

The Story of Hope #11

A Heart Rescue

2 Samuel 7:1-16

Story of Hope Section 19-20

Nate Ingvaldstad

11.19.17

Forty years have passed since God delivered the Israelites out of the clutches of Pharaoh. The exodus generation, those who had seen the many signs and wonders of the Lord, now had died off. Even their great leader, Moses, had given over to the curse of death. A man named, Joshua was appointed by God to lead the Israelites into the land of promise. Joshua was a commander, and God commissioned him to sweep across the new land and drive out the wicked tribes who lived there. The Israelites were to completely remove their presence from the land.

For a time, that is exactly what happened. Battle after battle, God went before them and their enemies were decimated. However; when we reach the book of Judges, Joshua had died and the Israelites began to forget God. They disobeyed God's command, and didn't fully remove the evil nations from their land. This dark influence began to fester and infect the Israelites. Soon, they had traded the God who gives, for false gods who take.

The cycle of the Judges had begun. Israel would sin against God by worshiping the destructive gods of their neighbors. The Lord God would allow them to be harassed and conquered by other nations. In response, the Israelites would cry out to God and repent. Then hearing their cries, God would physically rescue them by sending a leader, a Judge. Then, for a time the Israelites would live in peace until they started the cycle all over again. They would once again reject God and worship other gods.

Needing strong leadership, God gave his people kings to rule. Although they had a permanent human leader, the Israelites propensity to turn away from God remained. The cycle of sin in the book of Judges carried over to the time of the Kings. When Israel's leaders remembered God, there was peace and prosperity in the land. Then, inevitably they would forget God and turn to the false gods of the surrounding nations. They would then be overrun by other kingdoms. Their sufferings would then cause them to remember once again to whom they belonged. In the midst of their trials they would cry out to God, and no matter their heart condition, God always heard their cries and rescued them.

During this time, Israel had many kings. Most were terrible, but there were a few who believed and obeyed the Lord. Possibly the greatest and most well know king was a man named, David. Unlike many of the other kings that ruled over Israel, David truly trusted God. As Israel's King, David united all the tribes of Israel under one kingdom and established the capital in the city of Jerusalem. He did this through many mighty battles and campaigns. When his kingdom was at rest from the nations around them, David sent for a prophet named Nathan and revealed to him an idea he had been pondering.

David realized that he now had a permanent home. The nation of Israel was no longer marching to and fro in constant battle against their enemies, and David wanted the same for God. He wanted to replace the portable Tabernacle and construct, for God, a permanent home.

God heard David and answered. Instead of David building God a house, God was going to make a house, or a lineage for David. Out of David's house would come a great line of kings. Even more specific, out of his kingly line there would come one king. A Rescuer King, whose reign would not be like David's. It would be a forever reign. God's Rescuer would come from the line of David, and he would be the perfect King.

Throughout the time of the kings, God raised up messengers, or spokesmen called prophets. Their message was usually one of warning. Warning that due to Israel's moral failure, judgement was going to come down upon their heads. For the most part, the prophets were ignored, persecuted and even killed. Yet, the prophets often brought messages of hope wrapped in judgement. Many times at the end of their bleak pronouncements they would offer glimpses of a better future for those who repented.

As time moved forward, the prophets became increasingly specific about the coming of the Rescuer. His identity became more vivid and lifelike through their words and in their poetry. Although the judges and kings of Israel physically rescued the people of from their temporal punishment, they were never fully rescued because their original problem of sin and separation remained. No matter how many times they were rescued, their corrupted heart always led them to the same place. Mankind needed God's rescuer.

Then, something strange happened. The Israelites cried out in desperation, but there was no physical rescue from their troubles. The prophets stopped speaking and for four hundred years God was silent. The anticipation grew. Had God forgotten His people? When would The Rescuer come? The cosmic scene must have been similar to what it was in the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth. The angels waited, and watched as God's spirit once again hovered over a dark and chaotic world, waiting in anticipation for the perfect moment to send the Rescuer.

The Rescuer Would Be Both a King, and a Suffering Servant. The Rescuer would be a paradox, both king and suffering servant. Through the promises to king David we learned that the Rescuer would be a king, yet through the prophecies of Isaiah we understand that he would be despised and killed. The Rescuer would suffer and die. Yet; through his death, He would give life. No matter how often the Israelites were physically rescued from the consequences of their sin, they always ended up back in the same situation. Their rebellious hearts always let them to a place of separation from God. Simply being physically rescued by a human king or judge was not enough. There had to be a spiritual, heart rescue as well. The Rescuer would be God, and through His sufferings He would deal with the original problem of their separation from Him.

All Roads Do Not Lead To God. Many people believe that all beliefs or all religions ultimately lead to God. This is not what we see through the history of the Israelites. Countless times the people of Israel worshiped false gods, and the Lord God does not view this as a small offense. The false gods did not lead them back to the true God, or even to truth. Instead, they are led down paths of judgement and into destruction. There are many false gods, but only one true God.