is all about freeing us from what kills us; our sinfulness and our slavery to Satan's rebellion and restoring the image of God which He created in us; which is marked by the same trusting obedience we see in Jesus. That is why we need a king under whose authority we live. I am only truly free if I am Christ's slave; otherwise I am a slave to sin and to the devil. Just as Israel either served God under a good king, or served the gods and the nations around them, so I need to live under Christ's authority in His power, His guidance, and His grace to live a truly obedient, productive, healthy and joyful life. Otherwise I remain chained to the rotting corpse of my old man which continues to corrupt and poison my life here on earth. Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:3) and resistance to living under authority. Therefore, sin deceives us into thinking the more lawless we are, the freer we are when in fact, the more lawless we are, the more enslaved we are – which is the whole point of Judges. Christ came to free me from the power of sin which kills all its slaves. If I believe the gospel, then I will see that obedience isn't optional or even a perk of salvation but is at the heart of the salvation which frees me from sin and restores the image of God in me; and that I will never

know true joy until I follow the King. The more I believe the gospel, the more I will believe that obeying Jesus is the only path to life; and that if I do not live a life which pleases the Christ who saved me for Himself and who lives in me, I cannot live a life which pleases myself. That's why Jesus says that if I obey Him, His joy will be in me and my joy will be made full. My joy depends on His joy and the more I make Him happy, the happier He makes me. So I obey Jesus because I love Him and I obey Jesus because I love me and want to live the most joyful life I can. Look, Jesus was the most joyful man who ever lived because He knew the secret of joy. Joy doesn't come from pleasure or attainment or accomplishment; it comes from fulfilling the purpose for which we were created; walking in obedience with our Creator. Jesus came to rescue us for that purpose; to give us true joy. The more I trust Him and obey Him, the more of that joy I experience.

That's why belief in the gospel that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son leads inevitably to the obedience of love. And that brings us to way we see Jesus in another third book of the Old Testament from the same time period as the book of Judges, the book of Ruth. The story of the Bible is the story of the seed of the woman who will conquer Satan; the story of Jesus, which is why the story of Ruth is included. The story begins when a Hebrew man and woman and their two sons leave Israel to escape a famine and go to the neighboring country of Moab where the two sons marry two Moabite women. When all three husbands die, the mom Naomi and one her daughters – law named Ruth return to Naomi's city of Bethlehem in Israel. They are penniless and have no male protector left in their family which in that culture was a very dangerous place for women to be. Naomi sends Ruth to follow behind the wheat harvesters during harvest in the fields of her distant relative Boaz to take any wheat the harvesters left behind – something the poor were allowed to do in Israel – and in a very romantic story, Boaz and Ruth fall in love, marry and have a son named Obed who becomes the grandfather of David, the forefather of Jesus. That's why a Moabite woman is an ancestor of Jesus. But the story of Ruth tells us even more about the Promised Conqueror, Lamb, Champion and King. Boaz becomes something called in Israel a kinsmen-redeemer; a male relative who, according to the laws of the Pentateuch, had the responsibility to act on behalf of a relative who was in trouble, danger, or need. The kinsmen-redeemer rescues from trouble, redeems lost property, avenges the murder of a relative or receives restitution for the wrong done to a deceased relative. Also, if a widow had no children, to carry on the family, she could request a relative to take her as his wife and to raise up children for her family. Naomi knows that Boaz is a kinsman; therefore, he can both regain the family properties lost by her deceased husband 10 years earlier *and* to marry Ruth if he is willing and of course, this is what Boaz does, foreshadowing what Jesus will do as our kinsmen-redeemer. He not only redeems us but like Boaz, He also marries us which is why the church is called the Bride of Christ and why Jesus referred to Himself as the Bridegroom. He is not only our King but our Husband who laid down His life for His bride. God uses the most intimate of relationships to describe Christ's relationship with us – and that is why we can completely entrust ourselves to His love. He is not a distant king, ruling over us from afar and indifferent to our welfare. He is the king who is also our bridegroom and who loves us more than any husband ever loved his bride and has made Himself one with us, joining Himself to us forever. If obedience to Christ seems distasteful or limiting; it is only because we don't believe that He loves us the way the gospel tells us He loves us.