

## CHAPTER 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: "THE MASTER NARRATIVE"

*Seek First: How the Kingdom of God Changes Everything*, by Jeremy Treat

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1. The chapter opens with a quote from Lesslie Newbigin, "The way we understand human life depends on this question: What is the real story of which my life story is a part?"
  - Does it make sense to you that humans make sense of life by living according to a story?
  - Do you feel like you are very self-aware of the story by which you live?
2. On pp. 32-33, the author insists, "...it is possible to have Christian beliefs yet still live by another narrative.... We can identify as a Christian and go to church on Sundays. Yet in our day-to-day lives we may still be living by a secular narrative that is about building your own kingdoms."
  - Do you think he is right? Can you think of some examples that might illustrate his point?
3. On p. 34, the author states, "When Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God, he was not simply discussing a doctrine; it was evoking an entire story. It's the story of God making his broken creation into a beautiful kingdom.... The story of the kingdom of God is that master narrative for the people of God."
  - On a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being completely clueless to 10 being completely dialed in), where would you rate yourself in terms of understanding your life in light of the master narrative of the Kingdom of God?
4. On p. 39 the author said, "Sin is our attempt to dethrone God and enthrone ourselves. While humanity was made to live for God's kingdom and glorify his name, sin is our attempt to build our own kingdom and make a name for ourselves. Sin is *autonomy*, a word, which when broken into its component parts, means 'self-rule.' Sin is the attempt to dethrone God and replace him with the sovereign self, where individual desire reigns, personal choice is our authority, and freedom is defined by independence" (p. 39).
  - What do you find helpful about this analysis of humanity's rebellion against the King of creation?
5. The author made this declaration of Christ's saving reign: "The cross is Christ's throne from which he reigns with self-giving love. The essence of sin is our attempt to take God's place on the throne. The essence of salvation is God taking our place on the cross. When Jesus rose from the grave, it was a public declaration that nothing could stop God's reign from advancing on earth, not even death."
  - What do you make of this statement that "the cross is Christ's throne"? What thoughts or questions does it provoke in your mind?
6. At the end of the chapter, the author states, "The final chapter of the biblical story is not a disembodied heaven with harp-playing souls floating on clouds. The goal is heaven and earth coming together – a new creation. This is why the Bible ends with a picture of Jesus on the throne, proclaiming, 'Behold, I am making all things new' (Rev. 21:5). Eternity is Christ reigning over and through redeemed people from every tribe and people in language and nation in a world renewed by grace" (p. 44).
  - Have you tended to think that the end goal is for humans to leave this creation and go to heaven "floating on the clouds," or for embodied humans to inhabit a renewed creation where heaven and earth have become one?
  - How does this help bring the story at the beginning of Genesis to a fitting conclusion? How does this vision of the end of the story stir you or inspire you?