

## **An Aerial View of the Old Testament, (Part 3)**

### **Selected Scriptures**

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Let me begin by saying that I did not have a chance this week because of the short week to make copies of my slides from the last study we had together. I know that it's impossible for you to process everything that we're going through on Sunday night in one sitting to get it all down. So, some of you would like to get copies of that. Know that it is available, the PowerPoints are available online on the website the following week, but if you'd like printouts for those of you who'd like a hard copy in hand. We'll have some of those both for the last time and for tonight, Lord willing, next Sunday night. So, I encourage you to pick those up. I think it will be a help to you.

For those of you who are visiting with us, let me tell you that I have embarked on a major event over the last few weeks. We've decided to cover the entire Old Testament in six weeks, looking at its history and its message. And you have come tonight as we look for the third time at an aerial view of the Old Testament.

In 1776 America began as a country. So now, for some 231 years we have existed as a collection of confederated states with a unified central government. But imagine, if you would (in spite of what we're facing with the coming election and all of the politics that are on our minds and on our newspapers and on our televisions, imagine what the political climate would be like today), if instead of a centralized government, each of the fifty states was truly fully autonomous. The larger states would constantly be throwing their weight around, would be dominating the smaller, less populated states. There would be constant bickering, shifting alliances and infighting. There would probably also be, as was true in the past, armed conflicts between the border residents of some of the states. There would undoubtedly be (at various times) intrusion by Canada and Mexico and other foreign countries into the fifty states, each trying to insert itself and take advantage of the lack of a unified government. And imagine if that had gone on not for 231 years since 1776, but if that had been the political climate of our country since 1707. In other words, imagine what our lives would be like if that was true for 300 years. That's exactly what happened in the history of the nation of Israel in the period of the judges.

Tonight, we continue our study of Israel's history, and we come to the end of that long, dark night, 300 years when every man did that which was right in his own eyes because there was no king in Israel. There was no central government, and so, the tribes were constantly at war, without question, the darkest period in Israel's history. We come out of the period of the judges and into the period of the monarchy.

Now, let me remind you that when you look at Old Testament history, there are essentially nine major movements or scenes in Old Testament history. The first is universal dealings in Genesis 1 - 11. Depending on when you believe the creation of the world was, depending on whether or not you believe there are gaps in the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11, somewhere between 4000 B.C., creation date, and no further back than say 20,000. Most conservative would say somewhere around 10,000 would be the outside, so somewhere between 4 and 10,000 B.C. was creation to the time of Abraham in 2166. That is covered in the first 11 chapters of Genesis.

The patriarchal period follows, Genesis 12 - 50. It covers from the time of Abraham in 2166 and the calling of Abraham there in Genesis 12 to the death of Joseph in 1804 B.C. Four hundred years are covered by one chapter, and that's the slavery in Egypt. It's simply described and alluded to in Exodus 1 from the death of Joseph until the exodus in 1446 B.C.

Followed the fourth movement is the exodus under Moses. And that covers the four books of the Pentateuch: Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, or Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, beginning in Exodus 2 and running all the way through the end of the Pentateuch. That covers a period of forty years through the wilderness wanderings and the children of Israel gathering there in Deuteronomy on the plains outside of Jericho ready to go into the Promised Land.

Under Joshua, you have the conquest and division of Canaan from 1406 B.C. to about 1350 around his death. They served (Israel did), they served God all the days of Joshua and those who survived him, but then things began to turn. And we enter the period of the judges, covered by the books of Judges and Ruth and 1 Samuel 1 - 8. That period, 300 terrible years, runs down to 1051 B.C.

That's followed by the monarchy that we are going to look at tonight, and then ultimately the Babylonian exile and the restoration period, which we will examine in coming weeks. So, those are the nine major movements.

Tonight, we are going to look at the monarchy. Now, understand that the purpose of 1 Samuel (where the monarchy begins and is described for us) is a historical account of the beginning of the Israelite monarchy. It is there, politically, to serve as a record of the establishment of the monarchy and as an apologetic from Samuel, for both his contemporaries and for the future, explaining why they began with one dynasty, and the very next king was from a different dynasty.

It also records the rise of the prophetic office. It points out the reality that God alone was the supreme King, and any government has to function under His authority. And theologically, of course, it shows that we need a perfect King, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will someday come.

For 300 years there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes. The last judge and the only national judge was a man named Samuel. Here is an outline of 1 Samuel. Samuel is described in his ministry as a judge and as a prophet in the first 7 chapters, Saul in 8 - 15, and David in 16 - 31.

I want us to begin in 1 Samuel 9 because that introduces us to the seventh great movement of Old Testament history, the monarchy. Now the monarchy began in 1051 and ran all the way down to 586 B.C. Nearly 500 years in Judah in the south there was a king in Israel. This period of Israel's history is recorded in 1 Samuel 9 running all the way through 2 Kings 25, and it's also recorded in 1 and 2 Chronicles.

The question is what makes a monarchy? What makes the rule by kings? The rule by one, that's what monarchy means, "mono" meaning "one", and the Greek word for "ruler". Monarchy, rule by one. What makes a monarchy distinct from all other forms of government? It's the principle of succession. When a king dies, the son that he has chosen automatically succeeds him. And

that's what God put into place in Israel. Understand though, that Yahweh is still King of Israel. In the past, He had mediated that rule through individuals personally selected, one by one in each case. And now, with the monarchy, God will mediate His rule through family succession, through sons.

Now, there are two distinct periods of the monarchy in Israel. There's the united monarchy, (by united we mean that the kings ruled over all twelve tribes of Israel). And that is followed by the divided monarchy, and by divided we mean that the twelve tribes were split or divided into two separate kingdoms with two separate kings. Normally, they're referred to as the north, 10 tribes were in the north called Israel, sometimes Samaria, and two tribes were in the south under a separate king, and they're generally called Judah, they were Judah and Benjamin. So, that's the divided monarchy, Israel split up and ruled by two separate kings.

Tonight, I want us to look at the united monarchy. The united monarchy begins in 1 Samuel 12 and runs all the way through 1 Kings 11. It consists of three kings from two different dynasties: Saul, David and Solomon. If you want to remember the united monarchy, it's in three names: Saul, David and Solomon. And it's very convenient because each of those men ruled forty years. So, 120 years is the united monarchy. Each king rules for that approximate forty-year period.

Let's begin of course with Saul. He began to rule in 1051. He ruled to 1011 B.C., he was from the tribe of Benjamin, he was certainly the people's choice. Therefore, God said make Saul king because he's the one they would choose, given a chance. He gave them a king after their own heart. And Saul began well. But because of two very specific acts of rebellion and disobedience, God determined to replace this king.

The two acts of rebellion were the sacrifice at Gilgal recorded in 1 Samuel 13. You remember when Samuel didn't come and the people were getting uneasy, and so Saul takes the office of priest into his own hands and makes a sacrifice to mollify the people.

The other was the sparing of Agag and the Amalekites and the spoil. They were utterly to destroy the Amalekites, and Saul failed to do it. He's confronted you remember in that famous

confrontation by Samuel, “What means this bleating of the sheep in my ears?” And Saul’s response is well, the people wanted to keep some spoil. And that’s when Saul is reminded that the LORD has greater delight in obedience than in sacrifice.

As a result, by the way, from that day, from the day Samuel confronts Saul about sparing the Amalekites, from that day on, Samuel abandoned Saul, he never saw him again. You can read that in 15:35. As a result of these sins, Saul’s dynasty, his house is the way it’s described. Your house, God will often say. He means by that, your dynasty. Your dynasty is rejected in favor of a man after My own heart. This is how it’s written in 1 Samuel 13:13.

Samuel said to Saul, “You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.”

So, from this point, Saul knew that it was God’s will to replace him because of his disobedience, but he refused to accept this and to acknowledge God’s sovereign purpose, and he immediately became insanely jealous the very first time he perceived a threat to his throne and to his dynasty. From that day, Saul distrusted David. He became convinced that David would be his replacement, and sadly (his contempt or) his distrust rather grew to contempt, and contempt became a settled, murderous rage. And Saul the king actually sets out to kill one of his loyal subjects.

Saul’s first attempts to kill David were in the privacy of the palace. Twice he tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, it’s recorded in 18:10 - 11. Then Saul reconsiders the potential ramifications of actually murdering one of his staff, and he sets out to kill David by stealth. There are several plots that he tries to work out in order to get David killed and out of the picture, no longer a threat to his kingdom and to his son Jonathan taking over as his successor.

So, Samuel records a number of Saul's attempts to kill David, and you can read them there in Samuel.

But what's amazing about it is Samuel also records for us in 1 Samuel 19:11 - 21:9 a record of those who defended David and sought to protect his life from Saul's attempts. And it's really a remarkable list. You have Michal, Saul's daughter and David's wife, she acknowledges David's innocence and she tries to protect David from Saul, her own father. Samuel and the LORD both protect David at one point from Saul's murderous rage.

Jonathan protects David. Now this is a remarkable situation to think about because Jonathan is in line to be the next king. There's also another wrinkle that usually we don't get from flannelgraph. Jonathan usually is presented in this friendship with David, they're presented as peers, roughly the same age, two boys. I'm not going to take you through the details of how I get here, but there are clear details in the text that show that Jonathan could not have been David's age and in fact, he was probably about 30 years older than David.

The way we know that is because he was already involved in Saul's army and leading a group of men when David is born. And so, here he is, 30 years older than this young man, the next in line to receive the throne, and yet Jonathan is defending David and trying to rescue David from Saul's murderous attempts.

Ahimelech the high priest in 21:1 - 9 also comes to David's defense. Now by recording these incidents, the prophet makes it clear that those best in a position to know David's guilt or innocence and those in authority in Israel all defended him and proclaimed his innocence. That's key.

After these episodes David becomes a fugitive, on the run for several years and for the rest of the book of 1 Samuel. So, Saul is fully aware that God has chosen David as the next king of Israel, and it was because of his rebellion (he knows) that it's been taken away from him, but he refuses to repent of his rebellious spirit. And his jealousy moves him to try to frustrate God's clear plan by killing the successor that God Himself had chosen. First Samuel 21 all the way through 26,

that section documents the years that Saul basically abandoned his kingly duties and instead directs all of his energies and the resources of the kingdom in a futile attempt to find David and to kill him.

Now remember that part of the purpose for 1 Samuel is to be an apologetic for the change in dynasties. Remember what makes a king unique, a unique form of government? It's succession, your son succeeds you. And yet you have Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. The next person to step into that role should have been one of his sons. But instead, it's David from the tribe of Judah. How do you explain that?

Well the writer wants us to know that David did not obtain the throne by stealth. There was no coup in Israel. He didn't manipulate or intimidate his way to power, and in fact, it seems that whenever opportunity knocked, and it knocked several times, David refused to answer. This underscores his integrity and his patience to wait on God's timing. He did absolutely nothing to remove Saul from power. But even more to the point, he respected him as God's appointment and sought to preserve his life.

Think about the circumstances from David's perspective. It's really a remarkable story. In a short time, David's whole life had been turned upside down. He was once the favorite of the people, a leader of Israel's army, the king's son-in-law, applauded on every hand, and now he's become a fugitive, an outlaw hunted by the king. If you were to find yourself in that situation, you would (like David) think carefully through your options. And you only have basically two choices.

One of those is to leave Israel and (leave outside the land, and) live outside the land rather, but that would be somewhat risky because David, after all, had served as the leader of Israel's army and had at one time or other battled most of the surrounding countries. And so, if he was recognized, he would undoubtedly be captured and killed.

The other option of course was to remain in the country to gather some people around you to help you, to stay in sparsely populated areas where you would be difficult to find, to become a fugitive in the land of Israel. First Samuel 21 - 31 shows us that David tried both plans at various

times. When he was outside the land, he was often caught in trouble. You remember that he had to feign madness to escape on one occasion, but these were all attempts to hide from Saul.

But David was not completely confident in God through this period of time. What motivated David especially when he left the country was not his confidence in God, but a lack of confidence in God. And you can see this, in fact, this is an interesting passage. Turn with me to 1 Samuel 21. First Samuel 21 (Tom meant 1 Samuel 27), we get a little glimpse into David's heart during this period. He was not a person unlike us. How would you think and react in that situation?

In 1 Samuel 27:1, we get to listen in as David has a conversation with himself. "Then David said to himself, 'Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul.'" [Stop there. Specifically, David feared that he would not always escape Saul's attempts on his life. So, he goes on, verse 1 of 27,] "There is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines. Saul then will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand."

Now what is David saying? He's saying if I stay in Israel, I'm going to die. Was that true? Absolutely not, because what had God already promised David? That he would be Israel's next king. He had promised him with Samuel in 1 Samuel 16, Jonathan had assured him of this in 23:17, and even Saul himself was convinced that David would be the next king according to 24:20. And so, David loses confidence in the Word of God and comes up with a better plan and leaves Israel.

But even though David goes into the land of Israel's enemies (in a), with a lack of faith, with a lack of confidence in God, as God always does, in grace He uses even David's sinful decisions for good. He does something remarkable because He not only preserves David and his men, He prospers them. And even more remarkable, He uses the time to accomplish two things that were very important to David's future, number one, to defeat the border enemies in Israel. David would from those surrounding countries go in and attack the border towns where Israel's



enemies were inflicting harm on Israel and he would defeat them. And so, when the time came for David to take the throne, he had already consolidated power in those surrounding areas. And also, of course, that made him popular with the people of Israel because he was taking care, from outside of Israel, of their enemies, and so his own reputation was building. So, God used even his sinful decision, his lack of faith to accomplish His purposes. What a great reminder of God's providence in our own lives.

So, that's Saul. Saul at the end of Samuel dies in battle. He and his son Jonathan are hung on the wall at Beth-shan. That brings us to David. Saul meets an ignominious end, and David becomes the next king of Israel. He rules Israel from 1011 to 971 B.C. David is from the tribe of Judah, he united the nation, he makes Jerusalem the capital, and God gives him an eternal covenant in which He promised never to do to his dynasty what he had done to Saul's.

David's leadership brought Israel to the place of the mightiest nation in the eastern Mediterranean world during his lifetime. David's life as king begins in 2 Samuel. Here's what we have in 2 Samuel. You have David's difficult rise to the throne in chapter 1 - 5:16, David's glorious reign in Jerusalem from 5:17 - 9:12, David's weak and sinful latter days in chapters 10 - 20, and reflections on David's reign, chapters 21 - 24.

Now, to really understand David's life, we need to look at a brief timeline because I think sometimes, we don't really catch the flow of David's life. Here is what the Scripture describes in a very brief form of what happened with David. He was anointed by Samuel to be king in 1 Samuel 16 at about 15 years old. He begins serving almost immediately as a court musician, and then occasionally returning home to be a shepherd of sheep. And so, he's commuting, if you will, doing double duty. He's a court musician, and he's also helping his father care for the sheep. In his late teens in 1 Samuel 17, he defeats Goliath.

We don't know exactly how old he was, but there was some concern about his being at the battle, so somewhere between 15 and 20. And then we know that shortly after that, Saul begins to seek David's life. We don't know exactly how long that lasted, but we know that Saul died when David was about 22 years old. And I won't tell you how we get there; well, maybe I will. You

take, at 30 years old he was inaugurated. You subtract seven and a half years that he reigned in Hebron, and he was 22 when he was put in that position. So, in other words, for at least three years, perhaps four or five, David was fleeing for his life. Then Saul is killed. While David is genuinely grieved for Saul, he returns to Israel, and he's very quickly anointed as king over Judah.

Then wisely, he sought to extend his rule over the rest of Israel by diplomacy. But instead of accepting him as their king, they refuse to accept him, and a tragic lengthy civil war breaks out among the people he loves. So, for seven and a half years, David rules as king but only over one of Israel's twelve tribes. It wasn't until David was 30 that he became king of all Israel in 2 Samuel 5:4.

Now you know what is remarkable to me when I look at this timeline of David's life? For 15 long years, he waited patiently on God to do what God had promised when he was anointed at about 15 years of age. And those weren't easy years either. He was being chased by Saul, being sought for, to be murdered by the king in whose court he served. And then for seven and a half years, he rules as king alright, but over one tribe while the rest of Israel fights in a lengthy, bloody civil war. It's only at 30 that God finally accomplishes what He promised.

But you know what's remarkable about David? There isn't one hint of anger or bitterness or impatience. What an incredible lesson for us in patience and waiting on God. We pray something and expect God to act tomorrow. God's timing is not always our timing. It certainly wasn't in David's case. There were long, difficult years.

Now that brings us to 2 Samuel, and in 2 Samuel 5, turn there with me for a moment. In 2 Samuel 5, two very important events occur. You'll see in your *New American Standard Bible*, there's probably a heading that says something like "David King over all Israel". It's in this chapter that David is sought out after those seven and a half years ruling in Hebron. Leaders from all the tribes approach him. They come to Hebron, and they formally request David to be the king not of that one tribe, but of all Israel. And he becomes just that. Verse 4 says David was

30 years old when he became king, and he reigned for 40 years. Prior to that, he had reigned over Judah for seven years and six months.

Now in verse 6 and following, David chooses his capital city. This was a strategic decision. You'll notice in verse 6 we learned that it's going to be a city called Jerusalem. Jerusalem was part of the highlands. If you look at this relief map of Israel, you'll notice that the area where Jerusalem is located is in a more mountainous terrain. When you read in the Bible about people going up to Jerusalem even when they live up in the north in Galilee, it's not talking about they're going north, it's talking about they're going up in elevation because Jerusalem was at a higher elevation. It's in that elevated area, part of the highlands. This city existed in the time of Abraham, you remember back in the time of Melchizedek, he was the king of Salem in Genesis 14:18.

Here is basically what the city of Jerusalem looked like from David to Christ. You'll notice the dark brown, that was probably the original city of David, that little circle on that elevated hill was the original city that David founded. And then you see the expansion, the lighter brown is Solomon's expansion, Hezekiah's expansion is the light green, and the darker green is Nehemiah's reconstruction. And then the dark black line represents the location of the walls during Christ's time. So, that gives you some idea of how the city of Jerusalem ebb and flowed. But it becomes absolutely central.

At the time David founded this as his capital city, it was probably about 12 acres. It was an important location because it was located on the border between Judah and Israel. Remember that he had served for seven and a half years over Judah. He now founds his capital city in close proximity to each. The spring of Gihon is a good water supply, a flowing spring in the Kidron Valley. In addition, this city was surrounded on three sides by natural defenses. You can see that you had valley essentially on three sides with only one side exposed to a similar or higher elevation that would need to be defended more carefully. Even today if you visit Jerusalem, some of you are planning to go with us, you'll see this very reality.

So, he chooses this capital city, and he begins his glorious reign in Jerusalem beginning in 5:17, and going all the way through 2 Samuel 9, or excuse me 9:12. It begins with the Ark being

brought to Jerusalem. Now, that's absolutely crucial for David, you see this in 6:1 - 23. The Ark of God, popularized by even contemporary movies, are now 20 years old, I guess. But it's contemporary. The Ark represented the earthly throne of Israel's God. Think of the Ark not as some mystical box that was filled with magic; instead, it was representative of the reality that the God of Israel was in Israel dwelling in their midst serving as their King. And the Ark was His throne from which He ruled. And so, by bringing this Ark to Jerusalem, David was publicly acknowledging that while he was king, it was a delegated authority and that the Lord was truly King, and He had the right to rule both over David and the nation. That was a very important point, that the kings ruled under God's authority, and this was the recognition of that reality.

Now, when you come to chapter 7, you come to God's promise of an eternal dynasty to David. This is called the Davidic Covenant by many, and at the heart of the Davidic Covenant, this legally binding promise God makes David, is the Messiah because the Davidic Covenant narrowed the promise of a coming Messiah to one family in the tribe of Judah. If you go back to the beginning of the Old Testament, you see the Messiah painted in the broadest possible terms. In the garden after Adam and Eve sinned, God says to Adam and Eve that there will be a coming seed of the woman, and He will crush the head of the serpent. Now the most significant thing that that reveals about the coming Messiah from that point forward is that He would be human, He would be one of us.

In 4:26 we learn that He will come through the line of Seth, and then in Genesis 11, through the line of Shem, one of Noah's sons. And it continues to narrow, think of it as a huge funnel, and as you go through the Old Testament, it narrows until you get to the end of the Old Testament. That funnel empties on one person and one person only, and that's Jesus Christ. So, you come to 12, and you find out that not only will the Messiah be from the line of Shem, but he will be a descendant of Abraham. And then in 21:12 of Genesis, He'll be through Isaac. In 28:10 - 22, He'll be through Jacob. In Genesis 49 as Jacob gives his blessings, he says that the scepter will not depart from Judah, and he tells us that it will be Judah through whom the Messiah will come, the tribe of Judah.

And in 2 Samuel 7:16, we find out that that (descendant, that) Messiah rather, will be a descendant of one family in Judah, and that's David's family. And so the funnel continues to narrow, and as we go through the rest of the Old Testament, you'll see that narrow even more until you come to the New Testament, there is only one conceivable person that the Messiah could be. It was absolutely clear.

God promises him a house. Look at 2 Samuel 7. In verse 8 God begins this covenant with David. He says,

“Now therefore, thus shall you speak to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be a ruler over My people Israel. I’ve been with you wherever you’ve gone ... [I’ve] cut off your enemies, ... I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth.” [I love that. We see that promise fulfilled, don’t we? Everybody knows who David is. Go anywhere almost on the face of the earth and they’ve heard of David.]

[He says,] “I will ... appoint a place for My people Israel. I will plant them, and they ... [will] live in their own place and [shall] not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, even from the day I commanded the judges to be over My people Israel; ... [I’ll] give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD ... declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.” [There’s that expression. He’s not talking about a physical house, David wanted to make a house for God. He was talking about a physical place for God’s presence to manifest itself. God takes that and uses the word differently and He says you wanted to make a house for Me? I’m going to make a house for you, I’m going to make a dynasty out of you.]

“When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.” There’s Solomon, and “he will build a house for my name, and I will

establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,” I’ll discipline Him. “But My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.” Now watch as verses 16 and 17, “Your dynasty and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever. Your throne shall be established forever. In accordance with all these words and all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.”

If we had the time, I’d take you to Luke 1. In Luke 1:32 and 33, Luke tells us that this promise was fulfilled in none other than Jesus Christ and will be fulfilled in none other than Jesus Christ. So, God promises David an eternal dynasty and of course, that means the rule of his greater Son, Jesus Christ.

Now, I wish the story ended there, but for our own edification and encouragement, it does not. Second Samuel 10 - 20 traces David’s weaknesses and his failures and their tragic results. There are two chief sins of David that are listed in those chapters. One is the sin with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11 - 12. You know the story, it’s obvious that he committed both the sin of murder and the sin of adultery. He repented of those sins, and we have the record of that repentance on the pages of Scripture in Psalm 32 and Psalm 51, two of the most magnificent expressions of true contrition and repentance ever written.

And then the other sin that’s listed is in 2 Samuel 24, and it’s the sin of the census, taking the census. We cannot be sure what exactly the sin was, but whatever it is, it was clear to the people that lived in that time because even his general urged him not to do it. Possibly, it was the sin of pride and ambition. Possibly, it was David’s way of showing that he was really not dependent on God but on Israel’s army. It may be that he intended to take that census and do something with it like put a heavy tax burden on the people or even conscript them in labor to fulfill some of his dreams. We don’t know exactly what it was, but those sins are the ones that are specifically exposed of David.

And a major issue through this whole time of David's weaknesses and struggles and failures is his son's Absalom's revolt. Absalom saw David's sin; here are the natural consequences of what he did with Bathsheba. And Absalom tries to seek the kingdom in 2 Samuel 12 all the way through 19, even putting David as king on the run. And then David dies, that happens in 1 Kings.

Let's briefly begin our look at 1 and 2 Kings. The author of the book of 1 and 2 Kings, and I say book because it is a single book really. It's artificially divided just for the sake of convenience for us, but it's one book. The author of it, some believe was Jeremiah, that's unlikely. It may have been a contemporary of Jeremiah, or more likely I think it was a series of prophetic chronicles composed by a series of court prophets. And they were written and compiled during the exile, during the Babylonian exile, so all of the events that are written there had occurred. They now found themselves in exile, and this book is written.

So, the purpose of 1 and 2 Kings then was written to remind them of their consistent violation of the Mosaic Covenant, to show that the exile was consistent with that covenant, and ultimately, of course, to urge them and encourage repentance as they were there in exile. And so as you read 1 and 2 Kings, you will see that point made again and again, that God intervenes through the prophets to urge His people to repent, to turn back to the covenant that they made with Him back at Sinai in Exodus 19. And time and again, they refuse, and God brings judgment and ultimately, the ultimate judgment. He brings exile when they are exported from the land.

So, this book then really serves as an apologetic to all the nations as to why Israel is in exile. Remember we talked before that in the ancient world, if your army conquered another nation's army, that really meant that your god was stronger than their god. So, in that kind of thinking, how was God going to make His reputation clear and protect Himself from people thinking that He was somehow weak and that's why His people were defeated? He writes these books through the prophets. He establishes prophets who say you're disobeying. You're disobeying. You're breaking the covenant. God is going to take you off into exile. And that serves as an apologetic to them and to others that this is not because of the weakness of Israel's God, it's because of the sin of His people.

Now when you look at 1 and 2 Samuel, I'm sorry 1 and 2 Kings, in 1 Kings, you have the first 11 chapters, the kingdom is still united under Solomon. In 1 Kings 12 - 22, you have the kingdom divided under many different kings. That continues in 2 Kings, you have the divided monarchy, but in the first 17 chapters, you have a picture of that, and then it ends with Israel, the north, the northern ten tribes falling and being carried off into captivity. And in 18 - 25, the southern kingdom, Judah and Benjamin, the kingdom which survives, Judah falls and is carried off into Babylonian captivity. So, that's a picture of these two books in our Bible.

And I want to finish up our discussions tonight with the final figure in the united monarchy, when there was one king ruling over all twelve tribes of Israel. You had Saul, you had David, and then you had, naturally, David's son. That's what it means to be a king, your son succeeds you. Solomon reigned from 931, I'm sorry 971 - 931 B.C. And at his death, the kingdom was divided. Solomon's name means peace or peaceable, it comes from that Hebrew word "shalom". You can recognize it even in English. He was the tenth son of David and the second son of Bathsheba. David grew up as a shepherd with nothing, Solomon grew up in the lap of privilege in the palace among the powerful and influential.

Let's trace briefly his life. In 1 Kings 1 and running through the middle of 2, we have an attempted coup by Adonijah. And that coup is overthrown, it's arrested, and from his deathbed then, David charges Solomon to loyalty to the covenant.

Keep true to God. After David's death in 1 Kings 2:13, and running through the end of the chapter, Solomon consolidates his power by following the orders that his father had given him.

In chapter 3, that famous chapter, you come to Solomon offering a thousand burnt offerings to acknowledge his need of God's blessing. And God responds to Solomon with a gracious offer. Ask whatever you want, and I'll give it to you. And Solomon of course wisely asks for wisdom to rule. God approves that request, and with it He also says I'm going to give you riches and honor because you have asked so wisely.



Now, when you come to the reign of Solomon, and this is pictured in chapter 4 of 1 Kings, Solomon's reign is presented as the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham. In fact, you can see it in verse 20 of chapter 4, it says, "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; they were eating and drinking and rejoicing." This is the prophet's way of saying in the days of Solomon, the promises made to Abraham were essentially fulfilled, all of those great promises about his people becoming a mighty nation, and more than the sand on the seashore.

As we move through the story of Solomon in chapters 5 - 9, we focus on Solomon's two great building projects, his own palace and the temple. And the temple passage is absolutely a key passage in this book. The temple is completed and something remarkable happens. Turn to 1 Kings 8. You really have to understand this chapter to understand the rest of Old Testament history. In 1 Kings 8:1 - 9, the Ark of God is brought in. As they dedicate the temple, the Ark is brought in, left in the Holy of Holies, that's God's throne. And after God's throne is set there in the Holy of Holies, that cube of a room that no one could enter except the high priest, after that in verses 10 and 11, the glory cloud fills the temple. Notice in verse 10,

It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

So, here is this remarkable picture of Solomon completing the temple, and as they prepare to dedicate it, as they bring God's throne into His throne room, His presence, the manifestation of His presence, this blazing cloud of glory takes up residence in Israel's midst.

In that context, Solomon offers a brief speech that begins in verse 12 and runs down through verse 21. After that, we read in verse 22, "Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and he spread out his hands toward heaven." He actually kneels at this point because we find at the end of the prayer down in verse 54 that when he had finished praying this entire prayer and supplication to the LORD, "he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread toward heaven." So, here

is this solemn occasion, the glory of God has just taken up residence, and (Samuel, or excuse me,) Solomon kneels before the altar with his hands uplifted, and he prays this prayer, and a lot of space is given to this prayer. It's absolutely crucial both in 1 Kings and in the flow of Old Testament history.

Now we don't have time to go through it in detail, but let me give you the big picture, and then we'll look at a specific place. Most of this prayer is that when the people of Israel sin and find themselves in a variety of difficult trials, David, or Solomon's prayer is that God will hear their prayers from wherever their circumstances have taken them and forgive them. And this prayer reaches a kind of crescendo in 8:46.

“When they sin against you”, [this is Solomon praying now to God,] “when they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near; if they take thought in the land where they have been taken captive, and repent and make supplication to You in the land of those who have taken them captive, saying, ‘We have sinned and have committed iniquity, we have acted wickedly’; if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who have taken them captive, and pray to You toward their land which You have given to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and the house which I have built for Your name; then hear their prayer and their supplication in heaven Your dwelling place, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You, and make them *objects of* compassion before those who have taken them captive, that they may have compassion on them (for they are Your people and Your inheritance which You have brought forth from Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace).” [Do this in order] “that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and to the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they call to You.” [Why?] “... [Because] You have separated them from all of the peoples of the earth as Your inheritance,” [There's that concept we studied last Sunday

morning.] “as You spoke through Moses Your servant, when You brought our fathers forth from Egypt, O Lord GOD.”

Now what’s going on here? Remember that this book was written during the exile after God’s people had been carried off captive to Babylon, and it was written for the exiles. And so, Solomon is saying God, if they’re carried off to exile because of their sin, and they repent, and they cry out to you, hear their cry, forgive them, grant compassion, and restore them. This is a message to those people in Babylonian captivity that the reason they’re there is because they sinned against their God, and that if they will repent as Solomon describes it here, and if they will turn with all of their heart back to God, then God will do just this. He will hear. He will have compassion, and He will forgive, and He will restore.

It’s an encouragement to these people to cry out to God from Babylon, which is exactly what they did as we will see in coming weeks. Solomon anticipated this reality, and he prays with this in mind. And by the way, God heard His prayer, look at chapter 9.

... when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD, and the king’s house, and all that Solomon desired to do, ... the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time ... [and] The LORD said ..., “I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before Me....”

That’s God’s way of saying I will do exactly that. I will answer as you prayed. But God gives Solomon a warning, look down in verse 6.

“But if you or your sons indeed turn away from following Me, and don’t keep My commandments and My statutes ... and go and serve other gods ..., then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, [and] I will cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword.... And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astonished and hiss and say, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’ “And they will say, ‘Because they forsook the

LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them, therefore the LORD has brought all this adversity on them.”

This is an apologetic for what God had done to His people because this is, in fact, exactly what happens in the divided monarchy when God then carries them off captive to Babylon. Israel's exile is due to her sin. If she will repent, God will hear, forgive, and restore.

Just a couple of more things to observe about Solomon, in 1 Kings 9:10 through 10, the end of chapter 10, we have the achievements of Solomon's reign, and they're all connected to God's blessing and tied to his faithfulness to God, to the covenant with God. You have reference to his building, to the sacrifices he's made, to the merchant fleet that he created, to his wisdom to rule, his riches, his reputation. All of those things were God's blessing on him as a result of his faithfulness to God, and ultimately is an expression of God's grace.

Solomon's reign was also the golden literary age of Israel. During this time, the histories that we're looking at were written, much music was written. The Psalms and the wisdom literature was all written during this golden age of Israel, the age of David and Solomon.

Sadly, there came a great decline. You know the story of Solomon's sin. Solomon had started well, but his temptation came through international relations. He made a number of international treaties. That was a good thing in many cases, not in everyone, but it was common to seal those allegiances with marriages. But these marriages became more than formalities to Solomon. The foreign women that he married to seal these alliances won his heart and turned his heart to other gods. Notice how far it went, it's described in 1 Kings 11:7 and 8,

... Solomon even built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

Solomon remained committed to worship his God, but his heart was not wholly devoted to God because he was willing, because of his love for these women, to build temples in which they could worship, and he absolutely defiled the land of Israel. For his sin, we learn the kingdom will be taken away. God promises to remove it from him because of Solomon's unfaithfulness to the covenant. And God showed him grace because God confronts Solomon twice. Look at 1 Kings 11:9.

Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, 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 observe what the LORD had commanded.

Hard hearted disobedience. So, God even raised up men around in surrounding countries and from within to put pressure on Solomon to lead him to repentance. They're listed here in Chapter 11, Hadad and Rezon and Jeroboam, all to bring Solomon to the place of repentance.

Did he? I believe he apparently did repent in old age. As a young man, Solomon wrote the Song of Solomon. In middle age, he wrote and assembled the Proverbs. In old age, he wrote Ecclesiastes. It's hard to imagine that that twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes describing old age was written by someone who had not endured it. Likely it was written after his repentance for sins, somewhere between 950 and 931 and his death.

And how does he finish that book? After a life of great blessing and yet great sin, he finishes with this great statement. Ecclesiastes 12:13 - 14,

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to* every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

And ultimately, Solomon and those words brings us back to the only One who can undo the judgment of God upon our sin, to David's greater Son, to the descendant of Solomon, Jesus Christ.

The picture of the Old Testament, the picture of the united monarchy is: mankind needs a centralized ruler who is righteous, who will reign with justice. And someday that will come because God has made a promise to David, we saw it tonight, that his dynasty will be an eternal dynasty because his greatest Son will rule forever.

Let's pray together.

Father, there's so much to learn from this journey we've taken tonight through the days of Saul and of David and of Solomon. Father, I pray that You would give us, like David, a heart after Your own heart. May we be concerned for nothing more than Your glory, may nothing consume our hearts more profoundly, more deeply than Your name and Your reputation.

And Father, I pray that You would protect us and preserve us from ourselves, even as we see these men who had feet of clay.

And Father, use us as You used them, as an expression of Your grace, but Father most of all, we pray that You would bring our hearts and minds back to the one and only perfect, righteous King, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will someday reign forever. Lord, may we be true to Him who has made us righteous with His righteousness.

We pray in His great name. Amen.