

Confirmation 2020-21
Session 11 – Kings
November 22, 2020

Where are we?

Turn to pages 30ff. in the LSB and find the vertical line that indicates 1000 BCE. We will be in this time period during this lesson.

Background Information

When we left off last week, the Israelites had taken possession of the Promised Land, also known as Canaan, the land west of the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. When they went into the land, Joshua divided the land into twelve parcels and gave each Tribe of Israel a portion based on the size of their tribe.

You may recall that when the LORD told the Israelites to take possession of the land, the LORD himself would go before them in battle to guarantee their victory. But they didn't trust the LORD and made treaties and allowed the Canaanites to live among them, which led to intermarrying and tolerating and adopting their pagan customs and idol worship. This apostasy (sin) led to punishment from God. Under the weight of their punishment, the people would cry out. God would hear them and send them a "Judge," a leader of God's own choosing, to lead the people back to faithfulness. However, not all the Judges turned out to be good Judges. Isn't that just like people?

However, this pattern of apostasy, punishment, cry out to God, God hears them and sends them a Judge, happened over and over again. In fact, the Bible tells the story of twelve judges before God decided a new game plan was necessary.

What you need to know

The period of the Judges had a few brief periods (relatively speaking) when the Israelites thrived, but as was their pattern, that period always

collapsed and ended up with the Israelites being ruled by some other kingdom. So, sick of being ruled by the kings of other ruling nations, the Israelites asked God to give them a king too. That was, they believed, the key to their success as a nation. Amid their suffering, they forgot that they had God on their side and no human king could compare. God said no, and gave them the Judges. But the Israelites blamed them for their plight and persisted in demanding a human king like all the other nations had. One they could actually see and listen to as he took command of their armies. Today's session is about the Kings of Israel, whom God allowed Israel to have.

About the Lutheran Study Bible (LSB)

The story of the Kings is spread out throughout several books of the Bible. We will look at 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings. The introductions to each book are as follows:

- 1st Samuel – page 449
- 2nd Samuel – page 499
- 1st Kings – page 543
- 2nd Kings - Page 592

Please read the article entitled “Background File,” “What’s the Story?” and “What’s the Message” for each book. These articles can be found at the beginning of every book of the Bible and are very helpful in getting a basic understanding of each book’s content.

Into the Story

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| 1. | 1 Samuel 8:1-22 | Israel Demands a King |
| 2. | 1 Samuel 9:1-27 | Saul Chosen to be Israel's First King |
| 3. | 1 Samuel 10:1-8 | Samuel Anoints Saul |
| 4. | 1 Samuel 10:17-24 | Saul Proclaimed King |
| 5. | 1 Samuel 13:8-13a | Saul’s Unlawful Sacrifice |
| 6. | 1 Samuel 13:13b-14 | A Man After God's own Heart |
| 7. | 1 Samuel 15:10-34 | Saul Rejected as King |

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| 8. | 1 Samuel 16:1-13 | David Anointed as King |
| 9. | 2 Samuel 5:1-6 | David Anointed King of all Israel |
| 10. | 2 Samuel 5:6-12 | Jerusalem Made Capital of Israel |
| 11. | 2 Samuel 7:1-17 | God's Covenant with David |
| 12. | 2 Samuel 11:1-12:23 | David & Bathsheba |
| 13. | 1 Kings 1:1-27 | The Struggle for Succession |
| 14. | 1 Kings 1:28- 40 | The Ascension of Solomon |
| 15. | 1 Kings 11:1-41 | Solomon's Errors |
| 16. | 1 Kings 12 | The Northern Tribes Secede |

After the death of Solomon in about 931 BCE, most of the Israelite tribes (the ten Northern tribes of Reuben, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad Asher, Ephraim, and Manasseh) except for Judah and Benjamin refused to accept Rehoboam, the son and successor of Solomon, as their king. The rebellion against Rehoboam arose after he refused to lighten the burden of taxation and services that his father had imposed on his subjects.

Another leader by the name of Jeroboam, who was not of the Davidic line (see 10 above), was raised up by the rebellious northern tribes and was proclaimed king over all Israel at Shechem. The northern kingdom continued to be called the Kingdom of Israel or Israel, and sometimes, the Kingdom of Samaria, while the southern kingdom was called the Kingdom of Judah

Remembering that David named Jerusalem the capital city of Israel, and Solomon built a Temple to the God of their ancestors there (see 9 above), this caused a problem for the northern Kingdom of Israel. They did not want their citizens making the pilgrimage to the Temple at Jerusalem to make the required sacrifice and offerings. So they created their own capital of Shechem and their own site of worship at Mt. Gerizim.

These and other issues caused a civil war between the two nations that lasted for years and because they spent too much time fighting each other, other nations attacked them as well. Although there were times when the two nations got closer together, the nations were never again united.

History is recorded by the victors and next week we will briefly hear how this division disappointed God and how God punished all Israel. Much later in biblical history, the future remnants of the northern Kingdom of Israel, also known as the Kingdom of Samaria will become known as the Samaritans and will be looked down upon as unclean by First Century Judaism(John 4), which is made up of the descendants of the Kingdom of Judah.

Back to the Kings, referring to the illustration on page 545 of the LSB, we see the complete list of the kings of the united kingdom and the divided kingdom. A timeline that I will bring to class will better illustrate the tumultuous times that Israel experienced during the period of the kings.

Conclusion

So, having done a quick tour of the books of Samuel and Kings, we have the briefest review of how the Israelites went from being led by the Judges to having human Kings.

The important learning here is that the real problem with the Israelites is faithlessness in the God of their ancestors, and a lack of obedience to God and God's laws, commandments, and rules given to them as a gift so that they had clear boundaries of what it meant to live as God's Chosen People.

As we have learned so far, they were not godly people under Moses, nor Joshua, nor the Judges, nor the Kings. As a result, the Israelites continued in the pattern of apostasy, punishment, cry out to God, God responds by sending them a savior in various forms over and over again.

The story of Israel's kings is not so much about a nation's history as it is about a people's relationship with God. Trying to make sense of a senseless situation, the people of Israel reviewed their story and their beliefs. What they, and we, find in this reflection is that our views of God as all-controlling and all-powerful aren't as comforting in times of suffering and hardship as knowing that our God's heart breaks when we

turn away. God is always in a relationship with us, calling us closer without coercion, choosing love over control.

Essay Questions

In 150 of your own words, briefly answer any four of the following questions below:

1. Referring to Bible passages 1 and 2 above, how would you describe how human beings select leaders? Has it changed today?
2. Referring to Bible passage 5 above, what was the real cause of Saul losing favor with the LORD, not the actual act he did, but the spirit of his action?
3. Referring to Bible passage 6 above, what did David do that pleased the LORD?
4. Referring to Bible passage 11 above, what was the covenant God made with David? And why is it important to us today?
5. Referring to Bible passage 12 above, what sin David commit? What was his real sin?
6. Referring to question 5 above, in your own experience with sin and forgiveness, what is the real issue?
7. Referring to Bible passage 15 above, what was Solomon's error?

Email your answers back to Pastor Jesse by email at pastor@zionohio.org no later than next Sunday, November 29.