

3. December 2020

The Long Road to Bethlehem, Part 4
“Judges, kings and prophets”

It would be so easy if all people would submit to the loving rule of God, let themselves be filled by His Spirit and live a full and holy life in this intimate love relationship with God and with each other.

Is this a dream? Is it something that lives only in our desires and in our imagination, because we want to escape a reality that often looks so very different? An illusion?

No, it is not a dream!

This will be the reality that waits for us in eternity, if we accept God's action on us human beings and give Him the right answer. This reality intended by God begins - even if still limited - already on earth.

If we take the events of Bethlehem into our hearts and follow the newborn king of the Jews (*cf. Mt 2:2*), then the Kingdom of God will begin.

In Jesus we met a king who is so very different from the kings and rulers of this earth. It is a king who loves us, who serves us and waits for the answer of our love. For him, for this king and Messiah, the people of Israel should be prepared.

There were many kings in Israel and of most of them the Holy Scripture reports that they did what was displeasing to God (*cf. e.g. 1 Kgs 22:53*). Originally, God did not want to lead the people through kings, but to be their king himself and guide them through judges. But the people murmured. They wanted to be like the other nations (*cf. 1 Sam 8:19-20*), the ever recurring temptation of the people of Israel.

God warned them through the judge and prophet Samuel and made them realise what it would mean for them if they wanted to have a king (*cf. 1 Sam 8:9-18*). But the people insisted on their wish and God had Saul anointed as king (*cf. 1 Sam 10:1*).

Jesus later told us in simple words what the kings are all about and what his rule should look like.

Then Jesus said to them: *“Among the gentiles it is the kings who lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are given the title Benefactor. With you this must not happen. No; the greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves.”* (Lk 22:25-26)

A greater light of God shines in the true prophets. They fulfilled the will of God in all their weakness. In them God could speak to His people and give His requests and instructions.

Let us think of Moses, who led the people out of Egypt, of Isaiah and Jeremiah, of Elijah and Elisha up to John the Baptist. In these prophets the people could experience the presence of God and the coming of the Redeemer was foretold in them. They were also the ones who proclaimed the coming of the Messiah.