D-History

by
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Preface

It is not customary to defend one's title for a work in the preface, but in this case it may be appropriate. The Hebrew Bible contains two histories of the Israelite nation until the exile. The first of these comprises the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings. In the Hebrew canon, they fall in the second major division, the *Nebiim*, and are designated "The Former Prophets." This title distinguishes them from "The Latter Prophets," that is, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve. The second history comprises the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah and lies at the close of the Hebrew canon in its third major section called *Kethubim*. That these two histories are distinct though overlapping is apparent for several reasons.

The first history traces copiously the invasion by Joshua, the division of the land, and the history of the tribal league that followed. During the period of the divided monarchy, this first history alternately treats both the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. It gives a rather detailed account of the two famous northern prophets, Elijah and Elisha. It concludes with the exile of the northern nation to Assyria and the exile of the southern nation to Babylon.

The second history begins with extensive genealogies from Adam to the time of Saul and David. It passes over entirely the history of Joshua's invasion, the tribal league, the beginning of the monarchy, and even the early life of David. Instead, its narratives begin with the ascension of David to the throne of a united Israel. In tracing the history of the Israelites, it largely ignores the northern nation, concentrating instead upon the southern nation of Judah. Its narratives extend beyond the exile to the return from captivity and the rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple and walls.

To be sure, there is considerable overlapping material between the two histories. Some of it is word for word in the Hebrew text, suggesting an almost certain literary relationship. Specific authors who worked on the two histories are unknown, but it does seem obvious that in each case they worked from a distinctive theological viewpoint. The first history focuses upon the entire twelve tribes. The second history focuses largely upon a single tribe, Judah.

The past century and a half has seen a good deal of scholarly research and

speculation concerning the origins of these two histories. It is now common to call the first D-History (The Deuteronomist's History) and the second C-History (The Chronicler's History). These designations, at the simplest level, are helpful, since they offer a way to identify the two histories as separate works originating from distinctive theological vantage points. However, certain assumptions about the origins of these collections, their time of composition, any redactional work that may have occurred after they were written, and their integrity as inspired Scripture bear examination. It is not uncommon, especially after the work of Martin Noth on both histories,[1] to dissect them into different strands or sources, especially the D and P sources familiar from Pentateuchal source criticism. The present work does not attempt such literary dissection. In fact, whether in Torah studies, D-History or C-History, many of the assumptions and conclusions of such studies are, in the opinion of this writer, questionable.

Thus, to use the title D-History, at least in the present study, means no more and no less than the collection of the books Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings in the Hebrew Bible. These works combine to form a general historical perspective which owes much to the theology of the Book of Deuteronomy. My purpose is not to say that Deuteronomy is a product of any certain school, or that it was written in conjunction with D-History, much less to say that it is divorced from Moses. On the other hand, to fail to see the theological connections between Deuteronomy and the books of D-History is to fail in the ultimate task of sound biblical interpretation. Those connections are real, and they are prominent enough that they should not be ignored. Hence, the title D-History is appropriate.

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[1]M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1981) and M. Noth, *The Chronicler's History*, trans. H. Williamson (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1987).

The Arrangement And Contents Of The Former Prophets

For most Christians, the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings are books of stories. In our English categorizations of the Old Testament, we usually label them as "historical books," part of a larger section which includes the Pentateuch and then extends from Joshua through Esther.[2] Our English Bible follows the divisions of the Latin Vulgate (translated by Jerome in the 4th century A.D.), which in turn followed the divisions of the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Old Testament completed in the mid-2nd century B.C. In the Hebrew Bible, however, the order of books is different, and while both orders can be dated to at least the 2nd-century B.C., the order in the Hebrew Bible is that which prevailed among the Jews of Palestine and Babylon, where the Hebrew Bible was preserved and edited.[3] In the Hebrew Bible, the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings[4] are in the second major section, called the *Nebiim* (= the prophets), which in turn is divided into the "Former Prophets" (Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings) and the "Latter

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[2]The usual English categorization is seventeen historical books, five poetical books, and seventeen prophetical books, cf. M. Unger, *Unger's Bible Handbook* (Chicago: Moody, 1966) 4.

[3]The order of the Hebrew Bible is listed below. The familiar titles of the books in the Pentateuch were first given in the LXX, whereas the Hebrew Bible takes its titles for the same books from the first Hebrew words in the text. It also should be noted that a special section, called the "Five Rolls" (*Megilloth*), had a special relationship to the great Jewish festivals (Passover, Pentecost, Temple Destruction, Booths, Purim).

TORAH (= Instruction, Law):

> *Bereshith* (= In the Beginning/Genesis)
> *We'elleh Shemot* (= And These Are The Names/Exodus)
> *Wayyiqra'* (= And He Called/Leviticus)
> *Bemidbar* (= In the Desert/Numbers)
> *Elleh Hadevarim* (= These Are The Words/Deuteronomy)

NEBIIM (= Prophets):

> *Nebiim Rishonim* (= Former Prophets) Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings
> *Nebiim 'Aharonim* (= Latter Prophets) Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve

KETHUBIM (= Writings): Psalms, Proverbs, Job

> *Megilloth* (= Rolls): Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther
> Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles

F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments,* 3rd ed. (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1963), pp. 89-92.

[4]Samuel and Kings appear as two books in the Hebrew Bible, but in the LXX they have been divided into four books (1, 2, 3, 4 Kingdoms). In the Latin Vulgate, they also are divided into four books (1, 2, 3, 4 Kings), and so they pass into the English Bible as four books (1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings).

Prophets" (Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve).[5] This grouping of Joshua through Kings among the prophets was far from arbitrary, even though these books are also historical in character. It is essential to understand that these books were not simply concerned with recording events, like some national log book, but they were concerned with using the events to make a profound theological statement, a statement that the classical prophets also made in a somewhat different way. Joshua through Kings teach a prophetic lesson, and they draw heavily from Torah while at the same time complementing the classical prophets.[6]

Joshua

The content of the Book of Joshua may be analyzed in three major sections. First is the *Book of War* (Jos. 1-12). At the Red Sea, Yahweh had demonstrated himself as a Divine Warrior. Now the Israelites were prepared to cross the Jordan into Canaan proper, and Yahweh was to lead them into a holy war against the Canaanites to dispossess them, to destroy them, and to take their land.[7] After the opening charge to the people, Joshua commissioned a reconnaissance of Jericho, the first target. Appropriate ceremonies of preparation were held, and the Jordan was crossed through a miracle similar to what had happened at the Red Sea. Jericho fell by a divine act. Following Jericho's defeat, the Israelite army experienced a terrible

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[5]In the Hebrew Bible, the Twelve appears as one book which includes all twelve of what we call the "Minor Prophets" (minor in terms of length, not necessarily significance). Once again, it is in the LXX that the Twelve has been divided into separate documents.

[6]Bruce, p. 92.

[7]The date of the conquest of Canaan is closely connected with the date of the exodus. Traditionally, conservative theologians have argued that the exodus/conquest occurred in the 15th century B.C., cf. L. Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), pp. 88-109. However, the prevailing view among current archaeologists is that the best evidence for a disruption of Canaanite life, such as would have been caused by the invasion described in the Book of Joshua, is reflected in the archaeological remains of the 13th century B.C. Excavations at a variety of Canaanite sites show evidence of destruction and resettlement in the 13th century, cf. B. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 86-87. At the same time, such evidence is far from conclusive, and alternative dates keep reappearing. For instance, one innovative redating puts the events of the exodus and conquest as early as before 2000 B.C., cf. E. Anati, "Has Mt. Sinai Been Found?" *BAR* (Jul./Aug. 1985; XI.4), pp. 42-57. Another redating has attempted to support the more traditional date of shortly before 1400 B.C., cf. J. Bimson and D. Livingston, "Redating the Exodus," *BAR* (Sept./Oct. 1987; XIII.5), pp. 40-53, 66-68. The archaeological debate goes on, cf. B. Halpern, "Radical Exodus Redating Fatally Flawed," *BAR* (Nov./Dec. 1987; XIII.6), pp. 56-61; J. Bimson, "A Reply to Baruch Halpern," *BAR* (Jul./Aug. 1988; XV.4), pp. 52-55.

Within conservative scholarship, some argue that the earlier date is mandatory if biblical inerrancy is to be maintained, cf. G. Archer, "Alleged Errors and Discrepancies in the Original Manuscripts of the Bible," *Inerrancy*, ed. N. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 63-65. Other evangelicals, equally committed to the integrity of Scripture, accept the later date, cf. D. Wiseman, "Archaeology and the Old Testament," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. F. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979) I.316-318; R. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), pp. 174-177. Still other evangelicals, even without involving themselves in the question of inerrancy, opt for an earlier date, cf. W. Shea, "Exodus, Date of the," *ISBE* (1982) II.230-238. Among evangelicals, the issue has not been resolved.

failure at the relatively insignificant town of Ai due to a violation of the laws of Yahweh war. After this violation had been rectified, and the covenant had been renewed, the campaign in central Palestine continued. Though tricked into making a forbidden alliance with the Gibeonites, a Canaanite group, Joshua pressed on, completing campaigns in central, southern, and northern Palestine respectively. The Book of War closes with a summary of the defeated kings and city-states of Canaan.[8] The second major section of Joshua concerns *The Tribal Allotments* (Jos. 13-21). The Canaanites' land, which had been wrested from them in the conquest under Joshua, was divided among nine and a half tribes. (The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh had already received territorial allotments from Moses in the transjordan.) In additional to the tribal allotments, special cities were designated as sanctuary sites in connection with the Torah manslaughter laws. Other cities were designated for the Levite clans who, because of their cultic duties, received no territorial allotments. Finally, there is the *Epilogue* (Jos. 22-24). The closing section of the Book of Joshua recounts the dismissal of the transjordan tribes to their territories, the aged Joshua's farewell address to the clan leaders of all the tribes, and the covenant renewal ceremony at Shechem.

Judges

The content of the Book of Judges may be analyzed in three major sections also. First, there is the preface (Jg. 1:1--3:6). In this preface, there are two distinct introductions to the Book of Judges, each of which creates important ties with the conquest narratives in the Book of Joshua. The first introduction (1:1-2:5) provides a summary of the conquest of Canaan and a brief description of the final settlement of Israel in the land. In this section, the failure of Israel to dislodge many of the enclaves of Canaanites is emphasized, a fact that demonstrated a breach of covenant responsibility and a permanent weakness.[9] The second introduction (2:6--3:6)

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[8]Current archaeologists are debating the exact nature of the Israelite emergence and settlement in Canaan. While the biblical picture seems to clearly describe an invasion from the outside, non-evangelical archaeologists have begun to question the legitimacy of that picture, cf. M. Weippert, "Canaan, Conquest and Settlement," *IDBSup* (1976), pp. 125-130. New theories are being proposed, ranging from the idea that Israel was the result of a sociological upward mobility of indigenous peoples in a sort of "peasants' revolt" to the idea that Israel emerged as the result of the gradual infiltration of pastoral semi-nomads who began to adopt a sedentary lifestyle, cf. I. Finkelstein, "Searching for Israelite Origins," *BAR* (Sept./Oct. 1988; XIV.5), pp. 34-45. The very same archaeological evidence has been used to support both the idea of a military conquest and a peaceful infiltration, cf. F. Brandfon, "Archaeology & the Biblical Text," *BAR* (Jan./Feb. 1988; XIV.1), pp. 54-59.

Evangelicals, on the other hand, are firmly committed to the biblical picture of an invasion from the outside. Archaeological data, by its very nature, is fragmentary, and evangelicals are not willing to overthrow the biblical accounts on the basis of the shifting sands of current opinion.

[9]The fact of Israel's lack of success in this opening of Judges contrasts sharply with the record of brilliant successes recorded in Joshua. The one declares that Joshua conquered the entire land, gave it to the tribes of Israel, and secured rest for the land from war (cf. Jos. 11:23). The other delcares that Israel failed to dislodge many of the Canaanite enclaves, a fact which in turn meant that the entire land was not fully under Israelite control (Jg. 1:19-36). Yahweh determined to

describes the apostasy of the nation as Israel indulged in the pagan religions of the Canaanites who still lived among them. It sets the stage for the cycle of apostasy, oppression, repentance, deliverance, and peace which is repeated several times in the succeeding records of the Tribal League.

The second section is a history of the judges[10] (3:7--16:31). The history is a repeating cycle as military superiority shifted back and forth between Israel and various Canaanite nations.[11] The book describes twelve judges, six of them in varying detail (Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson) and six in very brief notations (Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon). In addition, two other persons of note figure in the history. One is Barak, a military leader who worked closely with Deborah; the other is Abimelech, a leader who unsuccessfully attempted to establish the first Israelite monarchy.

During the period of the judges, Israel's covenant-breaking pattern led to her oppression under Cushan-rishathaim of northwest Mesopotamia, Eglon of Moab, Jabin of northern Canaan, the bedouin clans of Midian and Amalek, the Ammonites, and the Philistines. In each case, because of Israel's repentance, Yahweh sent a military deliverer to rescue the nation.

Finally, there are some appendices (17-21). The final section of the book recounts two unconnected incidents of the period, both demonstrating the general internal disorder of the times. In this section, no less than four times the narratives explain that "Israel had no king" and/or "everyone did as he saw fit" (17:6; 18:1; 19:1;

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leave these Canaanites in the land due to Israel's violation of the covenant conditions (Jg. 2:1-4) and as an opportunity for further training and practice in war (Jg. 2:20--3:4).

Various solutions have been proposed for this tension between the two records. One is that the two accounts speak of an earlier and a later conquest, Joshua describing an earlier stage with Judges describing a later stage. However, the close parallels between the two accounts makes this solution weak, cf. A. Cundall & L. Morris, *Judges & Ruth* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1968), p. 19. A more satisfactory solution is that in Joshua 1-11 the Israelites fought in order to destroy and exterminate, but not to occupy by immediate settlement. After key cities had been conquered, the clans were to go back to their various tribal allotments to clear the enemy from them, a task which was not entirely successful, cf. F. Fensham, "Judges, Book of," *ISBE* (1982) II.1157. In any case, it should be pointed out that in the speeches of Joshua, the incompleteness of occupation is repeated several times, thus reducing the tension between the two records (cf. Jos. 13:1-7, 13; 16:10; 17:12-13, 16-18; 18:1-2).

[10]The term *shophet* (a participle of the verb *shaphat* = to decide, make a judgment) is used in the Book of Judges repeatedly to refer to Israel's leaders, and it is a term broader than just a reference to a civil magistrate. While apparently the judges did indeed arbitrate in civil disputes on occasion (Jg. 4:4-5), their primary function was to act as military deliverers, and in fact, another word *yasha'* (= to save, deliver) is also repeatedly used to describe their work. The word *shophet* itself is wide enough to embrace someone who performs acts of government, cf. R. Bowling, *Judges [AB]* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), p. 5.

[11]Since the period of the judges is closely related to the controversial date of the exodus and conquest (with the reign of David being more or less fixed), the duration of the entire period may be longer or shorter, depending upon the starting point. With any view, however, the cycles of the judges cannot simply be added up chronologically, since the result is 410 years, a period substantially too long for even an early date for the exodus and conquest, cf. L. Wood, *The Distressing Days of the Judges* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), pp. 10-11. This problem seems to suggest that the cycles of the judges should be viewed as overlapping, with some judges being contemporaries of other judges, along with possible geographical separation as well, cf. Fensham, p. 1158.

21:25). The first incident tells of the kidnapping of a Levite by the clan of Dan as the Danites were migrating from central Palestine to northern Galilee, a story which is painted against the background of syncretism and idolatry. The second incident recounts a civil war that nearly exterminated the Benjamites, a war instigated by a corporate attempt at sodomy and a devastating gang rape.

1 and 2 Samuel[12]

The third book in the Former Prophets of the Hebrew Bible, Samuel (1 and 2 Samuel in the English Bible), may be analyzed in six major sections. First, there are the accounts of Samuel at Shiloh (1 Sa. 1-7). Samuel is a transitional figure between the period of the judges and the beginning of the monarchy. He began his life under the tutelage of Eli, who was both a priest and a judge at the Shiloh shrine, the site of the Tent of Meeting (1 Sa. 4:18), and he extended the closing period of the judges through his own lifetime (1 Sa. 7:6, 15-16).

Shiloh, a town in Ephraim, had been the center of tribal administration and worship for the twelve clans since the time of Joshua (Jos. 18:1; 21:21-2; Jg. 21:12). Here the original tribal territories had been assigned (Jos. 18:8-10; 19:51; 22:9). The Danites had set up a rival shrine in the north (Jg. 18:30-31), but Shiloh remained the central place of worship. When Yahweh allowed Shiloh to be destroyed by the Philistines, due to the debauchery of Eli's sons, the ark of the covenant, Israel's central cultic object, was carried away as a Philistine trophy of war. Though it was eventually returned, Shiloh was never rebuilt.

Second are the accounts detailing the relationship between Samuel and Saul (1 Sa. 8-15). By the end of the 11th century B.C., the tribal league was on the verge of collapse. Israel's firmest control in Canaan had been in the central hill-lands, where fighting could be done on foot. The lowlands had been a continuing problem due to the formidable chariotry of the enemy (Jg. 1:19, 34). By the time of Samuel, the Philistines[13] had encroached upon even Israel's primary holdings (1 Sa. 10:5; 13:3), and in addition to destroying Shiloh, they had stripped Israel of her metal industry (1 Sa. 13:19-22). In this circumstance, Israel asked for a king to replace her judges.

The king chosen was Saul of Benjamin. Though Saul began a campaign

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[12]As is well-known, there are significant parallels between 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles and the Psalms. A brief listing of these parallels is as follows, cf. M. Tsevat, "Samuel, I and II," *IDBSup* (1976), p. 777.
1 Sa. 31=1 Ch. 10:1-12; 2 Sa. 3:2-5=1 Ch. 3:1-3; 2 Sa. 5:1-10=1 Ch. 11:1-9; 2 Sa. 5:11-25=1 Ch. 14:1-16; 2 Sa. 6:2-11=1 Ch. 13:6-14; 1 Sa. 6:12-19=1 Ch. 15:25--16:3; 2 Sa.7=1 Ch. 17; 2 Sa. 8=1 Ch. 18; 2 Sa. 10:1--11:1=1 Ch. 19:1--20:1; 2 Sa. 12:30-31=1 Ch. 20:2-3; 2 Sa. 21:18-22=1 Ch. 20:4-8; 2 Sa. 23:8-9, 11-39=1 Ch. 11:11-40; 2 Sa. 24:1-4, 8-9=1 Ch. 21:1-5; 2 Sa. 24:10-25=1 Ch. 21:8-26; 2 Sa. 22=Ps. 18.

[13] The Philistines were relative late-comers to Palestine, but they were significant enough to give to it their name (the name Palestine is derived from Philistine). Originally from Crete, the Philistines were part of the Sea Peoples of the Aegean who were repulsed in their invasion of Egypt in the early 12th century BC and who then settled on the south coast of Canaan, cf. J. Greenfield, "Philistines," *IDB* (1962) III.791-792; J. Greenfield, "Philistines," *IDBSup* (1976), pp. 666-667; J. Houston, "Palestine," *NBD* (1982), p. 865.

against the Philistines, he violated two sacred laws -- the law of priesthood and the law of Yahweh war. In the first place, he offered a sacrifice without waiting for an official priest, and in the second, he saved alive victims who were under sentence for extermination. Because of his rebellion, Yahweh formally rejected him as king through a prophetic word from Samuel.

The third section contains the stories about Saul and David (1 Sa. 16--2 Sa. 1). In place of Saul, Samuel anointed David of Judah to be the new king, though this was done secretly, and Saul continued to maintain his royal position. David's rise to popularity came when he executed a gigantic Philistine soldier in open field, hand-to-hand combat in full view of the opposing armies. David was initiated into Israel's new royal court when he served as a court musician for Saul, and while there, he developed a devoted friendship with Jonathan, one of Saul's sons. However, David's popularity turned Saul against him. Possessed by an insane jealousy which could only view David as a threat to the throne, Saul abandoned his primary task of war with the Philistines, and redirected the army in an intensive search for David. David had no choice but to become an outlaw, and in fact, for a period David served as a mercenary vassal with a private army in service to the Philistines. In the end, the Philistines deployed a full offensive against Israel in the Esdraelon. Saul had no choice but to defend his northern flank, and in the battle, Saul became a casualty.

The fourth section is the narrative of how David became the king of all Israel (2 Sa. 2-8). The death of Saul left a tremendous political vacuum. No policy had yet been adopted for the transition of power, and while the clan of Judah eagerly accepted the kingship of David, their favorite son, the rest of the clans remained loyal to the family of Saul and accepted Saul's son, Eshbaal, as their new king. For seven years the two families struggled in a civil war for control of the entire nation. When Eshbaal's general, Abner, was killed, his claim to the throne collapsed. Eshbaal was assassinated, and David was crowned king of a united Israel.

Using his private army, David engineered the fall of the Canaanite enclave of the Jebusites. Jerusalem, their capital city, he made the capital of the united kingdom. Mobilizing the Israelite army, he struck quickly at the Philistines, driving them back onto the south coastal plain. To secure religious unity, he brought the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem and constructed a temporary shrine for it there. He had intended to build a permanent shrine, but was forbidden by Yahweh. Yet because of his loyalty to Yahweh and his dedication to the task of Yahweh war, God established a covenant with David in which he promised to secure his dynasty forever. After the consolidation of his central holdings, David began expanding his territorial claims in all directions, during which he extended the borders of Israel throughout the transjordan and as far north as Damascus.

The fifth section is commonly called the Court History of David (2 Sa. 9-20), a history characterized by both glory and shame. On the one hand, David reinstated a

survivor of Saul's family into the royal court as a gesture of kindness to his predecessor's family. He also continued the expansion wars to the east and north. On the other hand, David seduced the wife of one of his soldiers and then had the soldier murdered in a sordid coverup. His subsequent family life was filled with court intrigue and treachery. One of his sons raped his daughter. Her brother, in turn, avenged her violation by murdering the rapist. This same son became alienated from his father and eventually attempted a coup d'etat which very nearly wrested the throne from David. In the aftermath, this son was also killed. Shortly, a Benjamite named Sheba called for a secession of the northern clans and had to be hunted down and executed.

Finally, there are some appendices (2 Sa. 21-24). The final section of the Book of Samuel contains miscellaneous accounts and records from David's reign. In one event, a royal act of vengeance on behalf of a broken treaty was carried out by execution and public exposure. Various exploits by some of David's private soldiers are recounted. A military victory poem (identical with Ps. 18) is recorded. David's final words are preserved. A second catalogue of some of David's toughest soldiers and their exploits is given. In the final episode, David made the mistake of taking a census (probably for military conscription or taxation purposes), a mistake which Yahweh punished severely by a divinely sent pestilence. In order to end the plague, David purchased a threshingfloor to the north of Jerusalem, where he built an altar of intercession to Yahweh.

1 and 2 Kings

The fourth book in the Hebrew Bible, Kings (1 and 2 Kings in the English Bible), may be analyzed in three major sections. First is the reign of Solomon (1 Kg. 1-11). When 2 Samuel closes, David is near the end of his career as evidenced by the inclusion of his "last words" (2 Sa. 23:1-7). Once again, as in the days of Saul, Israel faced the problem of throne succession in that no precedent had been established for a dynasty, other than Yahweh's covenant with David (which may not have been well known). Two of David's sons vied for his throne, even before his death. One son, Adonijah, conspired to seize the throne, and David, while on his deathbed, arranged for the coronation of Solomon as his official successor. Solomon's first acts of state consisted of a purge to remove all threats from the throne, including the execution of his brother. With the kingdom securely under his control, Solomon made his famous intercession for wisdom, which Yahweh granted to him.[14]

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[14]It should be observed that Solomon's wisdom must be judged by the standards of the ancient Near East, not modern ones. By modern standards, Solomon instituted some particularly disastrous state policies, and even by the standards of Torah, Solomon departed significantly from what was required of him, cf. especially J. Bright, *History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), pp. 214-219. However, wisdom in the ancient Near East was more a matter of

Solomon engaged in two massive building projects, the construction of a permanent temple for Yahweh and the building of a royal palace for himself. In his later years, however, Solomon fell prey to religious syncretism encouraged by his harem of foreign wives. By the end of his reign, which had been characterized by unparalleled prosperity, Solomon's state policies had set the stage for a political rupture. Heavy taxation and the inclusion of Israelite citizens in forced labor for government projects was deeply resented. The fiscal burden was at such a level that he was forced to cede twenty cities to Phoenicia to ease the financial strain.

After the kingdom divided upon the death of Solomon, there follows a lengthy section which describes the history of the divided monarchy (1 Kg. 12--2 Kg. 17). The history of the divided monarchy may be broken down into five subsections.

First is the narrative concerning how the kingdom split (1 Kg. 12-13). Solomon's son, Rehoboam, reaped the harvest of his father's oppressive state policies. The first request of the citizens when Rehoboam ascended to the throne was relief from the heavy taxation and forced labor. When Rehoboam insolently refused, the northern clans seceded, selecting Jeroboam I, their former corvee administrator, to be king of the new rival state. Jeroboam I promptly established two cultic worship centers to rival Solomon's temple, one at Bethel on the southern border, and the other at Dan in the north, the site of the rival cult center established by the Danites in the time of the judges. While the southern nation, Judah, was able to annex one other tribe, Benjamin, the northern tribes retained their political separation from the south. They existed as the nation Israel (also called Ephraim after the largest of its clans) until their fall to Assyria in 721 BC.

Then follows a synoptic history of both kingdoms until the Omri Dynasty (1 Kg. 14-16). The composer's central concern in the court history of the kings of both nations is religious fidelity. In Israel to the north, without exception the kings supported the rival cult centers in Bethel and Dan. In Judah to the south, the kings are evaluated by comparing them to David, who was the prototype for a righteous king. Some southern kings are upheld as good, others evil -- but all are compared to David. In Judah, the Davidic dynasty remained intact. In Israel, however, dynastic changes, usually through military coups, were not uncommon, and at least eight dynastic changes are to be found in the history of the north before its demise.[15] The first stage

exhibiting the intensely practical art of being skillful and successful in life, of demonstrating insight into human nature, and especially, of being able to express these insights in short, pithy sayings, cf. W. Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1979), pp. 189-193. In this area, Solomon excelled.

[15]The lengths of the reigns of the various kings in both nations, as listed in the text, are particularly vexing. The major difficulty arises from the fact that, if the chronology of the monarchy is computed in terms of the lengths of reigns, then this sum does not coincide with that computed on the basis of the synchronisms between the regnal years of the monarchs of the two kingdoms. Various solutions have been proposed, which will not be reviewed here, cf. see E. Ball, "Kings, Books of," *ISBE* (1986) III.36 and J. Oswalt, "Chronology of the OT," *ISBE* (1979) I.681-684. However, it is worth pointing out that the solution proposed by Thiele has won the acceptance of many if not most evangelicals, cf. E. Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977).

of the synoptic history of the kings includes:[16]

JUDAH	ISRAEL
Rehoboam (evil)	Jeroboam I (evil)
Abijam (evil)	Nadab (evil)
Asa (good)	Baasha (evil)*
	Elah (evil)
	Zimri (evil)*
	Omri (evil)*
	Ahab (evil)

During the Omri Dynasty there arose the first of two very powerful prophets to the northern nation. The next section of the book details the cycle of stories about Elijah, the first of these prophets (1 Kg. 17--2 Kg. 1). During the reign of Ahab of Israel, the mysterious figure of Elijah denounced the syncretism of the north and protested political despotism. There were six recorded episodes in Elijah's career: 1) his prediction of three and a half years of drought 2) his contest with the Baal cult on Mt. Carmel 3) his flight to Horeb in the Sinai peninsula 4) his judgment against Ahab over the Naboth murder 5) his oracle about Ahaziah's coming death, and 6) his translation into heaven. In addition, this section includes the accounts of two other prophets who gave oracles concerning Israel's wars with Syria, an unnamed prophet and a prophet named Micaiah.

The kings who ruled during the career of Elijah were:

JUDAH	ISRAEL
Jehoshaphat (good)	(Ahab)
	Ahaziah (evil)

The second of these great prophets is described in the Elisha cycle of stories (1 Kg. 2-8). Elijah's successor, Elisha, continued the prophetic ministry to the northern nation Israel. His career, even more than Elijah before him, was filled with the miraculous, including the restoration of the spring by Jericho, the cursing of a group of young blasphemers, the prediction of Israel's victory over Moab, the multiplying of the widow's oil and flour, the raising to life of a woman's only son, the cleansing of

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[16]An asterisk indicates a dynastic change in the northern nation. In the southern nation, it should be noted that while several of the kings of Judah are described as doing "right" in the eyes of Yahweh, and therefore can receive the assessment as a "good" king rather than an "evil" king, this assessment was often described as a relative good mixed with a failure to thoroughly follow all the things that Torah required (cf. 1 Kg. 15:14; 22:42-43; 2 Kg. 12:2-3; 14:1-6; 15:1-4, 32-35).

poisoned gruel, the multiplying of loaves among the community of prophets, the healing of Naaman's leprosy, the miraculous recovering of a lost axe head, the blinding of the Syrian army, the prediction of plenty during the Syrian seige of Samaria, and the prediction of Hazael to succeed Ben-Hadad as ruler of Syria.

The kings who ruled during Elisha's career were:

JUDAH	*ISRAEL*
Jehoram (evil)	Joram (evil)
Ahaziah (evil)	

After the stories surrounding the lives of these two dynamic prophets, the synoptic history of the two kingdsom picks up again and continues until the fall of Samaria, the capital in the north (2 Kg. 9-17). The remaining history of the kings of Judah and Israel, prior to Israel's demise, continues in the style introduced earlier. The dynasty of David still remained intact, with some kings of Judah being assessed as righteous and others evil. Without exception, all the kings of Israel were again assessed as evil because of religious syncretism and the refusal to remove the cult places of Bethel and Dan. During this period, the family of Ahab was exterminated by Jehu, according to the prediction of Elijah after the Naboth incident. Also during this period, the throne of Judah was temporarily usurped by Athaliah, the queen mother of deceased King Ahaziah, who attempted to preserve her throne by a deadly purge. However, a priest managed to save the royal heir, and when the boy finally ascended to the throne, Athaliah was executed. This heir, Joash, was only seven years old when he began his reign, and when an adult he attempted to purge the nation from syncretism while initiating a major restoration of the temple.

From Mesopotamia, the Assyrians had been pressing toward the west for some time, and in 721 BC they successfully brought the northern nation of Israel to an end when Samaria, the capital, fell to seige. It was a common tactic of the Assyrians to expatriate their prisoners of war so as to lessen the possibility of a resurgence of national patriotism among their conquered peoples, and many of the citizens of the northern nation were consequently carried away as captives to be colonists in outlying parts of the empire. In their place, foreigners were brought into Israel as colonists, where they intermarried with the remaining Israelite population and became known as the Samaritans.[17]

The kings who reigned during the final period of the divided monarchy were:

JUDAH	*ISRAEL*
(Athaliah, usurper)	Jehu (evil)*

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[17]R. Anderson, "Samaritans," *ISBE* (1988) IV.303.

Joash (good)	Jehoahaz (evil)
Amaziah (good)	Jehoash (evil)
Azariah, also called	Jeroboam II (evil)
Uzziah (good)	Zechariah (evil)
Jotham (good)	Shallum (evil)*
Ahaz (evil)	Menahem (evil)*
	Pekahiah (evil)
	Pekah (evil)*
	Hoshea (evil)*

The final section of the Book of Kings in the Hebrew Bible gives the brief histories of the last kings of Judah (2 Kg. 18-15). Even before the fall of the northern nation, the independence of the southern nation had become increasingly precarious. Ahaz of Judah, under threats from both Israel and Syria to the north, had appealed to Assyria for help, thus surrendering his independence and adopting the role of an Assyrian vassal. After Israel fell, the Assyrians were soon occupied at home with internal problems, and Hezekiah, Ahaz' son, tried to free Judah from her domination by Assyria. His efforts were only partially successful, however, and Judah continued in largely a vassal's role. Eventually a new threat loomed on the horizon from Mesopotamia. Babylon swallowed up the Assyrian empire, and the Assyrian capital Nineveh fell in 612 BC.

During this troubled period, one king stands out from the others as a righteous reformer. Josiah initiated a massive religious cleansing of the nation Judah, spurred on by the rediscovery of the "Book of the Law" in the temple. He died in battle at Megiddo in a last ditch effort to prevent the forces of Assyria from uniting with the armies of Egypt as they sought to oppose the Babylonians.

At last, Judah succumbed to the Babylonians. Jerusalem, the capital, fell to siege in 586 B.C. The city was plundered, and the temple burned. Many of the citizens were deported to Babylon, where they were settled as a Jewish community in exile.

The last kings of Judah, the southern nation, were:

JUDAH
Hezekiah (good)
Manasseh (evil)
Amon (evil)
Josiah (good)
Jehoahaz (evil)
Jehoiakim (evil)
Jehoiachin (evil)

Zedekiah (evil)

The Literary Relationship Between The Former Prophets And The Pentateuch

That there is a relationship between the history of Israel in Canaan (Joshua through 2 Kings) and the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) cannot be denied. The Pentateuch would be a beginning without an ending if the Former Prophets had not described the actual possession of the land of Canaan promised to Abraham and his posterity, a promise reaffirmed to Moses in the exodus and held forth before the nation in the desert as they prepared for entry and conquest. A direct literary relationship between these two parts of the Old Testament has been proposed by scholars in the past century or so, a literary relationship which has been explained along two somewhat different lines of thought. Even more important than any theory of *literary* relationship, at least for our purposes here, is the *theological* relationship between these two bodies of Old Testament literature, a theological relationship which is true and significant regardless of what position one adopts regarding literary connections.

In the first of the literary theories, it was suggested that the Book of Joshua should be included with the books of the Pentateuch and that these six books were probably collected and circulated as a unit prior to being merged with the other literature of the Old Testament in the final form of the canon. As such, then, one might speak of a "Hexateuch" (six books) rather than simply a "Pentateuch" (five books).[18]

This hypothesis was beset by major problems in that it severed the obvious relationship between Joshua and the books which followed, it failed to explain the unique character of Deuteronomy, and it did not sufficiently take into account the fact that the Jewish canon made the Pentateuch itself a separate entity while the Samaritan Pentateuch went even further and denied canonicity to all books except the Pentateuch, a situation that seems hardly likely if Genesis through Joshua originally formed a single corpus. Today, the theory of the Hexateuch is in serious decline.[19] At the same time, the recognition of a close relationship between Joshua and the

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[18] The theory of the Hexateuch was closely related to the critical theories of literary sources underlying the Pentateuch [JEDP]. It was believed that the Book of Joshua contained these same sources and was redacted by the same editors, D. Freedman, "Hexateuch," *IDB* (1962) II.597-598. Two of the most prominent scholars who championed this literary construct were Otto Eissfeldt and Gerhard von Rad. Conservatives, of course, were never much impressed by the Hexateuchal hypothesis, because it was grounded in a largely non-Mosaic approach to the Pentateuch.

[19] See discussion in B. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), pp. 230-231; R. Harrison, "Hexateuch," *ISBE* (1982) II.702-703.

Pentateuch is important, and while that relationship may not be explained by a literary construct called the Hexateuch, that it exists, no one would seriously deny.

In the second theory of direct literary relationship, the connection between Joshua and the Pentateuch was made by severing Deuteronomy from the Pentateuch and joining it with the books Joshua through 2 Kings. This left a Tetrateuch (Genesis through Numbers) and a corpus labeled Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy and the Former Prophets),[20] the latter of which was thought to be the editorial work of a single person or at least a unified group (sometimes called the Deuteronomistic Historian or the Deuteronomistic School).[21]

While this hypothesis has won the support of a large number of scholars, it is not without difficulties also, chief of which is the fragmenting of the Pentateuch in such a way that it leaves a Tetrateuch as a "torso-like composition" without a conclusion.[22] Thus, it is fair to say that there is a general lack of unanimity among critical scholars on where the Pentateuch ends, though all would agree upon the connecting role of Deuteronomy between what goes before it and what lies after it.[23]

Both of the above literary theories seem to be flawed because they do not sufficiently take into account the canonical shape of the Hebrew Bible. In the Hebrew canon, the Pentateuch is definitely separated from the succeeding books, and there is no such thing as a Hexateuch or a Tetrateuch. At the same time, there are strong lines, both theologically and linguistically, which connect the two bodies of literature, and Joshua as well as the other books in the Former Prophets are without question dependent upon the laws of Deuteronomy.[24]

Thus, the connection between the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets is most clearly made in a theological way rather than in a literary way. The Former Prophets were all written from an overarching perspective, a perspective that was grounded in the theological norms of Deuteronomy, especially with reference to the monarchy in Israel, the centrality of a worship shrine, the laws of Yahweh war, and the blessings and the cursings. This perspective was spelled out in the most graphic manner in the corpus of the Former Prophets. The four books, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, present a consistent history of Israel from the time of the conquest to the fall of the

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[20] The literary-critical terms Deuteronomistic and Deuteronomic can be confusing, particularly since they seem to be used interchangeably by some scholars. One common distinction between them is that the adjective Deuteronomic refers to the material found in the core of the Book of Deuteronomy, especially chapters 5-28. The adjective Deuteronomistic, on the other hand, refers to the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings which were so heavily influenced by the theology of the Book of Deuteronomy, cf. B. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986), pp. 83, 359.

[21] D. Freedman, "Deuteronomic History," *IDBSup* (1976), pp. 226-228. Probably the most prominent scholar who championed this literary construct was Martin Noth, cf. *The Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1981).

[22] Childs, pp. 231-232.

[23] D. Knight, "The Pentateuch," *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 271.

[24] Childs, pp. 232-233.

State of Judah, but it is far more than a mere recounting of political incidents. It is a history punctuated regularly by theological discourses, explanations, and analyses which seek to demonstrate that what God had given in Torah on Sinai, and what had been rehearsed by Moses in the Plains of Moab, was irrevocably shaping the history of the nation, both in terms of its rise as well as its decline.

As such, then, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings are indeed a "prophetic history," and they well deserve the title "The Former Prophets" in the Hebrew canon. At the same time, the term Deuteronomistic History is equally appropriate because of the theological continuity between Deuteronomy and the succeeding four books. The traditional approach to the four books of the Former Prophets is that each document is a self-contained work, and each probably was written by a single person at some particular time in Israelite history. As such, the books have been commonly treated, more or less, in isolation from each other. However, such an assumption is unwarranted, and in fact, it is apparent that the books must *not* be theologically isolated from each other, whoever their authors might be.[25] Even though the question of authorship cannot be answered with precision, the records themselves demonstrate that the books were compiled by using pre-existing sources. Various documents which have long since been lost are specifically indicated, such as, the Book of Jashar (Jos. 10:13; 2 Sa. 1:18), the Song of Deborah,[26] the Book of the Song (1 Ki. 8:53/LXX),[27] the Acts of Solomon (1 Ki.11:41), the Annals of the Kings of Israel (1 Ki. 15:31;16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:39; 2 Ki. 1:18; 10:34; 13:8, 12;14:15, 28; 15:11, 15, 21, 26, 31), and the Annals of the Kings of Judah (1 Ki. 14:29; 15:7, 23; 22:45; 2 Ki. 8:23; 12:19; 14:18; 15:6, 36; 16:19; 20:20; 21:17, 25; 23:28; 24:5). In addition, it is

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[25] All four books are formally anonymous, of course, and there are no internal evidences that lead in any particular direction as far as authorship is concerned. Jewish tradition assigned Judges and Samuel to the prophet Samuel, and the same tradition assigned Kings to the prophet Jeremiah (*Baba Bathra* 14b-15a). Traditional Christian dating and authorship has generally followed a similar lead, assuming that the books were written shortly after the events. The names of famous Israelites, such as, Joshua, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, and Jeremiah, all have been suggested as possible authors, cf. M. Unger, *Bible Handbook* (Chicago: Moody, 1967), pp. 155, 169, 186, 210; E. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 163, 169-170, 177-178, 188. All these conjectures, of course, have no supporting evidence other than the uncertainty of Jewish tradition and the attempt to narrow the time of composition based on internal evidences. The view that all four books were composed by a single author or school of authors is attractive, since there is the clear presence of a single theological perspective, but this view, also, is uncertain and lacks any direct historical confirmation. The question of authorship must be left open.

[26] While the Song of Deborah (Jg. 5) is not directly described in the text as an independent document, ancient Near Eastern scholars are virtually unanimous in assessing this poem to be one of the very earliest examples of Hebrew poetry, dating probably to the later half of the 12th century B.C., cf. A. Myers, "Deborah, Song of," *ISBE* (1979) I.904-905. Evidence of its antiquity lies partly in the fact that in the LXX some Hebrew words were simply transcribed from Hebrew letters into Greek letters, because the translators did not know how to render them. In a number of places, the LXX translations are pure speculation. Out of the 30 verses, some 22 of them have at least one word at which the meaning can only be guessed, cf. J. Soggin, *Judges* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), p. 92.

[27] The poetic oracle which appears in 1 Ki. 8:12-13 in the Hebrew Bible (and thus in the English Versions) and in 1 Ki. 8:53 in the LXX is specifically attributed in the LXX to the Book of the Song (though this notation is absent in the MT and in the English Versions).

highly likely that other sources underlie various narratives, such as, the narratives of David's court history, the Elijah cycle, and so forth.

The theological ties between the Former Prophets and Deuteronomy can be sketched in briefly. There seems to be a single dominant objective in the history, and that objective is to understand the factors that led to the dissolution of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Why was Israel, the nation of God's people, a kingdom under judgment? Why had Jerusalem, the city of David, and Mt. Zion, the place where Yahweh had chosen to place his sacred name, been desecrated by the pagans and destroyed? Why had Yahweh allowed the destruction of the culture, religion, shrine, and political entity of the people he had called to be a great and vast nation, and above all, why had the Israelites lost control of the land that was to be theirs forever? The answers lie in Deuteronomy and in the history of Israel which was interpreted along Deuteronomic lines.

The Deuteronomic character of the Former Prophets can be observed in the major emphases of these books: the peoplehood of Israel, the covenant and renewal ceremonies, the interplay of law and grace, the schema of promise and fulfillment, the meaning of the land, the centralization of the shrine, the attitudes toward kingship, the practice of Yahweh war, the historical periods which are marked off by what can only be regarded as Deuteronomic speeches, and the fulfillment of the blessings and cursings.[28] These repeated themes make the books of the Former Prophets truly Deuteronomic in character.

Major Theological Themes In The Former Prophets

If the primary connection between the Pentateuch and the books of the Former Prophets is indeed a theological one, then it is appropriate to examine the theological themes which arise from this connection in Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. While in the larger sense such a theological connection applies to the entire Pentateuch, it is especially through the lens of Deuteronomy that the connection is most apparent, and the Book of Deuteronomy will naturally be called upon more often than the rest to illustrate the various themes. Major historical patterns and events, for instance, trace their roots to the Book of Deuteronomy. This is true not only in the obvious fortune and misfortune of the nation, based upon the blessings and cursings, but also in its government by the judges (Dt. 16:18-20), in its eventual choice of a king (Dt. 17) and in the building of the temple (Dt. 12).

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[28] W. Rast, *Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings [PC]* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), p. 17.

Israel as the *'Am* (People) of Yahweh

In the exodus, Israel became the covenant people of Yahweh. The twelve clans, which were rescued out of Egyptian slavery, were molded into a cohesive group on the basis of their common family ties and their experience of Yahweh's mighty redemptive acts. "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God," Yahweh declared in the exodus (Ex. 6:7). The comparable Deuteronomistic expression grounds this concept of peoplehood in Yahweh's sovereign, loving choice:

> *Because he loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Panim (= presence, face) and his great strength.*   Dt. 4:37

> *For you are a people holy to Yahweh your Elohim. Yahweh your Elohim has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. Yahweh did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because Yahweh loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*
>   Dt. 7:6-8 (cf. 14:2; 26:18-19)

This Deuteronomic ideal of a single people with a single God becomes the pervasive norm for the history of the Former Prophets. During the period of Joshua, the cause of conquest welded the clans into a tight-knit fighting community. During the period of the judges, with its terrible cycles of oppression and freedom-fighting, the same call to Yahweh war helped maintained unity. Later, kingship would serve the same end, but above all, the peoplehood of Israel was grounded in the sovereign choice of Israel by God during the exodus. In the early period, Israel existed as a tribal league without statehood, central government, standing army, or administrative machinery of any sort, yet she still functioned as a people.[29]

Essential to Israel's concept of peoplehood was the number twelve, going all the way back to the twelve sons of Jacob. Throughout the Pentateuch, the number twelve surfaces again and again as the definitive description of the peoplehood of Israel. In Jacob's dying blessing, in which he addressed each of his twelve sons, the

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[29] The word amphictyony is sometimes used to describe this period of Israel's history, that is, a league of clans bonded loosely together on the basis of a common religious shrine, similar to the twelve-member League of Delphi in ancient Greece, cf. Anderson, *Understanding*, p. 94; A. Myers, "Amphictyony," *ISBE* (1979) I.118. This usage is appropriate so far as it goes, but Israel's peoplehood was defined by more than just a common religious shrine; it was defined by a covenant bond between the nation (the vassal) and her divine Suzerain (the overlord), and the covenant bond was far more intensive than anything that could have been achieved by a mere common shrine.

editorial comment is as follows:

> *All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him.*
>
> *Ge. 49:28*

The sacrosanct character of this number twelve is evident in that even though the Joseph clan became two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, making a total of thirteen tribes, the inclusive number is still always given as twelve. In the various symbolisms of the nation, the number twelve is always used, such as, in the symbolic altar at Sinai (Ex. 24:4), the number of stones in the high priest's breastpiece (Ex. 28:21; 39:14), and the number of loaves of holy bread (Le. 24:5, 8). The military was organized in terms of levies from the twelve clans, including the two Joseph tribes but minus the Levi tribe (Nu. 1:3-45; 26:2-51). In the spying mission from Kadesh, twelve spies were sent out as representing the twelve clans (Dt. 1:23). Finally, in the Blessing of Moses just prior to his death, each of the tribes are addressed in turn.[30]

This Pentateuchal preservation of the number twelve as the number-symbol representing the people of Israel continues throughout the Former Prophets. Israel always remains the twelve tribes, regardless of her constituency. When Joshua crossed the Jordan fords near Jericho, a cairn of twelve stones was erected to symbolize the unified tribes, even though Israel was by this time thirteen tribes (Jos. 4:1-9). The division of the land by lot and the establishment of tribal boundaries follows the same pattern (cf. Nu. 26:52-55). Nine and a half tribes received land in the Cisjordan (Jos. 14:1--19:48), and two and a half tribes in the Transjordan (Nu. 32; Jos. 13:6-32; 18:7). Since the Levi tribe was not to receive land inheritance (Jos. 13:14, 33), the two Joseph tribes each received land so as to make up the full number of twelve. Even though Manasseh was geographically divided on both sides of the Jordan, and even though the two halves apparently were not even adjacent to each other in straddling the Jordan, a situation which in most situations would call for yet another tribal distinction, Manasseh is still counted as only one tribe.[31] The number twelve is preserved.

Various other circumstances continue to reflect the sanctity of this number-symbol. A gruesome call for war was issued with twelve pieces of a woman's corpse sent throughout the various clans (Jg.19:29). When one tribe was on

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[30] The fact that Simeon is omitted and replaced by the two Joseph tribes (Dt. 33:17) only serves to strengthen the sanctity of the number twelve. For discussion as to the character of this blessing and the possibility of it having been edited, see J. Thompson, *Deuteronomy [TOTC]* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1974), pp. 305-306.

[31] Eastern Manasseh in the Transjordan probably extended north from the Yarmuk River, while Western Manasseh, in the Cisjordan, began somewhat farther south, cf. C. Pfeiffer, *Baker's Bible Atlas* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), pp. 94-97.

the verge of extinction during a particularly brutal civil conflict, a conflict in which all but 600 men from the Benjamites had been massacred (Jg. 20:46-48) and the other clans had taken oath not to give any of their daughters in marriage to the Benjamites (Jg. 21:1), a collective plan was formed to provide wives for the Benjamites so that "one tribe would not be cut off" (Jg. 21:2-3, 6, 15). The Simeon tribe eventually lost its clear distinctiveness, but this did not change the sacred number from twelve to eleven.[32] During the early monarchy, a gladiatorial contest over control of the full twelve tribes was fought with twenty-four soldiers, twelve each from the families of David and Saul (2 Sa. 2:12-16). When Solomon reorganized his empire into new tax districts, even disregarding old tribal boundary lines, he nevertheless was wise enough to maintain the sacred number twelve (1 Ki. 4:7-19).[33] The division of the kingdom was predicted by the prophet Ahijah in an acted-out symbol of tearing into twelve pieces a new cloak and separating it into sections of ten and two (1 Ki. 11:29-32). Even after the division of the kingdom, Elijah in the north erected an altar of twelve stones on Mt. Carmel, after the ancient fashion, thus representing the ideal of a united people (1 Ki. 18:31-32).

There were primarily three threats to the peoplehood of Israel. First was the internal tendency toward syncretism and the assimilation of foreign entities into the community of Israel. Then, there was the external threat of military control from the outside. Finally, there was a north-south mentality which lurked barely underneath the surface and eventually erupted into a chaotic polarization. While none of these forces destroyed the peoplehood of Israel, they seriously altered its character. It is only through the concept of a remnant that the peoplehood of Israel was not erased altogether.

Originally, the threat of syncretism and assimilation was to be countered by a call for total annihilation of the Canaanites within Israelite borders (Dt. 7:1-2, 16; 20:16-18; cf. Nu. 21:1-3).[34] The Deuteronomic code was unyielding; if any Israelite city showed evidence of defection, they were to be *herem* (= banned), a word indicating an irrevocable giving over of things or persons to Yahweh, usually by total destruction (Dt. 13:12-16).

Laws forbidding intermarriage and Canaanite treaties were part of this protection system (Dt. 7:3-4), and dire warnings were issued about the dangers

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[32] That the Simeon tribe was diminishing is clear from the tallies made in the desert (Nu. 1:22-23; 2:12; 26:14). In the settlement, the Simeonites settled within the borders of Judah (Jos. 19:1, 9) and were allied with Judah in conquest (Jg. 1:3, 17). The very cities allotted to Simeon (Jos. 19:2-8) also were allotted to Judah (Jos. 15:21ff.). Why the Simeonites were later identified with the northern ten tribes, even though there is no recorded history of Simeon in the north, is never explained. It is not unlikely that the Simeon tribe was gradually absorbed into the Judah tribe, cf. E. Masterman and A. Saarrisalo, "Simeon," *ISBE* (1988) IV.513-514.

[33] See discussion in J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), p. 217.

[34] If a Canaanite city lay outside Israelite boundaries, it could be offered terms of survival and slavery (Dt. 20:10-11), and only if such terms were refused would it be annihilated (Dt. 20:12-15).

inherent in such intermingling (Jos. 23:12-13). Nevertheless, both intermarriage and Canaanite treaties occurred, and these in turn became significant threats to the peoplehood of Israel (Jg. 3:5-6). Sometimes treaties occurred by subterfuge, such as when Joshua was fooled by the Gibeonites (Jos. 9), but in general they were avoided (Jos. 11:16-20). The consequences of intermarriage were vividly illustrated in the three celebrated examples of Samson (Jg. 14:1-3),[35] Solomon (1 Ki. 11:1-6), and Ahab (1 Ki. 16:31). Both treaties and intermarriage served to elevate the *goyim* (= nations) to a theological level of acceptance, and this in turn threatened the very definition of Israel as the chosen people of God. To become allies of the Canaanites would be to make the nation vulnerable to the destructive forces residing in the character of foreign gods.

The failure of the Israelite invaders to exterminate the Canaanites resulted in a shifting of the divine purpose from extermination to coexistence. The appearance of the Mal'ak Yahweh at Bokim[36] to announce the broken covenant due to this failure was cause for deep grief (Jg. 2:1-5). It meant that the ideal of an unadulterated population of Israel in Canaan, as held forth in Torah, was no longer within the divine purpose. From that point onward, Yahweh indicated that he would not drive out the Canaanites but would leave them as thorns and snares, which they certainly became. Other explanations for this change are given as well. The Canaanite enclaves would be used as a means of historical judgment against Israel because of the nation's covenant unfaithfulness (Jg. 2:11-15) and as an object for the exercise of Yahweh war (Jg. 2:20-23; 3:2). This divine use of foreigners for a historical judgment against Israel is only what was clearly spelled out in the Deuteronomic cursings (Dt. 28:25-26, 43).

This alien military threat to the peoplehood of Israel continued throughout the period of the judges. In the time of Samuel, it became most intense, so much so, that the nation of Israel was on the brink of collapse. Shiloh, the central shrine, was destroyed by the Philistines, and the ark of the covenant was taken as a trophy of war (1 Sa. 4). Philistine garrisons were placed at strategic points in the Shephelah (1 Sa. 10:5; 13:3, 23). Israel's metal industry was monopolized by the alien invaders (1 Sa. 13:19-22). While the Philistine occupation was not total, the Philistines held the Negev, much of the central mountain range, and the Plain of Esdraelon.[37] It only

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[35] The editorial explanation in Jg. 14:4 is problematic in that it seems to imply that God was violating his own law. Any serious interpreter must concede that the passage describes divine sovereignty, cf. A. Cundall & L. Morris, *Judges & Ruth* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1968), p. 43. Some would see this as an editorial apologetic in Samson's behalf, that is, that he was obliged to violate what is clearly a Torah prohibition against intermarriage, because Yahweh himself was controlling the situation, cf. J. Gray, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1967), p. 348. While this may be true enough, it does not answer the question about Yahweh's integrity. It may well be that Yahweh was not so much inciting Samson to marry a Philistine as he was using Samson's natural attraction to a Philistine as an occasion for Israelite liberation.

[36] The placename *Bokim* (= weepers) is a participial play on the verb *bakah* (= to weep, bewail).

[37] Bright, *History*, p. 181.

remained for them to mobilize for a final crushing blow.

To meet these military threats against the peoplehood of Israel, God empowered heroes with the Holy Spirit, such as, the various judges, Saul, at least in his early career, and David. During the divided monarchy, however, a new threat loomed on the eastern horizon which would not be thwarted. The Mesopotamian empire-builders of Assyria and Babylon cast their eyes toward Canaan and the Egyptian treasure beyond, and in the end, the covenant-breaking pattern caught up with Israel. She fell according to the Deuteronomic curses of the covenant (Dt. 28:36-37, 49-57, 62-68). Both nations of the divided monarchy succumbed, Israel first (2 Ki. 17:18-23), and then Judah (2 Ki.25).

Not long after the time of Israel's occupation of Canaan, the seeds of a north-south mentality began to take root. Part of this division was no doubt due to the geographic separations during the period of the judges, when the Israelites faced numerous enclaves of Canaanites were interspersed throughout the land. The Plain of Esdraelon was largely in the hands of the enemy (Jg. 1:27), thus effectively separating the northernmost clans from the others, while various other Canaanite city-states continued to coexist (Jg. 1:29-36). In particular, the Canaanite city-state of Jebus effectively separated the Judah tribe from those farther north, since it controlled the major route between them (Jos. 15:63; Jg. 1:21; 2 Sa. 5:6-7.[38] While Shiloh in the south was the location of the Tent of Meeting, a rival shrine was built in the north by the migrating Danites (Jg. 18), a shrine that remained from the time of the Tribal League until the exile of the northern nation (Jg. 18:30-31). Jeroboam I made full use of this Danite shrine when the monarchy ruptured at the death of Solomon (1 Ki. 12:28-30).

In the time of Saul and David, severe tensions between the north and south developed when each backed a different claimant to the throne. Judah, as might be expected, supported David, her favorite son (2 Sa. 2:4, 11). The northern tribes supported the Saulide dynasty in Eshbaal, Saul's son (2 Sa. 2:8-10), particularly since this claim was reinforced by Abner, Saul's cousin and former general (1 Sa. 14:50-51). Though the civil war ended some seven and a half years later, with David firmly in control of a united Israel (2 Sa. 5:1-5), the deep tensions between north and south were only temporarily suppressed. Shortly after Absalom's coup d'etat, when David was forced to temporarily abdicate the throne, a Benjamite named Sheba succeeded in a major secession of the north from the south (2 Sa. 20:1-2). Though this secession was put down by Joab, David's general (2 Sa. 20:3-22), the north and south finally ruptured permanently when Rehoboam ascended to the throne after Solomon died (1 Ki. 12:1-19). When a call for civil war was issued to regain the

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[38] F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), p. 19. On the apparent discrepancy of these verses with Jg. 1:8 (which describes a take-over of Jerusalem), it is possible that the take-over only involved the unfortified southwest hill, cf. R. Boling, *Judges [AB]* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), pp. 55-56.

north, the prophet Shemaiah instructed Rehoboam to abort the effort (1 Ki. 12:21-25). The division of the nation was interpreted as a judgment by Yahweh upon Israel for covenant-breaking (1 Ki. 11:29-36; 12:24).

Covenant and Covenant Renewal

The covenant was the vehicle for the fundamental theological relationship between God and his people. It is through covenant that God bound himself to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The exodus event arose out of God's faithfulness to his covenant oath, and the giving of Torah at Sinai followed the ancient Near Eastern patterns of covenant-making. The Book of Deuteronomy was structured after the ancient pattern of a suzerainty treaty between an overlord (Yahweh) and his vassal (Israel). The history of the nation, from the invasion and settlement of Canaan to the loss of the land in exile, was controlled by the norms given in the covenant stipulations. The blessings and cursings, especially, belonged to that ancient relationship, particularly as they were expressed in the Book of Deuteronomy.

The Sinai experience was pervaded by the idea of covenant. This is probably most clearly expressed in the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20:22--23:33; 24:7), the ancient written codification of law which was ratified by the vows and the symbolic actions of oath-taking (Ex. 24). However, while Israel was still at the foot of Sinai, the nation broke covenant by creating the golden calf (Ex. 32), a covenant violation that Moses graphically symbolized when he shattered the stone tablets (Ex. 32:19). Because of the broken covenant, a new issue of the tablets was necessary (Ex. 34:1-4), accompanied by the proclamation of the name Yahweh (Ex. 34:5-7), a prayer for forgiveness (Ex. 34:8-9), the renewal of the covenant (Ex. 34:10, 27-28), and a repetition of the core stipulations found in the original Book of the Covenant (cf. Ex. 34:11-26 and parallels in Ex. 20-23).[39] It is here that the idea of covenant renewal has its birth.

Forty years later, when Israel had reached the transjordan, this concept of renewal resurfaced. No one was left of the old nation of warriors except Joshua and Caleb (Nu. 26:1-4, 63-65). The rehearsal in Deuteronomy of the covenant which had been made forty years earlier culminated in a covenant renewal in which the new generation was exhorted to accept the covenant, much as their parents had done (Dt. 29:1-15).

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[39] For the view that Ex. 34 is not a renewal but merely another version of the original covenant events which have been restructured by an editor, see discussion in J. Hyatt, *Exodus [NCB]* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 318-322. However, it cannot be denied that the text, as it stands, presupposes the events of Ex. 19-24 as having already occurred, cf. R. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1983), p. 44.

You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with Yahweh your Elohim, a covenant Yahweh is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your Elohim as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Dt. 29:12-13

The solidarity of the nation in covenant, both for past, present and future generations, is clearly evident in the Deuteronomic language. The covenant was made, not merely with the first generation who stood at Sinai, but also with the second generation who had not been at Sinai yet who were addressed as though they had been there (Dt. 4:3, 10ff.; 5:2-4).

Yahweh our Elohim made a covenant with us at Horeb. It was not with our fathers that Yahweh made this covenant, but with us, with all of us who are alive here today. Yahweh spoke to you face to face out of the fire on the mountain.

Dt. 5:2-3

This immediacy, even for second generation Israelites, is very pointed in the constantly recurring word *hayyom* (= today) in Deuteronomy (cf. 9:1; 15:15; 26:17; 27:9; 30:15, 19). In covenant renewal, the events of the past were made a present reality. Similarly, the covenant which was renewed with the second generation Israelites was to extend into the future for successive generations.

I am making this covenant with its oath, not only with you who are standing here with us today in the presence of Yahweh our Elohim but also with those who are not here today.

Dt. 29:14-15

A specific ceremony for covenant renewal was mandated to be performed by the Israelites when they crossed the Jordan into Canaan. A covenant altar was to be constructed with fieldstones coated with plaster and inscribed with the words of Torah. In the Shechem Pass, between the mountains Ebal and Gerizim in central Canaan, the twelve tribes were to renew the covenant. Arrayed on the flanks of the mountains, six tribes on one slope and six on the other, the Levites were to invoke the blessings and cursings of the covenant (Dt. 11:26-30; 27:1-13). As the voices of the Levites called out, the united voices of the people were to echo the response, "Amen!" (Dt. 27:14-26).

The profound impact of the covenant and covenant renewal may be traced

throughout the Former Prophets. In the conquest stories, several incidents are rooted in this deep and fundamental notion that Israel was in covenant with Yahweh. At the crossing of Jordan, the cairn of twelve stones was set up at Gilgal as a "sign" of covenant fulfillment. The God who had "brought them out" by dividing the Red Sea had now fulfilled his covenant promise by "bringing them in" when he divided the Jordan (Jos. 4:1-9, 19-24). It was there at Gilgal that all the soldiers were circumcised, according to the ancient covenant stipulations (cf. Ge. 17:11, 13), and this act was in itself an expression of covenant renewal (Jos. 5:2-9). Aachan's sin at Jericho consisted of breaking the *herem* (= ban) of Yahweh war, an offense which is directly described as a covenant violation (Jos. 7:1, 11-13, 15; cf. Dt. 7:23-26; 13:15-18). When at last the Israelites were firmly in control of central Canaan, Joshua conducted the covenant renewal ceremony in the Shechem Pass on the slopes of Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, as commanded by God through Moses (Jos. 8:30-35; cf. Dt. 11:26-30; 27).[40] When the first stage of the war effort had been completed, the narrator in Joshua explained that the conquest of the land was "just as Yahweh had directed Moses" (Jos. 11:23; cf. Dt. 8:7-10).

At the close of the Book of Joshua, after all the tribal allotments had been completed, Joshua once more assembled the nation at Shechem, the site of the earlier blessings and cursings ceremony on Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. Here he again renewed the covenant. The various elements of the covenant formulary, that is, the pattern of the Suzerainty Treaty, are clearly evident.[41]

During the period of the Tribal League, it is the repetitive breaking of the covenant that is held forth most urgently in the Book of Judges. When the *Mal'ak Yahweh* left Gilgal, the site of the initial military encampment from which Joshua had launched the conquest, and appeared at *Bokim* (= Weepers), the geographical shift is significant (Jg. 2:1). At Gilgal, just after the supply of manna had stopped, the *Mal'ak Yahweh* had appeared to Joshua in the form of a man to assure him that the conquest of the land would be led by the hosts of Yahweh (Jos. 5:10-15). Now years later,

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[40] An Israelite altar and worship center has been excavated on Mt. Ebal by archaeologists, and there is an arguable case that it might be directly related to the biblical account of Joshua 8, cf. A. Zertal, "Has Joshua's Altar Been Found on Mt. Ebal?" *BAR* (Jan./Feb. 1985; XI.1), pp. 26-43. As with most archaeological finds, there is debate as to the actual significance of the site, cf. A. Kempinski, "Joshua's Altar-- An Iron Age I Watchtower," and A. Zertal, "How Can Kempinski Be So Wrong!" *BAR* (Jan./Feb. 1986; XII.1), pp. 42-53.

[41] That the Shechem covenant in Joshua 24 is patterned after the basic suzerainty treaty is generally recognized, cf. J. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), pp. 32-35. These same elements also were present in the Sinai covenant, cf. J. Plastaras, *Creation and Covenant* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1968), pp. 165-169.

PREAMBLE: Jos. 24:2a = Introduction of the Great King
HISTORICAL PROLOGUE: Jos. 24:2b-13 = Past history of the benevolent deeds of the suzerain to the vassal
STIPULATIONS: Jos. 24:14 = Undivided allegiance to the Great King
DEPOSIT OF DOCUMENT: Jos. 24:25-26 = Preservation of a written record of the treaty
WITNESSES: Jos. 24:22-24, 27 = The elements that stand as witnesses to the covenant, in this case, Israel itself and the large memorial rock
BLESSINGS AND CURSES: Jos. 24:20 = Consequences for breaking covenant

moving from Gilgal to Bokim, this same figure appeared to announce the broken covenant in that the Israelites had failed to complete the conquest (Jg. 2:1-3). The name Bokim symbolized the covenantal failure of the nation (Jg. 2:4-5). The consequences of the violated covenant in the failure of Yahweh war would result in these nations becoming a test for Israel regarding her exclusive loyalty to Yahweh (Jg. 2:20--3:5). Here again, Israel failed miserably. She abandoned Yahweh repeatedly in order to serve the Canaanite fertility gods (Jg. 2:10-13, 17-19), and in accordance with the Deuteronomic blessings and cursings, Yahweh turned the nation over to her enemies (Jg. 2:14-15). The phrase, "Israel did evil in Yahweh's eyes," becomes the epitaph of the Tribal League, and inevitably, such covenant violations led to the Deuteronomic cursings (Jg. 3:7-8, 12; 4:1-2; 6:1; 8:33-34; 10:6-8; 13:1).

The most severe crisis of the pre-monarchy occurred when Shiloh was destroyed during the priesthood of Eli. Eli's sons had so corrupted their office that God determined to exterminate the entire family (1 Sa. 2:12-17, 22-25, 27-34; 3:11-14). When they arrogantly appropriated the ark as a paladium for holy war without Yahweh's leave, he allowed the Philistines to destroy the central shrine and capture the ark (1 Sa. 4). The central symbol of the covenant containing the tables of stone now had been abandoned to the pagan enemy.

Throughout the monarchy, the covenant relationship between the people and Yahweh figures centrally. Solomon's great prayer at the dedication of the temple is filled with covenant phraseology (1 Ki. 8).[42] In the days of the Omri Dynasty, some years after the nation had divided into the north and south, Elijah in the north fled to Horeb, the mountain of Torah, to rediscover the roots of the covenant faith at the ancient site. Elijah perceived himself as the only one left in the north who was faithful to the covenant (1 Ki. 19:9-10, 13-14), though as God made clear, his assumption was a mistake (1 Ki. 19:18).[43] When the northern nation finally

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[42] Notice the parallels in Solomon's prayer with covenantal stipulations and the cursings accompanying covenant failure:

Circumstance	Solomon	Torah
Oath of Innocence	1 Ki. 8:31-32	Ex. 22:7-12; Nu. 5:11-31
Invasion by an Enemy	1 Ki. 8:33-34	Dt. 28:25
Drought	1 Ki. 8:35-36	Dt. 28:22-24
Plague	1 Ki. 8:37-40	Dt. 28:21-24
Exile	1 Ki. 8:46-51	Dt. 28:36-37, 64-68

[43] There are striking parallels between Elijah's flight to Horeb and Israel's desert experience which, in a literary way, suggest that Elijah's flight was a kind of quest for covenant authenticity:

Elijah's Flight to Horeb	Israel in the Desert
(1 Ki. 19:3-14)	(Ex. 19:16-19; 33:19-23)
40 days	40 years
Fed with bread/water by an angel	Fed with manna from heaven/ water from the rock
Mt. Horeb	Mt. Horeb (Sinai)
Sheltered in a cave	Sheltered in a rocky cleft

succumbed to Assyria, her exile was plainly spelled out as the disastrous result of covenant-breaking (2 Ki. 17:5-23; cf. Dt. 28:36-57, 64-68).

In the south, there was periodic respite under the reforms of Judah's better kings. Asa (1 Ki. 15:11-15), Jehoshaphat (1 Ki. 22:43, 46), Joash (2 Ki. 12:2-3), Amaziah (2 Ki. 14:3-6), Azariah (2 Ki. 15:3-4), and Jotham (2 Ki. 15:34-35) all received mixed reviews, partly good and partly insufficient. They "did right", but they were not approved without qualification, because they did not destroy the ancient local shrines in preference for the central shrine which Yahweh had chosen, that is, the temple in Jerusalem (Dt. 12).

Only two of Judah's kings received full commendation. Hezekiah was like "no one, either before him or after him" in his loyalty to Yahweh and the covenant (2 Ki. 18:3-8). Because of his faithfulness, the disaster of exile inflicted by the Assyrians upon the northern nation did not happen to Judah, at least immediately (2 Ki. 18:13--19:36). Even though God confirmed the eventual exile of Judah, it was postponed to a future time (2 Ki. 20:16-19).

The other king who was lauded without reservation was Josiah, Hezekiah's great grandson. Only eight years old when he began his reign (2 Ki. 22:1), he "walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left" (2 Ki. 22:2), and in fact, as was said of Hezekiah, "neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to Yahweh as he did -- with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses" (2 Ki. 23:25). Of major significance during his kingship was the discovery of the "Book of the Covenant" in the temple.[44] This discovery of the content and implications of the covenant spurred Josiah toward a reform and a renewal of the covenant in Judah (2 Ki. 23:1-3), which in turn postponed the tragic judgment of exile until after Josiah's death (2 Ki. 22:18-20; cf. 23:26-27).

Finally, the predicted catastrophe occurred in 587-6 B.C. The shattered covenant produced a shattered nation (2 Ki. 25). The Davidic king was shackled, blinded, and taken to Babylon. His sons were butchered, his capital razed and the temple torched. The best of the people were carried to Babylon in exile, along with

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Wind, earthquake, fire	Wind, earthquake, fire
Yahweh passed by	Yahweh passed by
Elijah covers his face	Moses shielded by God's hand

[44] The document that was discovered is alternately called the *sepher hattorah* (= Book of Torah, cf. 2 Ki. 22:8, 11) and the *sepher haberit* (= Book of the Covenant, cf. 2 Ki. 23:2, 21). The exact content of this document is not described in the text, but it is generally accepted that it at least included the core of the Book of Deuteronomy, if not more, cf. M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings [AB]* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988), p. 294. In favor of Deuteronomy is that it was clearly written in a covenantal form (Hittite Suzerainty Treaty). Also, it calls for a centralization of worship in Yahweh's chosen city (Dt. 12), it contains details of the blessings and cursings (Dt. 11:26-28; 28), which would have been the apparent cause of Josiah's deep consternation (cf. 2 Ki. 22:11-20), it details the relationship between Torah and the king (Dt. 17:14-20), and it calls for the extermination of all local cult centers and Canaanite religious associations (Dt. 7:5, 25-26; 12:2-3; 13; 16:21-22; 18:9-13), an act that Josiah performed (2 Ki. 23:4-7, 10-15, 19, 24).

many of the temple furnishings. The Deuteronomic cursings were complete (Dt. 28:49-68).

The most important and enduring symbol of the covenant was the ark. While Israel was at Sinai, Yahweh instructed Moses regarding the construction of an ark, a box built from acacia wood, overlaid with gold, and designed to be carried by poles inserted through rings on the sides (Ex. 25:10-22; 37:1-9). This ark had several purposes germane to the covenant. First, it's cover, which was graced by cherubim with overspreading wings, was considered to be the dwellingplace of Yahweh from which he communicated with the leaders or the people (Ex. 25:22; 30:6; Nu. 7:89). In the Former Prophets, this idea is retained (cf. Jos. 7:6), but it includes the concept that the lid was a kind of throne upon which Yahweh sat (*yashav*) or was "enthroned" (1 Sa. 4:4; 2 Sa. 6:2; Ki. 19:15). Yahweh's enthronement on the ark was an expression of his kingship over Israel, an expression similar to the kingship of Yahweh as expressed in the suzerainty covenant formulary (cf. Ps. 29:10; 80:1; 99:1; Is. 37:16; Je. 3:16-17). From his throne, Yahweh spoke to the boy Samuel, who was sleeping beside the ark in the *heykal* (= palace or temple) of Yahweh (1 Sa. 3:3). Three times the voice came, and after the third time, Yahweh "stood forth" (1 Sa. 3:9-10), an anthropomorphism which assumes that he previously was seated on the ark.[45]

Even more important for Deuteronomistic History, the ark served as a depository for the covenant itself. The ark was built so that it might house the "Testimony" (*'eduth* = warning) of Yahweh (Ex. 25:16, 21), and this Testimony was later explained to be the decalogue inscribed on the stone tablets (cf. Ex. 40:20; Dt. 10:1-5). The common title for the ark in the Book of Exodus is thus the "Ark of the Testimony" (*'aron ha'eduth*), though a similar but alternative title, "Ark of the Covenant" (*'aron haberith*), occurs a few times elsewhere (cf. Nu. 10:33; 14:44; Dt. 10:8; 31:9, 26). This second title became dominant in the Former Prophets, and the former disappeared altogether.[46] At Shechem, when the blessings and cursings were pronounced from Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, the ark was placed in the valley between the two mountains as the depository of the ancient law code for the covenant renewal ceremony (Jos. 8:33).

In the conquest narratives, the ark of the covenant also served as a palladium for war, a safeguarding symbol of Yahweh's militance against the Canaanites and Israel's covenantal responsibility to destroy them. This placement of the ark in a war context began in the desert sojourn, when the movement of the ark controlled the movements of the nation as an armed militia (Nu. 10:33).

Whenever the ark set out, Moses said,

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[45] G. Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch*, trans. E. Dicken (London: SCM, 1984), p. 109.

[46] The expression appears only once early in Joshua (4:16).

> *'Rise up, Yahweh!*
> *May your enemies be scattered;*
>   *may your foes flee before you.'*
> *Whenever it came to rest, he said,*
> *'Return, Yahweh,*
>   *to the countless thousands of Israel.'*

This belief in the ark as a symbol of Israel's covenantal responsibility to engage in Yahweh war lies behind its prominence in the crossing of the Jordan, the initial entrance to invade the land (Jos. 3:3-4; 4:10-13). Equally, it stands behind the command for the Israelites to carry the ark into the battle of Jericho (Jos. 6:6-14). Later, it motivated Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, to carry the ark into war against the Philistines, where it was lost when Shiloh was destroyed (1 Sa. 4). It is even possible that the ark once was used for war by Saul (1 Sa. 14:18).[47] Where the ark resided during the period of the Tribal League is unclear, but in view of the general apathy of the nation towards holy war, the largely silent record is not too surprising. The Tent of Meeting had been moved to Shiloh before the death of Joshua (Jos. 18:1), but no mention of the ark was made, and in fact, the ark was later said to have been located at Bethel (Jg. 20:26-27), even though the Tent of Meeting was still at Shiloh (Jg. 18:31). This means that the possibility must remain open that the ark and the tent were not always together, even prior to the destruction of Shiloh. Afterwards, of course, the ark and the tent were definitely separated until the building of the temple (1 Sa. 5-6).

It was David, the one who revived Israel's commitment to covenantal Yahweh war, who brought the ark back into prominence. He retrieved it from obscurity and brought it into his newly captured capital, pitching for it a special tent (2 Sa. 6). This new home did not eliminate the use of the ark as a palladium for war, however. The ark apparently was used in the Davidic wars with the Ammonites (2 Sa. 11:11),[48] and later, when David abdicated the throne to Absalom, the priests apparently assumed that the ark would be going with him, though David instructed them to return it to the city (2 Sa. 15:24-26, 29). Finally, when Solomon dedicated the new temple on Zion, he placed the ark in its inner room (1 Ki. 6:19; 8:1-21). It still contained the stone tablets of the decalogue (1 Ki. 8:9),[49] and these tablets were the enduring relic of the

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[47] The MT and the LXX are at variance here. The MT describes the ark as being in Saul's military camp (cf. NIV, NASB, ASV, RSV), while the LXX refers only to the ephod (cf. NEB, NAB, JV, AB), cf. H. Hertzberg, *I & II Samuel*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), pp. 113-114.

[48] C. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Books of Samuel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 385.

[49] The curious statement that the ark contained only the tables of stone is difficult to assess. If the accounts of Ex. 16:33 and Nu.17:10 are to be taken as describing the pot of manna and Aaron's rod as being placed in front of the ark, then there is no direct problem, but there is the possibility that these items earlier had been placed inside the ark (cf. He. 9:4), see discussion in F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews [NICNT]* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 188-189. It is not

covenant made between Yahweh and Israel in the desert (8:21).

Three divine-human covenants loom large in Torah and the Former Prophets, God's covenant with Abraham, his covenant with Israel through Moses, and his covenant with David. Deuteronomistic History, which depends so directly upon the theology of Deuteronomy, exhibits a sharp covenantal tension, particularly between the seeming unconditionality of the Abrahamic and the Davidic covenants as opposed to the marked conditionality of the Mosaic covenant. In all three covenants, the Deuteronomistic emphasis is the land, though of course other elements are expressed.

That the land of Canaan is the central aspect of the Abrahamic covenant for Israel from the time of the exodus to the exile is apparent when one surveys the references to it in Torah. In the original formulation of the covenant, various elements are expressed, none of them directly related to the land (Ge. 12:1-3), but it in the additions and development of the covenant, it is the land promises which are most significant for Deuteronomistic History (Ge. 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:18-19; 17:8; 22:17b; 26:3-4; 28:13; 35:12).[50] The land promises were couched in the language of a grant, and they were to be considered *'ad 'olam* (= perpetual, or forever). The event of the exodus is invariably interpreted as a fulfillment of these land promises, given on oath by Yahweh to Abraham (cf. Ex. 3:16-17; 6:2-4, 8; 32:13; 33:1; Nu. 32:11; Dt. 1:8; 6:10; 9:5; 30:20; 34:4). Though very few allusions are made to the Abrahamic covenant in Deuteronomistic History, whenever the covenant is recalled, it is the land promises which are most important (cf. Jos. 24:2-3, 11-13; 2 Ki. 13:23).

If the Abrahamic covenant is rarely recalled in the Former Prophets, the same cannot be said about the Mosaic covenant and its confirmation of the earlier land promises. Here, there is a significant shift, however. In the Abrahamic covenant, the land promises were given as perpetual. In the Mosaic covenant, the land was given conditionally. Its possession was to be regulated by the deuteronomic blessings and cursings. Disobedience not only prohibited the original group from immediately entering the land at Kadesh (Nu. 14:40-45), it cancelled entirely their personal participation in any fulfillment in the future (Nu. 14:22-23; 32:6-13; Jos. 5:6). The possession of the land was not unconditional, and in fact, the land could be lost (Lv. 26:32-35, 38-39; Dt. 28:36, 49-52, 64-68; 29:27-28).

The conquest under Joshua was, of course, a fulfillment of the land promise (Jos. 1:6; Jg. 2:1), and references to the "land" in the Book of Joshua are copious. However, it is apparent that the possession of the land is controlled far more by the deuteronomic blessings and cursings than by any automatic guarantee. Joshua's

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unlikely that if they were ever in the ark, they were displaced in the troubled period of the ark's residency in Philistia.

[50] It is worth reiterating that the sacred site of Shechem, where the original land promise was given and where Abram built a memorial altar in honor of the promise, was the same site at which the covenant renewal ceremony was made in the days of Joshua as mandated in Deuteronomy (cf. Dt. 11:29-30; 27:1-13; Jos. 24:1, 11-28).

farewell address (Jos. 23:12-16), the covenant renewal at Shechem (Jos. 24:13, 20), the general political turmoil in the period of the Tribal League, the Philistine threat from the time of Eli to the time of David, the dedicatory prayer of Solomon (1 Ki. 8:33-34, 46-51), and finally, the exile of the northern and southern nations (2 Ki. 17:18-23; 25:10-11, 21) all point toward the conditionality of land possession.

It was not until the wars of David that the conquest of Canaan can be said to have been complete. Granted, the initial stage of conquest was successful under Joshua (Jos. 11:23), but large tracts of land remained to be annexed (Jos. 13:1ff.; Jg. 1:1ff.). The failure to complete the conquest becomes the backdrop for the history recorded in the Book of Judges (Jg. 1:19--2:5, 23; 3:1-6). Israel's political fortunes seesawed back and forth until her very national existence was threatened in the time of Eli and Samuel. When David finally gained control of the nation after the seven years of civil war against the Saulide claimant to the throne, he quickly mobilized to annex Jerusalem and to end the Philistine threat (2 Sa. 5:6-25). The tragedy of Shiloh was rectified when the sacred ark was brought back to a central shrine (2 Sa. 6). At last, when the kingdom was secure, David determined to construct a permanent place for the ark (2 Sa. 7:1-2). This idea of permanency had a powerful symbolic value, for it contrasted sharply with the temporary character of the old Tent of Meeting and the, more or less, temporary political character of the Tribal League. A permanent house for the ark reflected upon the new permanent security of the nation in the land. It signaled the end of the conquest.

While Yahweh did not allow David the privilege of following through on this project, he did establish a covenant with David, a covenant guaranteeing a perpetual dynasty to David (2 Sa. 7:11b-16) as well as the land for the Israelite nation from which they would never be disturbed (2 Sa. 7:10-11a). The inviolable nature of this covenant is clear in David's closing words:

> *He shows unfailing kindness to his anointed,*
> *to David and his descendants forever.*
>
> *2 Sa. 22:51b*
>
> *Is not my house right with God?*
> *Has he not made with me an everlasting*
> *covenant,*
> *Arranged and secured in every part?*
>
> *2 Sa. 23:5a*

The establishment of the Davidic covenant set up added covenantal tension within Deuteronomistic History. Whereas already there was tension between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic covenant in terms of unconditionality and conditionality, there now was even greater tension between the Mosaic Covenant and

the Davidic covenant, also in terms of conditionality and unconditionality. The deuteronomic blessings and cursings controlled the possession of the land in a conditional way; the "sure promise to David" seemed to guarantee the possession of the land in an unconditional way. The difficulty of trying to reconcile the apparent unconditional character of the Davidic covenant with the realities of Deuteronomistic History is sharply evident in Psalm 89 (see especially the transition between 89:19-37 and 89:38-51).

Upon the death of Solomon, the united monarchy ruptured, never to be brought together again. The northern nation rejected the Davidic covenant with its shrine on Mt. Zion. The Israelites of the ten tribes reverted back to the older patterns, and they returned to the ancient worship at various local shrines (Jg. 18:30; 1 Ki. 12:26-33). At the secession, they said:

> *What share do we have in David,*
> *what part in Jesse's son?*
> *To your tents, O Israel!*
> *Look after your own house, O David!*
>
> <div align="right">*1 Ki. 12:16b*</div>

Thus, for the north, the Mosaic covenant was supreme, while the Davidic covenant was rejected. The southern two tribes, on the other hand, remained faithful to David's dynasty and the Davidic covenant. Zion was the central shrine for the south and remained so until the destruction of the Jerusalem. The orientation of the north toward Sinai rather than Zion is perhaps best indicated in Elijah's flight to Horeb. Passing directly alongside Zion on his way south, this northern prophet traveled straight to the primeval origin of his faith, Horeb (Sinai).

Kingship

Deuteronomic history is characterized by two radically different forms of politics, the politics of the Tribal League and the politics of the monarchy. The Tribal League grew out of the conquest, but it had no particular mandate, other than the Deuteronomic statement that judges and officials were to be appointed in the various towns of occupation (cf. Dt. 16:18-20). It had no capital, no central government, no standing army, no treasury and no official head of state. The monarchy, which began in the days of Samuel, quickly developed all of the things the Tribal League lacked. The political shift occurred in conjunction with a sociological shift. The establishment of the Tribal League made possible the shift from the semi-nomadic life of the Sinai desert to a nation of small farmers. The establishment of a monarchy in turn made possible the shift from a nation of small farmers to a nation of both small

farmers and urban classes in the major cities. This political shift was not easily made, however. The tribal theocracy was an incredibly stubborn and tenacious institution, and the tension between the two political forms is evident both before and after Samuel's time.

The first hint of a future kingship for Israel comes at the institution of circumcision as the covenant ritual. *El Shaddai* appeared to Abram (= exalted Father) and changed his name to Abraham (= father of many). Associated with this name change was the promise that Abraham would sire kings (Ge. 17:6). To be sure, the promise had some application to the descendants of Ishmael (Ge. 17:20), but God also repeated the same promise to Sarah (Ge. 17:16). Even here the promise had application beyond Israel, for Esau also fathered a line of kings in Edom (Ge. 36:31ff.). Yet the promise of kings was also repeated to Jacob (Ge. 35:11), and the idea of kingship in Israel is implicit in Jacob's dying blessing over Judah (Ge. 9:10).[51]

> *The scepter will not depart from Judah,*
> *nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,*
> *until he comes to whom it belongs.*
>
> *Ge. 49:10*

To be sure, even Balaam recognized that Yahweh himself was to be celebrated as the king of Israel (Nu. 23:21; cf. Ex. 15:18; Dt. 33:5), yet at the same time, he also prophesied of a future king, ostensibly a human king, who would be "greater than Agag" (Nu. 24:7b).[52]

It is in Deuteronomy, however, that explicit and unambiguous descriptions of a future king are given. To be sure, it is a permissive rather than a mandatory legislation, but it vividly anticipates the future monarchy of Israel.[53]

> *When you enter the land...and you say, 'Let us set a king over us like all*
> *the nations around us,' be sure to appoint over you the king Yahweh*

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[51] Christians have long seen a messianic intent in this blessing, and while we cannot pause to assess that interpretation here, it should at least be noted that the ideas of "scepter" and "staff" denote rulership of some kind, a rulership that most naturally would reach its culmination in the kingship of David, the "one to whom it belongs," cf. H. Ellison and D. Payne, "Genesis," *The International Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Marshall Pickering/Zondervan, 1979), p. 146; C. Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, trans. J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), pp. 229-230.

[52] That this may be a straightforward prophecy of Agag in the days of Samuel who opposed Saul, the first Israelite king, see G. Wenham, *Numbers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1981), pp. 177-178.

[53] It is almost axiomatic among non-evangelical scholars that Dt. 17:14-20 could not have originated in the time of Moses, since the picture of the king parallels so closely the behavior of the kings of Israel and Judah. In the JEDP scheme, Deuteronomy is thought to have been composed in the northern nation at about the time of the exile, and some scholars see suggestions in the deuteronomic law of the king that point toward the north, cf. G. von Rad, *Deuteronomy*,trans. D. Barton (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), p. 119. However, there is no reason why, even in terms of the content, Moses could not have composed this directive, cf. J. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1974), pp. 204-206.

your Elohim chooses.

<div align="right">*Dt. 17:14-15a*</div>

Here the rule for the king is given which requires that he be chosen by Yahweh himself from among the Israelites. Various stipulations are mandated: the king is not to be a foreigner, he is not to acquire horses (presumably for cavalry or chariotry), he is not to build a large harem, and he is not to accumulate a large treasury. Furthermore, he must scrupulously follow Torah, keeping a Torah scroll (or at least a Deuteronomy scroll) with him for careful and regular reading. In the Deuteronomic blessings and cursings, the penalty for covenant-breaking was exile from the land (Dt. 28:36). Thus, the notion of Israel as a monarchy was not an alien idea prior to the time of Saul of Benjamin. At the same time, there was no particular mandate for how or when such a monarchy would arise.

If the possibility of a monarchy had roots in Torah, it must be frankly admitted that there was stiff resistance. Israel was not eager to surrender the old order. During the Tribal League, her principle of leadership remained charismatic, not dynastic. In fact, the idea of a monarchy was consciously and firmly rejected in the days of Gideon.

> *The Israelites said to Gideon, 'Rule over us -- you, your son and your grandson -- because you saved us out of the hand of Midian.' But Gideon told them, 'I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Yahweh shall rule over you.'*

<div align="right">*Jg. 8:22-23*</div>

When Abimelech, one of the many sons of Gideon's harem (Jg. 8:31), established himself as a king in Shechem by executing his brothers (Jg. 9:1-6), the parable shouted from Mt. Gerizim by the one surviving son makes it plain that only a worthless bramble of a man, who had no useful employment, would aspire to be king (Jg. 9:7-21).[54] In fact, within three years Abimelech's self-proclaimed kingdom was erupting anarchy and treason. While trying to control his territory, Abimelech was killed when a woman dropped a millstone on his head from a tower. Any efforts toward kingship ceased until the time of Samuel.

In spite of the reluctance of Gideon and the aggrandizement of Abimelech, the Deuteronomic author of the Book of Judges did not view the absence of a king to be idyllic. To the contrary, the absence of a king was blamed for the general anarchy of the period, and no less than four times does this absence appear in statements which suggest that the woes of the Tribal League are at least to some degree a result of the

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[54] J. Bright, *The Kingdom of God* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1953), p. 32.

vacuum in leadership (Jg. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). The Song of Hannah points toward another ideal -- not the absence of a king but the justice and victory of a king anointed and exalted by God.

> *He will give strength to his king,*
> *and exalt the horn of his anointed.*
>
> <div align="right">*1 Sa. 2:10b*</div>

In the days of Eli, the central shrine of Shiloh had been destroyed by the Philistines. In fact, the Philistines had put the charismatic leadership of the Tribal League to a new and more severe test than ever had been made by the Canaanites. While Israel had been pushed into the central mountains and out of the plains due to her lack of chariotry (cf. Jg. 1:19, 27, 34), she now faced the threat of Philistine garrisons in the Shephelah itself (1 Sa. 13:3-4). Deprived of ironmongery and blacksmithing, the Israelites were for all practical purposes disarmed (1 Sa. 13:19-22). The nation was on the verge of collapse. It only remained for the Philistines to mount a full-scale offensive in order for the Israelites to be cut to pieces. To make matters worse, the sons of Samuel, who had been appointed as magistrates by their father, exploited their positions (1 Sa. 8:1-3). It is out of this situation that the first step toward statehood was made.

Israel's request to have a king "such as all the other nations have" (1 Sa. 8:5, 20) can only be regarded as a capitulation, at least in some degree, to a Canaanite ideal. Kingship in the ancient Near East was considered to be a sacred office with cultic functions as well as political ones. The king was considered to be a mediator between humans and the gods, and this understanding inevitably lead to the belief that the king was a semi-divine person, sometimes called the "son of *El*" (= son of God).[55] In Israel, there are some significant parallels to this Canaanite pattern. Each king was anointed, an act that pointed toward his sacred role and that gave rise to the term messiah (= the anointed). From the time of David onward, the Davidic king, in Judah at least, was considered to be God's son (Ps. 2:7; Ps. 89:20, 26-27; cf. 2:7), and in at least one psalm, he even is called "god" (Ps. 45:1, 6). It is probable that a fear of syncretism fueled Samuel's distaste for the idea of a kingship.

For whatever reason, the tension between the old charismatic leadership and the new monarchy can be keenly felt in the narratives of 1 Samuel 7-12. Here kingship is given both negative assessments as well as divine approval. In 1 Sa. 7:2-17, the leadership of Samuel in subduing the Philistines demonstrates that if the nation would have remained faithful to her covenant, the charismatic leadership of the Tribal League was adequate to preserve it. Samuel can only be described as blunt in

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[55] D. Payne, "King; Kingdom," *ISBE* (1986) III.21; S. Szikszai, "King, Kingship," *IDB* (1962) III.14-15.

the face of the nation's request for a king, and in fact, Yahweh himself explained to Samuel that the nation had not merely rejected their human leader but their divine suzerain as well (1 Sa. 8:6-8; 10:17-19; cf. 12:12). Among the people, there were certainly some dissenters, if not toward the kingship as an institution, certainly toward Saul as the new leader (1 Sa. 10:26-27; cf. 12-13).

At the same time, the text also makes clear that Yahweh himself appointed the new king. In spite of Samuel's reluctance, Yahweh instructed him to grant the people's request (1 Sa. 8:9a, 22a). He verified to Samuel the choice of Saul by personal revelation (1 Sa. 9:15-17), and Samuel in turn anointed Saul as king (1 Sa. 10:1). God further verified Saul as his choice by sending the charismatic spirit upon Saul (1 Sa. 10:6-7, 9-13), and by regulating the casting of lots for the new king (1 Sa. 10:20-25). Saul began his kingly career like the charismatic *shophetim* (= judges). He engaged in an action of Yahweh war spurred on by the *ruah Yahweh* (= Spirit of the LORD) which rushed upon him (1 Sa. 11:6). While at first there may have been some public reluctance, after Saul's victory over the Ammonites, his kingship was publicly reaffirmed (1 Sa. 11:14-15). Finally, in Samuel's last words, even though he frankly recognized that Israel's desire for a king was a rejection of Yahweh, he still maintained that "Yahweh has set a king over you" (1 Sa. 12:13). While Saul eventually suffered personal rejection because of his usurpation of priestly office (1 Sa. 13:7b-14) and because of his violation of the *herem* (= ban) of Yahweh war (1 Sa. 15:7-29), the kingship was to remain. Yahweh was grieved that he had chosen Saul as king (1 Sa. 15:11, 35b), but in rejecting Saul, Yahweh also determined to choose a replacement -- a man "after his own heart" who was "better" than Saul (1 Sa. 13:14; 15:28).

It is in David that the deuteronomic kingly ideal is to be found. David was "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sa. 13:14), an expression which occurs in the context of holy war and which probably means that David, a warrior committed to fighting the Canaanites and Philistines, was the ideal leader embodying the best elements of the *shophetim* and the kingship (cf. Ps. 89:19). Privately, Samuel anointed David as the new king (1 Sa. 16). In the battle with Goliath, David gained the public recognition necessary to propel him into a leadership role. David's implicit trust in Yahweh all during his outlaw years, and even during the period of civil war after Saul's tragic death, all commend him as the ideal shepherd-king, the "lamp of Israel" (2 Sa. 21:17). The Davidic covenant, which was guaranteed to David's dynasty forever (2 Sa. 75-16; 22:51; 23:5; Ps. 89:19-37), points to David as the deuteronomic ideal who, even on his deathbed, warned Solomon his successor that he must carefully follow Torah.

> *Observe what Yahweh your Elohim requires: Walk in his ways, and*
> *keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written*

in the Torah of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, and that Yahweh may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.

1 Ki. 2:3-4
(cf. Ps. 132:11-12)

David, of course, was not perfect, and the author of 2 Samuel does not avoid his weaknesses. He was guilty of adultery and murder (2 Sa. 11), and his severe family problems are vividly recorded in his court history (2 Sa. 12-20). Nevertheless, he was the king who did what was "just and right for all his people" (2 Sa. 8:15), and ever afterward, David's reign was viewed as the ideal.

Solomon, David's son, is remembered for his reign of splendor (cf. Mt. 6:29). During his reign, peace prevailed, and his plea for wisdom can only be described as admirable. However, early in his reign, the author of 1 Kings began to enumerate Solomon's covenant failings. Unlike David his father, and in spite of the fact that a central shrine was being built in Jerusalem, Solomon continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense in the ancient shrines, the famous "high places" (1 Ki. 3:2-4).[56] While that practice was perhaps excusable prior to the erection of the temple, it certainly was expected to cease once the temple was in place (Dt. 12:4-14). In Solomon's prayer for wisdom, Yahweh expressly warned him that he was obliged to follow David's whole-hearted devotion to Torah (1 Ki. 3:14). This Solomon did not do.

Though the nation was affluent and outwardly healthy (1 Ki. 4:20-21), Solomon began the trend away from strict covenant observance. His first departure was his violation of the deuteronomic restriction on horses (1 Ki. 4:26, 28; 9:19; 11:26-29; cf. Dt. 17:16). Though his prayer at the temple's dedication was flawless in its deuteronomic character (1 Ki. 8:33-51), Yahweh appeared to Solomon after the temple's dedication with a solemn warning, a warning that suggested it was more than pious words which Yahweh wanted (1 Ki. 9:1-9). This caution was directly aimed at the threat of religious syncretism, and the security of the Davidic dynasty, the land and the temple were conditioned upon full covenant obedience.

Solomon's coffers grew steadily, which was another prohibition of the deuteronomic code (Dt. 17:17). Gold poured in from the north (1 Ki. 9:14) and the south (1 Ki. 10:10-11), a flow which was estimated at about twenty-five tons annually (1 Ki. 10:14-15). Gold was so plentiful that silver was considered "as common as

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[56] The designation of the cultic sites called *bama* (= high place) derives from a stock Semitic vocabulary. In Akkadian and Ugaritic it meant "ridge" or "back", that is, a summit in the mountainous central hill country. At least three legitimate Israelite high places are mentioned in the pre-monarchy period, Ramah, Gibeath-Elohim and Gibeon, all in Benjamin just north of Jerusalem, cf. L. Geraty, "High Place," *ISBE* (1982) II.709.

rocks" (1 Ki. 10:21, 27). Solomon's wealth outstripped that of all other kings of the period (1 Ki. 10:23), and annually his treasury burgeoned from all quarters (1 Ki. 10:25).

Political marriages became Solomon's state policy for national security, and he built his harem from the princesses of the surrounding nations (1 Ki. 11:1). Not only was this a violation of the deuteronomic prohibition of building a large royal harem (Dt. 17:17), it was a violation of the law which forbade Israelite intermarriage with foreigners (1 Ki. 11:2-5; cf. Dt. 7:3-4). As was to be expected, Solomon's wives turned his heart away from Yahweh, and to accommodate their national religions, Solomon built pagan shrines within Israel, a defiant violation of the decalogue itself (1 Ki. 11:7-8; cf. Ex. 20:3; Dt. 5:7; 6:13-15; 8:19; 11:16-17; 16:21-22). In normal circumstances, this violation alone should have resulted in Solomon's execution (Dt. 13).

Because of Solomon's covenant failure, Yahweh was angry and determined to judge him in history. The kingdom would be torn from his family after his death (1 Ki. 11:9-13), and even before his demise, the outlying areas of his kingdom were becoming unhinged (1 Ki. 11:14, 23-25). The final assessment of Solomon according to deuteronomic history was that he "did not keep Yahweh's command" (1 Ki. 11:10).

When Solomon died, the kingdom split. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, refused to ease the burden of taxation and forced labor (1 Ki. 12:1-15). His refusal prompted the northern clans to secede, and they selected Jeroboam, the former corvee master, to be their king (1 Ki. 12:16-20; cf. 11:28-40). The history of the two nations until the respective exile of each is marked by frequent deuteronomic evaluations of their kings.

In the southern nation, which remained loyal to the dynasty and covenant of David as well as to the temple on Zion, all the kings are evaluated with respect to David himself, the ideal king. There is a stereotyped pattern to these evaluations which goes something like this:[57]

1. *In the ____ year of so-and-so, king of Israel, so-and-so, king of Judah, began to reign.*
2. *Facts about his age, length of reign, name, and queen mother*
3. *Deuteronomic evaluation with reference to his ancestor David*
4. *Source listing for further information about his reign in the royal archives*
5. *Concluding statement that he died, and so-and-so reigned in his place*

In the northern nation, another stereotyped pattern is provided, except in this case the paradigm is not David, but "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to

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[57] B. Anderson, *Understanding*, p. 195. See 1 Ki. 14:21-24, 29-31; 15:1-8 for the first two of these stereotyped reports.

sin." The anointing of Jehu by Elisha certainly seems to assume that the king "whom God would choose" was to be selected in a charismatic rather than a dynastic way (2 Ki. 9).

1. *In the _____ year of so-and-so, king of Judah, so-and-so, king of Israel, began to reign.*
2. *Facts about the length of his reign and the location of his capital*
3. *Negative evaluation because he "did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh, and walked in the ways of Jeroboam"*
4. *Source listing for further information about his reign in the royal archives*
5. *Concluding statement that he died, and so-and-so reigned in his place*

To a man, the kings of Israel were evil by deuteronomic standards. Archaeological finds indicate that the Omri dynasty was well-respected in the ancient world, but in D-History Omri only receives six verses -- and none of them very impressive.[58] In Judah, only two kings are given unqualified approval (Hezekiah and Josiah), though several others were commended, even though they retained some religious weaknesses.

The Central Shrine

Just as deuteronomistic history is characterized by two different approaches to politics, the Tribal League and the monarchy, it also is characterized by two different patterns of worship. The patriarchs worshiped in a variety of shrines in Palestine. These various locations were retained as sacred places by the Israelites who came out of Egypt into Canaan. However, during the reigns of David and Solomon, a central shrine was established, a permanent edifice which reflected the permanency of the Israelite occupation of the land. All the old shrines were abandoned, at least temporarily, though the memories of them did not die out. When the monarchy divided, the northern nation revived many of the old shrines, while the south remained loyal to the central shrine, at least in theory, though in fact the worshipers of the south also returned to many of the ancient high places. The shift between the old forms of worship at various ancient sacred sites to the new form of one, single, central place of worship was at best an uneasy one. In the end, the north rejected the shift altogether, though it settled for the uneasy compromise of two major shrines, one in the north and the other in the south, and both to be identified with ancient sacred sites. The southern nation, while giving lip service to the central shrine on Mt. Zion, fluctuated between loyalty to the temple built by Solomon and relapse toward the old sacred places of the past.

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[58] For a survey of the archaeological finds relative to Omri and Ahab, including the famous Moabite Stone, see J. Thompson, "The Dynasty of Omri," *The Bible and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), pp. 120-128.

These ancient sacred places gained their significance from the Patriarchs. Abraham's family was originally pagan when God called him to leave his relatives and his home and travel to a new land (Ge. 12:1; Jos. 24:2-3).[59] In the land of Canaan, Abraham's relationship with God was developed and expanded through the regular theophanic appearances of God and the *Mal'ak Yahweh*. While it is correct to say that the patriarchs worshiped a personal God who was more concerned to associate himself with persons rather than places (which is to be sharply distinguished from the Canaanite deities), it is equally true that the places where God appeared to the patriarchs were accorded special prominence.[60] The places of these ancestral appearances often were regarded as sacred sites, and the fact that they often were named in honor of the divine encounters themselves reinforced their sacredness, particularly locations such as Shechem, (Ge. 12:6-7), Beer Lahai Roi (Ge. 16:7, 13-14), Moriah (Ge. 22:2, 14), Beersheba (Ge. 26:23-25), Bethel (Ge. 28:10-19), Mahanaim (Ge. 32:1-2), and Peniel (Ge. 32:22-30). The fact that the patriarchs worshiped at altars in the same place more than once tended to further reinforce the sacredness of particular places, such as, the sacred sites of Shechem (Ge. 12:7; 33:18-20) and Bethel (Ge. 12:8; 13:3-4; 35:1, 3, 7).

In addition to the sacred places of the patriarchs, the Canaanites also had many sacred places associated with their religion. A common characteristic of the Canaanite deities was that they were often regional in character. Some gods in the Canaanite pantheon were associated with particular high places, while many of the major deities, particularly Ba'al and Ashteroth, had various regional manifestations.[61] Such local manifestations gave rise to a variety of places names, names which have been compounded with the name of the deity, such as, Baal Gad, Baal Hazor, Baal Hermon, Baal Meon, Baal Peor, Baal Perazim, Baal Shalishah, Baal Tamar, Baalah, Baalath Beer and so forth.

When Moses brought the Israelite slaves into the Sinai desert, he led them to the foot of "the mountain of God", Mount Sinai (Horeb), just as God had told him (Ex. 3:12; 19:1-2). From the experience at the burning bush, Moses knew that Sinai was "holy ground" (Ex. 3:1-6). Out of the burning mountain, Yahweh spoke face to face with Moses (Ex. 19:16--20:21). When Torah had been mediated through Moses, Yahweh instructed the Israelites to leave the mountain. At first, Yahweh indicated that he would be staying at the mountain and that he would not travel with them (Ex. 33:1-3), but in the end, at Moses' insistence, Yahweh agreed to go (Ex. 33:12-17; 34:8-9).[62] His presence "in the midst" of Israel was to be manifested in the Tent of

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[59] The names of Terah and Laban, Abraham's father and uncle, are both derived from Mesopotamian words for the moon, and this is suggestive that they were involved in moon worship, particularly since the Sumerian moon god, Nanna, was the patron deity of both Ur and Haran, cf. T. Jacobsen, *IDB* (1962) IV.735-736; Pfeiffer, p. 90.

[60] L. Hicks, *IDB* (1962) III.678.

[61] P. Craigie and G. Wilson, *ISBE* (1988) IV.95-101.

[62] It is likely that the expression, "I will not go with you" (Ex. 33:3b), is intended to describe a particularly intimate

Meeting (Ex. 25-27, 35-40). Just as the voice of God had spoken out of the burning mountain in the desert, his voice now would be heard from within the Tent of Meeting from between the cherubim whose wings overshadowed the lid of the ark (Ex. 25:22; 30:6; Nu. 7:89).

The erection of the Tent of Meeting established a particular central shrine toward which the Israelites could look as the dwellingplace of Yahweh "in their midst" (Ex. 29:44-46; 40:34-38). This shrine becomes the background for the deuteronomic call for a central geographical location for worship in Canaan. During the desert sojourn, and even throughout the Tribal League, the mobility of the Tent of Meeting prohibited the establishment of any single geographical site as a sacred location. Nevertheless, the ideal was there, waiting to be brought into reality.

It is against the background of the regional Canaanite shrines and the potential for syncretism inherent in the various sacred places of the patriarchs that the Deuteronomic Code called for a single, central shrine to be located in Canaan after the conquest. The local shrines of the Canaanites were to be completely destroyed (Dt. 12:1-3). Instead of following the pattern of worshiping at many cultic locations, Israel was to worship Yahweh in a special place which he would choose (Dt. 12:4-28). That the notion of multiple shrines was thought to be associated with Canaanite religion is implicit in the stern warning at the end of the Deuteronomic call for one place of worship (Dt. 12:29-32). Thus, the phrase "the place Yahweh your Elohim will choose as a dwellingplace for his name" is a recurring phrase, not only in the actual mandate for the shrine itself (Dt. 12:5, 11, 14, 18, 26), but also in the instructions for a variety of other ritual observances, such as, the tithing festivals (Dt. 14:23-25), the sacrifice of the firstborn animals (Dt. 15:20), the celebration of Passover (Dt. 16:2, 5-7), the celebration of the Feast of Weeks (Dt. 16:11), the celebration of the Feast of Booths (Dt. 16:15-16), the presentation of cases before the supreme judicial court (Dt. 17:8), the ritual recitation of the historical creed at the presentation of first-fruits (Dt. 26:2), and the periodic public reading of Torah at major convocations (Dt. 31:11). The Book of Deuteronomy at no time stipulates just where this special location would be, except to say that it would be a place Yahweh would choose.[63]

During the period of the Tribal League, no effort was made to establish a permanent central shrine in a particular place. At the time of the allotment of tribal

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expression of Yahweh's presence which would not go with them rather than that he would abandon them to go on alone. It is more than likely that the particular expression of Yahweh's presence that might have been withdrawn was his presence in the Tent of Meeting, cf. R. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God* (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1983), pp. 60-66.

[63] The Samaritan Pentateuch, of course, is more specific. In some 19 of the passages in Deuteronomy, the reference to Shechem is clear, and after Ex. 20:17 a command appears which indicates that a sanctuary should be built on Mt. Gerizim. These passages, however, are extremely tendentious and almost certainly reflect editing in the interest of the Samaritan religion, cf. E. Wurthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, trans. E. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 43.

lands, the Tent of Meeting, which by its very nature was temporary and designed for ease of movement, was pitched in Shiloh in the hill country of Ephraim, where it remained until the days of Samuel (cf. Jos. 18:8, 10; 19:51; 21:2; Jg. 18:31; 21:12, 19; 1 Sa. 1:3, 24; 2:14, 22; 3:21).[64] While the Shiloh shrine was not permanent, the ideal of a central place of worship was important, as particularly evidenced in two stories from the period.

In the first, the transjordan tribes built a memorial altar at Geliloth on the borders of Judah and Benjamin (Jos. 18:17; 22:9-10). This action, which was misunderstood to be an alternative worship site by the other tribes, was considered to be so serious an offence that the remaining Israelites mustered their troops for Yahweh war (Jos. 22:11-12). It is sufficiently clear that this altar was perceived as a violation of the worship statutes in Torah, and careful explanation had to be given that it was not intended for holocausts or other sacrifices (Jos. 22:13-33). It was a memorial altar only, and its name reflects this meaning (Jos. 22:34).

The second story comes from the later period of the judges. An Ephraimite named Micah built a local shrine with a carved image, a cast idol and an ephod (Jg. 17:1-4). At first he installed one of his sons as a priest (Jg. 17:5), and later he hired a traveling Levite for cultic service (Jg. 17:7-13). The story is rife with syncretism, for while the recognition of Yahweh underlies the worship depicted (Jg. 17:2b, 13), it is obvious that the shrine is a clear departure from Torah worship. To add to this confusion, the Danites, who were migrating to the north because they had been unable to control their original land allotment (Jg. 18:1), collected this same Levite and brought him to northern Israel, where yet another shrine was built at Dan (Jg. 18:2-29). This shrine eventually was used by Jeroboam I (1 Ki. 12:28-30), and it continued to exist until the time of the exile (Jg. 18:30-31). There seems little question that the Deuteronomic Historian included this account as a comment on the repeated departure of Israel from the ideal of a central shrine and the worship prescribed in Torah, particularly since the Danite shrine is connected with the career of Jeroboam I "who caused Israel to sin."

In spite of the ideal of a central shrine, however, and even though the Tent of Meeting was more or less permanently pitched at Shiloh, other sacred sites also were used for worship. The covenant renewal at Shechem (Jos. 24), the offering of sacrifices at places such as Bokim (Jg. 2:5), Bethel (Jg. 21:2-4), Beth Shemesh (1 Sa. 6:14-15), Ramah (1 Sa. 7:17), Gilgal (1 Sa. 10:8; 11:15), Bethlehem (1 Sa. 16:2-5), Jerusalem (2 Sa. 6:13, 17), Hebron (2 Sa. 15:8, 12), and Zion (2 Sa. 24:25) all suggest that worship at multiple sites was at least practiced if not fully authorized. Furthermore, there were altars built and sacrifices made in local towns (1 Sa. 9:12-13), in private homes (Jg. 11:31; 13:16-19, 23), in war camps (Jg. 20:24-27; 1

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[64] It is not without interest to note that the Ark seems either to have been separated from the Tent of Meeting for at least a short period, or perhaps the Tent itself was relocated briefly (cf. Jg. 20:27).

Sa. 7:9-10; 13:5-9; 14:35; 15:15), on behalf of clans (1 Sa. 20:6, 29), and at high places (2 Sa. 15:32; 1 Ki. 3:2) and other shrines (Jg. 8:24-32). In the words of the D-Historian:

> *The people were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the name of Yahweh.*
>
> *1 Ki. 3:2*

Thus, while the central shrine was an ideal, it was never effectively established until the time of David and Solomon. After Shiloh was destroyed, the Ark and the Tent were never together again, though the Tent continued to be used at Nob (1 Sa. 21:1-6). The Tent was later stored at the Temple site (1 Ki. 8:4; cf. 2 Chr. 1:3, 6).

It was David who first determined to erect a permanent, central shrine in accord with the deuteronomic ideal (2 Sa. 7:1-3). Though Yahweh did not permit David to bring this dream to fruition, he gave a covenant promise that the central shrine would be built by his son (2 Sa. 7:4-13). The threshingfloor of the Jebusite Araunah, which David purchased (2 Sa. 24:18-25), became the eventual site of the temple. After Solomon's throne was secure, he determined to build the permanent shrine as had been promised in God's covenant to his father (1 Ki. 5:3-5). The temple was built in seven years, and its floor plan was patterned after the Tent of Meeting (1 Ki. 6). The sacred Ark was installed in the Most Holy Place, and the cloud of Yahweh's presence filled the room (1 Ki. 8:1-11). This, at last, was to be viewed as the permanent, central shrine (1 Ki. 8:12). That this was a shift from the ancient multiple sites for worship is clear in Solomon's blessing (1 Ki. 8:14-16), and that it was authorized in the Davidic covenant is equally clear (1 Ki. 8:17-21, 24). Yahweh had chosen Zion as the central shrine (Ps. 9:11; 78:65-69; 87:1-2; 132:13-16).

The temple was to be a dwelling for Yahweh's "name" (Dt. 12:11, 21; cf. 1 Ki. 8:16-17, 29), which is a way of emphasizing that God could not be confined to any particular location on earth, though he could choose a place for special manifestation and honor (1 Ki. 8:27). At the same time, worship at the central shrine was intended to eliminate worship at multiple sites, which in turn was a way of emphasizing that God was one, particularly in distinction from the Baal cult (cf. Dt. 6:4). Furthermore, the permanent temple meant that the conquest of Canaan could be considered finished, for Yahweh had now given his people rest in their new land (1 Ki. 8:56-57). The permanent nature of the central shrine is emphasized in that it was to be the dwelling for Yahweh's name forever (1 Ki. 9:3). However, the seemingly unconditional covenantal promises given to David and Solomon regarding the land and the temple were, in fact, shaped by the conditional nature of the Sinai covenant and the deuteronomic blessings and cursings, so that there were both conditional and unconditional elements juxtaposed to each other (1 Ki. 9:4-9). While Solomon

fulfilled his temple obligations at the three annual festivals (1 Ki. 9:25), he also failed in his covenantal obligation to remove the ancient high places (1 Ki. 3:3). Even worse, he built additional high places to satisfy the religions of his pagan harem (1 Ki. 11:7-8).

When the United Monarchy ruptured at the ascent of Rehoboam to the throne, the newly appointed king of the north, Jeroboam I, led the northern clans in rejecting the Davidic covenant and the central shrine on Zion which Solomon had built (1 Ki. 12:16). He fortified two ancient sacred places, Shechem, where the covenant had been renewed in the days of Joshua, and Peniel, where Jacob had wrestled with God (1 Ki. 12:25). In place of the Zion temple, Jeroboam I built two major shrines as alternative worship sites, one in the north and the other in the south (1 Ki. 12:26-29). The northern shrine was apparently a modification of the ancient Danite shrine from the period of the Tribal League (Jg. 18:30; 1 Ki. 12:30), while Bethel was the ancient sacred place where Jacob had dreamed of a ladder reaching into heaven (Ge. 28:16-19). Both ostensibly were intended for the worship of Yahweh, but both were highly susceptible to syncretism with Canaanite religion, and both plainly rejected the deuteronomic ideal for a single, central place of worship. Not only this, but Jeroboam I also built other high places upon which to worship, he ordained priests outside the Torah prescribed bloodlines, and he instituted alternative annual festivals to rival the celebrations at Zion in the south (1 Ki. 12:31-33). These changes were unforgivable in the view of the deuteronomistic historian. Jeroboam's cult center at Bethel was denounced by a prophet (1 Ki. 13:1-5, 32-33). His editorial comment was terse and damning:

> *This was the sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and to its destruction from the face of the earth.*
>
> *1 Ki. 13:34*

From the time of Jeroboam I until the exile of the north by the Assyrians, the Israelites of the north worshiped at the various cultic centers in the ancient way. Inevitably, this worship tended toward a mixture of Yahweh worship and the Baal cult (cf. 1 Ki. 14:6-11), and the entire company of Israelite kings in the north, regardless of dynasty, was condemned because they "walked in the ways of Jeroboam" (1 Ki. 15:26, 30, 34; 16:2, 7, 13, 19, 25-26, 30-33; 22:52-53; 3:2-3; 13:2, 6, 11; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28). Though Jehu instigated a bloody purge of the Baal cult in the north (1 Ki. 9-10), he still did not remove the shrines in Dan and Bethel (1 Ki. 10:31), and the syncretism continued. The ideal of the single, central place of worship is especially pointed up in the Elijah episode on Mt. Carmel, where he built the altar with twelve stones, representing the ideal of the unified tribes, and waited to pray until he could do so simultaneously with the offering of the evening sacrifice

many miles to the south in Jerusalem (1 Ki. 18:31, 29, 36). In the end, the deuteronomistic historian assesses the exile of the north in terms of its syncretism and worship at all these cultic centers (2 Ki. 17:7-17, 21-23). The colonists which the Assyrians settled in the war-torn northern nation merely adopted the syncretistic practices of their predecessors (2 Ki. 17:24-41).

While ostensibly the southern nation remained faithful to the dynasty of David and the ideal of a central shrine, her leaders did not eliminate the ancient shrines and high places. The kings of Judah were condemned for this tolerance of alternative worship sites (1 Ki. 14:23-24; 2 Ki. 16:3-4; 21:3-9). Even the records of those kings which were otherwise faithful to Yahweh were tarnished by their refusal to remove the ancient high places (1 Ki. 15:14; 22:43; 2 Ki. 12:3; 14:4; 15:4, 35). Only two kings in the south, Hezekiah and Josiah, were commended without reservation, and they were the only ones who removed the alternate worship centers so that the people would worship only at the central shrine in Jerusalem (2 Ki. 18:4, 22; 23:4-15, 19-20). Josiah, of all the kings of Judah, was the highest example of what the deuteronomistic historian considered most important in his zeal to follow Torah and to establish the single, central place of worship.

> *Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to Yahweh as he did -- with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with the Torah of Moses.*
>
> *2 Ki. 23:25*

Because the southern nation also rejected the single, central place of worship, it, too, was destroyed as the north had been (2 Ki. 21:7-9; 23:27; 25:8-9, 13-17).

The Balance of Moral Power

As a theocracy, the nation of Israel was called to a national life of holiness (cf. Ex. 19:6; 22:31a; Lv. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7-8, 26; Dt. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18-19). Given this call, the history of the nation recorded in the former prophets gives high profile to the nation's moral climate. In particular, the moral climate of the united kingdom, and later the divided kingdom, to a large degree rested on the people's spiritual leaders. Near the beginning of their national tenure, there were two central figures for moral leadership, the military leader and the high priest. During the exodus, these figures were Moses and Aaron. After Moses' death, Joshua succeeded him (Dt. 31:1-8). After Aaron's death, the office of high priest passed to his son, Eleazar (Dt. 10:6). Thus, in the period of the conquest, Joshua and Eleazar worked together as leaders for the nation to effect a division of the land among the clans, a division which was spiritual as well as political (cf. Jos. 14:1; 17:4; 19:51; 21:1-3). However, when Joshua died, no successor was named (Jos. 24:29-31). Though the people remained faithful to Yahweh during his lifetime, his decease left a vacuum of moral leadership.

 The military task of Yahweh War eventually collapsed (Jg. 1-2). Similarly, when Eleazar died (Jos. 24:33), his son Phinehas seems to have lacked moral initiative. He is only mentioned once in Judges, when the clans sought his counsel about the civil war with Benjamin (Jg. 20:28). As for the *shophetim* (= judges), their value as moral leaders was uneven, at best. Some of them, such as Samson and Gideon, were themselves terrible moral failures (Jg. 8:24-27; 14:1-3; 16:1-22).

By the time of the days of Eli, the moral leadership of the nation was at a low ebb. While Eli himself seems to have been a man of personal integrity, he allowed his sons to contaminate the office of the priesthood through bribery and sexual exploitation (1 Sa. 2:12-17, 22-25). At this point, there entered into the history of Israel another moral force. This moral force was the figure of the prophet. Of course, Moses and Aaron had been regarded as prophets (Ex. 7:1; Dt. 18:15), and once in the early Tribal League a prophet had appeared to denounce idolatry (Jg. 6:7-10). Beginning with Samuel, however, the appearance of prophets was to become a regular and powerful moral force. Because of Eli's ineffective moral presence, Yahweh revealed through an unnamed prophet that the high priesthood of Eli's family would be wiped out (1 Sa. 2:27-36; cf. 3:11-14).[65]

Seven important prophetic figures appear from the eleventh to the ninth centuries: Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Elijah, Micaiah and Elisha. It is suggestive that these figures arose at the same time that the moral force of the priesthood was diminishing. Furthermore, it is clear that the role of the prophet sharpened in the face of moral degeneracy during the monarchy. The first of these figures, Samuel, was undoubtedly the strongest moral force of his time. During his lifetime, Israel demanded a king, and they were given one (1 Sa. 8-11). However, Samuel's role as a prophet who fearlessly called into moral accountability his own king became programmatic for the future. He rebuked Saul for his usurpation of the priestly role (1 Sa. 13:8-14). He later denounced Saul for violating the Deuteronomic code of Yahweh War (1 Sa. 15:10-29). Only in Israel could a prophet beard the king in his own den and escape with his life!

The pattern of prophet against king is a repeating one. Nathan was the mediator through whom Yahweh established his covenant with David, but later, he bluntly confronted David over his adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sa. 12). Gad pronounced sentence upon David for his sin in numbering the people (2 Sa. 24:10-14). Ahijah announced the rupture of the monarchy during the moral demise of Solomon (1 Kg. 11:29-39), and later, pronounced the sentence of doom upon

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[65]The general opinion of the history of religions school is that prophecy in ancient Israel was evolutionary and depended largely upon borrowing from the phenomena of ecstasy to be found among the Canaanites, cf. J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), pp. 29-35; B. Napier, *IDB* (1962) III.898-900. This conclusion seems overstated. While there are similarities between Israel's prophets and those of her neighbors, there are substantial differences as well, cf. G. Smith, *ISBE* (1986) III.995-996. It is certainly unnecessary to pose a direct historical connection.

Jeroboam I because of his covenant violations (1 Kg. 14:1-16). Both Elijah and Micaiah arose to contend with the flagrant covenant-breaking of Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kg. 17-19, 21-22). Elijah also pronounced judgment upon Ahaziah because he consulted the Philistine god Baal-Zebub (2 Kg. 1:1-17). Elisha announced the annihilation of Ahab's dynasty by Jehu (2 Kg. 9:1-13). Besides these better known prophets, of course, there were other prophets. Some were unnamed, such as, the man of God from Judah who denounced Jeroboam I's cult altar at Bethel (cf. 1 Kg. 13). Others were named, such as, Jehu ben-Hanani, who denounced the sins of Baasha (1 Kg. 16:7, 12-13).

Of the eighth and seventh century writing prophets, the deuteronomistic historian only mentions Isaiah, during the kingship of Hezekiah (2 Kg. 19-20), and Jonah, during the kingship of Jeroboam II (2 Kg. 14:25). Still, the pattern of prophet versus king or prophet versus people as a balance of moral power carries through in the written oracles of the Latter Prophets. The eighth century prophets in the north, Amos and Hosea, bitterly denounced the covenant violations of the nation. Isaiah and Micah followed the same course in the south. Later, this same pattern is clearly discernable in the writings of Zephaniah and Jeremiah in Jerusalem after the north had gone into exile.

It should be observed, of course, that the office of prophet, like the offices of king and priest, could be exploited. The deceitful prophet of Bethel indirectly caused the death of the prophet from Judah in the days of Jeroboam I (1 Kg. 13:7-32). Similarly, during the kingship of Jehoshaphat, Micaiah stood alone against a coterie of court prophets who were no more than "yes" men to Ahab (1 Kg. 22). Particularly in the latter narrative, the test of genuine prophecy as given in Torah (cf. Dt. 18:21-22) was vindicated in the outcome of Ahab and Jehoshaphat's war.[66]

The Deuteronomistic Speeches

Deuteronomistic History is punctuated with speeches which reiterate the conditions of the Deuteronomic code. Some of these speeches are found upon the lips of Yahweh, some by leaders to the people, and some in prayers. Regardless of their context, they aim at a primary goal--the reinforcement of the blessing and cursing clauses in the ancient covenant.

The Book of Joshua begins and ends with such speeches. In the first, Yahweh addressed Joshua as the new leader who succeeded Moses. After confirming that Joshua was to initiate the invasion of Canaan (Jos. 1:1-5), Yahweh urged him to be courageous, carefully obeying the covenant to ensure prosperity and success (Jos. 1:8; cf. Dt. 28:1ff.). On Mt. Ebal, Joshua erected an altar of fieldstones where he copied the Torah and, in the presence of the whole nation, read the blessings and cursings of

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[66]S. DeVries, *Prophet Against Prophet* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 142-144.

the covenant (Jos. 8:30-35).[67] At the end of his life, Joshua's farewell speech to Israel follows the same theme. Once again, the issue of obedience or disobedience would be programmatic for the future of the nation. If they carefully kept the covenant, their future was assured (Jos. 23:6-11). If they abandoned the covenant, the disasters predicted in the Deuteronomic code would catch up to them (Jos. 23:12-13; cf. Dt. 28:15ff.).

Similar to Joshua, Samuel, also, gave a farewell speech. In it, he rehearsed the history of the nation from the time of the exodus (1 Sa. 12:6-8). He reminded them of their slavery to the Canaanites, Philistines and Moabites in the days before the monarchy, a consequence of their covenant unfaithfulness (1 Sa. 12:9; cf. Dt. 28:25). Yet, when they turned back to Yahweh, he delivered them by powerful military leaders, such as, Gideon, Barak, Jephthah and Samuel himself (1 Sa. 12:10-11; Jg. 5-6, 10-11; 1 Sa. 7; Dt. 30:1ff.).[68] The threat of the Ammonites, however, induced the nation to ask for a king, and Yahweh acquiesced. However, the fate of the nation hung in the balance. If they thought that kingship, in and of itself, would protect them from invasion, they were in for a shock. Instead, it would be covenant faithfulness or disobedience that would determine the nation's safety (1 Sa. 12:12-15, 24-25).

David's final words follow the pattern set by Joshua and Samuel. In his prayer, he generalized the essence of the Deuteronomic code:

> *To the faithful you show yourself faithful,*
>> *To the blameless you show yourself blameless,*
> *To the pure you show yourself pure,*
>> *But to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.*

1 Sa. 22:26-27

His final words to Solomon restate the necessity of obedience and covenant faithfulness (1 Kg. 2:2-3). Even though the Davidic promises seemed to be unconditional, in light of the Deuteronomic code there was a conditional factor that could not be ignored (1 Kg. 2:4).

Solomon must have heard David well, because in his dedicatory prayer at the first temple, his words recalled the Deuteronomic conditions. He affirmed that Yahweh keeps his covenantal promises (1 Kg. 8:23), but he solemnly acknowledged that those promises concern failure as well as success (1 Kg. 8:33-53; cf. Dt. 30:1ff.). Success and prosperity were entirely dependent upon covenant faithfulness (1 Kg. 8:56-61). Yahweh's response to Solomon's prayer confirmed how appropriate his

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[67]For the possible discovery of this altar by archaeologists, see Footnote #40.

[68]A few LXX witnesses read "Samson," apparently out of discomfort that Samuel should mention himself (so also NEB, NAB, AB). However, the MT and most LXX texts read Samuel.

words were in light of the covenant. Obedience meant longevity, but disobedience meant disaster (1 Kg. 9:3-9). Solomon lived long enough to see the Deuteronomic forces at work in his own reign. Near the end, his own covenant-breaking behavior inspired a prophetic speech against him. The kingdom would be ripped from his family leaving him and his descendants with only a single tribe (1 Kg. 11:29-36). Jeroboam I, who was to receive the larger share of David's Empire, was given the same stern Deuteronomic warning by Ahijah the prophet (1 Kg. 11:37-39). Nevertheless, Jeroboam, like Solomon before him, did not follow the covenant of the Lord, and Ahijah also pronounced doom to his dynasty (1 Kg. 14:6-16).

So the Deuteronomic speeches went. Most often, they were condemnations of leaders who failed to keep the covenant. Jehu ben Hanani condemned Baasha (1 Kg. 16:1-4), an unnamed prophet condemned Ahab for sparing Ben-Hadad in violation of the laws of Yahweh war (1 Kg. 20:26-43), Elijah called Ahab to account for murder and land-grabbing (1 Kg. 21) and Ahaziah for idolatry (2 Kg. 1:15-17). The sternness of the Deuteronomic code had personal as well as corporate implications. An unnamed prophet's personal condemnation of Eli (1 Sa. 2:27-36) and Nathan's scathing rebuke of David (2 Sa. 12:1-14) suggest that leaders, especially, were held accountable for their obedience or violation of the covenant. On the other hand, personal obedience by a leader could postpone judgment, as the prophetess Huldah indicated in her speech to Josiah (2 Kg. 22:15-20).

The Exile and the Remnant

The idea of remnant was important to all the people of the ancient Near East, but especially, to Israel. In the context of war, famine, and migration, its importance is exemplified in the vocabulary which speaks of a group "left over."[69] In the earliest traditions, of course, this notion is present in the story of the great flood (Ge. 6-9), the famine which drove Jacob and his family to Egypt (Ge. 39-50), and the second generation of Israelites who finally entered Canaan after the bitter failure at Kadesh (Nu. 13-14). At the extreme opposite of the remnant concept was the ban. During the conquest of Canaan, the *herem* (= the ban) was a total destruction of marked Canaanite cities of which Jericho and Ai were the paradigm (Jos. 6-8; cf. 10:1, 28-43; 11:11-23).

For Israel, the idea of a remnant took on religious proportions. One of the most striking accounts is the civil war between Benjamin and the other tribes over the outrage at Gibeah (Jg. 19-21). The Benjamites were nearly annihilated, and the idea that there would be no surviving remnant of a whole tribe was so repulsive that

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[69] Derivatives of six Hebrew roots that express the remnant idea are employed over 540 times in the Old Testament, many of them in D-History. These six roots are *sh'r* (= to remain, to be left over), *plt* (= to escape, to get away), *mlt* (= to escape, to get to safety), *ythr* (= to be left over), *shr'd* (= survivor) and *'hr'th* (= remnant), cf. G. Hasel, *IDBSup* (1962) IV.735.

radical steps were taken to ensure that the Benjamin clan would not fall (Jg. 21:2-23). As the notion of the remnant developed, the idea often was directly correlated with the concept of a true people of God. Ethnic Israel could not simply define itself as the remnant without qualification, for God's judgment in the Deuteronomic code clearly spelled out disaster for disobedience. Some among the Israelites would not survive. For the house of Eli, God left as a remnant only an infant with a name recalling the disaster at Shiloh (1 Sa. 3:11-14; 4:16-22). During times when there was a national loss of faith, a faithful remnant still could be identified who had not succumbed. During the Elijah cycle, the prophet bemoaned his belief that he, alone, was the righteous remnant, though Yahweh informed him that the righteous remnant numbered some 7000 in the northern nation (1 Kg. 19:10-11, 14-18). Eventually, when the northern kingdom fell to Assyria, it still could be said that Judah to the south survived as "a remnant."

Thus the idea of remnant and the idea of divine judgment stand side by side. God's covenantal warnings in the Deuteronomic code were not idle, yet his promises regarding the perpetuity of the Israelites would not fail, either. Earlier, in response to Solomon's covenant-breaking, Yahweh determined to tear from his hand the tribes of Israel, but he left Judah and Benjamin to continue under Solomon's son for the sake of his covenant to David (1 Kg. 11:29-39). Here, the tension between the Deuteronomic code and the Davidic covenant is clear. The former called for judgment, the latter for perpetuity. It is the remnant concept which made possible Yahweh's faithfulness to both covenants.

In no place is this tension more evident than in the exile of the northern and southern kingdoms. The promises of a perpetual land grant, so germane to the covenant with the patriarchs (Ge. 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:18-21; 17:1-8; 22:17b; 26:3-4; 28:13; 35:12), and the grant of an unending dynasty for David (2 Sa. 7:11b-16) as well as the security of the land (2 Sa. 7:10-11a; 22:51b; 23:5a) violently collided with the exile of Jehoiachin (2 Kg. 24:12), the exile of Zedekiah (2 Kg. 25:1-7), and finally, the fall of the southern kingdom (2 Kg. 25). What was never supposed to happen, in fact, happened! It is the remnant concept which reconciled the seemingly unconditional promises to Abraham and David with the very conditional terms of the covenant with Moses. The loss of the land was not forever, nor was the fall of the dynasty of David without hope.

When Sennacherib invaded Judah in 701 BC, Hezekiah sent word to Isaiah to "pray for the remnant that still survives" (2 Kg. 19:4). Only two decades earlier, the Assyrians had carried into exile the northern nation (2 Kg. 17). Now they advanced upon Jerusalem, the southern nation's capital. Isaiah's response to his king was a promise for the future that a remnant of the house of Judah would survive to live in Jerusalem and Mt. Zion (2 Kg. 19:29-31). His oracle about a remnant, in light of the coming exile of Judah only a quarter century away, pointed toward a future after

exile. Because of the sins of Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, the "remnant of Yahweh's inheritance" would be handed over to their enemies (2 Kg. 21:14-15). However, exile was not Yahweh's final word. It would be the task of the prophets to explain that in spite of the exile, a remnant of Judah would survive to uphold the promises given to Abraham and David.