

The King and His Kingdom

Long, long before the world began, there was a king, the King of glory. This King was far, far above and beyond anyone or anything you or I could imagine. In the endlessness of eternity He was the only King, and His kingdom the only kingdom, a realm of perfect wisdom, love, joy, and peace. The kingdom had no need of sun or stars, for the King Himself was its light.

While the kingdom was limitless in its size, it was limited in its subjects. Some say the King had no subjects at all. Or did He?

One of the early mysteries of this King was that even when He alone existed, He was never alone. Still, He wanted to share His life with other intelligent beings.

So this good and wise King made a heavenly province with millions of dazzling, super-intelligent spirit beings called angels. He knew them all by name and He wanted them to know Him too. Life with the King was non-stop adventure.

But the King wanted more than angels. So He created a realm of time, space, and matter—a mind-boggling universe with a sparkling planet that would become home to a community of amazing creatures called humans.

Different from the angels, the human family began with just two beings, a man and a woman. As with the angels, the King wanted to share His life with them too.

Then something happened, something terrible. Rebellion arose in the kingdom, first in heaven, then on earth. A rebel angel seized the kingdom of earth by capturing its humans. But the King was not taken by surprise.

Deep in the heart of the King was a rescue plan so great, so mysterious, so extravagant, so far-reaching, that He would take thousands and thousands of years to fulfill it. What else would you expect from the King of eternity? He lives above time.

The King and His Prophets

To know the King and His plan, you must know His book. Over more than 15 centuries the King chose about 40 people to record His story and message. They were called prophets. The King gave them His words, which they wrote on scrolls to be copied, circulated, and kept for future generations. Though most of the prophets never knew each other, their writings tell one consistent story and message.

The writings of the prophets are called the Holy Scriptures. Without the Scriptures we could only guess where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. To know the correct answers we need the King's book.

About 3,500 years ago, the King inspired a prophet by the name of Moses to write, "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Today the King's words are collected in one book, *the Holy Bible*. Holy means *pure* or *set apart from all others*. Bible means *book* or *collection of books*. The Bible is the world's best seller and most translated book. Thousands of papyrus and leather scrolls show it to be the best preserved of all ancient texts.

The Scriptures have two main parts. The first part is the Old Testament (Torah, Psalms, etc.) where the King foretells His plan. The second part is the New Testament (Gospels, Acts, etc.)

where the King fulfills His plan. Testament means *covenant, contract, or agreement*. The Old Testament foretells what God planned to do. The New Testament records the fulfillment of His plan. Only God can write history before it happens.

The difference between the Old and New Testaments is the difference between having a great king send you letters and photos—and having that king come visit you in person.

The Scriptures came first to the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Europe, then later to the Americas and beyond. The prophets came from the Middle East, but the story and message they wrote is for every nation. For every family. For every person. For you.

The King and His Universe

If we could travel back through time and space—back, back, way back—before there were people, planets, or stars, we would witness the power and glory behind the first words of Scripture: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

Today, many people think the world and its wonders came to exist apart from an all-wise Creator. But their theories do not adequately explain the complex design and predictable order of the universe. In His book, the King says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands” (Psalm 19:1).

Speaking of hands, look at your own. Wiggle your thumbs. Try to hold a book, broom, or hammer without them. Notice the fingernails, joints, and skin. Think of some important things you do with your hands. Who but a master craftsman could design such tools?

What kind of wisdom and power would be required to make a billion galaxies? Or to create a living cell with its millions of complex parts? Or knit together the cell’s microscopic coiled threads with the genetic codes that make you *you*?

Some three thousand years ago, a prophet and king named David wrote, “You knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:13-14). Would you like to meet the One who formed you? Would you like to live forever with the Maker and Master of the galaxies? You can. He has revealed Himself. He wants you to know Him. He wants your family and community to know Him too. He invites you to understand His plan, experience His love, behold His majesty, submit to His rule, and live for His glory. But He will not force you to be His subject.

After all, He is not just a king. He is *the King. The King of glory*. This is His story.