

A Survey of the Bible

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” Psalm 119:105

Lesson 4

The Kingdom of Israel - Saul to Solomon

1 Samuel 8-30; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-11; 1 Chronicles; 2 Chronicles 1-9

Samuel was the last ‘judge’ of Israel. The judges delivered Israel from foreign oppression and ruled Israel. Samuel, the last judge, anointed the first two kings of Israel.

During the ‘judgeship’ of Samuel the Israelites became restless. They looked at the nations around them and realized they were different. Later in Samuel’s life the Israelites observed how Samuel’s sons did not walk in his ways and told Samuel, “Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (1 Samuel 8:5). Samuel prayed to God.

God informed Samuel to do as the people requested but to first warn them of the consequences. God said Israel was not rejecting Samuel but him, God, as their ruler (1 Samuel 8:7). God had been ruling through the judges he appointed. The Israelites were rejecting his divine reign.

Saul - Israel’s First King

The first king of Israel was **Saul**, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. Saul was selected by God to be the king of Israel. Saul was unaware of the selection until Samuel, by God’s direction, took him and anointed him king. This was a private anointing (1 Samuel 10:1). God gave him another heart, spirit, and Saul prophesied with the prophets (1 Samuel 10). Several days later Samuel called Israel to Mizpah and anointed Saul as king in the presence of the people. Samuel once again warned the Israelites of the nature of kings, wrote it in a book, and set it before the Lord.

Saul’s reign was marked with military success but spiritual weakness. God had given him a new heart, spirit, but God did not take away Saul’s free will. Even though he had once prophesied, he disobeyed God.

Just a couple of years into his reign, as he was preparing to go into battle against the Philistines, Saul

waited for Samuel to arrive at Gilgal to offer the sacrifice. When Samuel did not arrive in the time expected, Saul offered the sacrifice. Immediately upon presenting the sacrifice Samuel came and Saul went out to meet him. Samuel reproved Saul for not keeping the commandment of the Lord - only men from the tribe of Levi could serve at the altar (1 Samuel 13:13). Saul disobeyed God and God began looking for another to become king.

In his fight against Amalek Saul disobeyed God again. God told Saul to completely destroy Amalek because of what they had done to Israel earlier (see Ex. 17:8-16). God had promised to avenge his people and commissioned Saul to that task. Saul did not completely destroy Amalek. He brought the king and some of the animals back with him. He claimed to bring the animals for an offering to God. His desire to sacrifice might be described as good, but God expected obedience. Samuel reproved Saul.

Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king. 1 Samuel 15:22,23

Saul’s days as king were numbered. He had proven himself unworthy of the task. God sought a man who was worthy.

David, Israel’s Second King

The Lord sent Samuel to the “house” (family) of Jesse to choose the next king. Jesse

had several sons and Samuel was impressed with first one and then the other. God did not choose as Samuel would have chosen. God chose the youngest of Jesse’s sons, **David**. David was a man after God’s own heart, that is, David was one who obeyed the

1051 B.C.	931 B.C.	
Saul	David	Solomon
Each King reigned 40 years		

Lord (see Acts 13:22; 1 Sam. 13:14). David was anointed king by Samuel as a youth but did not serve as king for several years. In fact, David served Saul even though he knew that he was to be the next king of Israel. He played the harp to calm Saul's spirit

(1 Sam. 16), defeated the giant who stood against the armies of Israel (Goliath - 1 Sam. 17), and became a mighty soldier in the army of Saul (1 Kings 18). All these good deeds were despised by Saul. Saul saw a threat to his position and the hope for his son to succeed him on the throne. Because of this envy David had to flee for his life. He was pursued by Saul throughout the region of Judea. David's righteousness was again seen when he spared Saul's life. On two separate occasions he could have easily killed Saul but did not (1 Sam. 24,26). When David spared his life the second time Saul repented of trying to kill David. Saul, and all his sons but Ishbosheth, were slain in the battle against the Philistines.

After Saul's death, David became king of Judah while Ishbosheth was king over the rest of Israel. After two years Ishbosheth was killed by two of David's soldiers, without his knowledge or consent. Israel was united under one king again. David reigned seven years from Hebron followed by thirty-three years from the city of Jerusalem. During David's reign Israel conquered their enemies and expanded the kingdom. Nations were subject to Israel and David and Solomon reigned over the land from the Euphrates River to the Border of Egypt (1 Kgs 4:21).

David was a man after God's own heart, but he was also a man who experienced much pain due to

In the selection of a new king Samuel learned a valuable lesson, God "does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). This is still true today. When God looks at your heart, what does He see?

his sin and the sin in his house. David was tempted when he saw a beautiful woman, **Bathsheba**, bathing. He committed adultery with Bathsheba. Because she became pregnant with his child, David tried to hide his sin by recalling her husband from the battlefield so he could spend time with his wife. Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, came as instructed but would not go to his wife. He was committed to David and would not go to the comfort of his home while his fellow servants were fighting. David sent him back with instructions to the captain of the guard. He wanted Uriah in the hottest battle so Uriah would be killed. So, Uriah was killed in service to his king to 'cover' the sin of his king! But the consequences of David's sin were not yet complete. David and Bathsheba married after her days of mourning for

Uriah, but their child died after it was born. Although David had 'covered' his sin in the sight of man he was guilty in the sight of God. The fifty-first Psalm shows David's repentance and sorrow for his sin.

David's family had additional troubles. His daughter Tamar was raped by her half-brother Amnon. Then her brother Absalom murdered Amnon. Then, after a few years Absalom rebelled against David and took his kingdom for a short period of time. Absalom's rebellion led to his death.

David was well acquainted with troubles in life, but he constantly returned to God when he sinned and found comfort in his service to God. Many of the Psalms were written by David and show his trust in God in times of trouble as well as times of joy. David was blessed in seeing his son **Solomon** succeed him as king.

Solomon: Israel's Third King

Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba. He was loved by his mother and father and by God who named him Jedidiah (2 Sam. 12:24,25). Solomon was unique.

God's Plan for Redemption

God's plan for man's salvation continued through Israel's history. In fact, Israel was God's instrument for the preparation for Jesus.

Abraham was called from Ur and then Haran. He was promised that his descendants would become a mighty nation - the nation of Israel fulfilled that promise. He was promised the land on which he journeyed - Joshua gave that land (see Josh. 23:14; 2 Kgs 4:21). He was also promised that the world would be blessed through his 'seed' - Jesus fulfilled that promise (Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:16).

Moses led Israel from Egyptian bondage and gave them God's law. He was a type of the Prophet to come (Deut. 18:18,19). Jesus was that prophet of promise (Acts 3:18-26, esp. 22).

David reigned as a great king in Israel. God promised that one of his descendants would receive an eternal kingdom (2 Sam. 7:12-14). Jesus received that position and now sits on his throne at the right hand of God (Acts 2:29-36).

God prepared for our salvation before he created Adam and Eve. The Old Testament is the unfolding of that plan. Give God the glory due him as Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer through your obedience to his will. Read and apply Acts 2:22-47.

After David died Solomon had a vision from God. God asked Solomon which blessing he would desire. Solomon asked for wisdom. He knew his youth and inexperience and sought assistance from God (1 Kgs 3:7-9). God was pleased with Solomon and gave him the wisdom he sought and more. Solomon became the wisest man on earth, but also one of the most prosperous. Solomon's wisdom did him well - at least for a season.

Like all men, Solomon was not perfect [Jesus was the only person to walk the earth without sin]. He loved many foreign women. Because of his love for his wives, he built places of worship for their gods. His love for women turned his heart from God, at least for part of his life (1 Kgs 11:1-13).

Solomon left much of his wisdom for all who followed. The Song of Solomon is a book which describes his love for his wife and her love for him. Most of the book of Proverbs is a collection of his instruction to his son(s). It is interesting to note how much attention he gave to instructing his sons of the wanton woman, urging his sons to avoid women who would bring them to the grave. He wrote a few Psalms and the book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes describes the things Solomon sought after. Concerning worldly pursuits Solomon said, "All is vanity." Wealth, wisdom, and power are all empty. One day, he says, all go the same way - to the grave. This sounds pessimistic, but is actually quite instructive. Solomon reminds us to look beyond this life. After experiencing all things under heaven his conclusion was - "*Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man*" (Eccl. 12:13). Although we are not certain, it appears that Solomon used the wisdom God gave him and at the end of life made his heart right with God. The positive light in which Solomon is cast in the New Testament supports this thought.

The period from Saul to Solomon was a time of change for Israel. Israel demanded a king to be like the other nations and were given one. These kings did

United Kingdom

The period from Saul to Solomon is called the United Kingdom because Israel was united under three successive kings, except one short period following Saul's death.

This period begins with the anointing of Saul and ends with the death of Solomon. David is a major figure of this period, both as a great king and as a figure of the Christ to come.

not bless them as they hoped. They were held in service to the king and paid heavy taxes. From Saul to Solomon the government and luxury of the king expanded and grew. Although there were only 120 years from the beginning of Saul's reign to Solomon's death, the nation of Israel was vastly different at the end of the period than it was in the beginning. The nation had grown and prospered but individual citizens were burdened. God had warned, Israel refused to listen, and Israel reaped the consequences of their action. Sound familiar?

Literary Divisions

The Old Testament is divided into five different literary divisions. These are: Law, History, Poetry, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets.

The Law includes Genesis through Deuteronomy and was written by Moses. These books are called the Torah by Jews. Moses received the information in Genesis by revelation, being moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). Exodus through Deuteronomy record events which cover the span of Moses' life with a few events before and after his life. Moses had firsthand knowledge of these events but his writing was also overseen by the Holy Spirit (inspiration). The events covering Moses' death at the end of Deuteronomy were likely written by Joshua.

The books of "history" were written by inspired men too. They record many of the events of Israel's history. These records are written for our benefit (1 Cor. 10:1-13).

The books of "poetry" are also referred to as Wisdom Literature. Job probably lived about the time of Abraham, as evidence within the book indicates. The other four books - Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon - were written by David and Solomon, with a few other writers included in Psalms and Proverbs. The book of Psalms is a compilation of different psalms collected in one 'book'. Proverbs includes wise writings from Solomon. It begins with Solomon's instruction to his sons on 'how to succeed' in life - excellent information for all young people. Ecclesiastes is Solomon's reflection on life. He tried nearly everything and concluded that serving God is the prime responsibility of man. The Song of Solomon tells of Solomon's love for his wife and her love for him. Each of these books assist those desiring to be faithful to God, through example as well as instruction.

The 'major prophets' and 'minor prophets' are collections of the writing prophets of the Old Testament. They are divided into 'major' and 'minor' due to their length. They address the sins of the people of their day, the consequences of those sins, God's plan for his people, and several promises of the coming Messiah which were fulfilled by Jesus.

In every part of the Old Testament God continued to set before his people the hope of salvation through Jesus. God's promises were given and have since been fulfilled!

