

Kings and Queens

The Rise and Fall of Israel's Monarchs

Overview

"The people of Israel and Judah have provoked Me by all the evil they have done – they, their kings and officials, their priests and prophets, the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem. They turned their backs to Me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline. They set up their abominable idols in the house that bears My Name and defiled it" (Jeremiah 32:32-34)

Introduction:

1. Here is a brief review of the two significant periods of history that preceded the Times of the Kings of Israel.
 - The Conquest of Canaan
 - 1) This conquest took place after the Exodus from Egypt in which the Israelites (also known as Hebrews) returned to the land that they once lived prior to the great famine and the same land that the Lord had promised to Abraham.
 - 2) The leader of the conquest was Joshua, who after Moses died and after the Israelites had wandered in the desert for 40 years, led the Israelites back into the Promised Land.
 - 3) Prior to his death Joshua sought to remind the Israelites where they came from and for them to remain faithful to the Lord. (Joshua 23-24)
 - 4) The Scriptures tell us that; "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel" (Joshua 24:31)

- The Period of the Judges

- 1) After the death of Joshua things began to unravel as some of the Israelite tribes (**Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan**) did not completely drive out the inhabitants of the land and they instead willfully chose to live along side of them. (Judges 1:27-36)
- 2) Although the Israelites were rebuked for their **disobedience** (Judges 2:1-6) the Scriptures will later state; “And they took daughters to be their wives and gave daughters to their sons, and they served their gods” (Judges 3:6)
- 3) With Joshua gone and a new generation of Israelites bent on rebellion against the Lord, this period of time was seemingly very dark and **leaderless**.
- 4) Where the Israelites went completely wrong was in their lack of faith in the Lord (Judges 2:1-5) and their continued disobedience to Him.
- 5) The Israelites made **alliances** with the Canaanites and they **intermarried** with them which the Lord prohibited them to do.
- 6) The reason the people of Israel were not to live along side of these “ites” (Canaanites etc.) was because they were wicked and perverse and already under the judgment of the Lord.
- 7) With the breakdown of leadership and the general apostasy (falling away) of the Israelites came oppression and persecution by the very enemies from within the land they had conquered, albeit not completely.
- 8) During this time the Lord would raise up Judges (deliverer) for the purpose of delivering the various tribes of Israel from the oppression they faced.
- 9) This period of the Judges is often considered a low point in the history of the Israelites for at the conclusion of the Book of Judges it reads; “In those days there was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25 – NKJV)

2. In the days after the conquest of Canaan and preceding the first king of Israel, the Israelites as a whole had apostatized (fallen away) themselves due to their continued disobedience to the Lord. This resulted in the Lord demonstrating His divine judgment through various sovereignly appointed and even self-empowered leaders.
3. This shift from a Theocracy (God ruled) to a Monarchy (man ruled) system witnessed a number of changes for the Israelites but one thing remained true for them and that was the Lord remained in control of them, their destiny as well as all things related to mankind and His creation.
4. Here is a nice little chart from The Bible Knowledge Commentary (page 375) which lists the Judges and the enemies/oppressors they did battle with:

(BKC [OT] p. 375)

The Judges of Israel				
Oppressors	Years of Oppression	Judges	Years of Judging	References
Arameans	8	1. Othniel	40	Judges 3:7-11
Moabites	18	2. Ehud	80	Judges 3:12-30
Philistines	?	3. Shamgar	?	Judges 3:31
Canaanites	20	4. Deborah	40	Judges 4-5
Midianites	7	5. Gideon*	40	Judges 6-8
?	?	6. Tola	23	Judges 10:1-2
?	?	7. Jair	22	Judges 10:3-5
Ammonites	18	8. Jephtah	6	Judges 10:6 - 12:7
?	?	9. Ibzan	7	Judges 12:8 - 10
?	?	10. Elon	10	Judges 12:11-12
?	?	11. Abdon	8	Judges 12:13 - 15
Philistines	40	12. Samson	20	Judges 13 - 16

*Abimelech, Gideon's son (Jud. 9), though often considered a judge, is not included here because he usurped authority over Shechem and God did not appoint him as judge.

5. This map shows the Land of Israel during the time of the Judges and the area in which each Judge served:



6. The continued negative influence of the Canaanite idolatry and immorality led the Israelites into total apostasy and thus drove the need for a more centralized rule.
 - “Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way from which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do as their fathers” (Judges 2:17)
 - “In those days there was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25 – NKJV)
7. As the period of the Judges comes to a close during the days of Samuel they will cry out for a king to rule over them:
 - “Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, behold you have grown old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations” (I Samuel 8:5)
 - Samuel will warn the people that a king will merely enslave the people, overburden them work and take their possessions.
 - In spite of this warning this is what the Scriptures say; “Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said No, but there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles” (I Samuel 8:19-20)
8. This shift toward being ruled a king remained in complete **control** of the Lord and He will direct Samuel to select the first King of Israel whose name was **Saul**.
 - “Now a day before Saul’s coming, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel saying, About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel and he will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have regard for My people, because their cry has come to Me” (I Samuel 9:16-17)
 - “Samuel said to all the people, do you see him whom the Lord has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people.” (I Samuel 10:24)

Historical Background

1. When Samuel's life had come to a close and before Saul begins his reign as the first King of Israel the Israelites faced some significant military threats:
 - The **Arameans** to the north
 - The **Ammonites** to the east of the Jordan River
 - The **Philistines** to the south/southwest
2. **This is a significant reason why the people cried out for a king**
3. The **Philistines** were the primary enemies at the conclusion of the period of the Judges and also during the days of Samuel, Saul and David.
 - The Philistines probably migrated to southern Canaan from Crete or other parts of the Aegean Sea during the days of Abraham.
 - 1) They were originally known as “**sea people**” which was probably in reference to their making a living off the sea (Mediterranean and Aegean Sea).
 - 2) Their primary god was Dagon which in their descriptions of this god it had a human torso/upper body and a fish's tail.
 - 3) Their main reason for migrating to Canaan was for the purposes of farming the rich soil (their god Dagon was known to them as the grain god) of the region and then trading with the other cities across the Mediterranean Sea.
 - They lived in five main cities of the southern Canaan coast; **Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Ashdod.**
 - The Philistines will capture the **Ark of the Covenant** which will begin a series of conflict and battles between them and the Israelites. (I Samuel 4-7)
4. It will be a later battle between the Philistines and the Israelites that will bring a young lad named **David** to the forefront and he will eventually become King.

Biblical Background:

1. The period known as the Kings of Israel (1027-587 B.C.) encompasses **22** out of the 39 Books of the Old Testament:
 - I & II Samuel
 - I & II Kings
 - I & II Chronicles
 - Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
 - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations
 - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah
2. The list of the Kings of Israel and Judah is vast and some ruled for a long period of time while others ruled for a short period of time.
 - There were 3 kings that ruled over a “united kingdom” of Israel
 - 1) **Saul**
 - 2) **David**
 - 3) **Solomon**
 - During the reign of Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel experienced the largest territorial expansion in their recorded history and they were considered an Empire of extreme wealth and influence.
 - After the death of Solomon the kingdom of Israel divided:
 - 1) The **Northern** Kingdom of Israel (Made up of 10 Tribes)
 - 2) The **Southern** Kingdom of Judah (Made up of 2 Tribes)

3. The nation once referred to as just Israel and once led by just one king becomes a **divided** kingdom and each will follow their own king.
 - The Northern Kingdom (Their capital city is Shechem and then Samaria)
 - 1) Commonly referred to in the Scriptures as **Israel**
 - 2) Their first king is **Jeroboam**
 - 3) The 10 Tribes of the Northern Kingdom were; **Ephraim, Manasseh, Reuben, Gad, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Simeon, Asher, Naphtali.**
 - 4) There will be a total of **19** Kings that rule over the Northern Kingdom of Israel and **all** of them are described in the Scriptures as **wicked, evil or disobedient** to the Lord.
 - The Southern Kingdom (Their capital city is Jerusalem)
 - 1) Commonly referred to in the Scriptures as **Judah**
 - 2) Their first king is **Rehoboam**
 - 3) The 2 Tribes of the Southern Kingdom were **Judah** and **Benjamin**
 - 4) There will be a total of **19** Kings and **1** Queen that rule over the Southern Kingdom of Judah. **Some** of the kings are described in the Scriptures as **wicked, evil or disobedient** to the Lord, but there are **several** Kings of Judah who were known for their **righteousness** and **obedience** to the Lord.
4. There will be times when the Northern Kingdom of Israel will be at odds with the Southern Kingdom of Judah and there will also be times when they will unite together to defeat a common enemy.
5. The two kingdoms of Israel and Judah will remain divided until each of them collapse and go into captivity never to regain their sovereign control of the land. The prophets speak of a time when they will once again be united but that remains a yet future event according to the Scripture. (Jeremiah 33:14-16, Ezekiel 37:15-28)

6. This map and chart describes the division of land and the kings of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms until their final destruction and captivity:



(BKC [OT] p. 513)

Kings of Judah and Israel and the Preexilic Prophets				ISRAEL			
Kings*	Dates	Years	Dynasty†	Kings	Dates	Years	
Rehoboam	931-913	17	1st Dynasty	Jeroboam I	931-910	22	
Abijah	913-911	3	"	Nadab ‡	910-909	2	
Asa	911-870	41	2nd Dynasty	Baasha	909-886	24	
Coregency with Jehoshaphat	873-870	(3)	"	Elijah ‡	886-885	2	
Jehoshaphat	873-848	25	3rd Dynasty	Zimri	885	7 days	
Coregency with Jehoram	853-848	(5)	"	Tibni	885-880	6	
Jehoram	848-841	8	"	Overlapping reign† with Omri	885-880	(6)	
Ahaziah ‡	841	1	4th Dynasty	Omri	885-874	12	
Queen Athaliah ‡	841-835	6	"	Ahab	874-853	22	
Joash ‡	835-796	40	"	Ahaziah	853-852	2	
Amaziah ‡	796-767	29	"	Jehoram (Joram) ‡	852-841	12	
Azariah's vice-regency under Amaziah	790-767	(23)	"				
Azariah (Uzziah)	790-739	52	5th Dynasty	Jehu	841-814	28	
Coregency with Jotham	750-735	16	"	Jehoash ‡	814-798	17	
Jotham	750-735	16	"	Jehoash (Joash)	798-782	16	
Ahaz's vice-regency under Jotham	744-735	(9)	"	Coregency with Jeroboam II	793-782	(11)	
Coregency of Jotham with Ahaz	735-732	4	"				
Ahaz	732-715	16	6th Dynasty	Jeroboam II	793-753	41	
Hezekiah's vice-regency under Ahaz	729-715	(14)	"	Zachariah ‡	753-752	1/2	
Hezekiah	715-686	29	7th Dynasty	Shallum ‡	752	1/12	
Manasseh's vice-regency under Hezekiah	697-686	(11)	"	Menahem	752-742	10	
Manasseh	697-642	55	"	Overlapping reign with Pekah	752-742	(10)	
Anan ‡	642-640	2	"	Pekahiah ‡	742-742	(2)	
Josiah	640-609	31	8th Dynasty	Overlapping reign with Pekah	742-740	(2)	
Jehoahaz	609	1/4	9th Dynasty	Pekah ‡	752-732	20	
Jehoiskin	609-598	11	"	Hoshea	732-722	9	
Jehoiachin	598-597	1/4	"				
Zedekiah	597-586	11	"				

* Includes one queen (Athaliah).
† In coregency the kings ruled together; in overlapping reigns they reigned separately; in a vice-regency a son ruled with his father in a subordinate position.
‡ These kings and one queen were assassinated.
§ A dynasty is a succession of rulers who are members of the same family or a single ruler of a family different from those before and after him. (The kings of Judah were all of one dynasty because they were all descendants of David.)
** Evangelical scholars differ on these dates of Obadiah and Joel. Some place them at later dates (see the *Interpreters' Handbook* to Joel and Obad.).
Note: In some kings' reigns the dates (e.g., Rehoboam, 931-913), when subtracted, may vary from the number in the "Years" column for that king. This is because the beginning and ending dates for a given king may include only portions of those years in the Gregorian calendar.
The dates of the kings are adapted from Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963.

7. The Northern Kingdom of Israel will be conquered by the **Assyrians** in 722 B.C.
8. The Southern Kingdom of Judah will be conquered by the **Babylonians** in 586 B.C. and taken into captivity for **70** years.
9. The Jews will be permitted during the reign of Cyrus of Persia to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their Temple and their city but it will not be as grand and majestic as it was during the reign of Solomon.
10. The Kingdom of Israel and Judah never formally recovered as an Empire and they have been controlled by foreigners ever since.
11. A day is coming however, in which the Righteous Branch (The Lord Jesus Christ) will rule in Jerusalem and He will reign forever. (Jeremiah 33:14-16, Isaiah 25:8)