

## **Old Testament Foundation 4**

### **History Part 2 - Israel's Kings**

#### **1 Samuel**

The books of 1 & 2 Samuel (along with 1 Chronicles) continue the books of history and record the transition from the period of the judges to the time of the kings. Samuel served as the last of the judges and first of the national prophets since conquering the land. It became his role to anoint Israel's first two kings.

Samuel contains many favorite Bible stories: the birth of Samuel, the victory of the Philistines over Israel and the trouble they encounter when they capture the ark, the friendship of Jonathan and David, and probably the most recognized story – David and Goliath. But when looking at these familiar stories, we saw how they can be misused when removed from their original context, and often the point of the story in its larger context as part of God's plan is missed.

#### **Samuel – Israel's Last Judge**

1. The book of 1 Samuel opens with the story of a woman named Hannah who is childless. In that culture, a woman's identity and future welfare was tied to her ability to produce sons. After years of enduring shame and ridicule, where did Hannah turn for help? (1 Samuel 1:10)
2. What did she vow to do if she received her request? (1 Samuel 1:11)
3. After receiving the son she had so desperately wanted, she brought him to the Tabernacle currently located at Shiloh and offered a prayer of thanksgiving. Using 1 Samuel 2:1-10:
  - What did she say to the LORD?
  - What did she say about the LORD?
4. After an introduction to the circumstances around the birth of Samuel and meeting his praying mother, we learn young Samuel was to live at the Tabernacle with the High Priest (Eli) and his family. What was it like in the home of Israel's spiritual leader? (1 Samuel 2:22-25)

In the midst of Israel's disobedience, we are shown that God's plan for redemption was still moving forward as He raised up His new leader from the time of his birth. As a young child, Samuel slept in the Tabernacle and it was there he first met the Lord personally. The first time he heard the Lord's voice, he assumed it was Eli so went to him and asked what he wanted. By the third time Samuel came to him when he hadn't called, Eli finally realized it was the Lord calling to Samuel. Eli told him, next time He calls say, "*Speak Lord for your servant is listening.*" (Chapter 3). The text now contrasts Samuel's life of obedience with that of Eli's disobedient sons.

5. What was the relationship like between Samuel and the Lord and what did the people of Israel think about Samuel? (1 Samuel 3:19-21)
  
6. When the time came for the Lord's judgment to be carried out upon the house of Eli, the Philistines became the tool. 1 Samuel 4:2 says, "The Philistines deployed their forces to meet Israel, and as the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield." How did Israel deal with this defeat? (1 Samuel 4:3-9)
  
7. What a sad day it was for Israel. They assumed they would be protected if they took some sort of symbol into battle with them. Surely if the ark was with them, the Lord was also. Eli waited anxiously at the city gate for news of the battle. What was the outcome? (1 Samuel 4:14-22)

"At this point Samuel, recognized as a prophet, also became a judge. The capture of the Ark and its history in Philistine territory (chapters 4-6) show that God does not need Israel to vindicate Himself as the true God. Rather, they need Him. With Eli and his sons dead, deliverance from the Philistines may begin. Samuel in his role as judge achieves one of those mighty deliverances in which Yahweh Himself fights for Israel (chapter 7)."<sup>1</sup>

8. As Samuel grew older, what was the concern of Israel's elders and what request did they make to Samuel? (1 Samuel 8:1-5)
9. Not pleased with their request, what did Samuel do? Comment. (1 Samuel 8:6)
10. What did the Lord say the real problem was? (1 Samuel 8:7)
11. The Lord told Samuel to go ahead and give the people what they wanted but first to warn them of the consequences. What would some of those consequences be? (1 Samuel 8:10-18)
12. But the people insisted. What reason did they give? (1 Samuel 8:19, 20)

### **Saul – Israel's First King**

13. The people wanted visible security. Their failure to trust Yahweh for their safety would mean higher taxes to support the defense structure, a central bureaucracy, and a draft of their young men to serve in the army. What a price to pay for lack of faith! But, even though the people had asked out of evil intent, the Lord still would work with them and His plan still would go forward. How did this first coronation go? (1 Samuel 10:19-27)
14. Saul was a successful king in that he defeated Israel's enemies, he worshipped Yahweh and not idols, and he got rid of all the mediums and spiritists in the land. But he failed to obey the Lord's instruction to wait for Samuel before offering sacrifices. He failed a second time when he did not carry out the Lord's instructions against the Amalekites. What happened as a result of his disobedience? (1 Samuel 13:8-14)

“Both these failures show that Saul has a mistaken notion of kingship – one that Yahweh will not bear. The notion: that like other ancient kings, Israel’s king would be an absolute monarch – that his rule would be law. No, Israel already has a law given by God, not developed by the king. Also, Yahweh speaks through prophets. That word is higher than the king. Moses specifically warned about the king’s considering himself above the Law (Deut. 17:18-20). Rather, like Joshua, the king was to be a student of the Law that he might obey it. Torah is higher than king. Prophet is higher than king. Both are Yahweh’s instruction.”<sup>2</sup>

15. Samuel's final assignment took place while Saul was still king. What did the Lord say to His servant Samuel in 1 Samuel 16:1-13?

Once Saul was no longer God's chosen king, the Spirit of the Lord was removed from him (1 Samuel 16:14). During the Old Testament period, the Holy Spirit was given to each of God's servants to empower them to carry out the task He had called them to do. Chapters 16-31 continue the story of David and Saul. It shows that David trusted the Lord completely. The most familiar story of David is with Goliath, but this story has a far greater significance than just boy meets giant and wins. It was God showing Israel that David was His divinely appointed deliverer for Israel. The Lord revealed His choice of leaders through a unique victory where afterwards each was recognized as having the hand of the Lord upon them. This was God's announcement to Israel, even though it was not recognized at the time. The story continues as David, the Lord's anointed king without a kingdom, was willing to wait for the Lord's timing to make him the recognized king. That time was not lost, however, as the Lord continued to shape him into "*the man after God's own heart.*" 1 Samuel 13:14

## 2 Samuel

## David – Israel's Model King

16. How did David finally become the recognized king of Israel? (2 Samuel 5:1-5)
17. Once David was the recognized king, he needed a capital city. From 2 Samuel 5:6-10, please describe how that came about.

18. Once David was settled in his palace, what was his concern? (2 Samuel 7:1, 2)
19. What message did the Lord send to David about his concern? (2 Samuel 7:5-7)

### **Davidic Covenant**

20. Following the above message delivered to David by the prophet Nathan, the Lord made a covenant with David. Summarize the promises in that covenant. (2 Samuel 7:8-16)
21. David's prayer following Nathan's message from the Lord is recorded in 2 Samuel 7:18-29. This prayer shows David's heart, which the Lord had already seen. He recognized the Lord as the one true God and that His promises would endure forever. This set a pattern for how and where David spoke with the Lord for the rest of his life. From 2 Samuel 7:18a, where did David go to speak with the Lord and what position did he take? (See also 2 Samuel 6:17)
22. What type of covenant was the Davidic covenant? (2 Samuel 23:5)

The rest of the book of 2 Samuel follows the ups and downs of the life of David. Though the covenant was based upon an unconditional promise of the Lord, sin would bring punishment and consequences. David's life was not a perfect life. He sinned repeatedly, but when confronted by the Lord through His prophets, David repented of his sin and came back to a right relationship with the Lord. Upon his death, his son Solomon fulfilled that special Father-son relationship between Yahweh and the king as God said in 2 Samuel 7:14, *"I will be his father, and he will be my son."*

**Kings****Solomon, King of Israel**

23. When David died, Solomon, one of his youngest sons, was proclaimed his successor. This did not please David's older sons who were in line before Solomon for the throne. But Solomon had been the Lord's choice. (2 Samuel 12:24, 25) When Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving to the Lord, what happened? (1 Kings 3:5-9)

24. How did the Lord respond to Solomon? (1 Kings 3:10-14)

The Lord did just as He promised. There was no king like Solomon either before or after. His great wisdom brought fame, power and extreme wealth. His wealth came from several sources. First, because of the location of Israel, anyone traveling between the super powers (Egypt and Mesopotamia) had to travel on one of two trade routes (The Via Maris or The Kings Highway) and Solomon controlled both. Second, Solomon expanded his own trade through treaties with all the nations around him and added a fleet of sailing ships for imports and exports. Finally, royalty from every nation came to pay tribute to Solomon and to hear his great wisdom.

25. The most famous visitor was the Queen of Sheba. What is recorded about her visit? (1 Kings 10:1-10)

26. But of everything Solomon did, the most important is recorded in 1 Kings 5:3-5. What was in Solomon's heart to do?

27. What did the Lord say to Solomon about his desire? (1 Kings 6:1, 11-14)

28. When the temple was completed, Solomon held a dedication ceremony. What happened during that time? (1 Kings 8:1-11)
29. Solomon's prayer of dedication is recorded in 1 Kings 8:22-61. He recounted the history of Yahweh with the nation of Israel and his father David. He asked the Lord to continually keep His eyes upon this place and to remain with His people and to hear their prayers. The Ark of the Covenant now rested in the Holy of Holies in the Temple, and the cloud, representing the presence of the Lord had filled it. What was Solomon's view of the Lord now residing in the Temple? (1 Kings 8:27)
30. But, Solomon soon discovered that with great power comes great temptation. What happened? (1 Kings 11:1-13)

### **The Kings of Israel & Judah**

31. Who was Jeroboam? (1 Kings 11:28)
32. What did the prophet Ahijah say to him? (1 Kings 11:29-36)
33. What was the covenant the Lord made with Jeroboam and was it conditional or unconditional? (1 Kings 11:37 & 38)

Solomon didn't take too kindly to this. In verse 40 it says, "*Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam.*" But this was God's plan and His plan would move forward. Solomon had disobeyed the Lord in many ways, but when he brought idols into Israel, he set the whole nation on a downward path that would ultimately lead to their removal from the Land of Promise. (Please note that though Solomon brought these idols in to accommodate his many wives, he did not worship them. "*Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statutes of his father David.*" 1 Kings 3:3)

Jeroboam did become king of 10 tribes, which became the northern kingdom. They retained the name "Israel," though it is sometimes referred to as "Ephraim," the leading tribe of the north. The two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin became the southern kingdom and are called "Judah" because Judah was David's tribe. The king of Judah would always remain an heir of David because God's promise to David that his line would remain on the throne forever was unconditional. (Fulfillment of that promise was in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who was born in the line of David. Matthew 1)

34. When the first annual feast arrived – one of three feasts for which all Israel was commanded by the Law to return to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship before the Lord – what did the new king Jeroboam think and then do? (1 Kings 12:26-33)

### **Evaluation of the Kings in the Divided Kingdom**

From this point forward, each king is evaluated and given a rating according to his obedience to Yahweh and the Law. The willful disobedience of Jeroboam in setting up the golden calves is referred to as "the sin of Jeroboam" and because of this, Jeroboam became the standard for an evil king. All the succeeding kings of Israel are measured against Jeroboam while all the kings of Judah are measured against faithful king David.

The rating of the first king of Judah, Solomon's son King Rehoboam, is that "*He committed all the sins his father had done before him; his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his forefather had been.*" 1 Kings 15:3

All the kings of Israel were considered evil, but when we come to the 6<sup>th</sup> king, Omri, we discover that according to the world's standards he was one of the most successful kings. He recognized the need for a strong, yet visible headquarters, so he bought a city on a hill and made it the capital of Israel, called Samaria. He saw the economic benefit of the trade routes so he retook control of the routes that had been lost during the generation after Solomon. But the Lord's rating system is not the same as this world's. His rating: "*But Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD and **sinned more than all those before him.** He walked in all the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat and in his sin, which he had caused Israel to commit, so that they provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger by their worthless idols.*" 1 Kings 16:25, 26



But it was Omri's son king Ahab who took idol worship to a new low. When he married Jezebel, a Phoenician princess, she brought her gods – the Baals and Asherahs – with her into Israel. In zeal for her gods, Jezebel went about systematically killing all the prophets of Yahweh. Her husband King Ahab also built a temple for Baal in Samaria that rivaled the one Solomon had built for the Lord in Jerusalem. He went even further when he made Baal worship the official (politically correct) religion of Israel. At his death we read these words, *"He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, because he walked in the ways of his father **and** mother and in the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. He served and worshiped Baal and provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger, just as his father had done."* 1 Kings 22: 52, 53

### **The Final Days of Israel**

35. 2 Kings 17:13-14 summed up the Lord's perspective of Israel and its kings. What does it say?
  
36. List the ways that they had broken the Law, as pointed out by the Lord in 2 Kings 17:15-17.
  
37. What did the Lord finally do? (2 Kings 17:3-6 & 18a)
  
38. Of the 19 kings of Israel, not one of them repented or turned from the "sins of Jeroboam." So while Hoshea was king of Israel, the Lord removed Israel from His presence and took them into captivity in Assyria. What was it like in the southern kingdom of Judah at that time? (2 Kings 17:18b & 19)

### **Bibliography**

<sup>1</sup> Albert H. Baylis, From Creation To The Cross (Zondervan, 1996), Pg. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Albert H. Baylis, From Creation To The Cross (Zondervan, 1996), Pg. 192.