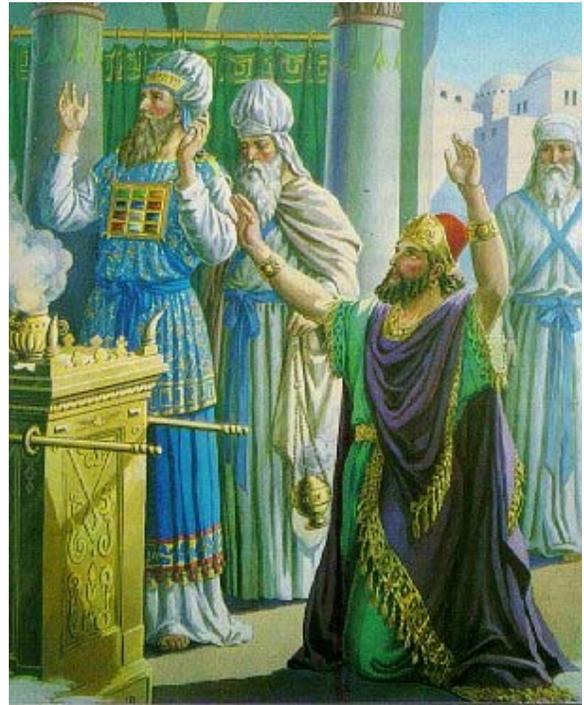


Lessons From Kings



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Written By: Charles Willis
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KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

UNITED KINGDOM

1020-1000	Saul
100-961	David
961-922	Solomon

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

<i>Dates</i>	ISRAEL (Northern)	<i>Dates</i>	JUDAH (Southern)
922-901	Jeroboam I – 22 yrs – Evil	922-915	Rehoboam – 7 yrs – Evil
		915-913	Abijah – 3 yrs - Evil
		913-873	Asa – 40 yrs – Good
901-900	Nadab – 2 yrs – Evil		
900-877	Baasha – 23 yrs – Evil		
877-876	Elah – 2 yrs – Evil		
876	Zimri – 1 Week - Evil		
876-869	Omri – 12 yrs – Evil	873-849	Jehoshaphat – 24 yrs – Good
869-850	Ahab – 19 yrs - Evil		
850-849	Ahaziah – 2 yrs – Evil		
849-843	Joram (Jehoram) – 6 yrs – Evil	849-843	Jehoram (Joram) – 6 yrs – Evil
843-815	Jehu – 28 yrs – Evil	843	Ahaziah – 1 yr - Evil
		843-837	Athaliah (Queen) – 6 yrs – Evil
		837-800	Joash (Jehoash) – 37 yrs – Evil
815-802	Jehoahaz – 13 years – Evil		
		800-783	Amaziah – 17 yrs – Good
802-786	Jehoash (Joash) – 16 yrs – Evil		
786-746	Jeroboam II – 40 yrs – Evil		
		783-742	Uzziah (Azariah) – 41 yrs – Good
746-745	Zachariah – 6 months – Evil	750-735	Jotham – 15 yrs – Good
745	Shallum – 1 month – Evil		
745-737	Manahem – 10 yrs – Evil		
737-736	Pekahiah – 2 yrs – Evil		
736-732	Pekah – 4 yrs – Evil		
		735-715	Ahaz – 20 yrs - Evil
732-724	Hoshea – 8 yrs – Evil		
721	FALL OF SAMARIA		
		715-687	Hezekiah – 28 yrs – Good
		687-642	Manasseh – 45 yrs – Evil
		642-640	Amon – 2 yrs – Evil
		640-609	Josiah – 31 yrs – Good
		609	Jehoahaz – 3 months – Evil
		609-598	Jehoikim – 11 yrs – Evil
		598-597	Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) – 3 months – Evil
		597-587	Zedekiah (Mattaniah) 10 yrs – Evil
		587	FALL OF JERUSALEM



Samuel advising Saul

Lesson One King Saul

READING: 1 Samuel 15:10-28; 18:10-16;
22:11-19; 28:3-19

1. Why did Israel want a king? What was wrong with this? (1 Samuel 8:4-22)

2. Why did God reject Saul from being the King over Israel?

3. What attitude did Saul develop toward David? How was this attitude displayed in 1 Samuel 18?

4. Why did Saul command Doeg to kill the priests of God? How many were killed?

5. When God did not answer Saul who did he turn to? Why is this significant?

No man had so many opportunities to obey God and failed to do so. Saul's life is a story of one tremendous fall. A continual growth of pride, ego and abuse of power which led to his moral ruin.

Consider his downfall.

Anointed with Spirit (11:6)

Humble, self-controlled (10:22; 27:11:13)

Selfishness restricted influence (13:12-13)

Disobedient and took rash vows (15:11-23)

Jealous of David, sought to harm him (18-19)

Patronized a spiritist (28:7)

Suicide in battle (31:4)

For Discussion

1. What was Saul's attitude about obeying God's commands in 1 Samuel 15? How does this compare with God's expectations?

2. Compare the statements of Samuel to Saul throughout his life with the statements in 1 Samuel 28.

King David



David refuses to harm God's anointed

READING: 1 Samuel 17:31-51; 24:1-22; 26:1-25;
2 Samuel 6:1-11; 11:1-12:15

1. How does David demonstrate his trust in God from 1 Samuel 17?
2. Why did David refuse to kill Saul? (1 Sam. 24 and 26) What does this demonstrate about his character?
3. Why did David get angry at God? (2 Sam. 6) Why was it important to have the ark with David?
4. What was David's great sin (2 Sam. 11-12)?
5. In what ways did Bathsheeba sin (2 Sam. 11)? Was she guilty of luring David into sin?

Ark of the Covenant

The first Indiana Jones movie depicts the Ark of the covenant as having a great power to destroy enemies. While a work of fiction, it is based on some facts in scripture. The ark went before the Israelites as they crossed the Jordan river on dry ground (Josh. 3-4) and played an important part in the destruction of Jericho (Josh. 6). When stolen by the Philistines in battle (1 Sam. 4) it caused them 7 months of plagues and they returned it.

Giants

Goliath in modern measurements would be 9 feet 6 inches tall. Critics reject the reality of Goliath. Skeletons in Palestine have been found that prove the reality of such tall men. The city of Gath had a reputation for "giants". 1 Chronicles 20:6 mentions another man of great stature from Gath with 24 fingers and toes who was descended from giants. Verse 8 also speaks of the "giants in Gath".

For Discussion

1. How did David try to deal with the consequences of sin? How do we try to deal with the consequences of sin?
2. Compare the courage of Nathan before the King (2 Sam. 12) to our courage in presenting the gospel to one who is in sin.



Solomon's Temple

Lesson Three

King Solomon

READING: 1 Kings 2:1-4; 3:1-28; 4:20-28
6:1-38; 8:54-66; 9:1-9; 11:1-13

1. What was the charge David gave Solomon? How does this compare with the instructions of God in 1 Kings 3:14?
2. God told Solomon "ask what you wish me to give you" (1 King 3:5). What was his reply and why did this please God? How is this demonstrated later in the chapter?
3. Describe Solomon's wealth and the power of the nation under his rule (1 Kings 4).
4. What structure is Solomon remembered for building? Describe some of its construction and furnishings and the sacrifices at its dedication. How does this speak of Solomon's wisdom?
5. How did God's statements in chapter 9 come true?
6. What caused Solomon to serve idols?

Stables

Solomon built several chariot cities (Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer – 1 King 9). "Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem." (1 Kings 10:26). Excavations in Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer have revealed stables of magnificent splendor housing 450 horses and 150 chariots each.

A Golden Temple

1 Kings 6 says "Solomon built the temple...he lined its walls inside with cedar boards...he overlain the whole interior with gold...he also covered the floors of both the inner and outer rooms of the temple with gold". When Ezra rebuilt the temple, "the old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice" (Ezra 3:12). Nothing compares with the temple of Solomon!

For Discussion

1. Discuss the influence of a spouse in regard to faith. Base the discussion on Solomon's great faith deteriorated by his love for his wives.
2. Solomon did not follow God "fully" (1 Kings 11:6) as David had done. Research the phrase "wholly devoted" and discuss what God expects from us in light of Solomon's example.



Rehoboam does not listen to the council of the older men

Lesson Four

King Rehoboam

READING: 1 Kings 12:1-24; 14:21-31;
2 Chronicles 11:1-13, 18-23; 12:1-16

1. What was the dramatic mistake of Rehoboam's reign which caused a division of the Israelite nation?
2. What applications can we make from this event about advice and decisions? *Provide New Testament passages to help.*
3. Why did the priests and Levites stand with Rehoboam (2 Chron. 11:13)?
4. Why did Shishak come up against Jerusalem?
5. Whose example was Rehoboam following in 2 Chronicles 12:1?
6. Though they humbled themselves again before God, what was the punishment for the people with Shishak?
7. Why did Rehoboam do evil (2 Chronicles 12:14)?

2 Chron. 11:18-21

records how Rehoboam had 18 wives and fathered 88 children. While not as many as his father Solomon, we still see a violation of God's law in this. Deuteronomy 17:14-17 has God speaking about a time in the future when the people possessed the land and would desire a King like the nations around them. Verse 17 specifically says of the King, "he shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away".

An Ammonite Mother, Naamah

Some have questioned whether his mother was politically powerful or not. It could easily be argued how she influenced Solomon to worship idols. She certainly would have been a persuasive influence on Rehoboam's decision to not seek the Lord in going after idols.

For Discussion

1. From the life of Rehoboam what can we learn about humbling ourselves before God?
2. How do we set our heart to seek the Lord? What New Testament passages teach us on this subject?



Jeroboam erects a golden calf to worship

Lesson Five

King Jeroboam

READING: 1 Kings 11:26-40, 12:20-13:10,
13:33-14:20; 2 Kings 17:22-23

1. Why did Solomon seek to put Jeroboam to death (1 Kings 11:40)?
2. What portion of the tribes of Israel did Jeroboam reign over?
3. Compare God's statement in 1 Kings 11:37-38 with Jeroboam's actions in 1 Kings 12:26-33. Make two points about how men today follow the logic of Jeroboam rather than God's instructions.
4. What was Jeroboam's attitude toward God's messenger (1 Kings 13:1-10)? What was the prophecy?
5. When Jeroboam sent his wife to visit Abijah regarding their ill son, what was she told would happen to the son (1 Kings 14)?
6. Why was God removing Jeroboam from his reign?

Jeroboam received a kingdom full of idolatrous worship established by Solomon. 1 Kings 11:33 says they worshipped these gods:

Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians

This was a female goddess of fertility, love and war which was associated with the planet Venus. In Babylon she was called Ishtar. Worship consisted of licentious conduct. This Hebrew name is unique and is believed to have been a deliberate alteration by the Hebrews to express their abhorrence by giving her name the vowels of their word for "shame".

Chemosh the god of Moab

This was the national god of Moab. What little is known about him includes horribly cruel worship similar to that of Molech.

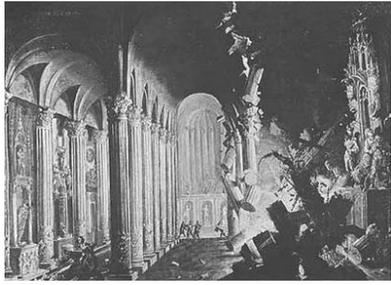
Milcom the god of the sons of Ammon

Milcom is another spelling for the god Molech. The idol is called an abomination in 1 Kings 11:5-7. Several references indicate worship consisted of child sacrifice (Lev. 18:21; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 32:35).

Jeroboam only added to these idols those of his own creation. What were two more calves?

For Discussion

1. Jeroboam was an influential King in Israel. Relate the importance of 1 Kings 14:16 and 2 Kings 17:22-23. How are we also influenced by religious leaders?
2. Jeroboam seems to have suffered from pride and ego. What is to be the believer's attitude about such things? How does Jeroboam demonstrate the danger of these traits?



Asa destroying the idols

Lesson Six

King Asa

READING: 2 Chronicles 14-16

1. Was Asa king over Israel or Judah?
2. How was Asa able to defeat the Ethiopian army that numbered "a million men" (2 Chron. 14:9)?
3. What message did Azariah bring from God (2 Chron. 15)?
4. How did Asa respond to this message (2 Chron. 15:8-15)?
5. Why did Asa have his mother removed as queen?
6. Why was it wrong for Asa to have made a treaty with Ben-hadad king of Aram (2 Chron. 16)?
7. The message that this was a mistake was brought by Hanani the seer. What was Asa's response to this messenger and this message?

Hanani the Seer (2 Chronicles 16:7)

There are three Hebrew words used of the prophets: **nabi, roeh and hozeh**. The first is always translated *prophet*. The second and third words are both active participles of different verbs which mean "to see". The second word is usually translated *seer*, and the third is translated *seer* or *prophet*. Scripture makes no distinction between the later two words using them synonymously. Hanani was a prophet.

300 Chariots (2 Chron. 14:9)

These would have been light-weight vehicles drawn by two horses which would have made them very fast. They were usually occupied by two men: a driver and a warrior. Chariots were not only used for running over the enemy, but also for swift attacks and retreats using spears primarily. During Solomon's reign, the nation of Israel had 1400 chariots (1 Kings 10:26). None are mentioned in the battle of Asa against the Ethiopians.

For Discussion

1. Much is said in these readings about serving God with all your heart and seeking Him earnestly. What New Testament passages teach similar concepts for the Christian?
2. How does Asa's life of serving God compare with his great-grandfather Solomon?



Ahab offering to purchase Naboth's vineyard

Lesson Seven

King Ahab

READING: 1 Kings 16:29-34; 18:1-19;
19:1-3; 20:31-21:29; 22:1-40

1. Why is Ahab remembered for having provoked God more than all the kings of Israel who were before him? (1 Kings 16)
2. Describe Jezebel's attitudes about Jehovah and his servants. (see 1 Kings 19:1-3)
3. What does 1 Kings 20 reveal about Ahab's attitudes toward God's instructions? Toward God's prophets?(see also 18:17 and 21:20)
4. From the reading about Naboth's vineyard, describe the character of Ahab.
5. If Ahab is remembered as a very evil king in following idols, why does he seem to repeatedly be concerned about the poor prophecies about himself from Elijah and Micaiah? (see especially 1 Kings 21:27-29)
6. How does Ahab die? What prophecies are fulfilled in regard to his and Jezebel's death?

Ahab's Ivory Palace

1 Kings 22:39 records how Ahab built for himself an ivory palace. We must infer this is the palace that was next to Naboth's vineyard. Ivory does not occur in large enough sizes to build a structure, so it is understood that the palace was inlaid and decorated with large amounts of ivory as a sign of extreme wealth. Some of the ivory carving that adorned his palace has survived.



Tree of Life ivory embellishment, Israel Museum, Jerusalem



Sphinx Ivory decoration from Ahab's palace, 9th C BCE, Israel Museum, Jerusalem



Note the non-Israelite influence in this ivory carving (also Israel Museum, Jerusalem).

For Discussion

1. What were the results of Ahab's choice for a wife? What implications does this reveal about our marriage choices? (see 1 Kings 21:25)
2. Describe Jezebel's attitude toward getting what you want. Compare this with modern views about worldliness.

King Jehoshaphat

READING: 2 Chronicles 17-20



Jehoshaphat and the people mourning - the prophecy of Jahaziel

1. Why was the Lord with Jehoshaphat (17: 1-6)?
2. When Ahab's false prophets said go up into battle, what was Jehoshaphat's response?
3. What was Micaiah prophesy about the battle?
4. When Jehoshaphat appointed Judges, what instructions did he give them (19: 5-11)? What personal applications can be made?
5. In a time of crisis what was Jehoshaphat's attitude (20: 1-12)?
6. What was God's response to Jehoshaphat's prayer (20: 13-23)?
7. A second alliance with the king of Israel was made. Why was God displeased with this alliance (20: 35-37)?

The High Places

2 Chronicles 17:6 tells us Jehoshaphat removed the high places, but 20:33 says "the high places, however, were not removed". The reason was perhaps because "the people had not yet directed their hearts to the God of their fathers" (20:33). The High Places were a source of constant problems for the Israelites.

The High Places were features of Caananite religions which the Israelites first encountered when passing into the land. They were instructed to destroy them (Deut. 33:29). They were vile places of idolatrous worship consisting of licentiousness and immorality as well as prostitution (Hos. 4:11-14; Jer. 3:2). There were often chambers at these locations maintained for male prostitutes (1 Kings 14:23-34; 2 Kings 23:7). Even remains of sacrificed children have been found in these places of worship.

Worship to Jehovah was to be from one altar in the temple – but the people often conducted such worship in the High Places. These places were continually being destroyed and rebuilt by various kings of Judah and the people.

For Discussion

1. Jehoshaphat saw the need to establish a teaching program (17: 7-9). What need for a program of teaching can we see in the church today?
2. Jehu makes an interesting statement in 19:2-3. Make application of these principles to modern concepts regarding fellowship, as well as to concepts regarding influence.



Uzziah struck with leprosy – painting by Rembrandt

Lesson Nine

King Uzziah

READING: 2 Chronicles 26

1. How does Uzziah demonstrate young people can have a heart for serving God?
2. How did God help Uzziah (v.5-15)?
3. In his pride, what act of disobedience did Uzziah commit?
4. Who opposed Uzziah's actions (v.16-21)? Why?
5. How did God show His displeasure toward Uzziah?
6. At what age do you think Uzziah was when he "became strong" and was filled with pride? (scripture does not say) What lessons might we learn from this?

Engines of War

The reading tells us Uzziah made engines of war for the towers of Jerusalem. This is the only place in scripture we see such a reference. The text tells us these machines were for shooting arrows and great stones (v.15). These were not unique to the Israelites, but can be seen as the "modern technology" of the day. Uzziah was updating their defenses. By the time of the Roman Empire these were standard equipment which were perfected under their use.

The *ballista* threw darts and arrows. Often called a *catapult ballista* because the technology is based on similar principles. Both devices are derivatives of the bow. The ballista was a fore-runner of the crossbow and was much larger.



The *catapult* threw stones weighing between 50 and 300 pounds. It was a slow-firing machine most often used in offensive siege battles. In a tower they were most likely permanently built in place.



For Discussion

1. How can pride similarly effect our thinking about religion?
2. What do we learn from these priests about opposing evil?



King Ahaz worshipping idols and sacrificing to other gods – art from 14th century Bible

Lesson Ten

King Ahaz

READING: 2 Chronicles 28; 2 Kings 16

1. What was Ahaz's attitude toward God and religion (2 Chron. 28: 1-4)?
2. Why was the Northern Kingdom able to defeat the Southern (2 Chron. 28:5-15)?
3. Where did Ahaz get funds to pay-off the Assyrians and prevent their attack (2 Chron. 28:20; 2 Kings 16:8)?
4. In time of crisis, who did Ahaz turn to (2 Chron. 28:22; 2 Kings 16:10-16)?
5. Describe how far Ahaz went in rejecting God (2 Chron. 28:24-26; 2 Kings 16:17-18).
6. What did the people think of Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:27)?

Ahaz Took Down The Sea

Scripture records how Ahaz ravaged the temple of God in Jerusalem, destroying many items used in worship. We're told "he took down the sea from the bronze oxen which were under it and put it on a pavement of stone" (2 Kings 16:17).

1 Kings 7:23-26 tells us Hiram of Tyre (a bronze worker Solomon hired) "*made the sea of cast metal ten cubits from brim to brim, circular in form, and its height was five cubits, and thirty cubits in circumference...It stood on twelve oxen...and all their rear parts turned inward... it could hold two thousand baths.*"

We learn from 2 Chronicles 4:6 that the Temple had 10 basins in which to wash (five on the right and five on the left, on the way in to the Temple) "*but the sea was for the priests to wash in*".

It is not difficult to understand why it was referred to as a 'sea'. Vessels of this size were not common, certainly rare being made of bronze. It had an estimated 12,000 gallon capacity (1 and 1/3 eighteen-wheeler tanker trucks) and when filled would have weighed nearly 90 tons.

For Discussion

1. How did Ahaz influence the people (2 Chron. 28:19, 23)?
2. Compare and contrast Ahaz's walk away from God with men today who reject God.



Hezekiah exhibiting his treasures to the Babylonians

Lesson Eleven

King Hezekiah

READING: 2 Chronicles 29-32;
2 Kings 19-20

1. What was Hezekiah's priority when he became king (2nd Chron. 29)?
2. By the 2nd month of his reign, what was his new priority? How did the people respond (2nd Chron. 30)?
3. 2nd Chronicles 31 relates the restoration of tithes and duties of the priests and Levites. From verses 20-21 what should be our attitude in serving God?
4. How did Hezekiah trust God (2nd Chron. 32)?
5. From Hezekiah's prayer and God's response, what can we learn about our own prayers and how God responds (2nd Kings 19)?
6. Why did God extend Hezekiah's life 15 years (2nd Kings 20:1-11)?

Hezekiah's Tunnel

2 Kings 20:20 "As for the other events of Hezekiah's reign, all his achievements and how he made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water into the city..."
2 Chron. 32:30 "It was Hezekiah who blocked the upper outlet of the Gihon spring and channeled the water down to the west side of the City of David."

Discovered in modern times by Edward Robinson (1838), cleared by Montague Parker's team (1909-11), work continues on the Tunnel and related passageways under the direction of Ronny Reich (1995-). The tunnel transported water from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam. It is 1760 ft. [536 m.] in length and 75 feet underground. It seems that it was built to bring water from the east side of the city to an area inside the wall closer to the newly inhabited western portion of the city and possibly to protect the city's water supply during the siege of the Assyrian king Sennacherib (701 B.C.). It is one of the greatest feats of water engineering in the ancient world.



For Discussion

1. Give references demonstrating Hezekiah's concern for the souls of ALL Israelites. How does this relate to modern conservative/liberal divisions?
2. How did Hezekiah misunderstand the prophecy of Isaiah (2nd Kings 20:16-19)?



Josiah hearing the word of God read

Lesson Twelve

King Josiah

READING: 2 Chronicles 34-35;
2 Kings 22-23:30

1. How did Josiah purge Judah and Jerusalem (2 Chron. 34)?
2. What did Hilkiah find? What did he do with it? What did Josiah think about it? (2 Chron. 34:14-21)
3. What did Huldah prophesy? (2 Chron. 34; 2 Kings 22) When was this fulfilled?
4. What made Josiah's observance of the Passover better than the other kings back to the day of Samuel (2 Chron. 35:1-18)?
5. What did the people think of Josiah (2 Chron. 35:24-27)?

A "Book" Found By Hilkiah

In Deut. 31:26-27 Moses said to the priests, "Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you. For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness...". Some have supposed that Hilkiah may have uncovered this original manuscript of the Torah (first five books of the Old Testament), or perhaps an original or early copy of Deuteronomy. Either way the book of the Law was evidently something they were not familiar with.

Ancient books were not bound as modern books, but were what we think of as scrolls.



For Discussion

1. Compare Josiah's covenant with the "covenant" Christians make with God in obedience to the gospel (2 Chron. 34:31-32; 2 Kings 23:3).
2. Read 2 Kings 23:25. What aspect of Josiah's character pleased God so much? Give 2 or 3 New Testament passages that indicate we are to have a heart like Josiah.