

Series: Transition

June 11, 2017

Title: "A New Kind of King"

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Text: Isaiah 40:10-11

The King Comes

Did you know God has a name?

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An old shepherd stood beside a flock of sheep deep in the Sinai desert. Granite peaks towered over him on either side, while the sheep sought out stray blades of grass between the rocks. Little did he know, but he was not only about to meet God, but was to learn God's personal name.

Out of the corner of his eye he caught sight of what looked like a bush on fire. When he went over to check it out, God spoke to him from the flames. God commanded him to leave the desert and return to Egypt with the mission of bringing the Israelites out of slavery to "a land flowing with milk and honey."

In response, Moses raised a practical question:

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Exodus 3:13 NIV

"Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

God's answer:

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Exodus 3:14-15 NIV

"I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

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God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob – has sent me to you.'

"This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation."

The Covenant-making God:

God's name isn't "God." God has a personal name – a name that He Himself revealed to us in His Word. His Name, in the original Hebrew is 'Yahweh.' It derives from the verb "to be." That is why God describes Himself as 'I AM,' or 'I AM WHO I AM.' It is translated as LORD in the NIV Bible.

It is *this* God, and no other, who made a solemn treaty or covenant with Abraham, promising to make him the father of many nations. It was *this* God, Yahweh, the LORD, who reaffirmed the covenant with each generation.

A God with a personal name. A God who gives His people permission to know Him by name. A God who enters into relationship with His people. A God who makes a solemn promise that He will never revoke. A God who can be trusted. All of this is in that little word 'Yahweh,' 'LORD.'

A King Who comes:

Isaiah commanded devastated Jerusalem to go out into the desert wastes and build a highway for her God. Who is this God? None other than the same Creator who revealed Himself in the desert to Moses. When the road was built, "the glory of the LORD" would be revealed to the entire world – the fulfillment of the ancient covenant with Abraham.

Now Isaiah says to Jerusalem:

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Isaiah 40:10a NIV

See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power...

It is this God, the LORD, and none other, that is coming once again to His people. Exile meant being estranged from the LORD. But the exile is over.

Once again, Jerusalem will welcome her God. David's Psalm would come true:

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Psalm 24:7-10 NIV

Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

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Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty – he is the King of glory.

Mighty to Save

Strong enough:

Ever have to dial 911? If so, then you know the feeling of chaos and panic surrounding the emergency that you are either witnessing or even experiencing! You call and make your report as best you can. Then you wait. Minutes seem like hours, until you hear a distant siren. Help is at hand.

Isaiah tells the destitute and powerless inhabitants of the ruins of Jerusalem that their 911 call made it through. Help is on the way:

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Isaiah 40:10 NIV

See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See his reward is with him and his recompense accompanies him.

The LORD is not only coming, but He is coming in power and might. He is coming to bring order to the chaos and confusion. He is coming to make things right. He is coming as the God of the ancient covenant to fulfill His promise to protect His people.

Conquering King:

Isaiah says that he comes with his “reward” and “recompense.” These are terms that can be translated ‘booty’ and ‘tribute.’ In other words, they are the spoils of war.

Israel had been stripped of all her wealth and glory by the conquering Babylonians. God’s own Temple had been plundered, and the gold and silver vessels carted off for the worship of Babylon’s gods.

But now, the LORD is coming back to His capital city. And He is bringing with Him the spoils of war. Jerusalem’s warfare is ended. Her God, the LORD, is a conquering King.

Mighty to save:

Like Jerusalem, we are called to build a highway for God in the desert. He entered into a covenant – the NEW Covenant – with us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. And in Jesus, He came – and comes – to us.

In fact, the first Christians referred to Jesus as ‘Lord.’ At one level they were saying that Jesus was their rightful Ruler, instead of Lord Caesar or any other being. But at a deeper level, they were saying that Jesus is LORD. You see, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the name of God – Yahweh – is always translated as *kurios, Lord*.

We build the road in the desert places of our lives and our world.

Jesus *is* the LORD coming with power, ruling with a mighty arm, and mighty to save.

A New Kind of King!

Like a shepherd:

So what does this mighty King look like, coming in power and ruling with a mighty arm?

A shepherd:

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Isaiah 40:11 NIV

He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Here is a King who *comforts* His people. Remember how the chapter began?

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Isaiah 40:1 NIV

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Well now we know what that comfort will be like.

- The LORD – Yahweh – for whom we build the highway in the desert, comes not as a destroying general or marauding army, but as a shepherd caring for His flock.
- The LORD – Yahweh – who will reveal His glory and splendor to the entire earth, gathers lambs in his arms.
- The LORD – Yahweh – whose breath withers the peoples of the earth like a scorching wind withers the flowers of the field, gently leads the ewes and their nursing lambs.

A new kind of King!

This is the vision of Yahweh that caused David to write the Shepherd Psalm. Even the darkest night in the desert was no match for this Shepherd:

[Slide 12]

Psalm 23:4 NIV

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Yahweh is the Shepherd King who comforts His people. He is the King who came in the person of Jesus, His Son, to say:

[Slide 13]

John 10:11, 14-15 NIV

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

"I am the good shepherd: I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep."

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To build a road in the desert for the LORD means first of all being willing to go out into that desert. But the LORD has promised that when you do so, He will already be there waiting for you. He is the Good Shepherd. He is *your* Shepherd. He is a *new kind of King*.

LIFE Group Lesson for "A New Kind of King"

Ice Breaker

- Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to call for help? What did it feel like when the help arrived?

God has a name (and it isn't "god")

- Isaiah promises that God is on the way. He tells Jerusalem to go out and proclaim: "Here is your God."
- The very next thing he does is *name* Israel's God:
 - *Isaiah 40:10 NIV*
 - *See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power...*
- In other words, Israel's *God* has a personal name: LORD.
- This word is an attempt to represent the Hebrew word that designates God's personal name:
 - In the Hebrew Bible, God's personal name is spelled: YHWH.
 - It is called the "tetragrammaton" because it is made up of 4 letters.
 - In ancient Hebrew, only the consonants were written down. The vowels were vocalized when the text was read aloud.
 - We spell God's name as Yahweh.
- YHWH derives from the Hebrew verb "HYH" which means "to be."
 - This is why Yahweh refers to Himself as "I AM" when speaking to Moses.

YHWH:

- So why not use the word "Yahweh" in our English translations of the Bible?
 - The Jewish people considered God's personal name so sacred that it could not be spoken.
 - Instead, they substituted the word "Adonai," which means "Lord" every time they came to YHWH or Yahweh in the Bible.
 - When the OT was translated into Greek, some 200 years before Christ, the translators used the Greek word "kurios" ("Lord") for Yahweh.
 - Our English translations tend to therefore do much the same thing, writing "Yahweh" as LORD. The use of capital letters is

meant to indicate that this is a representation of the Holy Name of God and not just the ordinary word "lord."

Jesus Christ is Lord:

- The first Christians came to understand that in Jesus the Messiah Yahweh Himself had finally come to His people.
 - Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 40.
 - He was literally the LORD coming on the desert highway.
- This helps us understand their earliest confessions of faith:
 - *Romans 10:9 NIV*
 - *If you declare with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
 - *Romans 10:13 NIV*
 - *For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (quoting from Joel 2:32)*
- Jesus' own life, death and resurrection was nothing less than the revealing of Yahweh's glory – just as Isaiah had promised.
- Paul writes:
 - *Philippians 2:9-11 NIV*
 - *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
- What Paul is saying is that Jesus, who was "in very nature God" (Phil. 2:6), revealed God's glory in His humility, his death on the cross, and in His resurrection.
 - The "name" that the Father gave to Him when He exalted Him is "Lord."
 - And as we have seen, this means that Jesus *is* Yahweh, here with us.

The Shepherd King:

- So now let's connect at least a few of the dots concerning Jesus as God's long-promised Shepherd King.
 - David said, "The LORD is my Shepherd."
 - Isaiah promised that Yahweh would come as a loving and comforting Shepherd.

- So when Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd, He is telling us that He is the Shepherd that David and Isaiah were talking about.
- And when He said that the Shepherd would lay down His life for the sheep, He was showing just how deep that love truly is!
 - This is the truest revelation of God.
 - This is the truest revelation of God's splendor and glory.
 - This is what it means for Yahweh, the LORD, to actually be our Shepherd King.

Prayer time:

- Pray for each other in those areas of our lives where we need to see the Shepherd King!