



The Christian life is a journey.

*TrailNotes* speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced, wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. **TrailNotes** is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

## ElderTalk: “No Kings? Know the King!”

MATT GODSIL

The title of “King” has been frequently mentioned in the news. I noticed that this coincided with my own personal Bible study, which began in the books of Samuel and has now brought me near the end of 2 Kings. It occurred to me that turning to Scripture for God’s perspective on kingship might be the best way to process current events—grounded in His truth. I’m not aiming to offer a political viewpoint, but rather a biblical one, to give you, the reader, an opportunity to reflect on God’s Word in light of our present time and place in the world.

In the upcoming *TrailNotes*, I’ll be doing a series that compares David, shepherd boy turned king, with other kings found throughout Samuel and Kings. I chose David as the central human figure because messianic prophecies during Jesus’ time often pointed back to him. So to begin, I present two questions:

- Why is it that David’s throne, above all others, is the one Scripture designates as the messianic throne—particularly during the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry?
- In what way is the messianic throne prophetically linked to the covenant God made with David through the prophet Nathan?

In order to invite God’s Word to answer this, I am planning a series of articles forthcoming in *TrailNotes* as follows:

- July ‘25 - God’s Design for a King
- October ‘25 - David & Saul
- January ‘26 - David & Solomon
- April ‘26 - David & the Kings of Judah & Israel
- July ‘26 - David & Jesus



*Pictured above is the Godsil’s 11-year-old grandson, Brendan Hartman, playing in a recent lacrosse tournament in Williamsburg, VA. It reminded Matt of a young David on the battlefield.*

Let us go directly to the passage where the Lord actually tells Moses that the people will demand a king to be set over them, Deuteronomy 17:14-20. To summarize, God in His infinite grace, mercy, and wisdom, gives guidelines for this demand, because a King is actually in His plans for His people. In summary of this passage, the guidelines include God’s choosing of one among the people of Israel, not one interested in horses, who will be separated from Egypt (aka the kingdom of this world), will have one wife, and will not pursue riches. He will fulfill the law, and dwell in the law for his whole life. His heart will not be above his brothers;

*(Continued on page 2)*

**“No Kings? Know the King!”** (Continued from p.1)  
he will be faithful to the law, and his kingdom will continue through his children in Israel.

About 350 years after Moses, the people of Israel are established in the promised land under duress. They are lamenting the broken relationship between the Lord and themselves. Then in 1 Samuel 7:3, the Lord speaks through the prophet Samuel and gives them a way forward:

“And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, ‘If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve Him only, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.’ So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.” (v.4)  
The Lord helps them, restores them, protects them, and thus the relationship is healed.

But it doesn’t take long for things to go awry. In the very next chapter, the people demand a king. Samuel then warns against a king. And... God grants Israel’s request. God identifies Saul to Samuel as the one to be chosen as king. However, later during his reign, Saul is disobedient, and God anoints another as a future king.

God leads the Prophet Samuel to His unexpected choice, a shepherd boy named David. God’s design for kingship is not what we would naturally choose. We read in 1 Samuel 16:7 (ESV):

“But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

What follows is a difficult journey for David. In his ascendancy to power, God, through Nathan the prophet, declares His design for David’s throne, but also the bigger story, of how He will send the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, to rescue and redeem the world. It is the framework of the invasion of the Kingdom of Heaven into the kingdom of this world. In 2 Samuel 7:8-16 (ESV) we read, “Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people

Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people, Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

What we see here is a double prophecy. It pertains to the moment of David’s reign, but also with a pointing to a descendent of David. As is often the case with the Lord, He has a plan that He presents in the beginning. He is also at work in the particular moment in which we find ourselves. We also will discover that what God has done, and is doing, coincides with the big picture of His redemptive plan for His creation. We see God doing this in the anointing of David as king, but God’s plan more importantly points to the coming of the Messiah, the “King” of kings, Jesus Christ.

In my next article, we will be looking at David and Saul to see the similarities and differences in their character, their choices, and their reign as kings. While both men are flawed, there are key differences that establish one reign of kingship above the other.

In this series, I pray that we might receive insight into what God wills for His Kingdom, and His love for all people, in our recognizing the true King today.

## GFC remembers...

### Dale Duane Black

(1927-2025)

Dale Duane Black, age 98, of Butler, Ohio, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at the Kingston of Ashland. A beloved husband, father, grandfather, and proud American, he lived a life marked by faith, service, hard work and joyful song.



The son of Harley and Nina (Fike) Black, Dale was born January 24, 1927, at home. Dale grew up with a strong sense of community and responsibility. After graduation from Butler High School in 1944, he answered the call to serve in the Korean War from 1950-1952. Dale was honorably discharged in 1952. Dale anticipated “mail days” with the hopes of receiving letters written by the love of his life, Sue Ann. He married her in 1956.

Dale attended Grace Fellowship Church where he was a devoted member, as was evident in his words and actions. He loved to lift his voice in special music. GFC members will long remember Dale’s annual birthday solos.

Dale’s funeral service was held near Bellville on May 11, followed by military honors in the Bunkerhill Cemetery in Butler. He is survived by three children, seven grandchildren, and one great grandson.

### Nancy Haas Byrom

(1943-2025)

Born in 1943, Nancy grew up in Ohio and graduated from Parma High School. She went on to attend The Ohio State University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and a Bachelor of Education degree with a focus in German studies. She began her teaching career at Worthington High School for two years. Her husband, Richard Byrom, Jr., was an Air Force officer and dentist. Eventually, she returned to teaching and gave over 20 years to the



Galion Public Schools.

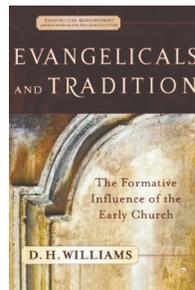
Nancy impacted people in many ways beyond her teaching. She served as a Cub Scout den leader, PTA member, Garden Club member, and also helped plant the Galion Alliance Church. She hosted many children for amazing Vacation Bible School weeks at her home, assisted with youth, and mentored many young women. She was a true prayer warrior, faithfully praying for her family, friends, and missionaries around the world. She loved to laugh.

Nancy’s earthly life of service was completed on May 15, 2025. She is survived by her husband of nearly 60 years, her four sons, including GFC’s Presiding Elder and Pastor, Eric, and their families.

A Celebration of Life service was held for Nancy at Grace Fellowship Church on June 17. Nancy loved supporting Alliance Missions and would be blessed by a gift to this ministry.

## Worth a read!

JOHN KURTZ



Tradition is a word that almost frightens many Protestant Christians today. There is a book, *Evangelicals and Tradition*, written by Dr. D. H. Williams and published in 2005 by Baker Academic, which should do a great deal to bely those concerns.

Although somewhat truly “academic” in parts, there is much between its covers which is easily comprehended by the average reader. This book traces the development and role of tradition in the first 4 to 5 centuries of the church, what kind of authority should be ascribed to tradition, and tradition’s interaction with the Protestant hallmarks of “Scripture alone” and “by faith alone.” It gives some insight into the early church fathers and how they helped formulate the fundamentals of our Christian faith by establishing creed and tradition, which have firm foundations in the Scriptures. As the subtitle of the book, *The Formative Influence of the Early Church*, implies, those early church fathers did develop a valid tradition which needs to remain a part of the Christian church even in today’s “post-modern” world.

Not always an easy read, but a solid one!

## Prayers lifed up “at home.”

Glimpses of the GFC Women’s Prayer Walk back on April 26.



## Prayers fulfilled in Japan.

The new church in Funehiki has been finished—worship inside. Shinji Okubo is the pastor.



## July 2025

	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

- 4 **Happy Birthday** to our nation, Land of the Free and Home of the Brave!
- 6 Mitch Schwartz preaching on 2 Peter 2:4-10a.
- 6-12 Kids DTS camp week.
- 13 Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on 2 Peter 2:10b-16.   
Teen DTS planning meeting, 12:45 in church lobby.
- 20 Elder Matt Godsil preaching on 2 Peter 2:17-22.
- 21-25 Clear Fork band renting our facility all week for camp.
- 27 Robert Key preaching on 2 Peter 3: 1-7. 
- 27-Aug. 2 Teen DTS camp week.

## Grace Fellowship Church

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- Eric Byrom Presiding Elder/Pastor
- Jadaé Fox Elder
- Matt Godsil Elder
- Cameron Karger Treasurer
- Kay Berry } Church Office
- Jedaé Fox }
- Judy Nichols Prayer Chain
- John and Donna Kurtz TrailNotes

(A complete list of church functionaries will return next month.)