

Story of the Old Testament

Lesson 6: Monarchy - The United Kingdom

We continue with the story of the Old Testament, Lesson Six. The title of this lesson is The Monarchy, The United Kingdom. This is the period with the transition from Samuel as and the last judge and the first prophet. He will anoint King Saul as the first king over of Israel and later anoints David as the second king of Israel and followed by Solomon. They serve as the three kings of the United Kingdom. This lesson begins on page 33 of your handout.

You can see the United Kingdom covers 1 Samuel chapter 8 through 31 all of 2 Samuel which is primarily the story of King David. And then 1 Kings chapter 1 through 11 is the story of Solomon as king. We'll see in the next lesson, that there is the divided kingdom that follows with the northern kingdom and southern kingdom after the death of Solomon.

The story of the Divided Kingdom is told in 1 Kings chapter 12 through 2 Kings chapter 25. Then there's what we could call the captive kingdom. The northern kingdom goes into captivity in Assyria in 722 BC. The southern kingdom of Judah continues on for another 150 years before it goes into exile into Babylon. The scriptures that cover that period of time are 2 Kings chapter 18 to 25.

This whole period of the United Kingdom runs from 1050 BC to 931 BC. It's about 120 years. On page 33 you can see the Scriptures that support this period of the story of the OT.

The books of poetry were written during this time with Psalms and Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. The key people are Samuel, Saul, David, Absalom, and Solomon.

Again, this period covers about 120 years with 3 kings. Each of them reigned for about 40 years. There is an easy way to remember these three kings, Saul, David, and Solomon.

Saul's reign is written about in 1 Samuel chapter 8 through 31. He had no heart for God.

David's life is told in 2 Samuel. He had a whole heart for God. He was a man after God's own heart. He wasn't perfect, but he had a soft heart, towards God, a heart of repentance.

Solomon's reign is summarized in 1 Kings chapter 1 through 11. He had half a heart for God. He started out well, but because of his many wives, this sin led him astray. He started well, but he didn't finish well. So, we could say Solomon had half a heart towards God.

Let's begin with Samuel. He was the last judge and the first prophet.

We read about him in 1 Samuel chapter 1 through 7 and leading up to the transition to people asking for a king to be like all the other nations.

David is Israel's greatest king. Solomon was Israel's glorious king during his time of peace. If you turn over to page 34, we'll highlight a few points for each of these characters. Samuel, was first prophet and the last judge. He purified and unified Israel. He did many great things.

He was the son of Hannah and Elkanah. He was dedicated to the Lord at an early age when he was born through his mom, Hannah, who was barren, and God opened her womb, and she gave birth to a son. She dedicated Samuel to serve the Lord, and he went and served under Eli the priest.

As Samuel was getting older, he had two sons who were not walking with the Lord, and the people said, you are old and your two sons aren't walking with the Lord. We want a king to be like the other nations.

You can read this in 1 Samuel chapter 8:4-9, where the people are rejecting God as their king. Samuel's heart was broken. He's feeling like they are rejecting him. God speaks to Samuel and comforts him.

He says, don't worry, Samuel. The people are not rejecting you as king. They're rejecting me as their king, so give them what they are asking for.

Let them know what how harsh a king can be.

There would be a time in the future when a king will come of God's choosing. We know that God is going to make a promise, a covenant promise with David that on David's throne, a king will reign forever and ever. At this point, the people are getting ahead of God and asking for their own king. Whenever we are not aligned with God's timing, trouble is soon to follow.

Samuel transitions from serving as the last judge and becomes the first prophet. He anoints Saul as king, the first king over Israel.

Very early in Saul's life, he demonstrated a lack of faith, and his disobedience towards God was revealed. One of the things we see in 1 Samuel chapter 9:1-2, the people were asking for a king. This was not God's timing.

Saul is described as a man who was handsome. He was tall. He had the outward appearance of a leader. The people were looking at the outward appearance. Later, we'll see when David becomes king, that people look at the outward appearance. God is looking for character. God is looking for the heart, and that is why something was missing from Saul from the very beginning. He was a man with no heart for God.

He looked good on the outside. He was lacking on the inside. The diagram on page 34 shows from the very beginning, there were two incidents where Saul was told by God to do certain things in 1 Samuel chapters 13 and 15.

In 1 Samuel 13, Saul was not supposed to make a sacrifice. He was to wait until Samuel came, and Samuel would lead the sacrifice as they honor the Lord together. But Saul takes the initiative, and he does what only the priests and prophets were permitted to do.

He offers the sacrifice to God which was an act of disobedience. Next, God said to Saul, you are to go and destroy the Amalekites, an arch enemy, people who were pagan worshipers and had a hatred toward God. Don't take any of the plunder for yourself.

Saul wins the battle against the Amalekites, but he spares King Agag's life, and he keeps some of the plunder for himself. When Samuel comes to Saul, he says, what is that sound of the sheep I hear in the background? And Saul is saying, oh, those are the sheep and the goats from our victory over the Amalekites. We kept these to offer to God. Fear of man is what guided Saul's decision. The people wanted to keep the plunder from the battle and Saul appeased the people instead of fully obeying God. One lesson from this encounter is that partial obedience is really disobedience. God desires obedience more than sacrifice.

True faith in God will always be demonstrated through our obedience. The evidence of our faith will be seen in our walking in obedience, obeying immediately, not partially, not hesitantly. God tells Saul that in response to his disobedience, the kingdom will be taken from him and given to another of God's choosing. For some reason though, God allows Saul to stay in the position of king until his death.

Yet while he is king, God calls Samuel to go and anoint the next king, the king who will replace Saul after his death. God tells Samuel to go to Jesse, and brings out his sons. God will show Samuel the next king of Israel that He will select. Samuel is looking at each of Jesse's sons and God says that none of them will be the future king. In Samuel's mind, he is looking at each of them thinking, maybe he is the one. Samuel's looking at the outward appearance.

And after he goes through all the sons, he says to Jesse, none of these are the ones that God has chosen. Do you have any more sons? And he says, yes, we have this worthless one, this small one who is out in the fields, David. And Samuel says, well, bring him, we will wait until he comes. And when David comes, the Lord speaks through Samuel and says, yes, he is God's chosen one. God doesn't look at things the way man does. Man looks at the outward appearance, the Lord looks at the heart. We read this in 1 Samuel 16:7.

And in front of his father Jesse and his brothers, Samuel anoints David as the future king of Israel. And for the next 10 years or more, we read about the troubled relationship between King Saul and David.

David makes a name for himself by relying on God. He defeats Goliath, becomes a great warrior, and as he serves King Saul faithfully. We read in 1 Samuel 16, David versus Goliath. In 1 Samuel 17, Saul becomes David's enemy. Saul tries to kill David 15 different times, as recorded in 1 Samuel chapters 18 to 30. David is running from Saul throughout most of 1 Samuel, until in a battle at the end of 1 Samuel, Saul is killed along with Jonathan. The kingdom would finally be taken from Saul and handed to David.

David becomes a king over Judah for seven years, and then becomes king over the United Kingdom for all of Israel for a period of 33 years. So, he's king for a total of 40 years. The key attribute of David is that he is a man after God's heart.

We read about this in 1 Samuel 13:14, and it's also reinforced in Acts 13:22.

Just as God made an eternal, unconditional covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12, God does the same with King David in 2 Samuel 7. This covenant will look forward to Jesus as the King of kings, yes, this is another red thread.

Let's read this together beginning in 2 Samuel 7:12.

“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 man, the stripes of the sons of men. 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. In accordance with all these words and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David. “

This is an eternal covenant, an unconditional promise that God is making with David through the prophet Nathan. He's saying that David, you're not going to be the one to build the temple. You're a man of blood. You're a warrior. Your son who will reign after you will build the temple.

Your son, Solomon, will be that son who will sit on David's throne. Yet there's a promise looking well beyond Solomon all the way to Jesus. David's throne will be an eternal throne, and there will be an eternal king sitting on that throne, and that will be Jesus who is crucified, is buried, is resurrected, is ascended in heaven, and he's going to return.

In Revelation 19 we read about the second coming of Jesus. In chapter 20, Jesus sets up his kingdom and reigns on David's throne for 1,000 years from Jerusalem. Jesus is referred to as the root of Jesse (David's father), and the Branch of David.

He will reign on earth for a thousand years on the throne of David from Jerusalem, which will then lead into the creation of a new heaven and new earth where Jesus, as God, will reign for eternity, and we will be his people, and he will be our God.

This is the theme of The story of the Old Testament, the story of the entire Bible, God establishing his kingdom, looking ahead to the King of kings and the Lord of lords who will be the king over God's kingdom for all of eternity.

Look at a few of the notes related to David's reign and the consequences of his sin.

David was a man after God's own heart, but he was not perfect. He committed some awful sins, but he had a heart of repentance and soft heart for God. When confronted, he would confess his sin and get back walking and step with God.

We can see David's sin with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11. We also can see David's broken heart broken, his sorrow in 2 Samuel chapter 12, as well much suffering that resulted from his sin. There were consequences for his sin.

Even though his sins were forgiven, there were consequences. We experience the same things today. In God's mercy, he may remove consequences. Often though, he will allow the consequences to remain in order to teach us, to grow us, to refine us.

We can read about then David's restoration to his position of power in 2 Samuel chapter 19-24. You see the beginnings of the plan for the temple, the permanent place where God would be worshipped, people would experience the presence of God here on earth. The site for the temple was purchased and prepared. We read about this in 1 Chronicles chapters 21-22. At the end of David's life, David anoints Solomon as his successor, as the third king of the United Kingdom.

Solomon's name meant shalom or peace. And he is known as Israel's glorious king. It was a time of great peace, of great wealth for the nation.

On the box on to the right of page 35, you read some highlights from Solomon's life.

You can read about Solomon's wisdom. He is wiser than any other man. We can this in 1 Kings 1-3.

We read about Solomon's wealth. Because he did not ask God ask for wealth, God gave him great wealth. You read this in 1 Kings 4-10.

In chapter 11, though, we read about Solomon's fall from grace. Solomon started well, but he ended poorly. Of the first three kings of Israel, we say that Saul had no heart for God, David had a whole heart for God, and Solomon had a half a heart for God.

Solomon dealt with the temptations that are common to all people, particularly in positions of leadership. These temptations of money, sex, and power, can lead to failure in one's spiritual life. God prophesied judgment on Solomon and the nation beginning in 1 Kings 11:13.

Let's turn there together.

“King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord has said to the people of Israel, You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clung to them in love. He had 700 wives who were princesses and 300 concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. When Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done. Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Molech, the abomination of the Ammonites on the mountains east of Jerusalem. And so he did for all his foreign wives who made offerings and sacrifices to their gods.”

Continue reading in verse 9 ...

“And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord and the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the Lord commanded. Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, ‘Since this has been your practice, and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded to you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. For the sake of David your father, I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of David my servant, for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.’”

And that's what we see in Solomon's life. He had great wisdom, he had great wealth, he started well with God, yet these foreign wives turned his heart away and he began to follow after other gods, other idols. And so he had a divided heart.

He was responsible for building the temple. He built himself a palace that was even more beautiful than the temple. He spent more time building his own home than he did building the temple of the one true God.

Solomon failed to obey God's word. You see that there were things kings were supposed to do in Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

Kings were not supposed to multiply horses for themselves. Solomon multiplied many horses. 1 Kings 10:28.

They were not to have many wives. Solomon multiplied wives for himself. 1 Kings 11:1-8.

They were not supposed to amass great portions of silver and gold for themselves. Solomon increased silver and gold for himself. 1 Kings 10, 24-27.

Kings were supposed to read and study and obey God's word. We read about this in Deuteronomy 17:18-19, something Solomon failed to do.

So judgment was prophesied on Solomon and that was the beginning of the downfall of the southern kingdom. Ultimately, the kingdom would be divided.

The northern kingdom would be made up of ten tribes and the southern kingdom, which we call Judah, would contain two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. The northern kingdom would go into captivity in Assyria because of the sins of Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom. And the southern kingdom would go into captivity in Babylon, as a result of the sins of Solomon and his son, Rehoboam.

The sins of Solomon were the root of the depravity in the northern and southern kingdoms. In spite of this though, God is faithful. He is going to continue to build his kingdom.

He's going to fulfill his promise to Abraham. He's going to fulfill his promise to David to build a kingdom. And on David's throne would rule a king who would rule forever.

During this time, the poetic books are written, Psalms and Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

The Psalms focused on a relationship with God, of worship, of praise, of thanksgiving, of prayer, even during these periods, which would help the people keep their heart focused on God.

Proverbs was focused on the relationship of our minds and hearts towards God with wisdom and purity.

Ecclesiastes focused on a relationship to the world, how to live out a life of faith on a daily basis.

Song of Solomon focused on loving relationships with one another. It's a picture of marriage, the love and purity and faithfulness in a marriage. It also a picture of our relationship with God.

The fifth book of poetry of Job was written during the time of the patriarchs. That was a picture of suffering while trusting the sovereignty of God.

So these poetical books deal with relationship that help us in our relationship with God, others, the world, and with ourselves. And they are a tool for worship, a tool for growing, a tool for discipleship that would be relevant in the life of any follower of God in the Old Testament, as well as in the life of any believer today as we walk by grace.

There is a key verse on page 35 from 1 Kings 8:61

“Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments as at this day.”

Disobedience and rebellion was at the heart of Saul's downfall. God desires us to walk in obedience.

There were consequences in the life of David because of his sin, his disobedience. He was quick to confess and repent though, but there were many consequences that tore apart his family and made life difficult for him.

And disobedience was also a downfall in the life of Solomon.

We must make the same choice to obey God's Word and walk in a manner worthy of our calling.

We're thankful for God's mercy and grace. When Jesus died on the cross, he paid the penalty for our sin so that we could have forgiveness and a renewed relationship with God through His grace and mercy. And at any point, his throne of grace is open for us to come before him to confess our sin. And he's faithful and just to continue to forgive us and to continue to cleanse us from all unrighteousness as we walk with him.

In Lesson 7, we'll continue from the death of Solomon, and we'll look at the divided kingdom. This is still the period of the Monarchy, but the kingdom has been split between north and south. We will see how the nation continues to spiral downward while God is still being faithful to fulfil his promises. There will always will be a faithful remnant that will be present to fulfill the promises of God to build his kingdom.

I look forward to joining you soon for Lesson 7.

God bless.