

## To Be a King

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... **our Lord Jesus Christ** ... he who is the blessed and only Sovereign,  
**the King of kings** and Lord of lords ...

(1 Timothy 6:14b, 15b ESV)

He changes times and seasons;

**he removes kings and sets up kings;**

he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

(Daniel 2:21 ESV)

... he raised up **David to be their king**, of whom he testified and said,

‘I have found in David the son of Jesse **a man after my heart, who will do all my will.**’

(Acts 13:22 ESV)

**Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people,**

**that I may discern between good and evil,** for who is able to govern this your great people?”

(1 Kings 3:9 ESV)

And if you will **listen to all that I command you**, and will **walk in my ways**,

and **do what is right** in my eyes by **keeping my statutes** and **my commandments**, as David my servant did,

**I will be with you** and will **build you a sure house** ...

(1 Kings 11:38 ESV)

Consider what you do, for **you judge not for man but for [YHWH]**.

He is with you in giving judgment.

Now then, **let the fear of [YHWH]<sup>1</sup> be upon you.**

Be careful what you do, for there is no injustice with [YHWH] our God, or partiality or taking bribes.

(2 Chronicles 19:6-7 ESV)

Then I saw **thrones**, and seated on them were **those to whom the authority to judge was committed.**

**They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

This is the first resurrection.

**Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!**

Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ,

and **they will reign with him for a thousand years.**

... and **you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,**

and **they shall reign on the earth.**

(Revelation 20:4a, 4bβ, 5b-6, 5:10 ESV)

**Jesus Christ claimed to be a “king”.** The promised destiny of Christians is to **“reign on the earth”**. As YHWH, Jesus Christ, claimed suzerainty over the nation of Israel. Under YHWH, the nation of Israel was ruled by a succession of **human kings**, some of whom left a legacy of “good kingship”; most, did not. From start to finish, **the concept of “kingship” is central to the Plan of God**. This paper examines the concept of “kingship” starting with **Jesus Christ as the “King of kings”**. The Bible contains information on each of the **Kings of ancient Israel**. Each of the Kings of Israel is examined to glean what can be learned about the concept of “kingship”. Each King of Israel embodies one or more object lessons to teach those called **“To Be a King”**. Finally examined is the concept of “kingship” as it relates to “Christians”. The bottom line is that a person called **“To Be a King”** must inculcate the Way of God.

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## 1. The King of kings

In the first vision the **Apostle John** reports in the Book of Revelation, **Jesus Christ speaks:**

Then **I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me,**  
and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,  
and in the midst of the lampstands **one like a son of man,**  
clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.  
The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow.  
His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace,  
and **his voice was like the roar of many waters.**  
In his right hand he held seven stars,  
**from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword,**  
and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.  
When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.  
But he laid his right hand on me, saying,  
“Fear not, **I am the first and the last,** and the living one.  
I died, and behold I am alive forevermore ...”

(Revelation 1:12-18a ESV)

Jesus enigmatically identifies himself as “**the first and the last**”.<sup>2</sup> In Jesus’ last communication with John reported at the end of the Book of Revelation, Jesus returns to the same theme:

“Behold, **I am coming soon**, bringing my recompense with me,  
to repay each one for what he has done.

**I am the Alpha and the Omega**,<sup>3</sup> **the first and the last, the beginning and the end.**”

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life  
and that they may enter the city by the gates.

**“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. ...”**  
(Revelation 22:12-14, 16a ESV)

The phrase “**Alpha and the Omega**” is interpreted as meaning “**first and the last**”, which Jesus further qualifies as “**the beginning and the end**”. The **Prophet Isaiah** reports Jesus’ use of these phrases when he was known as YHWH:

Who has performed and done this, **calling the generations from the beginning?**  
**I, [YHWH], the first, and with the last; I am he.**

Thus says [YHWH], **the King of Israel** and his Redeemer, [YHWH] of hosts:

**“I am the first and I am the last;**  
besides me there is no god. ...”

Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called!

**I am he; I am the first, and I am the last.**

My hand laid the foundation of the earth,  
and my right hand spread out the heavens;  
when I call to them, they stand forth together.  
(Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12-13 ESV)

The “**beginning**” goes back to the initial creation:<sup>4</sup>

**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.**  
(Genesis 1:1 ESV)

Do you not know? Do you not hear?

**Has it not been told you from the beginning?**

Have you not understood from **the foundations of the earth?**  
(Isaiah 40:21 ESV)

**In the beginning was the Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
**He was in the beginning with God.**  
(John 1:1-2 ESV)

And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **the beginning of God’s creation.**  
(Revelation 3:14 ESV)

Jesus Christ was the “Creator” who spoke as reported in Genesis chapter 1. Jesus Christ was “**the beginning of God’s creation**”, NOT that he, himself, was created; but that, he was to Divine Being who performed the acts of creation. **Jesus Christ is the “Beginning”, the “First”, the “Alpha”**. There are several “**end points**”, in all of which **Jesus Christ is the focal player**:

- Jesus has declared the “end” from the “beginning”:

**Who declared it from the beginning,**  
that we might know, and beforehand, that we might say, “He is right”?  
There was none who declared it, none who proclaimed, none who heard your words.  
(Isaiah 41:26 ESV)

Thus says [YHWH], the Holy One of Israel, and the one who formed him:

**“Ask me of things to come;**  
will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands?  
**I made the earth and created man on it;**  
it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host. ...”  
(Isaiah 45:11-12 ESV)

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<sup>2</sup> See also Revelation 2:8

<sup>3</sup> This title is also used twice of God the Father; see Revelation 1:8, 21:6. The symbol implies “eternal”, an inherent property of both Jesus Christ and God the Father. For further discussions see the article [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpha\\_and\\_Omega](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpha_and_Omega).

<sup>4</sup> See also Mark 10:6, Matthew 19:4,8, Hebrews 1:10, 2 Peter 3:4

... for **I am God**, and there is no other;  
**I am God**, and there is none like me,  
**declaring the end from the beginning** and from ancient times things not yet done, saying,  
 'My counsel shall stand, and **I will accomplish all my purpose**,'  
 (Isaiah 46:9b-10 ESV)

- The end of age, this present evil age, i.e., the Day of YHWH and the Parousia:<sup>5</sup>  
 ... **An end! The end has come** upon the four corners of the [earth] ('eret).<sup>6</sup>  
 Now **the end is upon you**, and I will send my anger upon you;  
 I will judge you according to your ways, and I will punish you for all your abominations.  
 And my eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity, but I will punish you for your ways,  
 while your abominations are in your midst.  
 Then you will know that I am [YHWH].  
 "Thus says the Lord [YHWH]: Disaster after disaster! Behold, it comes.  
**An end has come; the end has come**; it has awakened against you.  
 Behold, it comes. Your doom has come to you, O inhabitant of the [earth] ('eret).  
**The time has come**; the day is near, a day of tumult,  
 and not of joyful shouting on the mountains. ..."  
 (Ezekiel 7:2b-7 ESV)  
 But the court shall sit in judgment, and **his dominion shall be taken away**,  
 to be consumed and destroyed **to the end**.  
 And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven  
 shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;  
**his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom**, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.  
 (Daniel 7:26-27 ESV)  
 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called,  
 "Gabriel, **make this man understand the vision**."  
 So he came near where I stood.  
 And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face.  
 But he said to me,  
 "Understand, O son of man, that **the vision is for the time of the end**."  
 And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground.  
 But he touched me and made me stand up.  
 He said,  
 "Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at **the latter end of the indignation**,  
 for it refers to **the appointed time of the end**. ..."  
 (Daniel 8:16-19 ESV see also 11:27, 35, 40, 12:4, 6, 9, 13)
- The end of a person's life, lived by the Way of God:  
 Teach me, [YHWH], the way of your statutes; and **I will keep it to the end**.  
 I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, **to the end**.  
 (Psalm 119:33, 112 ESV)  
 ... and you will be hated by all for my name's sake.  
 But **the one who endures to the end will be saved**.  
 (Matthew 10:22 ESV see also 24:13, Mark 13:13)
- The end of life or the end of the age, whichever comes first:  
 An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land:  
 the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction;  
 my people love to have it so, but **what will you do when the end comes?**  
 (Jeremiah 5:30-31 ESV)  
 I give thanks to my God always for you  
 because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus ...  
 ... as you wait for the revealing of **our Lord Jesus Christ**,  
**who will sustain you to the end**, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 (1 Corinthians 1:4, 7b-8 ESV see also Hebrews 3:14, 6:11)  
**The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end**,  
 to him I will give authority over the nations,  
 (Revelation 2:26 ESV)

<sup>5</sup> See also Matthew 24:3,6,14, Mark 13:7, Luke 21:9

<sup>6</sup> The noun עֵרֶץ - 'eret, can be translated "land" or "earth", depending on the context; see Holladay page 28.

- The “end of the ages” marking the beginning of the New Testament Church:  
 ... for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world.  
 But as it is, **he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages**  
 to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.  
 (Hebrews 9:26 ESV)  
 Now these things happened to them as an example,  
 but they were written down for **our instruction,**  
**on whom the end of the ages has come.**  
 (1 Corinthians 10:11 ESV)
- The “First Resurrection” and the final “second death”:<sup>7</sup>  
**He put another parable before them,** saying,  
 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to **a man who sowed good seed in his field,**  
 but while his men were sleeping,  
 his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.  
 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also.  
 And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him,  
 ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field?  
**How then does it have weeds?’**  
 He said to them, ‘**An enemy has done this.**’  
 So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’  
 But he said,  
 ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them.  
 Let both grow together until the harvest,  
 and at harvest time I will tell the reapers,  
**“Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned,**  
**but gather the wheat into my barn.”**”  
 (Matthew 13:24-30 ESV)  
 Then he left the crowds and went into the house.  
 And his disciples came to him, saying, **“Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”**  
 He answered,  
**“The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.**  
 The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom.  
 The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil.  
**The harvest is the end of the age,** and the reapers are angels.  
 Just as **the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.**  
 The Son of Man will send his angels,  
 and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers,  
 and throw them into the fiery furnace.  
 In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.  
 Then **the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.**  
 He who has ears, let him hear.”  
 (Matthew 13:36-43 ESV see also 47-50)
- The final end when God the Father comes to the earth:  
**Then comes the end,** when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father  
 after destroying every rule and every authority and power.  
 (1 Corinthians 15:24 ESV)  
**Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,**  
 for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.  
 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,  
 prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.  
 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
 “Behold, **the dwelling place of God is with man.**  
 He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,  
 and God himself will be with them as their God.  
 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and **death shall be no more,**  
 neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore,  
 for the former things have passed away.”

<sup>7</sup> See Revelation 20:14-15  
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And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

And he said to me,

**"It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."**<sup>8</sup>

To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ..."

(Revelation 21:1-6 ESV)

**Jesus Christ is truly "the beginning" and "the end".** His resurrection after the crucifixion was a unique beginning. Jesus was God, one of the two Divine Beings who created the Plan of God. Jesus chose to relinquish his divine status in eternity and enter the physical creation as a human being. His death was necessary and sufficient to pay the penalty of sin for all human beings. His resurrection was the proof that human beings can be transformed into divine spirit beings. This defines the "beginning" and the "end". This is the "hope of eternal life",<sup>9</sup> the objective of the Plan of God,<sup>10</sup> made possible by Jesus Christ. **Jesus is the first of the "firstfruits", the "firstborn" from the dead.**<sup>11</sup>

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church.

**He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.**

(Colossians 1:15-18 ESV)

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

(1 Corinthians 15:20-23 ESV)

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son,

**in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.**

(Romans 8:29 ESV see also Hebrews 12:23)

**As the Creator, the Redeemer, the Firstborn, Jesus Christ is eminently entitled to his role as King of kings:**

**On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, *King of kings* and *Lord of lords*.**

(Revelation 19:16 ESV)

**I charge you in the presence of God**, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus,

who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,

**to keep the commandment** unstained and free from reproach

until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time—

he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the *King of kings* and *Lord of lords*,

who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.

**To him be honor and eternal dominion.** Amen.

(1 Timothy 6:13-16 ESV)

Although the role of King of kings had NOT yet been specified, **Jesus Christ, as YHWH, claimed Kingship over ancient Israel**. With the Psalms and Writing Prophets, the universality of Jesus role as King of kings began to be specified. When Jesus appeared on earth at the First Advent, Jesus made it clear that his purpose was to be the prophesized "King of the Jews", who would establish his Kingdom over the whole world.

<sup>8</sup> Here, these phrases are applied to God the Father.

<sup>9</sup> See Titus 1:2, 3:7

<sup>10</sup> See section **2.1 The Family of God** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>11</sup> See also Hebrews 1:6, Revelation 1:5; see also **Excursus 7 – The Firstborn Son** in the paper "**True Worship of the True God**" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

## 1.1 The King of Israel

Throughout her history, the nation of Israel looked to YHWH, Jesus Christ, as King. This relationship is formalized in the Writings of Moses. During the period from the conquest to the installation of King Saul, YHWH was the “only” king. God had clearly planned for a human king from the start, but even with Saul the time was not quite right.<sup>12</sup>

### The Writings of Moses

The people of Israel were slaves in the land of Egypt. YHWH defeated the Egyptians and removed the Israelites from Egypt. This transferred ownership of the slaves to YHWH – they were now his people. **YHWH, as suzerain, had the right to dictate the terms of a covenant to his vassal.** The Sinai Covenant was very simple, and the people readily agreed to it. **The Sinai Covenant established YHWH as king over the Nation of Israel:**

[YHWH] called to him out of the mountain, saying,  
“Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel:  
‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians,  
and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.  
Now therefore, if you will indeed **obey my voice** and **keep my covenant**,  
**you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples**,  
for all the earth is mine;  
and **you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**’

These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

So Moses came and called the elders of the people  
and set before them all these words that [YHWH] had commanded him.

All the people answered together and said, “**All that [YHWH] has spoken we will do.**”

And Moses reported the words of the people to [YHWH].  
(Exodus 19:3b-8 ESV)

This is the Sinai Covenant. The “**historical prologue**” simply states YHWH’s right as suzerain to dictate the terms to Israel as the vassal. The “**stipulations**” are simple:

- obey my voice,
- keep my covenant,
- be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

The “**covenantal benefit**” is also simple but far reaching: since all the earth belongs to YHWH, he can make the nation of Israel a “**treasured possession among all peoples**”. The net effect of this covenant was to create the Nation of Israel as a vassal of **YHWH** as suzerain, **King of Israel**.

The “soothsayer”, **Bil<sup>e</sup>am**, is forced to **acknowledge YHWH’s status as King of Israel:**

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind.  
Has he said, and will he not do it?  
Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

Behold, **I received a command to bless**: he has blessed, and I cannot revoke it.

He has not beheld misfortune in Jacob, nor has he seen trouble in Israel.

**[YHWH] their God** is with them, and **the shout of a king** is among them.

God brings them out of Egypt and is for them like the horns of the wild ox.  
(Numbers 23:19-22 ESV)

**Moses opens his final blessing** of the tribes of Israel with an **affirmation of YHWH’s status as King of Israel:**

**[YHWH] came from Sinai** and dawned from Seir upon us;  
he shone forth from Mount Paran;  
he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand.

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<sup>12</sup> This is discussed further in section *In the Fullness of Time*.  
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Yes, **he loved his people**, all his holy ones were in his hand;  
so they followed in your steps, receiving direction from you,  
when **Moses commanded us [torah]**,<sup>13</sup> as a possession for the assembly of Jacob.

**Thus [YHWH] became king in Jeshurun**,<sup>14</sup>  
when the heads of the people were gathered,  
all the tribes of Israel together.  
(Deuteronomy 33:2-5 ESV)

With the establishment of the Nation of Israel, **YHWH unequivocally established himself as King of Isarel**. YHWH retained this position until the dissolution of the nation, by which time his greater role as **Universal King** was well established.

## Joshua and Judges

**The direct kingship of YHWH over Israel is implicit throughout the period of Joshua and the Judges.** **Joshua** was selected by YHWH as the charismatic leader to follow Moses and lead the people into the Promised Land. He was eminently successful as a leader. He almost always looked to YHWH for guidance, and YHWH worked through him to establish the nation in the Promised Land. The situation in the period of the Judges changed drastically. **The second generation**, which grew up in the Promised Land and who had NOT known firsthand the miracles of YHWH to establish Israel in the Promised Land, were quickly drawn into the culture of the Canaanites. The period of the Judges is a litany of apostasy and oppression. The majority of people at best paid lip-service to the concept of YHWH's kingship. YHWH worked through charismatic leaders to free Israel from oppression, but in the end the experiment was a disaster.

### Joshua was personally selected by YHWH to succeed Moses:

Moses spoke to [YHWH], saying,  
"Let [YHWH], the God of the spirits of all flesh, **appoint a man over the congregation**  
who shall go out before them and come in before them,  
**who shall lead them** out and bring them in,  
that the congregation of [YHWH] may not be as sheep that have no shepherd."

So [YHWH] said to Moses,  
"**Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit**, and lay your hand on him.  
Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation,  
and you shall commission him in their sight.  
**You shall invest him with some of your authority**,  
that all the congregation of the people of Israel may obey.  
And he shall stand before **Eleazar the priest**,  
who **shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before [YHWH]**.  
At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in,  
both he and all the people of Israel with him, the whole congregation."

(Numbers 27:15-21 ESV)

### Joshua was well prepared for his role as leader of the people of Israel:

- He had been Moses' assistant from the start:  
Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.  
So **Moses said to Joshua**,  
"**Choose for us men**, and go out and fight with Amalek.  
Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand."  
Then [YHWH] said to Moses,  
"Write this as a memorial in a book and **recite it in the ears of Joshua**,  
that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."  
And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, [YHWH] Is My Banner, saying,  
"**A hand upon the throne of [YHWH]!**  
[YHWH] will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."  
(Exodus 17:8-9, 14-16 ESV)

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<sup>13</sup> The Hebrew word תּוֹרָה -torah, means "teaching", "instruction", "direction". There is almost no overlap of meaning with the English word "law"; hence, in this paper the transliteration is always used. For further discussion, see [Excursus 3 - torah](#) and [Excursus 5 - torah and nomos](#) in the paper "[Covenants of Grace](#)" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>14</sup> "Jeshurun" is a diminutive appellation for "Israel"; see Isaiah 44:2, Deuteronomy 32:15, 33:26

And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”

And **Joshua** the son of Nun, **the assistant of Moses from his youth**, said,

“My lord Moses, stop them.”

But Moses said to him,

**“Are you jealous for my sake?”**

Would that all [YHWH’s] people were prophets,  
that [YHWH] would put his Spirit on them!”

(Numbers 11:27-29 ESV)

- Joshua was on Mount Sinai with Moses:

[YHWH] said to Moses,

“Come up to me on the mountain and wait there,  
that I may give you the tablets of stone,  
with the [torah]<sup>15</sup> [even]<sup>16</sup> the commandment,  
which I have written for their instruction.”

**So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God.**

(Exodus 24:12-13 ESV)

- Joshua served at the Tent of Meeting:

**When Moses entered the tent**, the pillar of cloud would descend  
and stand at the entrance of the tent, and [YHWH] would speak with Moses.

And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent,  
all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door.

**Thus [YHWH] used to speak to Moses** face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

When Moses turned again into the camp,

**his assistant Joshua** the son of Nun, a young man, **would not depart from the tent.**

(Exodus 33:9-11 ESV)

- Joshua was one of the twelve spies sent into the Promised Land:

[YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying,

**“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan**, which I am giving to the people of Israel.

From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a chief among them.”

So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran, according to the command of [YHWH],  
all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel.

And these were their names:

... from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh;

... **from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun;**

These were the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land.

And **Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.**

(Numbers 13:1-4a, 6, 8, 16 ESV)

- Only Joshua and Caleb encouraged the people to go forward and take the Promised Land:

And **Joshua** the son of Nun and **Caleb** the son of Jephunneh,

who were among those who had spied out the land,

tore their clothes and **said to all the congregation of the people of Israel,**

“The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land.

If [YHWH] delights in us, **he will bring us into this land and give it to us,**

a land that flows with milk and honey.

Only **do not rebel against [YHWH].**

And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us.

Their protection is removed from them, and **[YHWH] is with us;** do not fear them.”

(Numbers 14:6-9 ESV)

### **Throughout the conquest, Joshua relied on YHWH’s instructions and directions:**

After the death of Moses the servant of [YHWH],

**[YHWH] said to Joshua** the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant,

“Moses my servant is dead.

Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people,  
into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.

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<sup>15</sup> See footnote 13

<sup>16</sup> The Hebrew particle ׀ - waw, has several meanings. The most common is as a conjunction, “and”, “but”. Very importantly to be distinguished is when it identifies “apposition” – in these cases, this paper substitutes “even”.

**Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you,**  
just as I promised to Moses.

**No man shall be able to stand before you** all the days of your life.  
Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

**Be strong and courageous,**  
for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.  
**Only be strong and very courageous ...**"

(Joshua 1:1-3, 5-6a ESV)

At every step in the conquest, YHWH instructed Joshua, "**YHWH said to Joshua ...**"; see Joshua 3:7, 4:1, 5:2, 9, 6:2, 7:10, 8:1, 18, 10:8, 11:6, and 20:1. The first generation in the Promised Land, the "**wilderness generation**", remained faithful to God. It was a "**golden age**" in which **Israel served YHWH their King,** but things deteriorated with the next generation:

**Israel served [YHWH] all the days of Joshua,**  
**and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua**  
**and had known all the work that [YHWH] did for Israel.**

(Joshua 24:31 ESV)

And the people served [YHWH] all the days of Joshua,  
and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua,  
who had seen all the great work that [YHWH] had done for Israel.

And **Joshua** the son of Nun, the servant of [YHWH], **died** at the age of 110 years.  
And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres,  
in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash.

**And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers.**

And **there arose another generation after them who did not know [YHWH]**  
or the work that he had done for Israel.

(Judges 2:7-10 ESV)

The word of [YHWH] came to me, saying,

"Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says [YHWH],  
**'I remember the devotion of your youth,** your love as a bride,  
how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.  
**Israel was holy to [YHWH], the firstfruits of his harvest.**

All who ate of it<sup>17</sup> incurred guilt;  
disaster came upon them, declares [YHWH]."

Hear the word of [YHWH], O house of Jacob, and all the clans of the house of Israel.

Thus says [YHWH]:

"What wrong did **your fathers** find in me that they **went far from me,**  
and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?

They did not say,

**'Where is [YHWH] who brought us up from the land of Egypt,**  
who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits,  
in a land of drought and deep darkness,  
in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells?'

And **I brought you into a plentiful land** to enjoy its fruits and its good things.

But when you came in, **you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.** ..."

(Jeremiah 2:1-7 ESV)

**The author of the Book of Judges summarizes the period:**

And **they abandoned [YHWH], the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt.**

**They went after other gods,**

from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them.

And **they provoked [YHWH] to anger.**

**They abandoned [YHWH]** and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth.

So the anger of [YHWH] was kindled against Israel,

and **he gave them over to plunderers,** who plundered them.

And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies,  
so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.

<sup>17</sup> The second generation reaped the benefits of the first generation, they "ate of it".

Whenever they marched out, the hand of [YHWH] was against them for harm, as [YHWH] had warned, and as [YHWH] had sworn to them.  
And **they were in terrible distress.**  
(Judges 2:12-15 ESV)

God worked with the Judges to prevent the total annihilation of the Nation of Israel. **The common attribute of the “judges” was that they defeated the oppressing enemies of Israel.** Concerning several of the “judges”, the Book Judges contains almost no information beyond their existence.<sup>18</sup> Ehud seems to have been an assassin,<sup>19</sup> while Jephthah and Samson seem to have been little more than thugs.<sup>20</sup> **The Judge Othniel is briefly commended:**

And **the people of Israel did what was evil** in the sight of [YHWH].  
They forgot [YHWH] their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth.  
Therefore the anger of [YHWH] was kindled against Israel,  
and **he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia.**  
And the people of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.  
But when **the people of Israel cried out to [YHWH],**  
**[YHWH] raised up a deliverer** for the people of Israel, who saved them,  
**Othniel** the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother.  
**The Spirit of [YHWH] was upon him,** and **he judged Israel.**  
He went out to war, and [YHWH] gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand.  
And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.  
**So the land had rest forty years.**  
Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.  
(Judges 3:7-11 ESV)

**The Prophetess Deborah is recounted as a heroine who served YHWH. The Song of Deborah recounts her victory:**

Now **Deborah, a prophetess,** the wife of Lappidoth, **was judging Israel at that time.**  
She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment.  
**[The Song of Deborah]**  
The villagers ceased in Israel;  
they ceased to be until I arose;  
**I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.**  
My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel  
who offered themselves willingly among the people.  
Bless [YHWH].  
**Tell of it,** you who ride on white donkeys,  
you who sit on rich carpets and you who walk by the way.  
To the sound of musicians at the watering places,  
there they repeat **the righteous triumphs of [YHWH],**  
the righteous triumphs of his villagers in Israel.  
Then down to the gates marched the people of [YHWH].  
**Awake, awake, Deborah!**  
Awake, awake, break out in a song!  
The kings came, they fought; then fought the kings of Canaan,  
at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; they got no spoils of silver.  
**From heaven the stars fought,** from their courses they fought against Sisera.  
The torrent Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon.  
March on, my [being] (nephesh),<sup>21</sup> with might!  
**So may all your enemies perish, [YHWH]!**  
But your friends be like the sun as he rises in his might.  
(Judges 4:4-5, 5:7, 9-12a, 19-21, 31a ESV)

<sup>18</sup> See Shamgar (3:31), Tola (10:1-2), Jair (10:3-5), Ibzan (12:8-10), Elon (12:11-12), and Abdon (12:13-15)

<sup>19</sup> See Judges 3:12-30

<sup>20</sup> For Jephthah, see Judges 10:6-18, 11:1-40, 12:1-7; for Samson, see Judges chapters 13, 14, 15, and 16

<sup>21</sup> The Hebrew word, נֶפֶשׁ - nephesh, is correctly translated by the English word “soul”. However, the English word “soul” has been rendered an unusable word due to the implication of the pagan concept of the “immortal soul”. Hence, in this paper, a more meaningful word is substituted. The most general word is “being”, but more specific words such as “mind”, “heart”, “life” are also used. For further discussion, see [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).  
**Excursus 2 - נֶפֶשׁ and ψυχή** in the paper “**The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

**The Judge Gideon** stands in a firm tradition of reluctant servants of YHWH.<sup>22</sup> As with few others, he was privileged with a personal theophany:

**Now the angel of [YHWH]**<sup>23</sup> came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son **Gideon** was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of [YHWH] appeared to him and said to him, **“[YHWH] is with you**, O mighty man of valor.” And Gideon said to him,  
“Please, my lord, if [YHWH] is with us, why then has all this happened to us?  
And **where are all his wonderful deeds** that our fathers recounted to us, saying,  
‘Did not [YHWH] bring us up from Egypt?’  
But now [YHWH] has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.”  
And [YHWH] turned to him and said,  
“Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?”  
And he said to him,  
“Please, Lord, **how can I save Israel?**  
Behold, **my clan is the weakest in Manasseh**, and **I am the least in my father’s house.**”  
And [YHWH] said to him, “But **I will be with you**, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.”  
(Judges 6:11-16 ESV)

**YHWH was true to his word.** Gideon and his three hundred men went on to a crushing defeat of the enemy:

So **Gideon** and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. Then **the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars.** They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, “A sword for [YHWH] and for Gideon!”  
Every man stood in his place around the camp, and **all the army ran.** They cried out and fled. When they blew the 300 trumpets, **[YHWH] set every man’s sword against his comrade** and against all the army. And the army fled ...  
(Judges 7:19-22a ESV)

After his victory, **the people wanted Gideon to be a king.** He refused, affirming the Kingship of YHWH:

Then **the men of Israel said to Gideon**,  
“**Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also**,  
for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.”  
**Gideon said to them**,  
“**I will not rule over you**, and my son will not rule over you; **[YHWH] will rule over you.**”  
(Judges 8:22-23 ESV)

The people of Israel had sadly lost perspective of YHWH as their King. **Gideon refused the kinship**, but **a son of his took advantage of his father’s name**:

Now **Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal**<sup>24</sup> went to Shechem to his mother’s relatives and said to them and to the whole clan of his mother’s family,  
“**Say in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem**,  
‘Which is better for you,  
that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal rule over you,  
or that **one rule over you?**’  
Remember also that **I am your bone and your flesh.**”  
And **all the leaders of Shechem** came together,  
and all Beth-millo, and they went and **made Abimelech king**, by the oak of the pillar at Shechem.  
(Judges 9:1-2, 6 ESV)

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<sup>22</sup> Moses balked because he was a poor speaker, see Exodus 4:10-17; Jonah was flat out afraid, see Jonah 1:1-3, 4:1-4; Amos protested that he did not have the proper training, see Amos 7:14-15; Isaiah felt he was unworthy, see Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah felt insecure due to his youth, see Jeremiah 1:6.

<sup>23</sup> The Hebrew phrase is מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה - mal’ak YHWH, “messenger”, “angel”, of YHWH; see Holladay page 196. See the discussion in the Bible Study Notes “**The Angel of YHWH**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca). In the passage under consideration, we are clearly dealing with a “manifestation” of YHWH.

<sup>24</sup> That is, “Gideon”; see Judges 6:32.

**Abimelech's kingship ended in disaster**<sup>25</sup> because **God was NOT yet ready for a human king in Israel.**

## **Human Kingship**

**That God had planned from the start for a human in Israel is evident in the promise to Abraham:**

When Abram was ninety-nine years old **[YHWH] appeared to Abram and said to him,**

"I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, ...  
I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations,  
and **kings shall come from you.** ..."

And **God said to Abraham,**

"As for Sarai **your wife**, you shall not call her name Sarai, but **Sarah shall be her name.**  
I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her.  
I will bless her, and she shall become nations; **kings of peoples shall come from her.**"

(Genesis 17:1, 6, 15-16 ESV see also 35:11)

The typical fulfillment of this promise began with **the Kings of Edom:**

**These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites.**

- Bela the son of Beor ...
- Jobab the son of Zerah ...
- Husham of the land of the Temanites ...
- Hadad the son of Bedad ...
- Samlah of Masrekah ...
- Shaul of Rehoboth on the Euphrates ...
- Baal-hanan the son of Achbor ...
- Hadar reigned in his place, the name of his city being Pau ...

(Genesis 36:31-39a ESV see also 1 Chronicles 1:43-51)

Note that this assertion in **the Book of Genesis clearly anticipates human kingship in Israel.** The various kings of the Northern Kingdom and especially the Davidic Dynasty of the Southern Kingdom are also the typical fulfillments of the promise to Abraham. **The antitypical fulfillment of the promise is, of course, to be realized in the Kingdom of God.** This is the subject of section **3. Kingship of Christians.**

As discussed in the previous section, the period of the Judges was an unmitigated disaster. The Book of Judges ends with an appendix<sup>26</sup> which drives home this point. In the appendix several incidents are summarized which demonstrate how degenerate and out of control life was in Israel at the time. The author of the Book of Judges is clearly preparing for the events recounted in the Book of First Samuel. This topic is taken up in section **2.2.1 King Saul.**

Based on the incidents recounted in the appendix, the author of the Book of Judges provides the following **assessment of the period of the Judges:**

In those days **there was no king in Israel.**

Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

In those days **there was no king in Israel.**

And in those days the tribe of the people of Dan was seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell in, for until then no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them.

In those days, when **there was no king in Israel,**

a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.

In those days **there was no king in Israel.**

Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

(Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25 ESV)

Although the author of the Book of Judges looked to a human king as the solution, the period of the Judges was a failure because the people did NOT follow the Way of God. They paid lip service to YHWH as King, but in reality, repeatedly fell into apostasy.

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<sup>25</sup> See Judges 9:22-57

<sup>26</sup> Chapters 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21  
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## 1.2 The King in Prophecy

Although God had planned for human kingship, which was first realized in King David, YHWH himself remained “The King”, in fact, the “King of kings”. The **Davidic Psalms**, and the **later Psalms**, explicitly **look to YHWH as King over Israel**, but they also clearly look ahead to the time when YHWH, as the returning Jesus Christ at the Second Advent, will assume his role as **King of kings over the whole earth**. The **Writing prophets** support these views.

### Davidic Psalms

#### **YHWH as King of Israel:**

- Give attention to the sound of my cry, **my King and my God**, for to you do I pray.  
(Psalm 5:2 ESV)
- Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of **my God, my King**, into the sanctuary ...  
(Psalm 68:24 ESV)
- I will extol you, **my God and King**, and bless your name forever and ever.  
(Psalm 145:1 ESV)

#### **YHWH as King of kings:**

- [YHWH] sits enthroned over the flood;  
**[YHWH] sits enthroned as king forever.**  
(Psalm 29:10 ESV)
- **[YHWH]** has established his throne in the heavens, and **his kingdom rules over all.**  
(Psalm 103:19 ESV)
- All your works shall give thanks to you, [YHWH],  
and all **your saints** shall bless you!  
They **shall speak of the glory of your kingdom** and tell of your power,  
to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds,  
and **the glorious splendor of your kingdom.**  
**Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,**  
**and your dominion endures throughout all generations.**  
(Psalm 145:10-13a ESV)

**Psalm 24 is unique.** It appears to have been written in conjunction with Psalm 68. Psalm 68 commemorates the whole event of **moving the Ark of the Covenant from the house of Obed-edom into the Tent erected by David in Jerusalem.**<sup>27</sup> Psalm 24 deals with the moment when the Ark approached the Gates of Jerusalem. **David extols the Gates as providing access to YHWH** to enter Jerusalem. The Psalm prefigures **the Second Advent** when “eternity” will open and the King of kings, YHWH strong and mighty, will enter the earth:

**Then I saw heaven opened,** and behold, a white horse!  
The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.  
His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems,  
and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.  
He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and **the name by which he is called is The Word of God.**  
And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.  
From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations,  
and **he will rule them** with a rod of iron.  
He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.  
On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, **King of kings** and Lord of lords.  
(Revelation 19:11-16 ESV)

**The earth is [YHWH's]** and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein ...

**Lift up your heads, O gates!**

And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

**Who is this King of glory?**

**[YHWH], strong and mighty,** [YHWH], mighty in battle!

Lift up your heads, O gates!

And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

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<sup>27</sup> See 2 Samuel 6:1-15, 1 Chronicles 15:1-28  
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**Who is this King of glory?**  
**[YHWH] of hosts, he is the King of glory!**  
(Psalm 24:1, 7-10 ESV)

## Later Psalms

### **YHWH as King of Israel:**

- You are **my King, O God**; ordain salvation for Jacob!  
(Psalm 44:4 ESV)
- Sing praises to **God**, sing praises!  
Sing praises to **our King**, sing praises!  
(Psalm 47:6 ESV)
- ... beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth,  
Mount Zion, in the far north, **the city of the great King**.  
(Psalm 48:2 ESV)
- Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,  
at your altars, **[YHWH] of hosts, my King and my God**.  
(Psalm 84:3 ESV)
- For our shield belongs to **[YHWH]**, **our King** to the Holy One of Israel.  
(Psalm 89:18 ESV)
- With trumpets and the sound of the horn **make a joyful noise before the King, [YHWH]!**  
(Psalm 98:6 ESV)
- **The King in his might loves justice**.  
You have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.  
(Psalm 99:4 ESV)
- Let Israel be glad in **his Maker**;  
let the children of Zion rejoice in **their King!**  
(Psalm 149:2 ESV)

### **YHWH as King of kings:**

- **[YHWH] is king** forever and ever; **the nations** perish from his land.  
(Psalm 10:16 ESV)
- **Your throne, O God, is forever and ever**.  
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;  
(Psalm 45:6 ESV)
- For **[YHWH]**, the Most High, is to be feared, **a great king over all the earth**.  
(Psalm 47:2 ESV)
- For **God is the King of all the earth**; sing praises with a psalm!  
(Psalm 47:7 ESV)
- May **all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!**  
(Psalm 72:11 ESV)
- Yet **God my King** is from of old, **working salvation in the midst of the earth**.  
(Psalm 74:12 ESV)
- Make your vows to **[YHWH] your God** and perform them;  
let all around him bring gifts to him who is to be feared,  
who cuts off the spirit of princes, who **is to be feared by the kings of the earth**.  
(Psalm 76:11–12 ESV)
- And I will make him **the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth**.  
(Psalm 89:27 ESV)
- For **[YHWH] is a great God**, and **a great King above all gods**.  
(Psalm 95:3 ESV)
- **Nations will fear the name of [YHWH]**,  
and all the **kings of the earth will fear your glory**.  
(Psalm 102:15 ESV)

## Writing Prophets

### YHWH as King of Israel:

- And I said:  
    "Woe is me!  
    For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;  
    for my eyes have seen the King, [YHWH] of hosts!"  
(Isaiah 6:5 ESV)
- [YHWH] of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth.  
(Isaiah 37:16 ESV)
- Set forth your case, says [YHWH]; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob.  
(Isaiah 41:21 ESV)
- I am [YHWH], your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.  
(Isaiah 43:15 ESV)
- Behold, the cry of the daughter of my people from the length and breadth of the land:  
    "Is [YHWH] not in Zion? Is her King not in her?"  
(Jeremiah 8:19a ESV)
- Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it,  
    and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished.  
    For I am a great King, says [YHWH] of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.  
(Malachi 1:14 ESV)

### YHWH as King of kings:

- Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice.  
(Isaiah 32:1 ESV)
- Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty; they will see a land that stretches afar.  
(Isaiah 33:17 ESV)
- For [YHWH] is our judge; [YHWH] is our lawgiver; [YHWH] is our king; he will save us.  
(Isaiah 33:22 ESV)
- There is none like you, [YHWH]; you are great, and your name is great in might.  
    Who would not fear you, O King of the nations?  
    For this is your due;  
    for among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like you.  
    But [YHWH] is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King.  
    At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation.  
(Jeremiah 10:6-7, 10 ESV)
- As I live, declares the Lord [YHWH],  
    surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm  
    and with wrath poured out I will be king over you.  
(Ezekiel 20:33 ESV)
- And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel.  
    And one king shall be king over them all,  
    and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms.  
(Ezekiel 37:22 ESV)
- I saw in the night visions, and behold,  
    with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man,  
    and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.  
    And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,  
    that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him;  
    his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away,  
    and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.  
(Daniel 7:13-14 ESV)
- Saviors shall go up to Mount Zion to rule Mount Esau, and the kingdom shall be [YHWH's].  
(Obadiah 21 ESV)
- I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob;  
    I will gather the remnant of Israel;  
    I will set them together like sheep in a fold,  
    like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men.  
    He who opens the breach goes up before them;

they break through and pass the gate, going out by it.  
**Their king passes on before them, [YHWH] at their head.**  
(Micah 2:12-13 ESV)

- **The King of Israel, [YHWH],** is in your midst;  
you shall never again fear evil.  
On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
“Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.  
**[YHWH] your God is in your midst,** a mighty one who will save;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness;  
he will quiet you by his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing. ...”  
(Zephaniah 3:15b-17 ESV)
- **And [YHWH] will be king over all the earth.**  
On that day [YHWH] will be one and his name one.  
(Zechariah 14:9 ESV)
- Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem  
shall go up year after year to **worship the King, [YHWH] of hosts,** and to keep the Feast of Booths.  
And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem  
to **worship the King, [YHWH] of hosts,** there will be no rain on them.  
(Zechariah 14:16-17)

### 1.3 The King of the Jews

From the very beginning, it was clear that Jesus of Nazareth was to be a King. The annunciation to Mary is clear and specific; her child was to be the prophesized King:

And **the angel said to her,**  
“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.  
And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and **you shall call his name Jesus.**  
He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.  
And **the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,**  
and **he will reign over the house of Jacob forever,** and **of his kingdom there will be no end.**”  
(Luke 1:30-33 ESV)

When the “**wise men**” from the east perceived the significance of the “star”, they were very sure of what they were looking for, “**the King of the Jews**”:

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold,  
**wise men from the east** came to Jerusalem, saying,  
“**Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?**  
For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”  
(Matthew 2:1-2 ESV)

At the time of the First Advent, “everyone” was expecting the appearance of the Messiah.<sup>28</sup> When **Jesus recruited his first disciples,** they were clearly looking for the Messiah, and **they readily accepted Jesus:**

**The next day Jesus** decided to go to Galilee. He **found Philip** and said to him, “Follow me.”  
Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.  
Philip found **Nathanael** and said to him,  
“We have found him of whom Moses in the [nomos]<sup>29</sup> and also the prophets wrote,  
Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”  
Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”  
Philip said to him, “Come and see.”  
**Jesus saw Nathanael** coming toward him and said of him,  
“Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”  
Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?”  
Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

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<sup>28</sup> See the discussion in section **3.4.3.4 The Messianic Hope** in the paper “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>29</sup> The Greek word, νόμος – nomos, can be correctly translated as “law”; however, it should NEVER be used in relation to the Writings of Moses, or any part of the Old Testament. The Old Testament comprises *torah*, NOT *nomos*; hence, in this paper, the transliteration, *nomos*, is always used. For further discussions see **Excursus 8 - torah and nomos** in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

**Nathanael answered** him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! **You are the King of Israel!**”  
(John 1:43-49 ESV)

The majority of people were anticipating a “warrior king” who would militarily establish “Israel”, i.e., themselves, the Jews, as the dominant nation on earth.<sup>30</sup> Jesus fought the “Messianic expectation” all through his ministry; nevertheless, he was clear and specific that his message was about the **“Kingdom of God”**.<sup>31</sup> **John the Baptist** had affirmed this, and Jesus was explicit in his early preaching:

In those days **John the Baptist** came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

“Repent, for **the kingdom of heaven** is at hand.”

(Matthew 3:1-2 ESV)

Now after John was arrested, **Jesus came into Galilee**, proclaiming **the gospel of God**, and saying,

“The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God is at hand**; repent and believe in the gospel.”

(Mark 1:14-15 ESV see also Matthew 4:17)

“... but he said to them,

“**I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God** to the other towns as well;  
for I was sent for this purpose.”

(Luke 4:43 ESV)

The **Synoptists Mark and Luke** use the phrase **“Kingdom of God”** dozens of times to characterize the content of Jesus’ message. The **Apostle Matthew** similarly uses the equivalent phrase **“Kingdom of heaven”**. **The Kingdom of God is central to the teaching of Jesus Christ.**<sup>32</sup>

In several of his parables about the Kingdom of God, **Jesus makes it plain that he is the King:**

He put another parable before them, saying,

“**The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field,**  
but while his men were sleeping,  
his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ...”

Then he left the crowds and went into the house.

And his disciples came to him, saying,

“Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”

He answered,

“The **one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.**

The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom.

The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil.

The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.

Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.

**The Son of Man will send his angels,**

and **they will gather out of his kingdom** all causes of sin and all law-breakers ...”

(Matthew 13:24-25, 36-41 ESV)

Therefore **the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king**

who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold,

with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.

So **the servant fell on his knees, imploring him,**

‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’

And **out of pity** for him, **the master** of that servant released him and **forgave him** the debt.

But when **that same servant** went out, he found **one of his fellow servants**

who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying,

‘Pay what you owe.’

So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him,

‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’

**He refused and went and put him in prison** until he should pay the debt.

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<sup>30</sup> See the discussion in section **3.4.3.4 The Messianic Hope** in the paper “Third Pillar - The Way of God” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>31</sup> See the discussion in section **2.3.5 The Kingdom of God** in the paper “Second Pillar - The Plan of God” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>32</sup> See section **3. Kingship of Christians**

When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

Then **his master summoned him and said** to him,

‘You wicked servant!

**I forgave you** all that debt because you pleaded with me.

And **should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant**, as I had mercy on you?’

(Matthew 18:23-33 ESV)

**When the Son of Man comes in his glory**, and all the angels with him, then **he will sit on his glorious throne**.

Before him will be gathered all the nations,

and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

Then **the King will say to those on his right**,

‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father,

inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,

I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me,

I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, saying,

‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

And **the King will answer them**,

‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

(Matthew 25:31-40 ESV)

All the Gospel authors report **Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem** in anticipation of the crucifixion:

The next day **the large crowd** that had come to the feast **heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem**.

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out,

“Hosanna! Blessed is **he who comes in the name of the Lord**, even **the King of Israel!**”

And **Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written**,

“Fear not, daughter of Zion;

behold, **your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!**”

(John 12:12-15 ESV see also Mark 11:1-10, Matthew 21:1-10, Luke 19:29-38)

Jesus specifically fulfilled **the Messianic prophecy** from the **Prophet Zechariah**:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, **your king is coming to you**;

righteous and having salvation is he, humble and **mounted on a donkey**, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

(Zechariah 9:9 ESV)

Again, all the Gospel authors report **Jesus’ interrogation by Pontius Pilate**. **Jesus is clear and specific that he is “the King”**, but his true kingdom is the Kingdom of God.

So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him,

**“Are you the King of the Jews?”**

Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”

Pilate answered,

“Am I a Jew?

Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me.

What have you done?”

**Jesus answered**,

**“My kingdom** is not of this world.

If **my kingdom** were of this world, my servants would have been fighting,

that I might not be delivered over to the Jews.

But **my kingdom** is not from the world.”

Then **Pilate said** to him, **“So you are a king?”**

Jesus answered,

“You say that I am a king.

For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world

—to bear witness to the truth.

Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

(John 18:33-37 ESV see also Mark 15:1-2, Matthew 27:2, 11, Luke 23:1-3)

Pilate’s final epitaph was indeed fitting:

Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read,

“Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

Many of the Jews read this inscription,  
for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city,  
and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.

(John 19:19-20 ESV see also Mark 15:26, Matthew 27:37, Luke 23:38)

Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies of the First Advent. He restored the Davidic line by establishing himself as the “King of the Jews”. At the Second Advent, Jesus will return with the Throne of David and rule the earth as the King of kings.

## 2. Kingship in Israel

The Books of First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, and First and Second Chronicles are primarily about “kingship”. The establishment of kingship in Israel is recounted in First Samuel. The “prototypical king of Israel”, David, is discussed in Second Samuel and First Chronicles. First and Second Kings and Second Chronicles trace the history of Dynasty of David from its inception to its termination. This history includes the most famous king of the dynasty, Solomon, and all the kings of his line. First and Second Kings also includes the various dynasties and kings of the Northern Kingdom who broke away from the Davidic Dynasty.

Why is this material in the Bible? How is it relevant to New Testament Christians? These are indeed good questions and to fully answer them is the purpose of this paper. Briefly the story of kingship in Israel is at the core of salvation history.<sup>33</sup> God’s primary promises to Abraham were:

1. The Land of Israel would be forever given to his descendants
2. All nations, all peoples, every last human being, would be blessed through a descendant of Abraham, the Messiah

The tenure of Ancient Israel in the Promised Land was conditional upon their adherence to the Sinai Covenant. The history of Israel is the record of their violation of the Sinai Covenant and their expulsion from the Land of Israel. The Land of Israel will be permanently allocated to the New Israel at the Second Advent.

Because King David proved to be “a man after God’s own heart”, the promise of The Descendant was particularized to a descendant of David.<sup>34</sup> The unbroken line from David to the last king of the dynasty, Jehoiachin, is the first part of the realization of this promise. The second part is realized in the genealogies of Matthew and Luke taking the line of David to Jesus’ legal father, Joseph.

Christians are called to be “kings” in the Kingdom of God.<sup>35</sup> The Kings of Israel provide many an object lesson, inspired by God, to be recorded for those upon “whom the end of the ages has come”:

Now these things happened to them as an example,  
but they were written down for our instruction,  
on whom the end of the ages has come.

(1 Corinthians 10:11 ESV)

<sup>33</sup> See section 2.3 Salvation History in the paper “Second Pillar - The Plan of God” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>34</sup> See section 7. The Covenant of Descent in the paper “Covenants of Grace” and sections 1.4 King in Jerusalem and 3.5 King in Jerusalem in the paper “David - A Man After My Own Heart”; both papers are located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>35</sup> See section 3. Kingship of Christians

The history of Kingship in Israel has three aspects: first the establishment of the monarchy and the history of the first three kings, “**The United Monarchy**”; secondly, “**The Northern Kingdom**”, the kings who ruled the break-away northern tribes; and thirdly, the Davidic line, “**The Southern Kingdom**”. But preliminarily, “**The Concept of Kingship**” is considered.

## 2.1 The Concept of “Kingship”

As discussed in section **Human Kingship**, God foretold **Abraham** that his **descendants would include human kings**. God inspired **Moses to elaborate** on this with a specification for Kingship in Israel. Moses’ teaching is reported in Deuteronomy chapter 17:

(14) When you come to the land that [YHWH] your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say,

‘**I will set a king over me**, like all the nations that are around me,’

(15) **you may indeed set a king over you whom [YHWH] your God will choose.**

One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you.

**You may not put a foreigner over you**, who is not your brother.

(16) Only **he must not acquire many horses** for himself

or cause the people to **return to Egypt** in order to acquire many horses, since [YHWH] has said to you,

‘You shall never return that way again.’

(17) And **he shall not acquire many wives** for himself, **lest his heart turn away**, **nor shall he acquire** for himself excessive silver and gold.

(18) And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom,

**he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this [torah]**,<sup>36</sup> approved by the Levitical priests.

(19) And it shall be with him, and **he shall read in it all the days of his life**,

that he may **learn to fear [YHWH] his God**

by **keeping all the words** of this [torah] and these statutes, and **doing them**,

(20a) that **his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers**,

and that **he may not turn aside** from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left,

(20b) so that **he may continue long in his kingdom**, he and his children, in Israel.

(Deuteronomy 17:14-20 ESV)

### **Analysis of the specification for “kingship”:**

- God gave Israel permission to have a human king, “**you may indeed set a king over you**”
- The determination of who was to be king, is up to God, “**God will choose**”
- The king must be an Israelite, “**you may not put a foreigner over you**”; the implication of this is far reaching: it is an abomination to God for Israel to be subservient to any foreign power
- The king must not put his trust in military might, “**he must not acquire many horses**”
- The king must not engage in diplomatic endeavours with foreign powers, “**return to Egypt**”
- The king must avoid a large harem, “**he shall not acquire many wives**”
- The pursuit of multiple women, especially in diplomatic contexts, can lead to apostasy, “**lest his heart turn away**”
- The king must not use his position for personal economic advantage, “**nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold**”
- The king is to use the word of God as his daily guide in all things, “**he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this torah**”, “**he shall read in it all the days of his life**”
- The goal of the life of the king is to attain a proper relationship with YHWH, “**learn to fear YHWH his God**”
- The king is to live by the Way of God, “**keeping all the words**”, “**doing them**”
- The king is to maintain a proper perspective on his relationship with his fellows, “**his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers**”
- These things are necessary to avoid apostasy, “**he may not turn aside**”

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<sup>36</sup> See footnote 13

The requirement to, “write for himself in a book a copy of this torah”, requires some discussion. The Hebrew text is:

וְכָתַב	לּוֹ	אֶת־	מִשְׁנֵה	הַתּוֹרָה	הַזֹּאת	עַל־	סֵפֶר
w <sup>e</sup> kathav	lo	'eth	mish <sup>e</sup> neh	hatorah	hazzo'th	'al	sepher
and he shall write	for himself		copy of	the torah	the this	in	scroll

Literally: “and he shall write for himself copy of the torah the this in scroll”

The phrase “the torah the this” refers to the entire documentation of the teaching of Moses, i.e., the material we have in the “Pentateuch”.<sup>37</sup> The king was required to personally write some parts of this teaching on a scroll for his personal edification. Since it is “a scroll”, one scroll, clearly NOT the entire set of Moses’ documentation was to be copied. Levitical approval was required of the material to be copied. Probably there was a “standard” subset of Moses’ teaching which was copied with some variation based on personal preference and subject to Levitical approval. There is no historical record of any king actually doing this, but presumably at least some of them did.

**The structure of the passage is very important.** Verses 14 and 15 provide God’s permission to Isarel to participate in the institution of “kingship”. There are two provisos on the institution in Israel: first, the King must be of God’s choice, and secondly, no foreigner was ever to rule over Israel. Verses 16 and 17 provide the **prototypical proscriptions on the king**. The implication of the proscriptions is that **the king is to serve under YHWH for the benefit of the people of Israel**. The King is NOT to use his position for any personal advantage.

**Verses 18 through 20a form a continuous protasis**, which contains **prescriptions defining the essence of true “kingship”**. The king is to order his life by the Way of God and be an example of living by the Way of God for the people to follow. **The apodosis is in verse 20b**, which **anticipates the climax of the Covenant of Life**.<sup>38</sup>

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today,  
that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.

**Therefore choose life**, that you and your offspring may live,  
loving [YHWH] your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him,  
for **he is your life** and length of days,  
that you may dwell in the land that [YHWH] swore to your fathers,  
to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.  
(Deuteronomy 30:19-20 ESV)

Later when the people of Israel demanded that Samuel institute Kingship in Israel, God gave Samuel an oracle contrasting the way that human kings actually function:<sup>39</sup>

So **Samuel told all the words of [YHWH] to the people** who were asking for a king from him.  
He said,

**“These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you:**

- he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots.
- And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots.
- He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.
- He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants.
- He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants.
- He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Deuteronomy 1:5, 4:8, 27:3,8,26, Joshua 1:7-8; for discussion what Moses wrote, see the paper “**The Writings of Moses**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>38</sup> See the discussion in section **5. The Covenant of Life** in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>39</sup> 1 Samuel 10:25a says “Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before [YHWH].” (ESV) Samuel’s record no doubt included God’s oracle and probably Moses’ teaching. Some have taken this statement to imply Samuel is the author of the teaching in Deuteronomy. This is unlikely. There is no more reason to doubt the Mosaic origin of Deuteronomy 17 than any other part of Deuteronomy.

- He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves.

And **in that day you will cry out because of your king**,  
whom you have chosen for yourselves,  
**but [YHWH] will not answer you in that day.**"

(1 Samuel 8:10-18 ESV)

This castigation identifies the propensity of human kings to violate the cardinal principle of God's requirement of a king with respect to those governed: **the king is to govern for the benefit of those governed; NOT for his own benefit.**

## 2.2 The United Monarchy

At the Battle of Ebenezer, about 1050BC, the High Priest and Judge, Eli, and his sons were killed.<sup>40</sup> **Samuel became the last "Judge of Israel"**.<sup>41</sup> Samuel had been brought up under the tutelage of Eli,<sup>42</sup> and he was already established as a "prophet".<sup>43</sup> Samuel attempted to continue the institution of "judges" through his sons, but the people rejected his sons and demanded a "king".<sup>44</sup> Samuel recoiled strongly from the people's demand, but God acquiesced:

But **the thing displeased Samuel** when they said, "Give us a king to judge us."

And Samuel prayed to [YHWH].

And **[YHWH] said to Samuel**,

**"Obey the voice of the people** in all that they say to you,  
for they have not rejected you, but **they have rejected me from being king over them.**  
According to all the deeds that they have done,  
from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day,  
forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you.  
Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them  
and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

(1 Samuel 8:6-9 ESV)

**King Saul was the first King of Israel.** Saul proved unfaithful to God, so he was rejected in favour of **David**, who became the "prototypical human king", and a type of the King of kings. David was succeeded by his son **Solomon**, who started well, but fell into apostasy.

### 2.2.1 King Saul

**The data on King Saul** comprise First Samuel chapters 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 24, 26, 28, and 31; also, verses 16:14-23, 18:8-30, 20:26-33, 22:6-19, 23:19-28, 1 Chronicles chapter 10; and Josephus Antiquities Book 6 chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12:5-7, 13:1-3, and 14. Josephus does NOT appear to have had any independent sources for his material. Josephus' presentation more or less follows the Masoretic Text.

According to the prescription in Deuteronomy chapter 17, **God identified Saul to be king** and **Samuel anointed him to the office**:

Now the day before Saul came, [YHWH] had revealed to Samuel:

"Tomorrow about this time **I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin**,  
and **you shall anoint him** to be prince over my people Israel.  
He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines.  
For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me."

When Samuel saw Saul, [YHWH] told him,

**"Here is the man of whom I spoke to you!** He it is who shall restrain my people."

Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Tell me where is the house of the seer?"

Samuel answered Saul,

"I am the seer.

Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me,  
and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind.

<sup>40</sup> See 1 Samuel 4:1b-18

<sup>41</sup> See 1 Samuel 7:15-17

<sup>42</sup> See 1 Samuel 1:24-28, 2:11,18-20,26

<sup>43</sup> See 1 Samuel 3:19-21, 4:1a

<sup>44</sup> See 1 Samuel 8:1-5,19-20

And **for whom is all that is desirable in Israel?**  
**Is it not for you and for all your father's house?"**

Saul answered,

"Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel?  
And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin?  
**Why then have you spoken to me in this way?"**

(1 Samuel 9:15-19, 20b-21 ESV)

As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, **Samuel said to Saul,**  
"Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on,  
stop here yourself for a while,  
**that I may make known to you the word of God."**

Then **Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head** and kissed him and said,  
"Has not [YHWH] anointed you to be prince over his people Israel?  
And **you shall reign over the people of [YHWH]**  
and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. ..."

(1 Samuel 9:27, 10:1a ESV)

**Saul was chosen by God. Saul started well and God gave him every opportunity to succeed.**

## **Saul's Early Years**

**Saul's beginning was not inauspicious.** Soon after Saul's anointing by Samuel, Saul was imbued with the Holy Spirit. The way it is written makes this appear that **Saul was truly converted:**

Then **the Spirit of [YHWH] will rush upon you,**  
and **you will prophesy** with them and **be turned into another man.**  
Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for **God is with you.**  
When he turned his back to leave Samuel, **God gave him another heart.**  
And all these signs came to pass that day.  
When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him,  
and **the Spirit of God rushed upon him,** and he prophesied among them.  
(1 Samuel 10:6-7, 9-10 ESV)

Soon after this, **Samuel convened a gathering to publicly ordain Saul as King of Israel:**

Now **Samuel called the people together to [YHWH] at Mizpah.**

And he said to the people of Israel,  
"Thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel,  
'I brought up Israel out of Egypt,  
and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians  
and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.'

But **today you have rejected your God,**  
who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses,  
and you have said to him, 'Set a king over us.'

Now therefore **present yourselves before [YHWH]** by your tribes and by your thousands."

Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot.  
He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its clans, and the clan of the Matrites was taken by lot;  
and **Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot.**

And Samuel said to all the people,  
"Do you see him **whom [YHWH] has chosen?**  
There is none like him among all the people."

And **all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"**  
(1 Samuel 10:17-21a, 24 ESV)

Soon after this, the King of Ammon threatened the people of the town of Jabesh-gilead.<sup>45</sup> The town appealed to Saul and he mustered an army and defeated the Ammonites.<sup>46</sup> As a result, there was a general confirmation of Saul's kingship by **"all the people"**, led by Samuel:

Then **Samuel said** to the people, "Come, **let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingdom.**"  
So **all the people** went to Gilgal, and there they **made Saul king** before [YHWH] in Gilgal.

<sup>45</sup> See 1 Samuel 11:1-4

<sup>46</sup> See 1 Samuel 11:5-11

There they sacrificed peace offerings before [YHWH],  
and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.  
(1 Samuel 11:14-15 ESV)

Saul similarly had early success in defeating the Philistines. At the **Battle of Michmash**, Saul's son Jonathan on two occasions was the hero in the route of the Philistines.<sup>47</sup> Saul also had several other early victories.<sup>48</sup> It is possible these early successes began to go to Saul's head. **Saul's poor decision making** began to show up with Jonathan's victory at Michmash:

And the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day, so **Saul had laid an oath on the people**, saying,  
"Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies."

**So none of the people had tasted food.**

Now when all the people came to the forest, behold, there was honey on the ground.  
And when the people entered the forest, behold, the honey was dropping,  
but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

But **Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath**,  
so he put out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb  
and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright.

Then one of the people said,  
"Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying,  
'Cursed be the man who eats food this day.'"

And the people were faint.

Then **Jonathan said**,

**"My father has troubled the land.**

See how my eyes have become bright because I tasted a little of this honey.  
How much better  
if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies that they found.  
For now the defeat among the Philistines has not been great."

Then **Saul said to Jonathan**, **"Tell me what you have done."**

And Jonathan told him,  
"I tasted a little honey with the tip of the staff that was in my hand.  
Here I am; I will die."

And **Saul said**, "God do so to me and more also; **you shall surely die, Jonathan.**"

Then **the people said to Saul**,

"Shall Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation in Israel?  
Far from it!  
As [YHWH] lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground,  
for he has worked with God this day."

So **the people ransomed Jonathan**, so that he did not die.  
(1 Samuel 14:24-30, 43-45 ESV)

This is the first report of several very poor decisions made by Saul. In the end, **his own choices led to his demise.**

## **Saul's Demise**

At the Michmash incident, **Saul had a warning from God that he ignored**:

Then Saul said,  
"Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the morning light;  
let us not leave a man of them."

And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you."

But **the priest said**, **"Let us draw near to God here."**

And **Saul inquired of God**,

"Shall I go down after the Philistines?  
Will you give them into the hand of Israel?"

**But he did not answer him that day.**

(1 Samuel 14:36-37 ESV)

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<sup>47</sup> See 1 Samuel 13:2-4, 14:1-23

<sup>48</sup> See 1 Samuel 14:47-48

On another occasion, Saul rashly took matters into his own hands, ignoring the plain instructions from Samuel:

He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel.

But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him.  
So Saul said,

“Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings.”

And he offered the burnt offering.

As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came.

And Saul went out to meet him and greet him.

Samuel said, “What have you done?”

And Saul said,

“When I saw that the people were scattering from me,  
and that you did not come within the days appointed,  
and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash,  
I said,

‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal,  
and I have not sought the favor of [YHWH].’

So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering.”

And Samuel said to Saul,

“You have done foolishly.

You have not kept the command of [YHWH] your God, with which he commanded you.

For then [YHWH] would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.

But now your kingdom shall not continue.

[YHWH] has sought out a man after his own heart,  
and [YHWH] has commanded him to be prince over his people,  
because you have not kept what [YHWH] commanded you.”

(1 Samuel 13:8-14 ESV)

This was the breaking point at which God decided he would NOT continue Saul’s dynasty, “now your kingdom shall not continue”. God’s final rejection of Saul is again predicated on a very bad choice made by Saul. Through Samuel, God specifically tasked Saul to eradicate a group of Amalekites.<sup>49</sup>

And Samuel said to Saul,

“[YHWH] sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel;  
now therefore listen to the words of [YHWH].

Thus says [YHWH] of hosts,

‘I have noted what Amalek did to Israel  
in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt.

Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have.

Do not spare them,

but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”

(1 Samuel 15:1-3 ESV)

Saul went to battle and defeated the Amalekites, but did NOT completely eradicate them and in fact allowed the people to take spoil:

And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt.

And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive

and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword.

But Saul and the people spared Agag

and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatted calves and the lambs,

and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them.

All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.

And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him,

“Blessed be you to [YHWH].

I have performed the commandment of [YHWH].”

And Samuel said,

“What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?”

<sup>49</sup> See *Excursus 2 – The Amalakites* in the paper “David - A Man After My Own Heart” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

Saul said,  
“They have brought them from the Amalekites,  
for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to [YHWH] your God,  
and the rest we have devoted to destruction.”  
(1 Samuel 15:7-9, 13-15 ESV)

After this, things went from bad to worse for Saul. Saul was rejected by God and became tormented by  
“a harmful spirit”:

The word of [YHWH] came to Samuel:  
“I regret that I have made Saul king,  
for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.”  
And Samuel was angry, and he cried to [YHWH] all night.  
And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul.  
And [YHWH] regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.  
[YHWH] said to Samuel,  
“How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? ...”  
Now the Spirit of [YHWH] departed from Saul,  
and a harmful spirit from [YHWH] tormented him.  
(1 Samuel 15:10-11, 35, 16:1a, 14 ESV)

To assist Saul in his plight, his servants identified David ben Jesse. This resulted in young David’s  
recruitment into the fulltime service of Saul:

And Saul’s servants said to him,  
“Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you.  
Let our lord now command your servants  
who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre,  
and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well.”  
So Saul said to his servants, “Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me.”  
One of the young men answered,  
“Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite,  
who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech,  
and a man of good presence, and [YHWH] is with him.”  
Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me David your son, who is with the sheep.”  
And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat  
and sent them by David his son to Saul.  
And David came to Saul and entered his service.  
And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer.  
And Saul sent to Jesse, saying,  
“Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight.”  
And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul,  
David took the lyre and played it with his hand.  
So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him.  
(1 Samuel 16:15-23 ESV)

There is no specific indication as to how long things went well between Saul and David, perhaps it was a  
year or two. David was promoted to a commander position in Saul’s military, and David’s successes  
induced extreme jealousy in Saul:

And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him,  
so that Saul set him over the men of war.  
And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul’s servants.  
As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine,  
the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing,  
to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments.  
And the women sang to one another as they celebrated,  
“Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”  
And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him.  
He said,  
“They have ascribed to David ten thousands,  
and to me they have ascribed thousands,  
and what more can he have but the kingdom?”  
And Saul eyed David from that day on.

The next day **a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul**, and he raved within his house while **David was playing the lyre**, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. And **Saul hurled the spear**, for **he thought, "I will pin David to the wall."** But David evaded him twice. **Saul was afraid of David** because [YHWH] was with him but had departed from Saul. So Saul removed him from his presence ... (1 Samuel 18:5-13a ESV)

This jealousy fuelled Saul's passion to kill David for many years. The incidents of David's fleeing from Saul are famous.<sup>50</sup> Through them all, **the deterioration of Saul is evident**. At the time of a New Moon Feast,<sup>51</sup> David wisely stayed away but remained in contact with Jonathan, Saul's son. Saul became aware of their communication and laid a tirade upon Jonathan:

Then **Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan**, and he said to him, **"You son of a perverse, rebellious woman**, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. **Therefore send and bring him to me**, for **he shall surely die."** (1 Samuel 20:30-31 ESV)

David fled to **Nob** where the Tabernacle had been moved after the destruction of Shiloh.<sup>52</sup> **The priests there were familiar with David**, so they helped him. **Saul's paranoia** is evident in that when he found out, he killed all the priests of Nob:

Then the king sent to summon **Ahimelech** the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, **the priests who were at Nob**, and all of them came to the king. And Saul said, "Hear now, son of Ahitub." And he answered, "Here I am, my lord." And Saul said to him, **"Why have you conspired against me**, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, so that he has risen against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?" Then Ahimelech answered the king, "And who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and captain over your bodyguard, and honored in your house? **Is today the first time that I have inquired of God for him?** No! Let not the king impute anything to his servant or to all the house of my father, for your servant has known nothing of all this, much or little." And **the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house."** (1 Samuel 22:11-16 ESV)

Twice David had a clear chance to kill Saul.<sup>53</sup> Both times he refused, trusting in God to work out his Plan. When confronted by David after the first incident, Saul showed some remorse. By the time of the second incident, Saul seems to be jaded, just accepting his fate:

As soon as **David had finished speaking these words to Saul**, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And **Saul lifted up his voice and wept**. He said to David, **"You are more righteous than I**, for you have repaid me good, whereas **I have repaid you evil**. And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when [YHWH] put me into your hands. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may [YHWH] reward you with good for what you have done to me this day.

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<sup>50</sup> See the discussion in sections **1.2 The Wandering Years** and **3.3 The Wandering Years** in the paper "David - A Man After My Own Heart" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>51</sup> See 1 Samuel 20:16-29

<sup>52</sup> See 1 Samuel 4:10, Jeremiah 7:12-14, 26:4-9

<sup>53</sup> See 1 Samuel 24:1-5, 26:1-16

And now, behold, **I know that you shall surely be king,**  
and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.  
Swear to me therefore by [YHWH] that you will not cut off my offspring after me,  
and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house."

And David swore this to Saul.

Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

(1 Samuel 24:16-22 ESV)

Then Saul said,

**"I have sinned.** Return, my son David, for **I will no more do you harm,**  
because my life was precious in your eyes this day.  
Behold, **I have acted foolishly,** and have **made a great mistake.**"

And David answered and said,

"Here is the spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and take it.  
[YHWH] rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness,  
for [YHWH] gave you into my hand today,  
and I would not put out my hand against [YHWH's] anointed.  
Behold, as your life was precious this day in my sight,  
so may my life be precious in the sight of [YHWH], and may he deliver me out of all tribulation."

Then Saul said to David,

"Blessed be you, my son David! **You will do many things and will succeed in them.**"

So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

(1 Samuel 26:21-25 ESV)

Soon after this, David retired to the territory of the Philistines to avoid Saul.<sup>54</sup> The next we hear of Saul, he is preparing for what would be his final battle at **Mount Gilboa**.<sup>55</sup> By this time, God was having nothing to do with Saul. Saul had gotten so far away from God that Saul resorted to the occult:

The Philistines assembled and came and encamped at Shunem.

And Saul gathered all **Israel**, and they **encamped at Gilboa**.

When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.

And **when Saul inquired of [YHWH], [YHWH] did not answer him,**  
either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets.

Then **Saul said** to his servants,

**"Seek out for me a woman who is a medium,** that I may go to her and inquire of her."

And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a medium at En-dor."

So Saul disguised himself and put on other garments and went, he and two men with him.

And they came to the woman by night.

And he said,

"Divine for me by a spirit and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you."

The woman said to him,

"Surely you know what Saul has done,  
how he has cut off the mediums and the necromancers from the land.<sup>56</sup>  
Why then are you laying a trap for my life to bring about my death?"

But **Saul swore to her by [YHWH]**, "As [YHWH] lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing."

Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"

He said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice.

And **the woman said to Saul**, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul."

(1 Samuel 28:4-12 ESV)

In the ensuing vision,<sup>57</sup> **Saul was given accurate information regarding the outcome of the battle:**

And "Samuel" said,

"Why then do you ask me, since **[YHWH] has turned from you and become your enemy?**  
[YHWH] has done to you as he spoke by me,

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<sup>54</sup> See 1 Samuel chapter 27

<sup>55</sup> For further discussion of the Battle of Mount Gilboa, see section **2. David in the Amarna Letters** in the paper "**David - A Man After My Own Heart**" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>56</sup> Note that Endor was in territory NOT under Saul's control, so this medium had NOT been subject to his ban.

<sup>57</sup> As with visions in general, it is NOT clear how God works. Samuel was dead. It was NOT Samuel in the vision, but only the appearance of Samuel. See the discussion in section **2.1.2 The Nature of Man** in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

for **[YHWH] has torn the kingdom out of your hand** and given it to your neighbor, David.  
 Because **you did not obey the voice of [YHWH]**  
 and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek,  
 therefore [YHWH] has done this thing to you this day.  
 Moreover, [YHWH] will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines,  
 and **tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me.**  
 [YHWH] will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines.”

(1 Samuel 28:16-19 ESV)

Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel,  
 and **the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa.**  
 And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons,  
 and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul.

**The battle pressed hard against Saul,** and the archers found him,  
 and he was badly wounded by the archers.  
 Then Saul said to his armor-bearer,

“Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it,  
 lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and mistreat me.”

But his armor-bearer would not, for he feared greatly.

Therefore **Saul took his own sword and fell upon it.**

And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with him.

Thus **Saul died, and his three sons,** and his armor-bearer, and all his men, on the same day together.

(1 Samuel 31:1-6 ESV)

The record of Saul’s life shows a pattern of bad decisions. Saul did NOT follow God’s instructions when he had contact with Samuel. **Saul did NOT seek the Way of God but went his own way and let his jealousy consume him.**

## Assessment of King Saul

Saul was God’s choice to be the first King of Israel. He started out well and was apparently converted. When Samuel first approached Saul, Saul protested, and Samuel later alludes to his protest:

Saul answered,

“Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel?

And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin?

**Why then have you spoken to me in this way?”**

1 Samuel 9:21 ESV

And Samuel said,

“Though **you are little in your own eyes,**

are you not the head of the tribes of Israel?

[YHWH] anointed you king over Israel.

(1 Samuel 15:17 ESV)

Samuel’s allusion to Saul’s protest is immediately after **Saul was castigated over the Amalekite incident.**

The question is, was Saul **“little in his own eyes”**, at that time? The Hebrew phrase is:

בְּעֵינַיִךְ	אַתָּה	קָטָן	אִם־	הֲלוֹא
b <sup>e</sup> ’eneka	’atah	qaton	’im	halo’
in eyes of you	you	little	if	? not

**Literally:** “if not little you in your eyes”

**There is no explicit verb**, so a “to be” verb of either “are” or “were”, could be supplied.

The next clause is:

יְהוָה	וַיִּמְשֹׁךְ	אַתָּה	יִשְׂרָאֵל	שִׁבְטֵי	רֹאשׁ
YHWH	wayyim <sup>e</sup> shahaka	’atah	yis <sup>e</sup> ra’el	shiv <sup>e</sup> te	ro’sh
YHWH	he anointed you	you	Israel	tribes of	head of

**Literally:** “head of tribes of Israel you, he anointed you, YHWH”

**Re-ordering:** “YHWH, he anointed you, you head of tribes of Israel”

**This clause provides the temporal definition:** the state of being little was when the anointing to be head of tribes was performed. The last clause is appositional, “head of tribes”, “king of Israel”. So a reasonable translation of verse 17 is:

And Samuel said,  
“Were you not little in your own eyes,  
when YHWH anointed you head of the tribes of Israel,  
king over Israel?”

NIV has:

Samuel said,  
“Although you were once small in your own eyes,  
did you not become head of the tribes of Israel?  
[YHWH] anointed you king over Israel.”

NEB has:

So Samuel went on,  
“Time was when you thought little of yourself,  
but now you are head of the tribes of Israel,  
and [YHWH] has anointed you king over Israel”

Clearly, **Saul had been “little in his own eyes” when God chose him.** The question is how did Saul get to the point of being his own authority and, therefore, being cut off by God? We need to **compare the record of Saul’s actions with God’s specification of the requirements of a king.** The Bible contains no indication that Saul was involved in foreign entanglements; nor that he acquired “many wives”; nor that he amassed undue wealth to himself. The Bible is silent as to whether or not he daily studied the word of God, but his actions suggest **he did NOT internalize the teaching of God.**

Each of the mistakes that is recorded of Saul, follows a common pattern. Saul made a foolish decision, without regard to the guidance of God, and then **tried to justify his actions.** **There is no record of true repentance.**<sup>58</sup> This proclivity of his was apparently well known. At the **Michmash incident,** when Jonathan was informed of his transgression, he immediately identified Saul’s mistake:

But **Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath,**  
so he put out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb  
and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright.

Then one of the people said,  
“Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying,  
‘Cursed be the man who eats food this day.’”

And the people were faint.

Then **Jonathan said,**  
“**My father has troubled the land.** ...”

(1 Samuel 14:27-29a ESV)

Had it NOT been for the intervention of “the people”, **Saul would have executed his son in an attempt to justify himself.**

At the **Gilgal incident,** Saul tried to argue that his action was justified because he was trying to seek God’s favour for the battle:

And **Saul said,**  
“When I saw that the people were scattering from me,  
and that **you did not come** within the days appointed,  
and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash,  
I said  
‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal,  
and **I have not sought the favor of [YHWH].**’  
So **I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering.**”

(1 Samuel 13:11b-12 ESV)

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<sup>58</sup> After his rejection, Saul academically acknowledges that he had sinned, but there is no evidence that he made any effort to change;  
see 1 Samuel 15:24,30-31.

In the **Amalekite incident**, Saul clearly just thought he could do whatever he wanted:

“... And [YHWH] sent you on a mission and said,  
‘Go, **devote to destruction** the sinners, the Amalekites,  
and fight against them until they are consumed.’

Why then did you not obey the voice of [YHWH]?

Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of [YHWH]?”

And **Saul said to Samuel**,

“**I have obeyed the voice of [YHWH]**.

I have gone on the mission on which [YHWH] sent me.

I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction.

But **the people took of the spoil**, sheep and oxen,  
the best of the things devoted to destruction,

**to sacrifice to [YHWH] your God** in Gilgal.”

(1 Samuel 15:18-21 ESV)

The phrase “**devote to destruction**” is from the root verb חָרַם - *ḥaram*. **This verb has a very specific technical meaning.** Persons or animals placed under *ḥaram* by God are marked by God for death. There is no recourse, no exception.<sup>59</sup> Saul should have understood his mission. He claimed, “**I have obeyed the voice of YHWH**”, when he was in clear and specific violation of his charge: bringing back a foreign king as a prize of war, is NOT *ḥaram*. Saul further tried to absolve himself by blaming “the people”, “**the people took of the spoil**”. Was Saul NOT in charge? Did Saul NOT give the orders? How then were “the people” able to do this? To add insult to injury, Saul goes on to imply a higher standard of morality for himself: he claimed to do better than just killing the animals – they were to be used in sacrifice to YHWH. Note Saul refers to YHWH as “**your God**”, which clearly indicates the state of his relationship with God.

**Saul’s failure was that he did NOT learn to live by the Way of God.** God gave Saul every opportunity to succeed. Saul was chosen by God.<sup>60</sup> Saul was converted. He was given the Holy Spirit.<sup>61</sup> Saul’s heart was changed.<sup>62</sup> Saul had access to a devout teacher in Samuel. Saul had access to same teaching of God that we rely on today, the Writings of Moses. Saul should have used all this to develop a living relationship with YHWH, “**learn to fear YHWH his God**”:

And it shall be with him, and **he shall read in it all the days of his life**,

that he may **learn to fear [YHWH] his God**

by **keeping all the words** of this [torah]<sup>63</sup> and these statutes, and **doing them**,

that **his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers**,

and that **he may not turn aside** from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left,

so that **he may continue long in his kingdom**, he and his children, in Israel.

(Deuteronomy 17:19-20 ESV)

Clearly the most important part of God’s specification of the requirements for a person “**To Be a King**”, is the proviso to learn the Way of God, “**keeping all the words**”, “**doing them**”. Saul did NOT, “**his heart was lifted up**”, “**he did turn aside**”, and “**he did NOT continue long in his kingdom**”. The last years of Saul’s life bring out the tragedy of his existence. His all-consuming jealousy of David and his repeated attempts to kill David reflect a very disturbed person. His end was most tragic: resorting to the occult, the realm of Satan the Devil, for guidance. His death was lonely and sad: defeated in battle, his sons already dead, wounded, fearful of capture, he fell on his own sword.

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<sup>59</sup> For further discussion, see [Excursus 1 – Devoted to Destruction: ḥaram](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca) in the paper “Third Pillar - The Way of God” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>60</sup> See 1 Samuel 9:15-17, 10:24

<sup>61</sup> See 1 Samuel 10:6,10

<sup>62</sup> See 1 Samuel 10:9

<sup>63</sup> See footnote 13

## 2.2.2 King David

The data on King David comprise First Samuel chapters 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, and 30; all of Second Samuel; and First Chronicles chapters 11 through 29. Josephus commits all of Book 7 to David. Josephus' material is pretty much just a representation of the Biblical material. Much of the material on David has been discussed in the paper "**David - A Man After My Own Heart**" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca). This current paper focuses only on the Davidic material related to "kingship".

**David is the "prototypical" human king.** David exemplifies what persons should strive for in becoming "a king". As the "Kings of kings", Jesus Christ is the "antitype" to which the "prototype" and all "typical" attributes of human kings point. **The most important attribute of King David is the state of his "heart":**

... [God] raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said,  
'I have found in **David** the son of Jesse **a man after my heart**, who will do all my will.'

Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.  
(Acts 13:22b-23 ESV)

And **Samuel said to Saul**,

"You have done foolishly.

You have not kept the command of [YHWH] your God, with which he commanded you.  
For then [YHWH] would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.

But now your kingdom shall not continue.

**[YHWH] has sought out a man after his own heart,**

and [YHWH] has commanded him to be prince over his people,  
because you have not kept what [YHWH] commanded you."

(1 Samuel 13:13-14 ESV)

**The state of the "heart" is key to conversion:**

For **this is the covenant** that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,  
declares [YHWH]:

**I will put my [torah]<sup>64</sup> within them,**

and **I will write it on their hearts.**

And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

**I will give them one heart and one way,** that they may fear me forever,  
for their own good and the good of their children after them.

(Jeremiah 31:33, 32:38-39 ESV)

And **I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.**

And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

And **I will put my Spirit within** you,

and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to [live by my mish<sup>e</sup>patim].<sup>65</sup>

(Ezekiel 36:26-27 ESV)

And **let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called** in one body.

... so that **he may establish your hearts** blameless in holiness before our God and Father,  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

For **with the heart one believes and is justified**, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

... and hope does not put us to shame,

because **God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit** [which] has been given to us.  
(Colossians 3:15a, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, Romans 10:10, 5:5 ESV)

But a Jew is one inwardly, and **circumcision is a matter of the heart**, by the Spirit, not by the letter.

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"

**has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God** in the face of Jesus Christ.

... who has also put his seal on us and **given us his Spirit in our hearts** as a guarantee.

... so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts** through faith ...

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<sup>64</sup> See footnote 13

<sup>65</sup> The words מִשְׁפָּט - mish<sup>e</sup>pat and, the plural, מִשְׁפָּטִים - mish<sup>e</sup>patim, are generally translated very poorly. When the singular, *mish<sup>e</sup>pat*, is used of a character attribute, it is best translated as "justness"; when used abstractly, "justice" is usually the best translation. There is no English word to translate the plural, *mish<sup>e</sup>patim*. It means the understanding, wisdom, and discernment that come from living by the Way of God. For general discussion, see *Excursus 1 - mish<sup>e</sup>pat* in the paper "**Covenants of Grace**" and *Excursus 4 - David's Use of mish<sup>e</sup>pat* in the paper "**David - A Man After My Own Heart**", both papers are located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

... as bondservants of Christ, **doing the will of God from the heart** ...  
(Romans 2:29a, 2 Corinthians 4:6, 1:22, Ephesians 3:17a, 6:6b ESV)

**The "heart" is the essence of a person's innermost being.** The state of the "heart" defines what a person wants; what a person strives to be; what a person truly values; and, what a person will become if granted the gift of eternal life.

## In the Fullness of Time

In his farewell discourse, when Samuel relinquished his position as "Judge of Israel" in favour of the new King of Israel, Saul, **Samuel is clear and specific that the people's demand for a king was a great sin:**

"... **you said to me,**

**'No, but a king shall reign over us,'**

when [YHWH] your God was your king.

And now behold the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked;

behold, [YHWH] has set a king over you.

If you will fear [YHWH] and serve him and obey his voice

and not rebel against the commandment of [YHWH],

and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow [YHWH] your God,  
it will be well.

But if you will not obey the voice of [YHWH], but rebel against the commandment of [YHWH],  
then the hand of [YHWH] will be against you and your king.

I will call upon [YHWH] ... And **you shall know and see that your wickedness is great,**  
which you have done in the sight of [YHWH], **in asking for yourselves a king."**

And **all the people said to Samuel,**

**"Pray for your servants to [YHWH] your God, that we may not die,**

**for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king."**

And **Samuel said to the people,**

**"Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil.**

Yet do not turn aside from following [YHWH], but **serve [YHWH] with all your heart.** ..."

(1 Samuel 12:12b-15, 17b, 19-20 ESV)

God acquiesced to the people's demand and provided a king. **Why then was it such a great sin for the people to demand a king?** God had promised Abraham that there would be kings among his descendants. Moses had prepared for kings in Israel by providing God's specification for "kingship". Why was it a problem to ask for a king at that time? **The problem was timing:** God was preparing David to be king. The people's demand came when David was less than ten years old.<sup>66</sup> David was NOT ready, so Saul was chosen. Later in life, David came to understand the significance of his calling, that God had prepared him from the womb:

For **you formed my inward parts;** you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works; my [being] (nephesh)<sup>67</sup> knows it very well.

My frame was not hidden from you, when **I was being made in secret,**

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed substance;

**in your book were written,** every one of them, **the days that were formed for me,**

when as yet there was none of them.

(Psalm 139:13-16 ESV)

Following the Amalekite incident, when YHWH informed Saul that he was rejected, YHWH was specific that he had been preparing David:

The word of [YHWH] came to Samuel:

**"I regret that I have made Saul king,**

**for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments."**

And Samuel was angry, and he cried to [YHWH] all night.

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<sup>66</sup> See the chronological charts "**Samuel and Saul Timeline**" and "**The Life of David**" located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>.

<sup>67</sup> See footnote 21

And Samuel said to Saul,  
 “I will not return with you.  
 For **you have rejected the word of [YHWH]**,  
 and [YHWH] has rejected you from being king over Israel.”  
 As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore.  
 And Samuel said to him,  
 “[YHWH] has torn **the kingdom of Israel** from you this day  
 and **has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.**  
 And also **the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret,**  
 for he is not a man, that he should have regret.”  
 (1 Samuel 15:10-11, 26-29 ESV)

The castigation of Saul, “**you have rejected the word of YHWH**”, implies more than just the Amalekite incident. The “**word of YHWH**” defines the **Way of God**. Saul had come to pursue a way of life apart from the Way of God. The Amalekite incident was simply exemplary of his heart. God could no longer work with him. Saul’s neighbour was, of course, David. It hurt YHWH deeply to reject Saul, “**I regret that I have made Saul king**”, since it is NOT in his divine nature to have regret “**the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret**”.

As discussed in section **2.2.1 King Saul**, Saul had every opportunity to succeed – he certainly was NOT “fated to failure”. God held out Saul the possibility that his line could carry forward “**forever**”, i.e., **the Messiah could have come from the line of Saul**:

The promise given to Saul is **the same promise later given to David**:

And Samuel said to Saul,  
 “You have done foolishly.  
 You have not kept the command of [YHWH] your God, with which he commanded you.  
 For then **[YHWH] would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.**  
 (1 Samuel 13:13 ESV)

**If God had already been preparing David for this role, how could it also be promised to Saul?** David was married to Saul’s daughter and David was well aware of the significance of being married into the royal line:

Now **Saul’s daughter Michal loved David.**  
 And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.  
 Saul thought,  
 “Let me give her to him,  
 that she may be a snare for him<sup>68</sup> and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.”  
 Therefore **Saul said to David** a second time, “**You shall now be my son-in-law.**”  
 And Saul commanded his servants,  
 “Speak to David in private and say,  
 ‘Behold, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you.  
 Now then become the king’s son-in-law.’”  
 And Saul’s servants spoke those words in the ears of David.  
 And David said,  
 “**Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king’s son-in-law,**  
 since I am a poor man and have no reputation?”  
 (1 Samuel 18:20-23 ESV)

Had Saul proved faithful in his calling, **the line to the Messiah could have gone through Michal** – both David and Saul could have been progenitors of the Messianic line. The Plan of God has been determined since before the foundation of the world,<sup>69</sup> but **the Plan contains enough flexibility** that God can deal with the circumstances of individuals as required. **The most important aspects of the Plan of God are determined and unmovable**, for example the First Advent:

But **when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son,**  
 born of woman, born under the [nomos],<sup>70</sup> to redeem those who were under the [nomos],

<sup>68</sup> Even at this time, Saul’s motives were corrupted.

<sup>69</sup> See section **2. The Plan of God** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>70</sup> See footnote **29**

so that we might receive adoption as sons.  
(Galatians 4:4-5 ESV)

**In him we have redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses,  
according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us,  
in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will,  
**according to his purpose**, which he set forth **in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time**,  
to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.  
(Ephesians 1:7-10 ESV)

God had planned for “human kingship” in Israel. **God prepared David for the role. The people sinned in that they forced the issue before “The Fullness of Time”**. Saul could have been accommodated to the Plan, but he proved unfaithful. God moved ahead with David, whom he had carefully prepared.

## David’s Early Preparation

David’s early life is discussed in some detail in sections **1.1 The Early Years**, **1.2 The Wandering Years**, **3.1 The Early Years**, **3.2 In Saul’s Service**, and **3.3 The Wandering Years** in the paper “**David - A Man After My Own Heart**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca). This current paper summarizes some of this material specifically related to “kingship”.

**David spent his youth as a shepherd tending his father’s flocks**. Clearly, however, his formal education was not neglected. Some **seventy-three Psalms** are attributed to him – they **reflect the mind of a well-educated person**. His years as a shepherd provided him ample solitude to reflect on the great covenant God of Israel, YHWH, and history of Israel since the time of Moses. The vocation of a shepherd taught him many lessons **which prepared him to be the prototype of The Shepherd of all mankind, Jesus Christ**:

Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?”

And he said, “There remains yet **the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep**.”

But **David said to Saul**,

“Your servant used to keep sheep for his father.

And **when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock**,

I went after him and struck him and **delivered it out of his mouth**.

And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him.

Your servant has struck down both lions and bears,

and this uncircumcised **Philistine** shall be like one of them,

for **he has defied the armies of the living God**.”

And David said,

“**[YHWH] who delivered me** from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear  
**will deliver me** from the hand of this Philistine.”

(1 Samuel 16:11a, 17:34-37a ESV)

Later when the people assembled at Hebron to make David King over all Israel, they specifically alluded to his **“shepherding skills”** as necessary for a king:

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said,

“Behold, we are your bone and flesh.

In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel.

And [YHWH] said to you,

**‘You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.’**”

(2 Samuel 5:1-2 ESV // 1 Chronicles 11:1-2)

Those in leadership positions are frequently referred to as “shepherds”:

And **I will give you shepherds after my own heart**,

who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

**I will set shepherds over them who will care for them**,

and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares [YHWH].

(Jeremiah 3:15, 23:4 ESV)

Kings in the ancient world frequently regarded themselves as “shepherds” of their people.<sup>71</sup> King Cyrus of Persia is called a shepherd:

... **who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd**, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’;  
(Isaiah 44:28a ESV)

David, as King, is specifically contrasted with the One Shepherd:

**My servant David shall be king over them,**  
and **they shall all have one shepherd.**

They shall walk in my [mish<sup>e</sup>patim]<sup>72</sup> and be careful to obey my statutes.  
(Ezekiel 37:24 ESV)

Jesus declares himself to be the “**Good Shepherd**”:

So **Jesus again said to them,**

“Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.  
All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.  
I am the door.  
If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

**I am the good shepherd.**

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

**I am the good shepherd.** I know my own and my own know me ...”

(John 10:7-9, 11, 14 ESV)

**David had significant natural ability**, and **he was well educated**. When David was recruited into Saul’s fulltime service, his qualifications included: “**skillful in playing**”, “**a man of valour**”, “**a man of war**”, “**prudent in speech**”, and “**a man of good presence**”. His skill in playing was likely a natural ability self-taught during his time alone with the sheep. His valour and ability in war had been demonstrated at the Battle of Elah.<sup>73</sup> **To be “prudent in speech” and “of good presence” require formal instruction:**

One of the young men answered,

“Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite,  
who is **skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech,**  
**and a man of good presence,** and [YHWH] is with him.”

(1 Samuel 16:18 ESV)

**When David was ready, God sent Samuel to anoint David as King of Israel:**

[YHWH] said to Samuel,

“How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel?  
Fill your horn with oil, and go. **I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite,**  
for **I have provided for myself a king among his sons.** ...  
And **you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you.**”

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely [YHWH’s] anointed is before him.”

But [YHWH] said to Samuel,

“Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him.  
For **[YHWH] sees not as man sees**: man looks on the outward appearance,  
but **[YHWH] looks on the heart.**”

Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?”

And he said, “There remains yet **the youngest**, but behold, he **is keeping the sheep.**”

And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.”

And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome.

And [YHWH] said, “**Arise, anoint him, for this is he.**”

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.

And **the Spirit of [YHWH] rushed upon David from that day forward.**

(1 Samuel 16:1, 3b, 6-7, 11-13a ESV)

**Analysis of David’s anointing:**

- God is clear and specific that David had been personally prepared, “**I have provided for myself a king among his sons**”

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, ANET page 164, line 50, “**Hammurabi, the shepherd**, called by Enlil, am I”

<sup>72</sup> See footnote 65

<sup>73</sup> See 1 Samuel 17:1-11, 38-54

- There was no humanly observable reason to choose David over any of his brothers, **“you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you”**

The same was prophesized about Jesus of Nazareth, and in fact he was so average looking that he could just slip through a crowd:

... **he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,**  
and **no beauty that we should desire him.**

(Isaiah 53:2b ESV)

When they heard these things, **all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.**

And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

But **passing through their midst, he went away.**

(Luke 4:28-30 ESV)

- God does NOT evaluate people by human criteria, **“YHWH sees not as man sees”**
- God’s evaluation is of the innermost being, the heart, **“YHWH looks on the heart”**
- David’s anointing resulted in imbuelement by the Holy Spirit, **“the Spirit of YHWH rushed upon David from that day forward”**

Saul had similarly been imbued with Holy Spirit, but he did NOT use it to prepare his “heart”; the Holy Spirit was taken away and Saul was rejected:

When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met [Saul], and **the Spirit of God rushed upon him,** and he prophesied among them.

**[YHWH] has sought out a man after his own heart,**

... you have not kept what [YHWH] commanded you.

For **you have rejected the word of [YHWH],**

and **[YHWH] has rejected you** from being king over Israel.”

Now **the Spirit of [YHWH] departed from Saul** ...

(1 Samuel 10:10, 13:14b, 15:26b, 16:14a ESV)

David’s anointing and imbuelement with the Holy Spirit were just the beginning. These things happened when David was about twenty. **David had some ten hard years with many hard lessons ahead of him before he became king.** Most of these incidents are discussed in the paper **“David - A Man After My Own Heart”** located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca). **The most important thing that David learned was to let God work things out according to his Plan.** This is demonstrated first and foremost by David’s unwavering respect for Saul, as God’s chosen and anointed king, also his father-in-law. When Saul first turned on David in jealousy, David continued in his service as a lyre player<sup>74</sup> and a military commander fighting the Philistines.<sup>75</sup> When forced to flee from Saul and resort to hiding in the Judean wilderness, David continued his respect for Saul despite **Saul’s efforts to kill him:**

And **David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness,** in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. And **Saul sought him every day,** but God did not give him into his hand.

Then **the Ziphites went up to Saul** at Gibeah, saying,

“Is not **David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh,**

on the hill of Hachilah, which is south of Jeshimon?

Now come down, O king, according to all your heart’s desire to come down,

and **our part shall be to surrender him into the king’s hand.**”

And Saul said, “May you be blessed by [YHWH], for you have had compassion on me.

Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon.

And Saul and his men went to seek him.

And David was told, so he went down to the rock and lived in the wilderness of Maon.

And when **Saul** heard that, he **pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.**

(1 Samuel 23:14, 19-21, 24b-25 ESV)

On both occasions when **David had a clear opportunity to kill Saul,**<sup>76</sup> he refused, and **showed great remorse for any disrespect towards Saul:**

And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself.

<sup>74</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:10

<sup>75</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:30

<sup>76</sup> See 1 Samuel 24:1-7, 26:6-12

Now **David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave.**

And the men of David said to him,

“Here is the day of which [YHWH] said to you,

‘Behold, **I will give your enemy into your hand,**

and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.’”

Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul’s robe.

And afterward **David’s heart struck him,** because he had cut off a corner of Saul’s robe.

He said to his men,

“[YHWH] forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, [YHWH’s] anointed,

to put out my hand against him, seeing he is [YHWH’s] anointed.”

Afterward **David** also arose and went out of the cave, and **called after Saul,**

**“My lord the king!”**

And when Saul looked behind him, **David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage.**

And David said to Saul,

“Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Behold, David seeks your harm’?

Behold, this day your eyes have seen how [YHWH] gave you today into my hand in the cave.

And **some told me to kill you,** but **I spared you.**

I said,

**‘I will not put out my hand against my lord,** for he is [YHWH’s] anointed.’ ...”

(1 Samuel 24:3-6, 8-10 ESV)

**So David and Abishai went to the army by night.**

And there lay Saul sleeping within the encampment, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the army lay around him.

Then Abishai said to David,

“God has given your enemy into your hand this day.

Now please let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear,

and I will not strike him twice.”

But David said to Abishai,

“Do not destroy him,

for **who can put out his hand against [YHWH’s] anointed and be guiltless?”**

Saul recognized David’s voice and said, “Is this your voice, my son David?”

And David said, “It is my voice, my lord, O king.”

And he said,

**“Why does my lord pursue after his servant?”**

For what have I done? What evil is on my hands?

Now therefore let my lord the king hear the words of his servant.

If it is [YHWH] who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering,

but if it is men, may they be cursed before [YHWH],

for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of [YHWH], saying, ‘Go, serve other gods.’

Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of [YHWH],

for **the king of Israel has come out to seek a single flea**

like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains.”

(1 Samuel 26:7-9, 17-20 ESV)

Through these experiences, God taught David many critical things that he would later need as a king.

**One of the most important things David had to learn was the meaning of *hesed*.** As soon as David entered Saul’s fulltime service, he made a fast friendship with Jonathan, Saul’s son.<sup>77</sup> Since Eshbaal, Saul’s youngest son, was about five years older than David,<sup>78</sup> Jonathan, Saul’s oldest son, was certainly many years older than David. **Jonathan, no doubt, served as a mentor<sup>79</sup> for David in David’s early years in Saul’s court.** Through his friendship with Jonathan, **God ensured that David understood the significance of *hesed*.** The most important word for understanding the Nature of God is *hesed*.<sup>80</sup> Briefly, *hesed* is the expression of God’s covenantal commitment to fulfill his side of a covenant agreement.

<sup>77</sup> See 1 Samuel 18:1-4

<sup>78</sup> See the Chronological Charts “**Samuel and Saul Timeline**” and “**The Life of David**” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>

<sup>79</sup> See 1 Samuel 19:1-2, 20:11-13

<sup>80</sup> See section **1.4.3 Attributes of God’s Character** in the paper “**First Pillar - The Nature of God**” and **Excursus 2 - *hesed*** in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**”; both papers are located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

When God enters into a covenant, he unequivocally commits himself to do everything in his power to see that the covenant is fulfilled. To translate *hesed* into English, the best we can do is “**covenant love**”. **When *hesed* is expressed between persons**, the meaning is the same, except that persons lack the ability to actually fulfill a covenant unequivocally, but the commitment remains the same. Jonathan and David entered into a covenant, based on *hesed*, whereby David agreed to perpetuate the house of Jonathan:

“... If I am still alive, **show me the [*hesed*] of [YHWH]**, that I may not die;  
and **do not cut off your [*hesed*]** from my house forever,  
when [YHWH] cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.”

And **Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David**, saying,  
“May [YHWH] take vengeance on David’s enemies.”

And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him,  
for he loved him as he loved his own [life] (*nephesh*).<sup>81</sup>  
(1 Samuel 20:14-17 ESV)

Later, when Jonathan was dead and **David was king over all Israel**, **David made an explicit point of going back to fulfill the terms of this covenant**:

And David said,  
“Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul,  
that **I may show him [*hesed*] for Jonathan’s sake?**”

Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David.

And the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?”

And he said, “I am your servant.”

And the king said,  
“Is there not still someone of the house of Saul,  
**that I may show the [*hesed*] of God to him?**”

Ziba said to the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet.”

The king said to him, “Where is he?”

And Ziba said to the king, “He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.”

Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.

And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage.

And David said, “Mephibosheth!”

And he answered, “Behold, I am your servant.”

And David said to him,  
“Do not fear, for **I will show you [*hesed*] for the sake of your father Jonathan**,  
and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always.”  
(2 Samuel 9:1-7 ESV)

When God established the **Covenant of Descent**<sup>82</sup> with David, **God explicitly committed *hesed* to the descendants of David**:

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers,  
**I will raise up your offspring after you**, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.  
He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.  
I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.  
When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,  
but **my [*hesed*] love will not depart from him** ...  
(2 Samuel 7:12-15a ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:11-13a)

**This commitment by God, based on *hesed* to David, is the only reason that the Sothorn Dynasty continued for some 400 years.** Davids’s early preparation by God was necessary and specific for the purpose to which God was calling David. As God deals with each person, whom he calls to be a True Worshipper, God provides life lessons which are required to prepare that person to be a candidate for the gift of eternal life. So it was with David. His early preparation served him well – his first several years as king were met primarily with one success after another. However, David did have some critical life lessons yet to learn.

<sup>81</sup> See footnote 21

<sup>82</sup> See section 7. *The Covenant of Descent* in the paper “Covenants of Grace” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

## David's Life Lessons

**"To Be a King", a person must develop "people skills"** – the ability to get along with other people and show **political astuteness** in dealing with other people. While David was running from Saul in the wilderness of Judea, many men and their families came to join him.<sup>83</sup> David applied his "shepherding skills" to prove himself a good leader of these people. David used his men to care for the general population in the area in which they were dwelling;<sup>84</sup> thus, gaining their favour. During the Battle of Mount Gilboa, at which Saul and Jonathan were killed, **David was protecting his people from a band of Amalekites.**<sup>85</sup> David recovered much "spoil" and used it to further gain the favour of the general population around Hebron:

And when he had taken him down, behold,  
**[the Amalekites]** were spread abroad over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing,  
because of all **the great spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah.**

And David struck them down from twilight until the evening of the next day,  
and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men, who mounted camels and fled.

**David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken,** and David rescued his two wives.

Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken.  
David brought back all.

David also captured all the flocks and herds,

and the people drove the livestock before him, and said, **"This is David's spoil."**

When **David** came to Ziklag, he **sent part of the spoil to his friends, the elders of Judah,** saying,  
"Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of [YHWH]."

It was for those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negeb, in Jattir, in Aroer, in Siphmoth, in Eshtemoa, in Racal,  
in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, in the cities of the Kenites, in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, in Athach,  
**in Hebron, for all the places where David and his men had roamed.**

(1 Samuel 30:16-20, 26-31 ESV)

**It was, no doubt, political astuteness such as this which prompted the people at Hebron to quickly make David King:**

After this David inquired of [YHWH], "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?"

And [YHWH] said to him, "Go up."

David said, "To which shall I go up?"

And he said, **"To Hebron."**

So **David went up there,** and his two wives also,

Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel.

And David brought up **his men who were with him,** everyone with his household,  
and **they lived in the towns of Hebron.**

And **the men of Judah** came, and there they **anointed David king** over the house of Judah.

(2 Samuel 2:1-4a ESV)

While **David** showed acumen in dealing with people at arm's length, he **failed to properly manage certain relationship with people close to him,** notably **Joab,** his nephew, and **Amnon,** his son. Joab was the son of David's sister, Zeruiah.<sup>86</sup> If Zeruiah was significantly older than David, Joab and David could have been about the same age – perhaps they developed a close friendship in childhood. In any event, **David trusted Joab far too much.** Joab proved his worth in battle in the taking of Jebus, Jerusalem.<sup>87</sup> At the **Battle of Gibeon,**<sup>88</sup> Joab is head of David's forces.<sup>89</sup> Soon after that Joab begins to show his true colours in **the murder of Abner,** with whom David had just completed a peace agreement.<sup>90</sup> Joab was valuable to David as a military commander,<sup>91</sup> so he continued to have free rein. Eventually, David tried to

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<sup>83</sup> See 1 Samuel 22:1-2, 23:13

<sup>84</sup> See 1 Samuel 25:6-7, 14-16

<sup>85</sup> See 1 Samuel 30:1-20

<sup>86</sup> See 1 Chronicles 2:16

<sup>87</sup> See 1 Chronicles 11:4-7

<sup>88</sup> See 2 Samuel 2:12-17

<sup>89</sup> See 2 Samuel 2:12-14

<sup>90</sup> See 2 Samuel 3:20-21, 26-27

<sup>91</sup> See 2 Samuel 10:6-14, 11:1, 12:26, 1 Chronicles 19:6-15, 20:1

replace Joab as commander of the army by Joab's cousin,<sup>92</sup> Amasa. Joab simply murdered Amasa and resumed control of the army.<sup>93</sup> Joab was clearly out of control.

The handling of Joab was one of David's great failings. The object lesson is to be very careful about letting personal preferences or personal relationships dictate policy. There needed to be a layer of separation between David and Joab. Eventually, David did realize the danger, and he warned Solomon about Joab:

Moreover, you also know what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me,  
how he dealt with the two commanders of the armies of Israel,  
Abner the son of Ner, and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed,  
avenging in time of peace for blood that had been shed in war,  
and putting the blood of war on the belt around his waist and on the sandals on his feet.  
Act therefore according to your wisdom,  
but do not let his gray head go down to [the grave] (sh'e'ol)<sup>94</sup> in peace.  
(1 Kings 2:5-6 ESV)

The Amnon incident was a matter of palace intrigue to which David should have paid attention. Amnon wanted his half sister Tamar, but he was unwilling to take her legitimately as a wife. His cousin, Jonadab, devised a scheme to rape her.<sup>95</sup> Two years later Absalom, Tamar's full brother, killed Amnon in revenge.<sup>96</sup> Absalom was banished,<sup>97</sup> but with the help of Joab became reinstated in the court.<sup>98</sup> Somewhere along the line, Absalom hatched his scheme to depose David and make himself king,<sup>99</sup> which scheme he nearly accomplished.<sup>100</sup> Again, the problem was that David allowed those close to him to manipulate him. David did NOT pay proper attention to what was actually happening among those close to him.

While David was King of the Tribe of Judah in Hebron, Abner used Saul's last remaining son, Eshbaal / Ish-bosheth,<sup>101</sup> as a puppet to rule the other tribes from Mahanaim in Gilead.<sup>102</sup> Eventually, Abner turned on Eshbaal and came over to David.<sup>103</sup> That is when Joab murdered Abner.<sup>104</sup> David mourned the death of Abner.<sup>105</sup> This was taken as a sign of David's virtue as a king. The author of Second Samuel summarizes:

Then all the people came to persuade David to eat bread while it was yet day.  
But David swore, saying,  
"God do so to me and more also, if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down!"  
And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them,  
as everything that the king did pleased all the people.  
(2 Samuel 3:35-36 ESV)

After the death of Abner, things moved quickly to make David King over all Israel.<sup>106</sup> Once David was established as King in Jerusalem, one of first things he did was to move the Ark of the Covenant from Keriath-jearim<sup>107</sup> into Jerusalem. This took two attempts: the first attempt ended badly:  
David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.  
And David arose and went with all the people who were with him

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<sup>92</sup> See 1 Chronicles 2:17

<sup>93</sup> See 2 Samuel 20:4-10

<sup>94</sup> The ESV transliterates as "Sheol", but this supports the notion of a "place" where the "dead" go. The word, שְׁאוֹל - sh'e'ol, should always be translated as "grave" or "death", or an equivalent term. See TWOT article 2303c pages 9892-893.

<sup>95</sup> See 2 Samuel 13:1-6

<sup>96</sup> See 2 Samuel 13:23-29

<sup>97</sup> See 2 Samuel 13:37-38

<sup>98</sup> See 2 Samuel chapter 14

<sup>99</sup> See 2 Samuel 15:1-12

<sup>100</sup> See 2 Samuel 15:13-37, 16:15-23, chapter 18

<sup>101</sup> Since "Ba'al" can refer to a pagan deity, an editor has at some point replaced "ba'al" with "bosheth", which means "shame"; see ESV footnote on 2 Samuel 4:4.

<sup>102</sup> See 2 Samuel 2:8-10

<sup>103</sup> See 2 Samuel 3:6-21

<sup>104</sup> See 2 Samuel 3:26-27

<sup>105</sup> See 2 Samuel 3:31-34

<sup>106</sup> See 2 Samuel chapter 4 and 5:1-3

<sup>107</sup> See 1 Samuel 6:1-15, 7:1-2

from Baale-judah<sup>108</sup> **to bring up from there the ark of God,**  
 which is called by the name of [YHWH] of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim.  
 And **they carried the ark of God on a new cart** and brought it out of the house of Abinadab,  
 which was on the hill.  
 And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart, with the ark of God,  
 and Ahio went before the ark.  
 And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before [YHWH],  
 with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.  
 And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon,  
**Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God** and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled.  
 And the anger of [YHWH] was kindled against Uzzah,  
 and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God.  
 And **David was angry because [YHWH] had broken out against Uzzah.**  
 And that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day.  
 And **David was afraid of [YHWH]** that day, and he said,  
 “How can the ark of [YHWH] come to me?”  
 (2 Samuel 6:1-9 ESV see also 1 Chronicles 13:1-12)

This first attempt failed because neither David, nor his advisors, paid close enough attention to Word of God. **A king must be very sure to know what the Word of God actually says and observe all of God’s teaching.** The instructions for moving the Ark are clear and specific:

[YHWH] spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,  
 “Take a census of the **sons of Kohath** from among the sons of Levi,  
 by their clans and their fathers’ houses, from thirty years old up to fifty years old,  
 all who can come on duty, to do the work in the tent of meeting.  
**This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting: the most holy things.**  
 When the camp is to set out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and take down the veil of the screen  
 and **cover the ark of the testimony** with it.  
 Then they shall put on it a covering of goatskin and spread on top of that a cloth all of blue,  
 and **shall put in its poles.** ...  
 And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary  
 and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out,  
 after that **the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these,**  
 but **they must not touch the holy things, lest they die.**  
 These are the things of the tent of meeting that the sons of Kohath are to carry. ...”  
 (Numbers 4:1-6, 15 ESV)

The second attempt to move the Ark was successful because **David became aware of God’s instructions,**  
 and they were followed:

And **[David] prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it.**  
 Then **David said that no one but the Levites may carry the ark of God,**  
 for [YHWH] had chosen them to carry the ark of [YHWH] and to minister to him forever.  
 And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring up the ark of [YHWH] to its place,  
 which he had prepared for it.  
 And David gathered together the sons of Aaron and the Levites:  
 of **the sons of Kohath,** Uriel the chief, with 120 of his brothers;  
 Then David summoned the **priests** Zadok and Abiathar,  
 and the **Levites** Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Aminadab, and said to them,  
 “You are the heads of the fathers’ houses of the Levites.  
 Consecrate yourselves, you and your brothers,  
 so that you may bring up the ark of [YHWH], the God of Israel,  
 to the place that I have prepared for it.  
**Because you did not carry it the first time, [YHWH] our God broke out against us,**  
**because we did not seek him according to the [mish\*pat].”**<sup>109</sup>

So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of [YHWH], the God of Israel.  
 And the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles,  
**as Moses had commanded according to the word of [YHWH].**  
 (1 Chronicles 15:1b-5, 11-15 ESV)

<sup>108</sup> This is an alternate name of Kiriath-jearim; see Joshua 18:14, 1 Chronicles 13:6

<sup>109</sup> This is a rare usage of the singular *mish\*pat*; neither “justice” nor “justness” provides a suitable meaning. The range of meaning is more like the plural, *mish\*patim*, “understanding”, “wisdom”, “discernment”.

After this, the first ten or fifteen years of David's reign in Jerusalem went well: his family grew,<sup>110</sup> he defeated his enemies,<sup>111</sup> he normalized the worship of God,<sup>112</sup> he established his administration,<sup>113</sup> and he made preparations for the construction of the Temple.<sup>114</sup> However, somewhere in the middle of his reign, when he was probably in his mid to late forties, **David got complacent** and made the worst choice of his life. **This was a lesson that he had apparently learned some twenty-five years earlier** when he was wandering in the wilderness. At that time, David's men had been providing protection to the shepherds and herds of a wealthy landowner named Nabal. David needed supplies for his men, so sent them to make a request of Nabal; Nabal rebuffed them, and **David determined to eradicate Nabal**:

So David sent ten young men. And **David said to the young men**,

"Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal and greet him in my name.

And thus you shall greet him:

'Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.

I hear that you have shearers.

Now **your shepherds have been with us**, and we did them no harm,

and **they missed nothing** all the time they were in Carmel.

Ask your young men, and they will tell you.

Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day.

**Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.'**"

And **Nabal answered David's servants**,

"**Who is David?** Who is the son of Jesse?

There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters.

Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers

and give it to men who come from I do not know where?"

So David's young men turned away and came back and told him all this.

And **David said to his men**, "**Every man strap on his sword!**"

And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword.

Now David had said,

"Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness,

so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and **he has returned me evil for good**.

God do so to the enemies of David and more also,

**if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him.'**"

(1 Samuel 25:5-8, 10-13a, 21-22 ESV)

Meanwhile, word got to **Abigail, Nabal's wife**, of what was about to happen. She immediately took measures to placate David:

Now the name of the man was **Nabal**, and **the name of his wife Abigail**.

**The woman was discerning and beautiful**,

but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite.

Then **Abigail made haste** and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine

and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins

and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys.

And she said to her young men, "Go on before me; behold, I come after you."

But **she did not tell her husband Nabal**.

And as she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain,

behold, **David and his men came down toward her**, and she met them.

**When Abigail saw David**, she hurried and got down from the donkey

and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground.

She fell at his feet and said,

**"On me alone, my lord, be the guilt.**

Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant.

Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he.

Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.

But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent.

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<sup>110</sup> See 1 Chronicles 14:3-7

<sup>111</sup> See 2 Samuel 5:17-25, 8:1-14, 1 Chronicles 14:8-17, 18:1-13

<sup>112</sup> See 1 Chronicles 16:1-7, 37-42

<sup>113</sup> See 2 Samuel 8:15-18, 1 Chronicles 18:14-17

<sup>114</sup> See 1 Chronicles chapters 23, 24, 25, and 26

Now then, my lord, as [YHWH] lives, and as your [being] (nephesh)<sup>115</sup> lives, because **[YHWH] has restrained you from bloodguilt** and **from saving with your own hand**, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord.  
**Please forgive the trespass of your servant.**  
**For [YHWH] will certainly make my lord a sure house,**  
 because my lord is fighting the battles of [YHWH],  
 and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live.

(1 Samuel 25:3, 18-20, 23-28 ESV)

**David accepted Abigail's intervention** and recognized that it as **God who had sent her to intervene to prevent David from making a terrible mistake**. Soon after this Nabal died of a heart attack and Abigail was only too willing to come and be a wife of David:

And **David said to Abigail,**

**"Blessed be [YHWH], the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me!**  
**Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you,**  
**who have kept me this day from bloodguilt**  
**and from working salvation with my own hand!**  
 For as surely as [YHWH], the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from hurting you,  
**unless you had hurried and come to meet me,**  
 truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male."

Then David received from her hand what she had brought him.

And he said to her,

"Go up in peace to your house.  
 See, **I have obeyed your voice**, and I have granted your petition."

And Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king.

And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk.

So she told him nothing at all until the morning light.

In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.

And **about ten days later [YHWH] struck Nabal, and he died.**

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said,

**"Blessed be [YHWH] who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of Nabal,**  
**and has kept back his servant from wrongdoing.**  
 [YHWH] has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head."

**Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife.**

When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her,

"David has sent us to you to take you to him as his wife."

And she rose and bowed with her face to the ground and said,

"Behold, **your handmaid is a servant** to wash the feet of the servants of my lord."

And Abigail hurried and rose and mounted a donkey, and her five young women attended her.

**She followed the messengers of David and became his wife.**

(1 Samuel 25:32-42 ESV)

#### **Analysis of David's encounter with Nabal / Abigail:**

- David was justified in requesting recompense from Nabal, **"your shepherds have been with us", "they missed nothing"**
- Nabal was arrogant and ungrateful, **"who is David"**
- David was impetuous, **"every man strap on his sword"**
- David was determined to do it his way, **"if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him"**
- Abigail was a woman with redeeming qualities, **"the woman was discerning and beautiful"**
- Abigail was able to make quick decisions, **"Abigail made haste"**
- Abigail was astute, **"she did not tell her husband Nabal"**
- Abigail was humble, **"on me alone, my lord, be the guilt"**, **"please forgive the trespass of your servant"**, **"your handmaid is a servant"**

- Abigail recognized her mission was from God, **“YHWH has restrained you from bloodguilt”**
- Abigail got right to the heart of David’s character flaw, **“from saving with your own hand”**
- Abigail was aware of God’s promises to David, **“for YHWH will certainly make my lord a sure house”**
- David immediately recognized the virtues of Abigail, **“David said to Abigail”, “blessed be your discretion”, “blessed be you”, “unless you had hurried and come to meet me”**
- David recognized God’s hand in working through Abigail, **“blessed be YHWH”, “who sent you this day to meet me”**
- David acknowledged that his impetuosity and his proclivity to do it his way very nearly got him into a great sin, **“kept me this day from bloodguilt”, “working salvation with my own hand”**
- David acknowledged his debt to Abigail, **“I have obeyed your voice”**
- Clearly God was working according to his Plan, **“about ten days later [YHWH] struck Nabal, and he died”, “David sent and spoke to Abigail”, “she followed the messengers of David and became his wife”**

**Fast forward to the day when David observed Bathsheba bathing on her rooftop.** David knew she was the wife of another man. If it was God’s will that David have her, **David should have remembered Abigail.** How David got to his current state-of-mind, ignoring his past experience and the plain teaching of God, we do NOT know. **As king he had the power to simply take Bathsheba. She came.**

Their actions put both David and Bathsheba under a sentence of capital punishment:

You shall not commit adultery.

If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor,

**both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.**

(Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 20:10 ESV)

In addition, David’s action was a most flagrant violation of one of God’s most important criteria of “kingship”: **David used his position as king for his own advantage.** It is unlikely that Bathsheba would have simply gone to any other man. But, **who was Bathsheba?** She was the daughter of Eliam,<sup>116</sup> the son of Ahithophel. Eliam was a trusted soldier of David’s, as was Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband.<sup>117</sup> Ahithophel was a counsellor of David.<sup>118</sup> Bathsheba and her family were clearly a known quantity to David, and he was known to them. In David’s troubled state-of-mind, he failed to see the hand of God working at that point in his life.

God did NOT require the death penalty on either David or Bathsheba. After the death of Uriah, she became David’s wife. The bastard child died, much to David’s grief,<sup>119</sup> and David was meted out a punishment that would last the rest of his life:

**Why have you despised the word of [YHWH],** to do what is evil in his sight?

**You have struck down Uriah the Hittite** with the sword  
and **have taken his wife** to be your [women] (‘ishshah)<sup>120</sup>  
and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.

Now therefore **the sword shall never depart from your house,**  
because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your [woman] (‘ishshah).’

Thus says [YHWH],

‘Behold, **I will raise up evil against you out of your own house.**

And I will take your [women] (‘ishshah) before your eyes and give them to your neighbor,  
and he shall lie with your [women] (‘ishshah) in the sight of this sun.

For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.’

(2 Samuel 12:9-12 ESV)

**The curse included the Amnon / Tamar incident and Absalom’s rebellion.** However it is clear that in spite of David’s presumptive handling of the situation, **God intended Bathsheba to be the mother of the**

<sup>116</sup> See 2 Samuel 11:3

<sup>117</sup> See 2 Samuel 23:24a, 34b, 39

<sup>118</sup> See 2 Samuel 15:12

<sup>119</sup> See 2 Samuel 12:15b-23

<sup>120</sup> See the discussion of “‘ishshah” in sections **3.5 David** and **5.5.3 Jesus’ Teaching on Marriage** in the paper “**The Human Condition**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

**Davidic Dynasty.** She went on to have four sons for David.<sup>121</sup> The youngest of which, Solomon, became king after David, and progenitor of the dynasty. Solomon's older brother, Nathan, is included in Luke's genealogy of Jesus Christ.<sup>122</sup>

## David's Repentance

Repentance is the beginning of the relationship between any person and God. This is vital for any person called "**To Be a King**", as David is the prototype. As human beings, we are entitled to only death:

... for **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God** ...

For **when you were slaves of sin**, you were free in regard to righteousness.

But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed?

For **the end of those things is death**.

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

For **the wages of sin is death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 3:23, 6:20-23 ESV)

The basis of the message of John the Baptist was repentance and Jesus followed up with the same message:

**John appeared**, baptizing in the wilderness

and **proclaiming a baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins.

**Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.**

(Mark 1:4, Matthew 3:8 ESV)

Now after John was arrested, **Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming** the gospel of God, and saying,

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent** and **believe in the gospel**."

(Mark 1:14-15 ESV)

The process of repentance begins with God's calling. **God is very careful who he calls** – only when a person is ready does God give any person the opportunity to repent:

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner,

but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,

**who saved us and called us to a holy calling,**

not because of our works but **because of his own purpose and grace,**

which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began ...

For **the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.**

(2 Timothy 1:8-9, Romans 11:29 ESV)

David was well prepared by God. When he was anointed, he received the Holy Spirit and never looked back. **When David sinned, he readily acknowledged it and repented.** This characteristic was key to his being "**a man after God's own heart**". After a most egregious sin, David penned the classic expression of repentance to which True Worshipers have ever since looked for inspiration:

Have mercy on me, O God, **according to your [hesed]**,<sup>123</sup>

according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

For **I know my transgressions**, and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,

so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Behold, **you delight in truth in the inward being,**

and you teach me **wisdom in the secret heart.**

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

**Create in me a clean heart**, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence, and **take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

(Psalm 51:1-4, 6-7, 9-12 ESV)

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<sup>121</sup> See 1 Chronicles 3:5

<sup>122</sup> See Luke 3:31b

<sup>123</sup> See footnote **80**, and the discussion around it.

The 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm was written after the Bathsheba / Uriah incident. The intervention of the **Prophet Nathan** was critical to bring David out of his complacency. **Nathan appealed to David's sensibilities as "The King", the highest judge of the nation:**

And **[YHWH] sent Nathan to David.**

He came to him and said to him,

**"There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor.**

The rich man had very many flocks and herds,

but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought.

And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children.

It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms,

and it was like a daughter to him.

Now there came a traveler to **the rich man**,

and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd

to prepare for the guest who had come to him,

but he **took the poor man's lamb** and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

Then **David's anger was greatly kindled** against the man, and he said to Nathan,

"As [YHWH] lives, **the man who has done this deserves to die**,

and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

**Nathan said to David, "You are the man! ..."**

**David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against [YHWH]."**

And Nathan said to David, "[YHWH] also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

(2 Samuel 12:1-7a, 13 ESV)

**God accepted David's repentance, but the curse remained.** David endured much hardship as he weathered the storms brought on by the curse. David learned that even though he was forgiven of the sin, there were physical consequences to pay for his actions. Later, towards the end of his life, David insisted that Joab take a census of the military strength of Israel.<sup>124</sup> There is no explicit statement as to why David wanted the census, but clearly his motivation was NOT acceptable to God:

But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people.

And **David said to [YHWH],**

**"I have sinned greatly** in what I have done.

But now, [YHWH], **please take away the iniquity of your servant**, for I have done very foolishly."

(2 Samuel 24:10 ESV)

But **God was displeased** with this thing, and he struck Israel.

And David said to God,

"I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing.

But now, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

(1 Chronicles 21:7-8 ESV)

As punishment, God gave David three choices: three years famine, three months of defeat by enemies, or three days of pestilence from God.<sup>125</sup> David chose wisely:

Then David said to Gad,

"I am in great distress.

**Let us fall into the hand of [YHWH], for his mercy is great;**

but let me not fall into the hand of man."

(2 Samuel 24:14 ESV // 1 Chronicles 21:13)

As the plague was dissipating, David expressed his repentance:

Then David spoke to [YHWH] when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said,

"Behold, **I have sinned**, and **I have done wickedly**.

But **these sheep, what have they done?**

Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house."

(2 Samuel 24:17 ESV)

Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

And David said to God,

**"Was it not I who gave command** to number the people?

**It is I who have sinned** and **done great evil**.

But these sheep, what have they done?

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<sup>124</sup> See 2 Samuel 24:1-9, 1 Chronicles 21:1-6

<sup>125</sup> See 2 Samuel 24:11-13, 1 Chronicles 21:9-12

Please let your hand, [YHWH] my God, be against me and against my father's house.  
But **do not let the plague be on your people.**"

(1 Chronicles 21:16b-17 ESV)

This is the last life lesson recorded for David. **Perhaps it was the hardest for him to learn.** Joab had resisted David's decision to do the census, but as King, David was able to force his desires. A "king" must always remember that humility is always in order. Sometimes it is best to stand down and take the advice of other people.

**The King of kings was NOT averse to a demonstration of humility:**

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then **Jesus sent two disciples**, saying to them,

"Go into the village in front of you,  
and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her.  
Untie them and bring them to me.  
If anyone says anything to you, you shall say,  
'The Lord needs them,'  
and he will send them at once."

This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

"Say to the daughter of Zion,  
'Behold, **your king is coming to you, humble,**  
and mounted on a donkey, on a colt,  
the foal of a beast of burden.'" (citing Zechariah 9:9)

(Matthew 21:1-5 ESV)

**The outcome of repentance has to be change;** as John the Baptist had said, "**bear fruit in keeping with repentance**".<sup>126</sup> Change requires learning, coming to a deeper understanding of the Way of God, "**grow in grace and knowledge**".<sup>127</sup> The role of "king", as a shepherd of the people, includes teaching the people the Way of God. **The Preacher specifies the relationship between teaching and shepherding,** and **Asaph affirms that David did this:**

Besides being wise, **the Preacher also taught the people knowledge,**  
weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care.  
The Preacher sought to find **words of delight**, and uprightly he wrote **words of truth.**  
**The words of the wise are like goads,** and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings;  
**they are given by one Shepherd.**  
(Ecclesiastes 12:9-11 ESV)

**He chose David** his servant and took him **from the sheepfolds,** from following the nursing ewes,  
he brought him **to shepherd Jacob his people,** Israel his inheritance.  
**With upright heart he shepherded them** and guided them with his skillful hand.  
(Psalm 78:70-72 ESV)

The Chronicler reports several speeches of David, just prior to his death, in which David's teaching is exemplified:

Therefore **David blessed [YHWH] in the presence of all the assembly (qahal).**

And David said:

Blessed are you, [YHWH], the God of Israel our father, forever and ever.  
Yours, [YHWH], is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty,  
for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours.  
**Yours is the kingdom,** [YHWH], and you are exalted as head above all.  
Both riches and honor come from you, and **you rule over all.**  
In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.  
And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.  
**But who am I, and what is my people,** that we should be able thus to offer willingly?  
For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.  
For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were.  
Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding.  
[YHWH] our God, all this abundance that we have provided **for building you a house**  
for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own.

<sup>126</sup> See Matthew 3:8

<sup>127</sup> See 2 Peter 3:18

**I know, my God, that you test the heart** and have pleasure in uprightness.  
**In the uprightness of my heart** I have freely offered all these things,  
and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you.  
[YHWH], the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers,  
**keep forever** such purposes and thoughts in **the hearts of your people**,  
and **direct their hearts toward you**.

**Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart** that **he may keep your commandments,**  
**your testimonies, and your statutes, performing all,**  
and that he may build the palace<sup>128</sup> for which I have made provision.

(1 Chronicles 29:10-19 ESV see also 22:17-19, 28:1-8, 29:1-5)

The noun קָהָל - qahal, can mean any kind of an “assembly”, but it commonly implies a “religious” assembly. For David, there would have been no distinction between a “religious” assembly and assembly convened for civic purposes. David took his “teaching” responsibilities seriously, which is probably what prompted him to compose his Psalms. **David frequently alludes his desire to teach in his Psalms**, with reference to the qahal, for example:

**I will tell of your name to my brothers;**

**in the midst of the congregation (qahal)** I will praise you:

You who fear [YHWH], praise him!

All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted,

and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him.

**From you comes my praise in the great congregation (qahal);**

my vows I will perform before those who fear him.

The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise [YHWH]!

**May your hearts live forever!**

(Psalm 22:22-26 ESV)

**I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation (qahal);**

behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, [YHWH].

I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart;

**I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;**

**I have not concealed your [hesed]<sup>129</sup> and your faithfulness from the great congregation (qahal).**

(Psalm 40:9-10 ESV)

David proved himself a worthwhile shepherd of Israel. He is the prototypical human king. David’s heart was “right” before God, so **God used David to progenitor the dynasty** that would rule in Israel for some 400 years. **The dynasty continues in perpetuity through the King of kings.**

## The Dynasty of David

There is no information as to when David began to develop his desire to build a Temple to God. His movement of the Ark into Jerusalem is clearly related to the Temple. The Tabernacle was in full function at Gibeon, just a few miles from Jerusalem.<sup>130</sup> **Why did NOT David restore the Ark to the Tabernacle?**

It is nowhere explicitly stated, but clearly God wanted the Ark in the Temple.<sup>131</sup> The Tabernacle was at the end of its useful life. Soon after the Ark was established in David’s tent, David approached the

### **Prophet Nathan:**

Now when the king lived in his house and [YHWH] had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies,  
**the king said to Nathan the prophet,**

“See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but **the ark of God dwells in a tent.**”

And Nathan said to the king, “Go, **do all that is in your heart**, for [YHWH] is with you.”

(2 Samuel 7:1-3 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:1-2)

<sup>128</sup> The Hebrew word בִּירָה - birah, means literally a “citadel” or “fortress”; clearly this applies to the Temple, not Solomon’s palace.

<sup>129</sup> See footnote 80, and the discussion around it.

<sup>130</sup> See 1 Chronicles 16:39-42, 21:29

<sup>131</sup> See 1 Kings 8:1-6

No doubt David spent that night in elation, making plans for the Temple. The next day, however, reality hammered home; but, at the same time, **David was given far reaching promises**. These promises were for much more than the construction of a Temple:

- **David would NOT be allowed to build the Temple:**

But that same night the word of [YHWH] came to Nathan,  
“Go and tell my servant David,

‘Thus says [YHWH]: **Would you build me a house to dwell in?**

I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”” ...”

(2 Samuel 7:4-7 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:3-6)

- **YHWH acknowledges his commitment to David:**

Now, therefore, thus you shall **say to my servant David**,

‘Thus says [YHWH] of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be **prince over my people Israel**.

And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you.

And **I will make for you a great name**, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ...’

(2 Samuel 7:8-9 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:7-8)

- **YHWH recounts the outworking of his Plan:**

And **I will appoint a place for my people Israel** and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more.<sup>132</sup>

And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel.

And I will give you rest from all your enemies.

(2 Samuel 7:10-11a ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:9-10a)

- **David is promised a dynasty:**

Moreover, [YHWH] declares to you that **[YHWH] will make you a house**.

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers,

**I will raise up your offspring** after you, who shall come from your body, and **I will establish his kingdom**.

(2 Samuel 7:11b-12 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:10b-11)

- **David’s son will build the Temple:**

**He shall build a house for my name** ...

(2 Samuel 7:13a ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:12a)

- As required, **David’s dynasty will be punished**, but NOT rejected:

I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.

**When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men,**

with the stripes of the sons of men,

but **my [hesed]**<sup>133</sup> **will not depart from him**, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.

(2 Samuel 7:14-15 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:13)

- **The dynasty will continue forever:**

... and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever**.

And **your house** and **your kingdom** shall be made **sure forever before me**.

**Your throne shall be established forever**.

(2 Samuel 7:13b, 16 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:12b, 14)

The promise of a “dynasty” was no doubt overwhelming to David, but **the promise of “forever” was certainly something beyond his comprehension**. David was certainly familiar with the promise of universal blessing to Abraham,<sup>134</sup> but **David could not possibly have understood the fantastic**

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<sup>132</sup> This of course looks to the New Israel in the World Tomorrow.

<sup>133</sup> See footnote 80, and the discussion around it.

<sup>134</sup> See 1 Chronicles 29:18

**implications of the particularization of that promise to his own Descendant.** David's wonder and his gratitude are expressed in his prayer of thanks to God:

- David goes to God in humility, gratitude, and praise:  
Then King David went in and sat before [YHWH] and said,  
    **"Who am I, O Lord [YHWH], and what is my house,** that you have brought me thus far?  
And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord [YHWH].  
    **You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come,**  
and this is instruction for mankind,<sup>135</sup> O Lord [YHWH]!  
And **what more can David say** to you?  
For you know your servant, O Lord [YHWH]! ..."  
(2 Samuel 7:18-20 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:16-18)
- David acknowledges that God works according to his Plan:  
    **Because of your promise,**<sup>136</sup> and **according to your own heart,**  
you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it.  
Therefore you are great, O Lord [YHWH].  
For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you,  
according to all that we have heard with our ears.  
(2 Samuel 7:21-22 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:19-20)
- David acknowledges God's grace in the establishment of Israel:  
And who is like your people Israel,  
    **the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people,**  
making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things  
by driving out before your people,  
whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods?  
And you established for yourself your people **Israel to be your people forever.**<sup>137</sup>  
And you, **[YHWH], became their God.**  
(2 Samuel 7:23-24 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:21-22)
- Almost in disbelief, **David requests confirmation of the promise to him of "forever":**  
And now, [YHWH] God, **confirm forever the word that you have spoken**  
concerning your servant and concerning his house, and **do as you have spoken.**  
And your name will be magnified forever, saying,  
    '[YHWH] of hosts is God over Israel,'  
and the house of your servant David will be established before you.  
For you, [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying,  
    **'I will build you a house.'**  
**Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you.**  
(2 Samuel 7:25-27 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:23-25)
- **David** extolls God for the greatness of his promise and **prays for fulfillment:**  
And now, O Lord [YHWH], **you are God,** and **your words are true,**  
and you have promised this good thing to your servant.  
Now therefore **may it please you** to bless **the house of your servant,**  
so that it **may continue forever before you.**  
For you, O Lord [YHWH], have spoken,  
and **with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever.**  
(2 Samuel 7:28-29 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:26-27)

**David no doubt could NOT understand how his dynasty would continue forever.** Almost certainly he assumed that it meant that the physical kingdom of Israel would continue forever. The first parts of the

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<sup>135</sup> Instead of the phrase "this is instruction for mankind", 1 Chronicles 17:17 has "have shown me future generations"; Keil concludes that the Chronicler is explaining the phrase from 2 Samuel rather than repeating it; see **KD3** page 522. This phrase is the one significant difference between the text of Samuel and the text of First Chronicles. The Hebrew of Samuel is "w'zo'th torah ha'adam", literally "and this instruction of the mankind". The Hebrew of First Chronicles is "ur'ithani k'thor ha'adam hamma'alalah", literally "and you have shown me with sequence of the mankind the ascending procession". The ESV translates this as "and have shown me future generations" with a footnote of "and you look upon me as a man of high rank". RSV is the same as the ESV. NKJV and NRSV are the same as the ESV footnote. Clearly the phrase in Chronicles is difficult. BDB, page 1064, states that "k'thor" is corrupt. Keil (**KD3** page 522) suggests "thor" is actually a contraction of "torah". The Chronicler's use of the verb "ur'ithani", "you have shown me", is not inconsistent with the tenor of David's prayer. This leaves obscurity only in "ma'alalah". BDB, page 751, gives a general sense of "higher and higher" for "ma'alalah". Thus, the sense of the phrase in Chronicles would be "you have shown me with instruction of the mankind the increasing" – "you have shown me the increasing instruction of mankind".

<sup>136</sup> This would seem to be an allusion to the promise to Abraham.

<sup>137</sup> This is an allusion to the Covenant of Performance, see Exodus 34:10-27 and the discussion in section **9.3 The Covenant of Performance** in the paper **"True Worship of the True God"** located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

promise were physically fulfilled: Solomon was born; he became king; he built the temple; and, Solomon established the dynasty which ruled the Southern Kingdom for some 400 years. Only looking back from the perspective of 3000 years of intervening history, is the “forever” part discernable. **The prophecies of the Messianic nature of the promise of perpetuity** began with Ethan the Ezrahite:<sup>138</sup>

You have said,

“I have made a covenant with my chosen one; **I have sworn to David my servant:**

**‘I will establish your offspring (zera`) forever,**

**and build your throne for all generations.’**”

Of old you spoke in a vision to **your godly one**, and said:

“I have granted help to one who is mighty; I have exalted **one chosen from the people**.

I have found **David**, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him,

so that my hand shall be established with him; my arm also shall strengthen him.

My faithfulness and my [hesed]<sup>139</sup> shall be with him,

and **in my name shall his horn be exalted**.

He shall cry to me,

**‘You are my Father**, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.’

And **I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth**.

My [hesed] I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him.

**I will establish his offspring (zera`) forever** and **his throne as the days of the heavens**.

I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips.

Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David.

**His offspring (zera`) shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. ...**”

(Psalm 89:3-4, 19-21, 24, 26-29, 34-36 ESV)

The Psalmist alludes back to the **Protoevangelium**<sup>140</sup> “**I will establish your zera`<sup>141</sup> forever**”:

I will put enmity between you and **the woman**,

and between your offspring (zera`) and **her offspring (zera`)**;

(Genesis 3:15a ESV)

The Psalmist alludes to **Samuel’s role**, “**your godly one**”, in establishing “**David**”, “**one chosen from the people**”. The Davidic Dynasty will become Messianic, “**in my name shall his horn be exalted**”. The role of the Messiah to reveal the Father, “**you are my Father**”, is prophesized:

All things have been handed over to me by my Father,

and **no one knows** who the Son is except the Father,

or **who the Father is except the Son** and **anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him**.

(Luke 10:22 ESV see also Matthew 11:27)

Jesus Christ is referred to, “**I will make him the firstborn**”, “**the highest of the kings of the earth**”:

He is the image of the invisible God, **the firstborn of all creation**.

And he is the head of the body, the church.

He is the beginning, **the firstborn from the dead**, that in everything he might be preeminent.

(Colossians 1:15, 18 ESV)

... **Jesus Christ** the faithful witness, **the firstborn of the dead**, and the **ruler of kings on earth**.

(Revelation 1:5 ESV)

Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the “**offspring**”, will sit on his throne, the throne of David, forever:

He will be great and will be called **the Son of the Most High**.

And **the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David**,

and **he will reign over the house of Jacob forever**, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

(Luke 1:32-33 ESV)

When **the Son of Man** comes in his glory, and all the angels with him,

then he **will sit on his glorious throne**.

(Matthew 25:31 ESV)

<sup>138</sup> This “Ethan” is probably the one mentioned in 1 Chronicles 6:42,44, 15:17,19, a contemporary of David. The “Ethan ben Zerah” of 2 Chronicles 2:6,8, assuming continuous genealogy, must be distinct. The “Ethan the Ezrahite” of 1 Kings 4:31 could be either of the other two.

<sup>139</sup> See footnote 80, and the discussion around it.

<sup>140</sup> See the discussion at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seed\\_of\\_the\\_woman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seed_of_the_woman)

<sup>141</sup> The noun זֶרַע -zera’ means any kind of “seed”; applied to humans it implies “descendant”, “offspring”; see Holladay pages 92-93.

But of the Son he says,

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,

the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. (citing Psalm 45:6)

(Hebrews 1:8 ESV)

**The promise of perpetuity can of course only be fulfilled by One who Eternal.** No single human being or even a line of human beings can be regarded as continuing in perpetuity. The **Prophet Isaiah** clearly prophesizes One who will continue the dynasty in perpetuity, and the **Synoptist Luke** is clear and specific that Jesus of Nazareth is the prophesized One who will carry the dynasty in perpetuity:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;

and **the government shall be upon his shoulder,**

and his name shall be called

- Wonderful Counselor,
- Mighty God,
- Everlasting Father,
- Prince of Peace.

**Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,**

**on the throne of David and over his kingdom,**

to establish it and to uphold it with [justness] (mish\*pat)<sup>142</sup> and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of [YHWH] of hosts will do this.

(Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV see also 16:5)

And the angel said to her,

"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and **you shall call his name Jesus.**

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

And **the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,**

and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and **of his kingdom there will be no end."**

(Luke 1:30-33 ESV)

The physical dynasty did come to an end. As God had said that he would punish as required:

**When he commits iniquity,**

**I will discipline him with the rod of men,**

**with the stripes of the sons of men ...**

(2 Samuel 7:14b ESV)

The **Prophet Ezekiel** laments the end of the physical dynasty. Ezekiel's lament focusses on the last four kings of the line of David:

And you, take up **a lamentation for the princes of Israel,** and say:

**What was your mother?** A lioness!

Among lions she crouched; in the midst of young lions she reared her cubs.

And she brought up **one of her cubs; {Jehoahaz}**

he became a young lion, and he learned to catch prey; he devoured men.

The nations heard about him; he was caught in their pit,

and **they brought him with hooks to the land of Egypt.**<sup>143</sup>

When she saw that she waited in vain, that her hope was lost,

she took **another of her cubs** and made him a young lion. **{Jehoiakim}**<sup>144</sup>

He prowled among the lions; he became a young lion, and he learned to catch prey; he devoured men, and seized their widows.

He laid waste their cities, and the land was appalled

and all who were in it at the sound of his roaring.

Then **the nations set against him** from provinces on every side;<sup>145</sup>

they spread their net over him; he was taken in their pit.<sup>146</sup>

With hooks they put him in a cage and **brought him to the king of Babylon; {Jehoiachin}**<sup>147</sup>

they brought him into custody,

that his voice should no more be heard on the mountains of Israel.

<sup>142</sup> See footnote 65

<sup>143</sup> See 2 Kings 23:31-34

<sup>144</sup> See 2 Kings 23:34-36

<sup>145</sup> See 2 Kings 24:1-2

<sup>146</sup> See Jeremiah 36:30

<sup>147</sup> See 2 Kings 24:8-12

**Your mother was like a vine in a vineyard planted by the water,**

fruitful and full of branches by reason of abundant water.

Its **strong stems** became rulers' scepters;

it towered aloft among the thick boughs;

it was seen in its height with the mass of its branches.

But **the vine was plucked up in fury, cast down to the ground;**

the east wind dried up its fruit; they were stripped off and withered.

**As for its strong stem, fire consumed it.**

Now it is **planted in the wilderness**, in a dry and thirsty land. {Jehoiachin}

And fire has gone out from the stem of its shoots, has consumed its fruit,

so that **there remains in it no strong stem, no scepter for ruling.** {Zedekiah}

This is a lamentation and has become a lamentation.

(Ezekiel 19:1-14 ESV)

**The "mother" is the Davidic Dynasty.** The first half of the poem deals with the last three kings: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin. The second half of the poem goes back to the inception of the dynasty and compares its origins, in **David**, to **a fruitful vine**. The **"strong stems"** are the few **"good kings"** of the dynasty. Now the dynasty is over, **"cast down to the ground"**, **"fire consumed it"**. The last exponent of the dynasty, **Jehoiachin**, is taken captive to Babylon, **"plucked up in fury"**, **"planted in the wilderness"**. Ezekiel has no use for **Zedekiah**, **"there remains in it no strong stem"**, **"no scepter for ruling"**, whom he does NOT consider a legitimate king.

The final castigation by the **Prophet Jeremiah** of the Davidic Dynasty comprises Jeremiah chapter 21 verses 11-14 and all of chapter 22. Jeremiah specifically addresses the oracle to the **Dynasty of David**, calling its current king, **Jehoiakim** to repentance:

And to the **house of the king** of Judah say,

'Hear the word of [YHWH], **O house of David!**

Thus says [YHWH]:

"Execute justice in the morning,

and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed,

lest my wrath go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it,

**because of your evil deeds."**

Thus says [YHWH]:

"Go down to **the house of the king** of Judah and speak there this word, and say,

'Hear the word of [YHWH], **O king of Judah**, who sits **on the throne of David**,

you, and your servants, and your people who enter these gates.

Thus says [YHWH]:

Do [justness] (mish'pat)<sup>148</sup> and righteousness,

and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed.

And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien,

the fatherless, and the widow,

nor shed innocent blood in this place.

For **if you will indeed obey this word**,

then there shall enter the gates of this house kings

who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses,

they and their servants and their people. ..."

(Jeremiah 21:11-12, 22:1-4 ESV)

This oracle fits the situation around 600BC. **Josiah** is dead.<sup>149</sup> **Jehoahaz** has been taken to Egypt and will not return.<sup>150</sup> **Jehoiakim** is on the throne,<sup>151</sup> and **Jehoiachin** is apparently crown prince.<sup>152</sup>

Weep not for **him who is dead**, nor grieve for him, {**Josiah**}

but weep bitterly for **him who goes away**, {**Jehoahaz**}

for he shall return no more to see his native land.

(Jeremiah 22:10 ESV)

<sup>148</sup> See footnote 65

<sup>149</sup> See 2 Kings 23:29

<sup>150</sup> See 2 Kings 23:31-34

<sup>151</sup> See 2 Kings 23:34,36

<sup>152</sup> See 2 Kings 24:6,8,12

**Do you think you are a king** because you compete in cedar? {**Jehoiakim**}  
 Did not **your father** eat and drink and **do justice and righteousness**? {**Josiah**}  
 Then it was well with him.  
 He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well.  
 Is not this to know me? declares [YHWH].  
 But you have eyes and heart only for your dishonest gain,  
 for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence.  
 Therefore thus says [YHWH] **concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah**, king of Judah:  
 “They shall not lament for him, saying,  
     ‘Ah, my brother!’ or ‘Ah, sister!’  
 They shall not lament for him, saying,  
     ‘Ah, lord!’ or ‘Ah, his majesty!’ ...”  
 (Jeremiah 22:15-18 ESV)

As I live, declares [YHWH], though **Coniah (Jehoiachin) the son of Jehoiakim**, king of Judah,  
 were **the signet ring** on my right hand,  
 yet I would tear you off and give you into the hand of those who seek your life,  
 into the hand of those of whom you are afraid,  
 even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans.  
**I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country,**  
**where you were not born, and there you shall die.**  
 (Jeremiah 22:24-26 ESV)

**This is the end of the Dynasty of David** from a physical perspective. Immediately after this oracle, Jeremiah reports **a famous Messianic prophecy** demonstrating how the dynasty will continue in perpetuity. The prophecy was originally given by Isaiah:<sup>153</sup>

Behold, the days are coming, declares [YHWH],  
 when **I will raise up for David a righteous Branch**,  
 and **he shall reign as king** and deal wisely,  
 and shall execute [justness] (mish\*pat)<sup>154</sup> and righteousness in the land.  
 (Jeremiah 23:5 ESV // 33:15)

There shall come forth **a shoot from the stump of Jesse**,  
 and **a branch from his roots shall bear fruit**.  
 And the Spirit of [YHWH] shall rest upon him,  
 the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
 the Spirit of counsel and might,  
 the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of [YHWH].

And his delight shall be in the fear of [YHWH].  
 He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,  
 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
 and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
 and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.  
 (Isaiah 11:1-5 ESV see also Isaiah 4:2-6)

As prophesized by Jeremiah, **no descendant of Jehoiachin would ever be physical king**, but the physical line of David did continue from Jehoiachin<sup>155</sup> until the First Advent as documented by the

#### **Synoptists Matthew and Luke:**

Thus says [YHWH]:  
 “Write this man down as childless,  
 a man who shall not succeed in his days,  
 for **none of his offspring** shall succeed  
 in sitting **on the throne of David** and ruling again in Judah.”  
 (Jeremiah 22:30 ESV)

The book of the genealogy of **Jesus Christ**, the **son of David**, the son of Abraham.  
 And **David** was the father of **Solomon** by the wife of Uriah,  
 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam ...  
 and **Josiah** the father of Jechoniah (**Jehoiachin**)

<sup>153</sup> See also the discussion of these prophecies in [Excursus 3 The Branch](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca) in the paper “**The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>154</sup> See footnote 65

<sup>155</sup> See Jeremiah 33:17-18

and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.  
And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel,  
and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel ...  
and **Jacob the father of Joseph** the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.  
(Matthew 1:1, 6b–7a, 11-12, 16 ESV)

Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age,  
**being the son** (as was supposed) **of Joseph**, the son of Heli ...  
the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri ...  
the son of Nathan, the son of David ...  
(Luke 3:23, 27b, 31b ESV)

At the Ascension Jesus returned to eternity where he now presides, as High Priest, at the right hand of the throne of God the Father:

Now the point in what we are saying is this:  
we have such **a high priest**,  
one who is **seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven** ...  
... looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,  
who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,  
and **is seated at the right hand of the throne of God**.  
(Hebrews 8:1, 12:2 ESV)

**Jesus own throne is the throne of David**, which he will bring back with him to the earth and sit on it as King of kings ruling the nations:

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.  
And **the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David** ...  
(Luke 1:32 ESV)

But **of the Son** he says,  
“**Your throne**, O God, **is forever and ever**,  
the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. ...” (citing Psalm 45:6)  
(Hebrews 1:8 ESV)

**When the Son of Man comes in his glory**, and all the angels with him,  
**then he will sit on his glorious throne**.  
(Matthew 25:31 ESV see also 19:28, Revelation 3:21)

During Jesus’ last public appearance in the Temple, two or three days before the crucifixion, Jesus used the fact of his Davidic descent demonstrate to the Pharisees how defective was their understanding:

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying,

“**What do you think about the Christ?**

**Whose son is he?**”

They said to him, “**The son of David**.”

He said to them,

“How is it then that David, in the Spirit, **calls him Lord**, saying,

‘The Lord said to my Lord,

“**Sit at my right hand**, until I put your enemies under your feet’?

(citing Psalm 110:1 LXX)

**If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?**”

And no one was able to answer him a word,  
nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.  
(Matthew 22:41-46 ESV // Mark 12:35-37, Luke 20:41-44)

The Pharisees refused to accept the facts that the Messiah was YHWH, and through the miracle of the incarnation, YHWH emptied himself of his divine status in eternity and entered the physical realm as the man, Jesus of Nazareth.

Later, Jesus would unequivocally answer his question in the Book of Revelation:

And one of the elders said to me,

“Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, **the Root of David, has conquered**,  
so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

**I, Jesus**, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches.

**I am the root and the descendant of David**, the bright morning star.

(Revelation 5:5, 22:16 ESV)

**The Davidic Dynasty is central to the Plan of God.** The promises to David were far reaching and remain effectual. The physical dynasty lasted some 400 years, but **the true import of the promises was The Messiah.** The First Advent prepared the way for The Messiah to assume his position as King of kings. Jesus Christ remains poised in Eternity for **the Second Advent**; at which time, he will return to earth with **the Throne of David** and **establish his Kingdom in perpetuity.**

## Assessment of King David

**David is one of the few people of whom the Bible is specific that the decision has been made.**

David will be granted the gift of eternal life. David will participate in the First Resurrection:

Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek [YHWH] their God,  
and **David their king,**  
and they shall come in fear to [YHWH] and to his goodness in the latter days.  
(Hosea 3:5 ESV)

But they shall serve [YHWH] their God and **David their king, whom I will raise up for them.**  
(Jeremiah 30:9 ESV)

And I will set up over them **one shepherd, my servant David,**  
and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.

And I, [YHWH], will be their God,  
and my servant **David shall be prince** among them.  
I am [YHWH]; I have spoken.  
(Ezekiel 34:23-24 ESV)

My servant **David shall be king over them,** and they shall all have one shepherd.  
They shall walk in my [mish<sup>e</sup>patim]<sup>156</sup> and be careful to obey my statutes.  
They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived.  
They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever,  
and **David my servant shall be their prince forever.**  
(Ezekiel 37:24-25 ESV)

In his life, **David understood that God is concerned with a person's innermost being,** not any physical attribute or human accomplishment. God looks to the heart:

But [YHWH] said to Samuel,  
"Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him.  
For **[YHWH] sees not as man sees:** man looks on the outward appearance,  
but **[YHWH] looks on the heart.**"  
(1 Samuel 16:7 ESV)

**Who has put wisdom in the inward parts (tuḥoth)**  
or given understanding to the mind?  
(Job 38:36 ESV)

Behold, **you delight in truth in the inward being (tuḥoth),**  
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.  
(Psalm 51:6 ESV)

The noun, תְּהוֹת - tuḥoth, occurs in only these two passages. It is reflected in the New Testament in the expression "**inner being**", which is translated from ἔσω ἄνθρωπον – esō anthrōpon:

For I delight in the [nomos]<sup>157</sup> of God, **in my inner being (esō anthrōpon)** ...  
(Romans 7:22 ESV)

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father ...  
that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power  
**through his Spirit in your inner being (esō anthrōpon),**  
**so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,  
may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,  
and to know **the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,**  
that **you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**  
(Ephesians 3:14, 16-19 ESV)

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<sup>156</sup> See footnote 65

<sup>157</sup> See footnote 29

Similar phrases are used in the following passages:

So we do not lose heart.

Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.  
(2 Corinthians 4:16 ESV)

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices  
and have put on the new self,  
which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.  
(Colossians 3:9-10 ESV)

**David understood the nature of sin.** As human beings, we are given to sin. Because David was a “man after God’s own heart” he knew that sin was inevitable, but that **repentance is necessary as the basis of the relationship with God:**

[YHWH], rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath!  
For your arrows have sunk into me, and your hand has come down on me.  
There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation;  
**there is no health in my bones because of my sin.**

For **my iniquities have gone over my head**; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.  
**I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin.**  
(Psalm 38:1-4, 18 ESV)

**Who can discern his errors?**

Declare me innocent from **hidden faults.**

Keep back your servant also from **presumptuous sins**; let them not have dominion over me!  
Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of **great transgression.**  
(Psalm 19:12-13 ESV)

**Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**

Blessed is the man against whom **[YHWH] counts no iniquity**, and in whose spirit there is **no deceit.**

**I acknowledged my sin** to you, and I did **not cover my iniquity**;

I said, “I will **confess my transgressions** to [YHWH],”

and **you forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

(Psalm 32:1-2, 5 ESV)

Remember your mercy, [YHWH], and your [hesed],<sup>158</sup> for they have been from of old.

**Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions**;

according to your [hesed] remember me, for the sake of your goodness, [YHWH]!

Consider my affliction and my trouble, and **forgive all my sins.**

(Psalm 25:6-7, 18 ESV)

As for me, I said,

“[YHWH], **be gracious to me**; heal me, **for I have sinned against you!**”

(Psalm 41:4 ESV)

**David committed his life to living by the Way of God.** His preparation for kingship focused on his relationship with God. A relationship with God must be based on true knowledge of God. **Only by living by the Way of God can a person come to know God and be known by God.** David was well aware of this and not only strove to do it, but also committed himself to pass it on, to teach others the Way of God. This David primarily accomplished through his Psalms:

**Make me to know your ways**, [YHWH]; **teach me your paths.**

**Lead me in your truth and teach me**, for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all the day long.

Good and upright is [YHWH]; therefore **he instructs sinners in the way.**

**He leads the humble** in what is right, and **teaches the humble his way.**

**All the paths of [YHWH]** are [hesed] and faithfulness,

for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Who is the man who fears [YHWH]?

**Him will he instruct in the way** that he should choose.

(Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10, 12 ESV)

The steps of a man are established by [YHWH], **when he delights in his way**;

though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for [YHWH] upholds his hand.

Wait for [YHWH] and **keep his way**, and he will exalt you to inherit the [earth] (‘eret);<sup>159</sup>

<sup>158</sup> See footnote 80, and the discussion around it.

<sup>159</sup> The noun עֵרֶץ - ‘eret, can be translated “land” or “earth”, depending on the context; see Holladay page 28.

you will look on when the wicked are cut off.  
(Psalm 37:23-24, 34 ESV)

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; **you discern my thoughts** from afar.  
**You search out my path** and my lying down and are acquainted with **all my ways**.  
Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, [YHWH], you know it altogether.  
And see if there be any grievous way in me, and **lead me in the way everlasting!**  
(Psalm 139:2-4, 24 ESV)

[YHWH] dealt with me according to my righteousness;  
according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me.  
For **I have kept the ways of [YHWH]**, and have not wickedly departed from my God.  
For **all his [mish\*patim]<sup>160</sup> were before me**, and **his statutes I did not put away from me**.  
I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from my guilt.  
So [YHWH] has rewarded me according to my righteousness,  
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

**This God—his way is perfect; the word of [YHWH] proves true;**  
he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.  
For who is God, but [YHWH]? And who is a rock, except our God?  
the God who equipped me with strength and **made my way blameless**.  
(Psalm 18:20-24, 30-32 ESV)

I will sing of [hesed]<sup>161</sup> and justice; to you, [YHWH], I will make music.  
**I will ponder the way that is blameless**.  
Oh when will you come to me?  
I will walk with **integrity of heart** within my house;  
I will look with favor on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me;  
**he who walks in the way that is blameless** shall minister to me.  
(Psalm 101:1-2, 6 ESV)

**I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;**  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.  
(Psalm 32:8 ESV)

Then I **will teach transgressors your ways**, and sinners will return to you.  
(Psalm 51:13 ESV)

**[YHWH] is righteous in all his ways** and kind in all his works.  
[YHWH] is near to all who call on him, to all who **call on him in truth**.  
He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.  
(Psalm 145:17-19 ESV)

**All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks**, [YHWH], for they have heard the words of your mouth,  
and **they shall sing of the ways of [YHWH]**, for great is the glory of [YHWH].  
(Psalm 138:4-5 ESV)

**King David epitomized** what it means “**To Be a King**”. David’s life was based on his relationship with God. David’s heart was “right” before God. David strove to live by the Way of God. David committed his life to teaching the Way of God. **David is central to the Plan of God**. The Dynasty of David ruled God’s nation for some 400 years, but the true import of the dynasty is **The Descendant** who will carry it forward in perpetuity, **The Messiah, Jesus Christ**. David’s legacy is critical instruction for any person called by God to be a True Worshipper, “**To Be a King**”.

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<sup>160</sup> See footnote [65](#)

<sup>161</sup> See footnote [80](#), and the discussion around it.

## 2.2.3 King Solomon

The data on King Solomon comprise 1 Kings 1:28-53, all of 1 Kings chapters 2 through 11; 1 Chronicles 29:22b-25, all of 2 Chronicle chapters 1 through 9; in addition, Josephus Book 8 chapters 1 through 7. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible.

Solomon inherited a stable, well organized, prosperous, kingdom. All the nations around were either his vassals, e.g., Edom, Moab, Ammon,<sup>162</sup> or were in treaty relationships with him, e.g., Phoenicia,<sup>163</sup> Egypt:<sup>164</sup>

**Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms** from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt.

They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

But now [YHWH] my God has given me **rest on every side**.

There is **neither adversary nor misfortune**.

(1 Kings 4:21, 5:4 ESV)

Nevertheless, Solomon's ascension was NOT without difficulty. Solomon's half brother **Adonijah**, David's oldest surviving son,<sup>165</sup> had designs on taking the Kingship:

Now **Adonijah** the son of Haggith **exalted himself**, saying, "**I will be king**."

And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom.

He conferred with **Joab** the son of Zeruiah and with **Abiathar** the priest.

And they **followed Adonijah and helped him**.

(1 Kings 1:5, 6b-7 ESV)

King David was on his deathbed<sup>166</sup> and was unaware of the actions of Adonijah.<sup>167</sup> **Nathan the Prophet** worked with **Bathsheba**, the mother of Solomon, to apprise David of the situation.<sup>168</sup> David had previously made **Solomon the Crown Prince**,<sup>169</sup> clearly indicating David's intention for Solomon to become King. With the potential usurpation of Adonijah, David acted decisively:

Then **King David answered**, "**Call Bathsheba to me**."

So she came into the king's presence and stood before the king.

And the king swore, saying,

"As [YHWH] lives, who has redeemed my [life] (nephesh)<sup>170</sup> out of every adversity, as I swore to you by [YHWH], the God of Israel, saying,

**'Solomon your son shall reign after me**, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' even so will I do this day."

Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground and paid homage to the king and said,

"May my lord King David live forever!"

King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada."<sup>171</sup>

So they came before the king. And the king said to them,

"Take with you the servants of your lord and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon.

And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel.

Then blow the trumpet and say, **'Long live King Solomon!'**

You shall then come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, for **he shall be king in my place**.

And I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah."

(1 Kings 1:28-35 ESV)

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<sup>162</sup> See 2 Samuel 8:12

<sup>163</sup> See 1 Kings 5:1-12

<sup>164</sup> See 1 Kings 3:1

<sup>165</sup> See 1 Chronicles 3:1-2

<sup>166</sup> See 1 Kings 1:1-2

<sup>167</sup> See 1 Kings 1:6a

<sup>168</sup> See 1 Kings 1:11-27

<sup>169</sup> See 1 Chronicles 23:1, 29:22b

<sup>170</sup> See footnote 21

<sup>171</sup> "Jehoiada" was a fairly common name; nothing more is known about this "Jehoiada".

Adonijah's uprising quickly dissipated<sup>172</sup> and Solomon assumed the Kingship. David's last words to Solomon were of two natures. David warned Solomon to be wary of two particularly nefarious characters, Joab and Shimei.<sup>173</sup> But most importantly, **David adjured Solomon to fully embrace the Way of God.**<sup>174</sup>

When **David's time to die drew near**, he commanded Solomon his son, saying,

"I am about to go the way of all the earth.

Be strong, and show yourself a man, and **keep the charge** of [YHWH] your God,

**walking in his ways** and **keeping his statutes, his commandments,**

**his [mish'patim]**,<sup>175</sup> and **his testimonies**, as it is written in [torah]<sup>176</sup> of Moses,

that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn,

that [YHWH] may establish his word that he spoke concerning me, saying,

'If your sons **pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness**

**with all their heart** and **with all their [being] (nephesh)**,

you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' ..."

(1 Kings 2:1-4 ESV)

**Solomon quickly demonstrated his understanding of his role** by his treatment of Adonijah. Solomon immediately extended grace to Adonijah, with the proviso that he indeed proved faithful.<sup>177</sup> Later when the Temple was built, in his dedicatory speech and prayer, **Solomon showed that he had indeed heeded David's adjuration to live by the Way of God.**

## Solomon's Political Astuteness

Jesus used a parable to make the point that **those called to be Kings, must exhibit political astuteness in dealing with "the world"**:

He also said to the disciples,

**"There was a rich man who had a manager,**

and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions.

And he called him and said to him,

'What is this that I hear about you?

Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.'

And the manager said to himself,

'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me?

I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.

I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management,

people may receive me into their houses.'

So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first,

'How much do you owe my master?'

He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.'

He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'

Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?'

He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.'

He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

**The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness."**

For **the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.**

And I tell you, **make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth,**

so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

(Luke 16:1-9 ESV)

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<sup>172</sup> See 1 Kings 1:41-49

<sup>173</sup> See 1 Kings 2:5-9

<sup>174</sup> See the detailed discussion of the Way of God in the paper "Pillar Three - The Way of God" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>175</sup> See footnote 65

<sup>176</sup> See footnote 13

<sup>177</sup> See 1 Kings 1:50-53

Earlier, when Jesus sent the Apostles on a missionary tour of Galilee, he adjured them:

Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves,  
so **be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.**  
Beware of men ...  
(Matthew 10:16-17a ESV)

**King Solomon clearly understood this principle.** Although Solomon had extended grace to Adonijah, Adonijah continued to scheme. Adonijah quietly went to Bathsheba, the Queen Mother, and convinced her to request for himself Abishag, the last concubine of David. Bathsheba was apparently NOT political astute – she fell for it.<sup>178</sup> Solomon’s reaction was swift and sure:

King Solomon answered his mother,  
“And **why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah?**  
**Ask for him the kingdom also,** for he is my older brother,  
and on his side are Abiathar the priest and Joab the son of Zeruiah.”

Then **King Solomon swore** by [YHWH], saying,  
“**God do so to me and more also if this word does not cost Adonijah his life!**  
Now therefore as [YHWH] lives,  
who has established me and placed me on the throne of David my father,  
and who has made me a house, as he promised,  
**Adonijah shall be put to death today.**”

So King Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he struck him down, and he died.  
(1 Kings 2:22-25 ESV)

Similarly, as David had warned Solomon, **Solomon clearly recognized that Joab was ruthless killer.** Joab had already allied himself with Adonijah, so Solomon knew that he could NOT be trusted. When Joab heard of the execution of Adonijah, he knew he was next:

When the news came to Joab  
—for Joab had supported Adonijah although he had not supported Absalom—  
**Joab fled to the tent of [YHWH] and caught hold of the horns of the altar.**  
And when it was told King Solomon,  
“Joab has fled to the tent of [YHWH], and behold, he is beside the altar,”  
Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, “**Go, strike him down.**”  
(1 Kings 2:28-29 ESV)

**Solomon’s beginning as King of Israel was good in every aspect.** He was determined to serve God as David his father had done. God appeared to Solomon in a dream and offered assistance to Solomon. Solomon truly demonstrated his understanding of the enormity of the task in front of him by first acknowledging his inadequacy, “**I do not know how to go out or come in**”, then by requesting from God understanding, “**give your servant therefore an understanding mind**”, and discernment, “**that I may discern between good and evil**”:

**Solomon loved [YHWH], walking in the statutes of David his father,**  
only he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places.  
And **the king went to Gibeon**<sup>179</sup> to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place.  
Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.  
**At Gibeon [YHWH] appeared to Solomon in a dream by night,** and God said,  
“Ask what I shall give you.”  
And Solomon said,  
“You have shown great [hesed]<sup>180</sup> to your servant David my father,  
because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness,  
and in uprightness of heart toward you.  
And you have kept for him this great [hesed]  
and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.  
And now, [YHWH] my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father,  
although **I am but a little child.**  
**I do not know how to go out or come in.**

<sup>178</sup> See 1 Kings 2:13-21; see also the discussion of this incident in section **3.5 David** in the paper “**The Human Condition**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>179</sup> The location of the Tabernacle

<sup>180</sup> See footnote **80**, and the discussion around it.

And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen,  
a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude.

**Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people,  
that I may discern between good and evil,** for who is able to govern this your great people?"

(1 Kings 3:3-9 ESV see also 2 Chronicles 1:7-10)

Despite his youth, Solomon handled well the machinations of his ascension. He demonstrated his humility, "**I am but a little child**", and his desire to serve God, "**give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people**".

## God Reveals Himself to Solomon

Clearly, Solomon chose wisely in his request for understanding and discernment, because God responded very favourably:

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.

And God said to him,

**"Because you have asked this,**

and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies,  
but have asked for yourself **understanding to discern what is right,**  
behold, I now do according to your word.

Behold, **I give you a wise and discerning mind,**

so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.

I give you also what you have not asked, both **riches** and **honor,**

so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.

And **if you will walk in my ways,** keeping my statutes and my commandments,  
as your father David walked, then I will **lengthen your days.**"

(1 Kings 3:10-14 ESV see also 2 Chronicles 1:11-12)

God granted Solomon "**understanding to discern what is right**". He also gave him "**a wise and discerning mind**". However, God put contingency on his full blessing, "**if you will walk in my ways**". This passage is seminal in understanding the Hebrew word מִשְׁפָּטִים - *mish<sup>e</sup>patim*. David had explicitly used this word in his charge to Solomon:

Be strong, and show yourself a man, and **keep the charge of [YHWH] your God,**

walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments,

**his [mish<sup>e</sup>patim],**<sup>181</sup> and his testimonies, as it is written in [torah]<sup>182</sup> of Moses ...

(1 Kings 2:2b-3 ESV)

The best definition we can give the word *mish<sup>e</sup>patim* is "**the understanding, wisdom, and discernment, that come only from living by the Way of God**". There is no word in English to encompass this meaning. God explicitly used all aspects of this definition in his bequest to Solomon, "**understanding to discern what is right**", "**a wise and discerning mind**", "**walk in my ways**". The concept of *mish<sup>e</sup>patim* is critical to any person called "**To Be a King**".

**The Bible contains many examples of Solomon's application of *mish<sup>e</sup>patim*:**

- The two prostitutes and the baby, 1 Kings 3:16-26
- The visit of the Queen of Sheba, 1 Kings 10:1-10, 2 Chronicles 9:1-12
- The extent of Solomon's influence, 1 Kings 4:29-34, 10:23-24, 2 Chronicles 9:22-23
- Many Proverbs are ascribed to Solomon, see the discussion in section **3.5.3 Other Wisdom Literature (The Book of Proverbs)** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)
- The Book of Ecclesiastes is widely acclaimed to reflect the wisdom of Solomon, see the discussion in section **3.5.3 Other Wisdom Literature (The Book of Ecclesiastes)** in the paper "**Third Pillar - The Way of God**" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

**King Solomon is one of the very few people in the Bible to receive a personal theophany.** In fact, God appeared to him twice, once as just recounted at the beginning of his reign, and again some twenty

<sup>181</sup> See footnote **65**

<sup>182</sup> See footnote **13**

years later.<sup>183</sup> At the second theophany, God repeated to Solomon some of the most important requirements of one called **“To Be a King”**:

As soon as Solomon had finished building the house of [YHWH] and the king's house and all that Solomon desired to build, [YHWH] appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. And [YHWH] said to him,

“I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.

And as for you, **if you will walk before me**, as David your father walked, with **integrity of heart** and **uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded** you, and **keeping my statutes** and my **[mish\*patim]**, then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’

(1 Kings 9:1-5 ESV // 2 Chronicles 7:11-18)

**God requires any person called “To Be a King” to come to an understanding of the Way of God and commit his/her life to living by the Way of God.** King David is the most important example of a person who did this. King Solomon is a person who was given everything possible to do as God required. Of King David, the Bible is clear: he was successful. King Solomon did many great things, but as we continue, we will see that his record is NOT clear. The bible does NOT state whether or NOT he was successful. This in itself is an object lesson for anyone called **“To Be a King”**: **success is required on a daily basis.**

## Solomon Builds the Temple

**Solomon's greatest success was the construction of the Temple.** King David had made extensive provision for the construction of the Temple.<sup>184</sup> Solomon prepared further,<sup>185</sup> and the Temple was built.<sup>186</sup> Then the Ark of the Covenant was moved from David's tent into the Temple and the Glory of God filled the Temple.<sup>187</sup> After this, several prayers of Solomon are reported. The prayers are all presented as having been spoken at a formal dedication ceremony for the Temple. First, Solomon offers thanks to God for allowing him to build the Temple in fulfillment of the promise to David:<sup>188</sup>

Now **[YHWH] has fulfilled his promise** that he made.

For I have risen in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as [YHWH] promised, and **I have built the house for the name of [YHWH]**, the God of Israel.

(1 Kings 8:20 ESV // 2 Chronicles 6:10)

Then, Solomon prays for God to fulfill the next part of the promise to David – **longevity of the dynasty.**<sup>189</sup> We can only wonder how Solomon understood this. Did Solomon have an inkling of an eternal descendant? Or, did he just think in terms of a perpetual line of human kings? However, it is clear that **Solomon understood that living by the Way of God was prerequisite to the perpetuity:**

Now therefore, [YHWH], God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons **pay close attention to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.**’

Now therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David my father.

(1 Kings 8:25-26 ESV // 2 Chronicles 6:16-17)

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<sup>183</sup> See 1 Kings 9:1-9 // 2 Chronicles 7:11-22

<sup>184</sup> See: the Temple site 2 Samuel 24:18-25 // 1 Chronicles 21:18-27; construction workers and materials 1 Chronicles 22:2-5, 29:2-9; Levites 1 Chronicles 23:2-32; Priests 1 Chronicles 24:1-31; musicians 1 Chronicles 25:1-31; and, Temple personnel 1 Chronicles 26:1-32

<sup>185</sup> See 1 Kings 5:7-18, 2 Chronicles 2:1-16

<sup>186</sup> See 1 Kings 6:1-10, 14-38, 7:13-51, 2 Chronicles 3:1-17, 4:1-22, 5:1

<sup>187</sup> See 1 Kings 8:1-11, 2 Chronicles 5:2-14

<sup>188</sup> See 1 Kings 8:12-21 // 2 Chronicles 6:1-11

<sup>189</sup> See 1 Kings 8:22-26 // 2 Chronicles 6:12-17

Next, Solomon appeals to the **Divine Nature of God** to listen to his prayer, and to the prayers of the people of Israel, and even to earnest prayers of foreigners, directed to God through his Temple.<sup>190</sup>

**Solomon demonstrates his earnestness to properly serve God as the King of Israel.** Solomon focuses in an exemplary way on various sins and situations that his subjects will fall into. Solomon's purpose is to remind the people listening that **whatever the situation or the sin, prayer to God with repentance is the solution.**<sup>191</sup>

**But will God indeed dwell on the earth?**

Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you;  
how much less this house that I have built!

**Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant** and to his plea, [YHWH] my God,  
listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day,  
that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said,  
'My name shall be there,'

that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place.

And **listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel**, when they pray toward this place.

And **listen in heaven your dwelling place**, and **when you hear, forgive.**

(1 Kings 8:27-30 ESV // 2 Chronicles 6:18-21)

**If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—**

and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy,  
so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near,  
yet **if they turn their heart** in the land to which they have been carried captive,  
**and repent and plead with you** in the land of their captors, saying,

'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,'

**if they repent with all their heart** and with all their [being] (nephesh)<sup>192</sup> in the land of their enemies,  
who carried them captive, **and pray to you toward their land**, which you gave to their fathers,  
the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name,

**then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea**,

and maintain their cause and **forgive your people** who have sinned against you,  
and all their transgressions that they have committed against you,  
and **grant them compassion** ...

(1 Kings 8:46-50a ESV // 2 Chronicles 6:36-39)

Finally, the author of the Book of Kings includes a prayer which the Chronicler omits.<sup>193</sup> **Solomon reiterates God's requirement to live by the Way of God** and points to the Plan of God whereby **all people in all nations over the whole world will come to know the Way of God:**

[YHWH] our God be with us, as he was with our fathers.

May he not leave us or forsake us, that he may **incline our hearts to him**,  
**to walk in all his ways** and **to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his [mish'patim]**,<sup>194</sup>  
which he commanded our fathers.

Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before [YHWH],  
be near to [YHWH] our God day and night,  
and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires,  
**that all the peoples of the earth may know that [YHWH] is God**; there is no other.

**Let your heart therefore be wholly true to [YHWH] our God,**  
**walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments**, as at this day.

(1 Kings 8:57-61 ESV)

These prayers of Solomon clearly show that his heart was right before God and that he truly desired to serve God as his father David had done. The other side of his life is **the wealth he amassed**,  
**the opulence of his life**, and **the extent of his harem**:

Now **the weight of gold** that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold,  
besides that which came from the explorers and from the business of the merchants,  
and from all the kings of the west and from the governors of the land.

The king also made **a great ivory throne** and **overlaid it with the finest gold**.

The throne had six steps, and the throne had a round top,

<sup>190</sup> See 1 Kings 8:27-45 // 2 Chronicles 6:18-35

<sup>191</sup> See 1 Kings 8:46-53 // 2 Chronicles 6:36-42

<sup>192</sup> See footnote 21

<sup>193</sup> See 1 Kings 8:54-61

<sup>194</sup> See footnote 65

and on each side of the seat were armrests and two lions standing beside the armrests, while twelve lions stood there, one on each end of a step on the six steps.

**The like of it was never made in any kingdom.**

All King Solomon's **drinking vessels were of gold,**

and all the **vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold.**

None were of silver; **silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon.**

For the king had a fleet of ships of Tarshish at sea with the fleet of Hiram.

Once every three years the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

And **the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone,**

and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephelah.

(1 Kings 10:14-15, 18-22, 27 ESV see also 2 Chronicles 9:13-28)

Now **King Solomon loved many foreign women ...**

He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines.

(1 Kings 11:1a, 3a ESV)

Although Solomon clearly demonstrated his commitment to the Way of God in his early life, as demonstrated by in his prayers, he somehow allowed the physical opulence of his life to dominate him. It was clearly this side of his life which caused Solomon problems. The object lesson for anyone called **"To Be a King"** is that the Way of God must be fully adhered to: **compromise leads to complacency:**

**Do not love the world or the things in the world.**

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world—the **desires of the flesh** and **the desires of the eyes** and **pride of life**—is not from the Father but is from the world.

(1 John 2:15-16 ESV)

## Solomon's Apostasy

While Solomon is NOT castigated for his wealth or the size of his harem, he was clearly under two of the proscriptions on Kings from Deuteronomy chapter 17. Solomon is, however, **severely castigated for the composition of his harem** and **the effect it had on him:**

And **he shall not acquire many wives** for himself, lest his heart turn away,

**nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.**

(Deuteronomy 17:17 ESV)

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh:

**Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite** women,

from the nations concerning which [YHWH] had said to the people of Israel,

**"You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods."**

**Solomon clung to these in love.** He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines.

And **his wives turned away his heart.**

For **when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods,**

and his heart was not wholly true to [YHWH] his God, as was the heart of David his father.

For **Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians,**

and **after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.**

So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH]

and did not wholly follow [YHWH], as David his father had done.

Then **Solomon built a high place for Chemosh** the abomination of Moab,

**and for Molech** the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem.

And **so he did for all his foreign wives,** who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.

(1 Kings 11:1-8 ESV)

**Solomon's apostasy set the tone for all the subsequent history of Israel.** Both the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom, throughout their existence, struggled with apostasy and idolatry. It seems incomprehensible that a person who clearly knew the Way of God, like Solomon, can turn their back on it and fall into apostasy. This is a stark lesson for anyone called **"To Be a King"**: the pull of the world is strong. Satan spares no effort to compromise persons called by God:

**The heart is deceitful above all things,** and desperately sick; who can understand it?

**I, [YHWH], search the heart and test the mind,**

to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.  
(Jeremiah 17:9-10 ESV)

**Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart,**  
leading you to fall away from the living God.  
But **exhort one another every day**, as long as it is called “today,”  
**that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.**  
(Hebrews 3:12-13 ESV)

## Assessment of King Solomon

While **the Bible does nowhere explicitly record that Solomon was imbued with the Holy Spirit** as Saul<sup>195</sup> and David<sup>196</sup> had been, the prayers attributed to Solomon suggest he was truly converted. This of course makes his apostasy such tragedy:

**For it is impossible, in the case of those who** have once been enlightened,  
who have tasted the heavenly gift, and **have shared in the Holy Spirit,**  
and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,  
and **then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance,**  
since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.  
(Hebrews 6:4-6 ESV)

**Only God knows when a person has crossed the line and repentance is no longer possible.** With Solomon there is hope. As stated above, the **Book of Ecclesiastes** is widely acclaimed to reflect the wisdom of Solomon.<sup>197</sup> **If in fact Solomon is the “Preacher”**, the Book of Ecclesiastes would seem to indicate a repentant attitude:

Besides being wise, **the Preacher also taught the people knowledge,**  
weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care.  
The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and **uprightly he wrote words of truth.**  
The end of the matter; all has been heard.  
**Fear God and keep his commandments,** for **this is the whole duty of man.**  
For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.  
(Ecclesiastes 12:9-10, 13-14 ESV)

As with David’s sin, **Solomon’s sin brought on a curse with long term ramifications:**

And **[YHWH] was angry with Solomon,**  
because **his heart had turned away** from [YHWH], the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice  
and had commanded him concerning this thing, that **he should not go after other gods.**  
But he did not keep what [YHWH] commanded.  
Therefore [YHWH] said to Solomon,  
**“Since this has been your practice**  
and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you,  
**I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. ...”**  
(1 Kings 11:9-11 ESV)

**The schism between North Israel and South Israel was the result of this curse.** The object lesson for anyone called **“To Be a King”** is that while forgiveness of sin is always available upon repentance, there may still be a penalty to pay. **Always God uses physical trials to instruct and bring about spiritual understanding:**

**Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,**  
for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.  
And let steadfastness have its full effect,  
**that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.**  
(James 1:2-4 ESV)

With Solomon, the united monarchy ended – a period of about 100 years during which Israel was transformed from a collection of struggling tribes into the most dominant regional power. Each King contributed to this development. Saul brought some cohesion among the tribes and solidified the base

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<sup>195</sup> See 1 Samuel 10:6,9-10

<sup>196</sup> See 1 Samuel 16:13, Psalm 51:11

<sup>197</sup> See the discussion in section **3.5.3 Other Wisdom Literature (The Book of Ecclesiastes)** in the paper “Third Pillar - The Way of God” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

territory of Israel. David conquered all surrounding nations and consolidated the administration of the kingdom. Solomon inherited a well-organized thriving kingdom and extended its wealth.

**The spiritual lessons written with the lives of the subsequent Kings of Israel will now be explored.**

## **2.3 The Northern Kingdom**

Every King of the Northern Kingdom represents a classic tragedy. They were all people who were given the opportunity to have a relationship with God. None of them succeeded. **Some blatantly rejected God** and pursued rank paganism. **Some paid lip service to God** but merrily went their own way actually ignoring God, although claiming to worship God. **Some were simply oblivious** to the opportunities in front of them. **All of the Kings of the Northern Kingdom had access to true Prophets who could have taught them the Way of God.** The kings of the Northern Kingdom provide living object lessons of some of the people Jesus alludes to in the **Parable of the Sower and the Seed**:

And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them:

“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow.

And as he sowed, some **seed fell along the path**, and the birds came and devoured it.

Other **seed fell on rocky ground**, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil.

And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away.

Other **seed fell among thorns**, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ...”

**The sower sows the word.**

And these are **the ones along the path**, where the word is sown:

when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

And these are **the ones sown on rocky ground**:

the ones who, **when they hear the word**, immediately receive it with joy.

And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while;

then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, **immediately they fall away**.

And others are the **ones sown among thorns**.

They are **those who hear the word**,

but the **cares of the world** and the deceitfulness of riches

and the **desires for other things** enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

(Mark 4:2-7, 14-19 ESV // Matthew 13:3-7, 18-22, Luke 8:4b-7, 11-14)

All of the Northern Kings had opportunity to “**hear the word**”, learn the Way of God from the Prophets of God. The Kings oblivious to the opportunity are like the “**seed along the path**”. Those who paid lip service to God are like the “**seed on rocky ground**”. Those who pursued paganism are like the “**seed among thorns**”.

### **List of Northern Kings**<sup>198</sup>

King & Capital	Dates	Rival King & Capital	Dates
Jeroboam I, Shechem	931/930 – 910/909		
Nadab, Shechem	910/909 – 909/908		
Baasha, Tirzah	909/908 – 886/885		
Elah, Tirzah	886/885 – 885/884		
Zimri, Tirzah	885/884		
Omri, Tirzah, Samaria	885/884 – 874/873	Tibni, unknown	885/884 - 880
Ahab, Samaria	874/873 – 853		
Ahaziah, Samaria	853 – 852		

<sup>198</sup> These dates are based on Thiele; for more detailed information see the chart “**Chronology of the Divided Monarchy**” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>.

King & Capital	Dates	Rival King & Capital	Dates
Joram / Jehoram, Samaria	852 – 841		
Jehu, Samaria	841 – 814/813		
Jehoahaz, Samaria	814/813 – 798		
Joash / Jehoash, Samaria	798 – 782/781	Jeroboam II (coregent) , Samaria	793/792 – 782/781
Jeroboam II, Samaria	782/781 – 753		
Zachariah, Samaria	753 – 752		
Shallum, Samaria	752		
Menahem, Samaria	752 – 742/741	Pekah, Gilead	752 – 742/741
Pekahiah, Samaria	742/741 – 740/739	Pekah, Gilead	742/741 – 740/739
Pekah, Samaria	740/739 – 732/731		
Hoshea, Samaria	732/731 – 723/722		

### 2.3.1 The Jeroboam Dynasty

The data on the Jeroboam Dynasty comprise 1 Kings 11:26-40, 12:25-33, 13:1-10, 33-34, 14:1-20, 15:25-34, 16:1-20, and Josephus Book 8 paragraphs 7.7, 7.8, 8.4. 8.5, chapters 9, 11, and paragraphs 12.4, 12.5. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. The Dynasty covers a period of about 45 years, 931BC-884BC.

The Jeroboam Dynasty proper consisted of two kings, Jeroboam I and his son Nadab. Baasha was a usurper who killed Nadab. The son of Baasha, Elah, was similarly killed by Zimri. The Dynasty of Jeroboam is also discussed, from a different perspective, in section **1. The Crisis** in the paper “**The Work of Elijah**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

#### Active prophets:

- Ahijah the Shilonite, ~940-920BC, 1 Kings 11:29-39, 14:2-18, 2 Chronicles 9:29, 10:15
- Shemaiah the man of God, ~930-925BC, 1 Kings 12:22-24, 2 Chronicles 11:2-4, 12:5-8, 15
- An un-named man of God, ~925BC, 1 Kings 13:1-32
- Jehu the son of Hanani, ~915BC, 1 Kings 16:1-4, 7-12
- Iddo the seer, ~910BC, 2 Chronicles 9:29, 12:15, 13:22
- Azariah the son of Oded, ~895BC, 2 Chronicles 15:1-8
- Hanani the seer, ~890, 2 Chronicles 16:7-10

### Jeroboam I & Nadab

Jeroboam was a man who **paid lip service to God**. Jeroboam was recognized by Solomon as “able” and “industrious”.<sup>199</sup> God identified Jeroboam as the man to take the Northern Tribes away from Solomon’s son. The **Prophet Ahijah** the Shilonite was sent with the message:

And I will take you, and **you shall reign over all that your [heart] (nephesh)<sup>200</sup> desires**, and **you shall be king over Israel**.

And if you will **listen to all that I command you**, and will **walk in my ways**, and **do what is right** in my eyes by **keeping my statutes** and **my commandments**, as David my servant did,

<sup>199</sup> See 1 Kings 11:26-28

<sup>200</sup> See footnote **21**

**I will be with you** and will **build you a sure house**, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.  
(1 Kings 11:37-38 ESV)

**If Jeroboam had chosen to live by the Way of God**, his dynasty would have ruled the Northern Kingdom until its end. Instead, Jeroboam feared for his position and, although **in theory still worshipping YHWH**, he set up his own system of worship, ignoring the teaching of God.<sup>201</sup> Later in his reign, his son, Abijah, was gravely ill. Jeroboam still acknowledged YHWH because he sent his wife to surreptitiously inquire of the **Prophet Ahijah** in Shiloh.<sup>202</sup> Ahijah delivered to her **a message of condemnation for the Dynasty of Jeroboam**:

Go, tell Jeroboam,

‘Thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel:

“Because **I exalted you** from among the people  
and made you leader over my people Israel  
and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you,  
and **yet you have not been like my servant David**,  
who kept my commandments and followed me with all his heart,  
doing only that which was right in my eyes,  
but **you have done evil** above all who were before you  
and have gone and made for yourself other gods and metal images,  
provoking me to anger, and have cast me behind your back,  
**therefore** behold, **I will bring harm upon the house of Jeroboam**  
and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, both bond and free in Israel,  
and will burn up the house of Jeroboam, as a man burns up dung until it is all gone.  
Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs shall eat,  
and anyone who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat,”

for [YHWH] has spoken it.’

(1 Kings 14:7-11 ESV)

The **object lesson** in this, for any person called “**To Be a King**”, is to **value the calling**. The calling of God is rare and precious. If the person called, does not positively respond but spurns God’s grace, the consequences are dire.

Jeroboam’s son Nadab ruled briefly. He was apparently oblivious to the opportunities presented to him. The only information provided on Nadab is:

He did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH] and **walked in the way of his father**,  
and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.

(1 Kings 15:26 ESV)

**This castigation became a standard epithet for the Northern Kings.**

### **Baasha, Elah, & Zimri**

These were three men who were apparently completely oblivious to the opportunities presented to them. Nothing of significance is said about any of them. The **Prophet Jehu** the son of Hanani pronounced God’s condemnation of Baasha:

And the word of [YHWH] came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying,

“Since **I exalted you** out of the dust and **made you leader over my people Israel**,  
and **you have walked in the way of Jeroboam** and have **made my people Israel to sin**,  
provoking me to anger with their sins,  
behold, I will utterly sweep away Baasha and his house,  
and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.  
Anyone belonging to Baasha who dies in the city the dogs shall eat,  
and anyone of his who dies in the field the birds of the heavens shall eat.”

(1 Kings 16:1-4 ESV)

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<sup>201</sup> See 1 Kings 12:25-33

<sup>202</sup> See 1 Kings 14:1-6

Baasha had completed the curse on the House of Jeroboam,<sup>203</sup> now the same curse was placed on his descendant, Elah, which Zimri carried out.<sup>204</sup> All three men were castigated for following the sin of Jeroboam.<sup>205</sup>

The **object lesson** for any person called “**To Be a King**” is **NOT to get caught up in the way of the world**. All three of these men simply continued with the status quo: Jeroboam’s religious innovations. They did NOT stop to inquire about the will of God but instead got involved in the flow of events happening around them.

### 2.3.2 The Omri Dynasty

The data on the Omri Dynasty comprise 1 Kings 16:21-34, 18:1-20, 19:1-2, 20:1-43, 21:1-29, 22:1-40, 51-53, 2 Kings 1:1-9, 17-18, 3:1-12, and Josephus Book 8 paragraph 12.5, chapters 13, 14, paragraphs 15.5, 15.6, Book 9 chapters 2, 3, paragraphs 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. In 8.13.5, Josephus cites Menander to confirm the drought in the time of Elijah. The Dynasty lasted about 45 years, 885BC-841BC.

**The Bible says little about Omri**, but he must have been an able ruler as the Assyrians for decades referred to Israel as the “House of Omri”.<sup>206</sup> His son, **Ahab**, is one of the most famous kings of Israel due to his marriage to the evil **Jezabel**. The Bible has much to say about the pair. The Bible does NOT say why it was allowed, but the Omri Dynasty survived for three generations; four kings, the last two kings being brothers.

The Dynasty of Omri is also discussed, from a different perspective, in sections **2. The Dynasty of Omri**, **3. Elijah – Getting Attention**, and **4. Elijah – Understanding God’s Plan**, in the paper “**The Work of Elijah**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

#### **Active Prophets:**

- Elijah ~875-845
- Elisha ~860-790
- Obadiah ~865, 1 Kings 18:3-16
- Joel ~845 2 Chronicles 21:12-14
- Several un-named prophets,<sup>207</sup> ~855BC, 1 Kings 20:13-14, 22, 35-42
- Micaiah the son of Imlah, ~853BC, 1 Kings 22:8-28, 2 Chronicles 18:4-27
- Jehu<sup>208</sup> the son of Hanani the Seer, ~852BC, 2 Chronicles 19:2-3, 20:34
- Eliezer the son of Dodavahu, ~850BC, 2 Chronicles 20:35-37

### Omri & Tibni

When Zimri killed Elah and assumed the Kingship, there was a popular reaction against him. **One faction made Omri King; another, made Tibni King.**<sup>209</sup> It is NOT stated from where Tibni ruled, possibly Shechem, but he held sway for about five years; then, he was killed and Omri ruled all Isreal. At this point, Omri founded the city of Samaria.<sup>210</sup> Omri is castigated as more evil than the previous kings, but no details are provided. **The Bible does NOT explicitly state that Omri himself became a worshipper of Ba`al**, but he arranged for his son, Ahab, to marry **Jezabel, a devout worshipper of Ba`al**:

**Omri** did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH],  
and **did more evil than all who were before him**.  
For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,

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<sup>203</sup> See 1 Kings 15:27-30

<sup>204</sup> See 1 Kings 16:9-13

<sup>205</sup> See 1 Kings 15:34, 16:7,19

<sup>206</sup> See Bright page 241

<sup>207</sup> Note: one of these is called a man of “**the sons of the prophets**” (1 Kings 20:35); this is the technical term for a member of a “School of the Prophets”, see Freeman page 31.

<sup>208</sup> This “Jehu” is almost certainly NOT the same “Jehu” of 1 Kings chapter 16. If it is the same person, he is extremely old.

<sup>209</sup> See 1 Kings 16:15-17,21

<sup>210</sup> See 1 Kings 16:22-24

and in the sins that he made Israel to sin,  
provoking [YHWH], the God of Israel, to anger by their idols.

And **Ahab** the son of Omri did evil in the sight of [YHWH],  
more than all who were before him.

And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,  
he **took for his wife Jezebel** the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians,  
**and went and served Baal and worshiped him.**

(1 Kings 16:25-26, 30-31 ESV)

The **object lesson** in this is that when evil prevails, **God will step back and let things run their course.**  
Ahab and his two sons were perhaps the most evil kings of the Northern Kingdom.

## Ahab & Jezebel

Ahab is a classic example of a King who blatantly rejected God and went into rank paganism. The summary of Ahab's reign pretty much says all the needs to be known about Ahab:

And **Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of [YHWH]**, more than all who were before him.

And as if it had been a light thing for him to **walk in the sins of Jeroboam** the son of Nebat,  
**he took for his wife Jezebel** the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians,  
**and went and served Baal and worshiped him.**

He erected an **altar for Baal** in the **house of Baal**, which **he built** in Samaria.

And Ahab **made an Asherah.**

Ahab did more to provoke [YHWH], the God of Israel,  
to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

(1 Kings 16:30-33 ESV)

**The confrontations between Elijah and Ahab/Jezebel are famous,**<sup>211</sup> but it was in dealing with another, unnamed, Prophet, that **Ahab receives a particular castigation.** In a battle with the Arameans, God gave Israel the victory so that the Aramean King, Ben-hadad, could be put to death.<sup>212</sup> Ahab weakly lets Ben-hadad go free and is confronted by the Prophet:

So **the prophet departed and waited for the king** by the way,  
disguising himself with a bandage over his eyes.

And as the king passed, he cried to the king and said,

“Your servant went out into the midst of the battle,  
and behold, a soldier turned and brought a man to me and said,

**‘Guard this man;**

if by any means he is missing, **your life shall be for his life,**  
or else you shall pay a talent of silver.’”

And **as your servant was busy** here and there, **he was gone.**”

**The king of Israel said to him, “So shall your judgment be;** you yourself have decided it.”

Then he hurried to take the bandage away from his eyes,  
and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets.

And he said to him,

“Thus says [YHWH],

**‘Because you have let go out of your hand**

**the man whom I had devoted to destruction,**

therefore **your life shall be for his life,** and **your people for his people.**”

(1 Kings 20:38-42 ESV)

The **object lesson** in this incident is that one who is called **“To Be a King”** must **fully understand the will of God** and **NOT deviate from it in any way.**

## Ahaziah & Joram / Jehoram

While **Ahaziah** followed his father Ahab in **rejecting God** and pursuing rank paganism, **Joram / Jehoram** pulled away from Ba'al worship, but continued in the sin of Jeroboam. The **sin of Jeroboam** was to be a nominal worshipper of YHWH, but actually NOT live by the Way of God:

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<sup>211</sup> See 1 Kings chapter 18, 19:1-3, 21:1-24; note that after this last confrontation, there is a brief notice of Ahab's "repentance", 1 Kings 21:27-29; see the discussion of "worldly repentance" under [Jehoahaz](#).

<sup>212</sup> See 1 Kings 20:26-34

**[Ahaziah]** did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH] and **walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother** and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He served Baal and worshiped him and **provoked [YHWH]**, the God of Israel, **to anger in every way that his father had done.** (1 Kings 22:52-53 ESV)

**[Joram / Jehoram]** did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH], though not like his father and mother, for **he put away the pillar of Baal that his father had made.** Nevertheless, **he clung to the sin of Jeroboam** the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from it. (2 Kings 3:2-3 ESV)

Elisha's reaction to Joram / Jehoram clearly shows how much God regarded his "improved" position:

And **Elisha said to the king of Israel,**

**"What have I to do with you?**

Go to the prophets of your father and to the prophets of your mother."

But the king of Israel said to him,

"No; it is [YHWH] who has called these three kings to give them into the hand of Moab."

And **Elisha said,**

"As [YHWH] of hosts lives, before whom I stand,

were it not that I have regard for Jehoshaphat the king of Judah,

**I would neither look at you nor see you. ..."**

(2 Kings 3:13-14 ESV)

The **object lesson** in the contrast between these two brothers is that in God's eyes, attempting to worship according to one's own ideas of how to worship, is no better than rank paganism. **Paying "lip service" to God is of no value.**

### 2.3.3 The Jehu Dynasty

The data on the Jehu Dynasty comprise 2 Kings chapters 9 and 10, 13:1-19, 14:23-29, 15:8-12, Hosea 1:1, 4, Amos 1:1, 7:10-17, and Josephus Book 9 chapter 6, and paragraphs 8.1, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 10.1, 10.3, 11.1. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. The **Books of Amos and Hosea** contain material relevant to the social and religious conditions of the Northern Kingdom under the Jehu Dynasty. The Dynasty lasted about 90 years, 841BC-752BC.

After the rank paganism of the Omri Dynasty, God took steps to eradicate the worship of Ba'al in Israel. Jehu was identified as the person to wipe out the House of Omri and destroy the worship of Ba'al. Jehu was partially successful, and he was promised four generations of descendants on the throne. The Dynasty of Jehu is also discussed, from a different perspective, in sections **6. The Purge of Jehu** and **9. Lessons from Jehu's Purge** in the paper "**The Work of Elijah**" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

#### **Active Prophets:**

- Elisha ~860-790
- un-named prophets, ~805BC, 2 Chronicles 24:19
- Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, ~805BC, 2 Chronicles 24:20-22
- An un-named prophet, ~785BC, 2 Chronicles 25:15-16
- Jonah the son of Amittai,<sup>213</sup> ~780BC, 2 Kings 14:25
- Amos ~760BC
- Hosea ~755BC-710BC

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<sup>213</sup> The name suggests that this is the "Jonah" of the Book of Jonah, see Jonah 1:1.

## Jehu

**Jehu ben Jehoshaphat ben Nimshi** was the commander of the Israelite forces engaged in a battle with the Arameans at Ramoth-gilead, southeast of the Sea of Galilee. **The Prophet Elisha** sent a young Prophet to Ramoth-gilead on the mission to anoint Jehu to be King of Israel.<sup>214</sup> **Jehu was commissioned to eradicate the House of Ahab and Jezebel:**

And the young man poured the oil on his head, saying to him,

“Thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel,

**I anoint you king** over the people of [YHWH], over Israel.

And **you shall strike down the house of Ahab** your master, so that I may avenge on Jezebel the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of [YHWH].

For **the whole house of Ahab shall perish**,

and I will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel.

And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah.

And **the dogs shall eat Jezebel** in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury her.”

(2 Kings 9:6b-10a ESV)

**Jehu was very zealous in carrying out his commission.** **Joram / Jehoram**, Ahab’s son, King of The Northern Kingdom, was killed along with his nephew,<sup>215</sup> **Ahaziah**, King of the Southern Kingdom.<sup>216</sup> **Jezebel** met her prophesized fate.<sup>217</sup> All the sons of Ahab were executed.<sup>218</sup> All the relatives and supporters of Ahab in Samaria were killed.<sup>219</sup> Finally, all devout worshippers of Ba`al were killed and the temple of Ba`al was destroyed.<sup>220</sup> Some consider the brutality of this purge to be extreme, but the purge was necessary, and **Jehu is commended by God for his efforts:**

Thus Jehu wiped out Baal from Israel ... And [YHWH] said to Jehu,

“Because **you have done well** in carrying out what is right in my eyes, and **have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart**, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.”

(2 Kings 10:28, 30 ESV)

However once in power, Jehu seems to have become self-satisfied. He willingly paid tribute to Shalmaneser III on his next foray into Western Asia. The Black Obelisk records Jehu providing to Shalmaneser gold, silver, and various precious vessels.<sup>221</sup> **While Jehu’s purge was significant, he clearly did not understand or was unwilling to comply with God’s full intentions.** God wanted all vestiges of the innovations of Jeroboam I to be removed. **Jehu is censured for NOT going far enough with his reform:**

But **Jehu did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam** the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin—that is, the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan.

But **Jehu was not careful to walk in [torah]<sup>222</sup> of [YHWH]**, the God of Israel, with all his heart.

**He did not turn from the sins of Jeroboam**, which he made Israel to sin.

(2 Kings 10:29, 31 ESV)

Two generations later, the **Prophet Hosea** records that in fact **Jehu’s purge was proverbially recognized as a failure.** The blood he spilled was wasted because he did not complete the reform:

And [YHWH] said to him,

**“Call his name Jezreel,**

for in just a little while **I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel,** and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.”

(Hosea 1:4 ESV)

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<sup>214</sup> See 2 Kings 9:1-13

<sup>215</sup> Ahaziah was the son of Athaliah, the sister of Joram / Jehoram; see 2 Kings 8:26 // 2 Chronicles 22:2.

<sup>216</sup> See 2 Kings 9:14-28

<sup>217</sup> See 2 Kings 9:30-37

<sup>218</sup> See 2 Kings 10:1-8

<sup>219</sup> See 2 Kings 10:11-17

<sup>220</sup> See 2 Kings 10:18-27

<sup>221</sup> DOTT page 48 from the Black Obelisk “At that time I received tribute from ... Jehu ... silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden vase ...”

<sup>222</sup> See footnote 13

The **object lesson** from the life of Jehu is that **zeal without total commitment is of no value to God**. One who is called “**To Be a King**” must work zealously to eradicate sin, as Jehu did, but beyond that full commitment to the Way of God is also required.

## Jehoahaz

Jehu’s son Jehoahaz is a very typical “**nominal worshipper**”. He started out sure that he could do it his way, so God applied some punishment, and he “repented”, but NOT really:

... **Jehoahaz the son of Jehu** began to reign over Israel in Samaria ...

He did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH]

and **followed the sins of Jeroboam** the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from them.

And the anger of [YHWH] was kindled against Israel,  
and he gave them continually into the hand of Hazael king of [Aram]  
and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael.

Then **Jehoahaz sought the favor of [YHWH]**, and [YHWH] listened to him,  
for he saw the oppression of Israel, how the king of [Aram] oppressed them.

Nevertheless, **they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam**,  
which he made Israel to sin, but walked in them; and the Asherah also remained in Samaria.  
(2 Kings 13:1bα, 2-4, 6 ESV)

The **object lesson** from the life of Jehoahaz is that **true repentance is a gift from God** upon God’s calling through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. **Worldly “repentance”**, when things are bad, means nothing to God – the person who repents thus, nearly always returns to the same sins.

## Joash / Jehoash

Little is said about **Joash / Jehoash**. He truly seems to be an individual oblivious to the opportunities presented to him. It is stated that he did NOT depart from the sins of Jeroboam,<sup>223</sup> but the narrative of Second Kings contains several passages where an “**anonymous king**” of Israel has positive interactions with Elisha.<sup>224</sup> Joash / Jehoash is most likely the “anonymous king”. When Elisha dies, it is clear that he and Joash / Jehoash had a positive relationship:

Now when **Elisha had fallen sick with the illness of which he was to die**,

**Joash king of Israel** went down to him and wept before him, crying,

“My father, my father!

The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!”

(2 Kings 13:14 ESV)

The **object lesson** in the life of Joash / Jehoash, for a person called “**To Be a King**”, is that **you never know how a positive influence will avail another**. Elisha obviously saw something in Joash / Jehoash and was willing to be his friend. Even though Joash / Jehoash never “got it” in this life, he will come up in the second resurrection, and his friend, Elisha, will be there to show him the Way of God.

## Jeroboam II & Zechariah

Although the Bible says little about Jeroboam, it was under his reign that North Israel attained its greatest period of power and prosperity.<sup>225</sup> His reign is frequently referred to as a “Golden Age”. Clearly, as an administrator and a military leader,<sup>226</sup> Jeroboam was a successful King; however, the summary of his reign is the same as the other Kings of North Israel:

And **he did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH]**.

**He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat**, which he made Israel to sin.

(2 Kings 14:24 ESV)

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<sup>223</sup> See 2 Kings 13:11

<sup>224</sup> See 2 Kings 5:8, 6:8-23, 8:1-6

<sup>225</sup> See Bright pages 257-259

<sup>226</sup> See 2 Kings 14:25-27

Although he paid lip service to YHWH, **Jeroboam clearly did NOT embrace the Way of God**. **The Books of the Prophets Amos and Hosea**<sup>227</sup> reveal the spiritual and social condition of Israel by the end of the Golden Age.<sup>228</sup> The people under Jeroboam had gotten so far away from the Way of God that the moral fabric of the nation was gone. **The physical abundance that Israel enjoyed turned out to be more of a curse than a blessing**. Because the nation, and many, perhaps most, of the individual people, rejected the Way of God, they went down the slippery slide of moral degeneracy leading to social, civil, and personal crimes.

The **object lesson** from Jeroboam is that **physical ability alone does NOT make a good King** – unless the Way of God is fully embraced, physical abundance will be a curse.

Jehu was promised descendants to the fourth generation on the throne. **Jeroboam's son, Zechariah**, the fourth generation from Jehu, did sit briefly on the throne. He continued in the policies of his father, including the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. After six months he was assassinated.

### 2.3.4 The Last Kings

Data on the last kings comprise 2 Kings 15:13-31, 17:1-6, Isaiah 7:1-6, and Josephus Book 9 paragraphs 11.1, 13:1, 14.1. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. These kings ruled for about 30 years, 752BC-722BC.

Under the last Kings of the Northern Kingdom, the degeneracy which had set in during the Golden Age took its toll. External factor also played into it – Assyria was moving west, and the nation could NOT avoid political entanglements. But in the end, the nation was destroyed by Assyria.

#### **Active Prophets:**

- Oded a prophet, ~735BC, 2 Chronicles 28:9-11
- Isaiah ~745BC-680BC
- Micah ~735BC-710BC

### Shallum, Menahem, & Pekahiah

Shallum assassinated Zechariah and enjoyed the throne for one month before he was assassinated by Menahem.<sup>229</sup> Menahem continued in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,<sup>230</sup> but also, he committed atrocities on civilian populations:

At that time **Menahem sacked Tiphshah** and all who were in it and its territory from Tirzah on, because they did not open it to him.  
Therefore he sacked it, and **he ripped open all the women in it who were pregnant**.  
(2 Kings 15:16 ESV)

With the help of Assyria,<sup>231</sup> he maintained power for ten years and **his son, Pekahiah**, continued his policies for two more years.

The **object lesson** from Menahem is that **once the Way of God is rejected**, there are no limits to the degeneracy into which a person can fall.

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<sup>227</sup> See Hosea 1:1, Amos 1:1

<sup>228</sup> The sins of Israel identified by the Prophets are discussed in section **3.4.2.2 The Sins of Israel** in the paper “Third Pillar - The Way of God” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>229</sup> See 2 Kings 15:10, 13-14

<sup>230</sup> See 2 Kings 15:18

<sup>231</sup> See 2 Kings 15:19-20

## Pekah & Hoshea

When Menahem killed Shallum, **Pekah established a rival Kingship in Gilead**. When Pekahiah came to the throne, there was some form of reconciliation, as Pekah assumed a position in Pekahiah's military.<sup>232</sup> From that position, Pekah assassinated Pekahiah and assumed Kingship in Samaria over the whole Northern Kingdom.<sup>233</sup>

Menahem and his son had maintained a pro-Assyrian policy. Pekah, in conjunction with Rezen King of Aram, pursued an anti-Assyrian policy.<sup>234</sup> This brought on the attack of Tiglath-pileser in 732BC:

In the days of Pekah king of Israel, **Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came** and captured Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and **he carried the people captive to Assyria**.  
(2 Kings 15:29 ESV)

This induced popular support for **Hoshea to assassinate Pekah** and assume a pro Assyrian policy.<sup>235</sup> Hoshea eventually looked to Egypt, rebelled against Assyria, was taken captive to Assyria, and the nation was destroyed by Assyria.<sup>236</sup>

Pekah is stated to have continued in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat;<sup>237</sup> while Hoshea apparently mitigated the sin in some way.<sup>238</sup>

The **object lesson** from these last two kings is that **worldly politics cannot be part of the repertoire** of one who is called "**To Be a King**".

### 2.3.5 Assessment of the Northern Kings

The Kings of the Northern Kingdom are living examples of the words of Jesus Christ:

For **many are called**, but **few are chosen**.  
(Matthew 22:14 ESV)

Jesus used this statement to summarize two parables related to "Kingship". In the **Parable of the Wedding Feast**, the "**King**" represents God the Father, and the "**Son**" is Jesus Christ. The originally invited "**guests**" were the people, especially **the Kings**, of ancient Israel. **Those finally gathered** to the Feast are those called to the New Testament Church:

And again **Jesus spoke to them in parables**, saying,

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to **a king who gave a wedding feast for his son**, and sent his servants to call **those who were invited** to the wedding feast, but they would not come.

Again he sent other servants, saying,

'Tell those who are invited,

"See, I have prepared my dinner,

my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready.

**Come to the wedding feast.**"

But **they paid no attention and went off**, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.

The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.<sup>239</sup>

Then he said to his servants,

'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy.

Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.'

And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good.

So **the wedding hall was filled with guests**. ..."

(Matthew 22:1-10 ESV)

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<sup>232</sup> See 2 Kings 15:25

<sup>233</sup> For a discussion of the events of this period, see Thiele Chapter Six, pages 118-140.

<sup>234</sup> See Isaiah 7:1-6

<sup>235</sup> See 2 Kings 15:30, 17:3

<sup>236</sup> See 2 Kings 17:4-6

<sup>237</sup> See 2 Kings 15:28

<sup>238</sup> See 2 Kings 17:2

<sup>239</sup> This, of course, is a prophecy of the impending fate of Jerusalem in 70AD.

The Kings of the Northern Kingdom are clearly among those who “**paid no attention and went off**”. Jesus then followed up this parable with the **Parable of the Wedding Garment**. This parable is aimed at those who respond to the call, i.e., the New Testament Church:

But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there **a man who had no wedding garment**.

And he said to him,

‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’

**And he was speechless.**

Then the king said to the attendants,

‘Bind him hand and foot and **cast him into the outer darkness.**

In that place **there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**’

For **many are called**, but **few are chosen.**”

(Matthew 22:11-14 ESV)

The point of the **Parable of the Wedding Garment** is that there is now way to “sneak into the Kingdom of God”. To participate in the first resurrection is the free gift of God the Father upon his, and only his discretion. **To be considered as a candidate for the gift of eternal life, a person must fully embrace and commit to the Way of God.** Although all the Kings of the Northern Kingdom were “called”, not one of them fully embraced and committed to the Way of God. That is the point of the object lessons discernible from the lives of those Kings. They all had exposure to the Way of God and one way or another rejected it.

Many were “oblivious” to the calling, ignoring the Way of God, “**seed fell along the path**”:

- Nadab
- Baasha
- Elah
- Zimri
- Tibni
- Joash / Jehoash
- Jeroboam II
- Zechariah
- Shallum
- Menahem
- Pekahiah
- Pekah

Some “paid lip service” to the Way of God, “**seed fell on rocky ground**”:

- Jeroboam I
- Joram / Jehoram
- Jehu
- Jehoahaz
- Hoshea

Some “blatantly reject God”, spurning the Way of God for pagan ways, “**seed fell among thorns**”:

- Omri
- Ahab
- Ahaziah

## **2.4 The Southern Kingdom**

**The Kings of the Southern Kingdom could NOT remain oblivious to the Way of God as many of the Northern Kings did.** The Temple service was an everyday part of their lives. There are no prescriptions in the Writings of Moses compelling the Kings to participate in the Temple Service, but it is recorded that many of them made significant offerings. Most of the Southern Kings simply “paid lip service” to the Way of God, “**seed fell on rocky ground**”. A few of the Southern Kings blatantly reject God and

embraced pagan ways , “**seed fell among thorns**”. At least a couple fulfilled the fourth category of the **Parable of the Sower and the Seed**:

And **other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain**,  
growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.  
And he said, “**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**”  
But those that were sown on the good soil  
are **the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit**,  
thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.  
(Mark 4:8-9, 20 ESV // Matthew 13:8-9, 23, Luke 8:8, 15)

**Those who produce fruit** are the ones who have “**ears to hear**” and do “**hear**”. Jesus frequently used this, and similar expressions, to refer to **people who are truly converted**.<sup>240</sup> There is no explicit statement in the Bible, but it seems safe to assume that for at least a couple of the Southern Kings, the decision has been made, and they will be granted the gift of eternal life in the first resurrection.

For many of the Southern Kings, the Chronicler has provided considerable details beyond what the author of the Books of Kings has provided. In some cases, the perspective of the Chronicler is quite different from the author of the Books of Kings.

The Kings of the Southern Kingdom are assessed by how they relate to the Way of God. They were all fully exposed to the Way of God by the Temple Service and by the Prophets of God. A person called “**To Be a King**” must fully commit to the Way of God. Learning the Way of God and living by the Way of God are pre-requisite to be consider by God as a candidate for the gift of eternal life. “**To Be a King**”, **with the King of kings, Jesus Christ, requires eternal life.**

### List of Southern Kings<sup>241</sup>

King	Dates	Assessment	Coregent	Dates
Rehoboam	931/930 – 913	bad		
Abijam / Abijah	913 – 911/910	bad		
Asa	911/910 – 870/869	good	Jehoshaphat	873/872 – 870/869
Jehoshaphat	870/869 – 848	good	Joram / Jehoram	853 – 848
Joram / Jehoram	848 – 841	bad		
Ahaziah	841	bad		
Athaliah (Queen)	841 – 835	bad		
Joash / Jehoash	835 – 796	mixture		
Amaziah	796 - 767	mixture	Azariah / Uzziah	792/791 – 767
Azariah / Uzziah	767 – 740/739	mixture	Jotham	750 – 740/739
Jotham	740/739 – 732/731	good	Ahaz	735 – 732/731
Ahaz	732/731 – 716/715	bad		
Hezekiah	716/715 – 687/686	good	Manasseh	697/696 – 687/686
Manasseh	687/686 – 643/642	bad		
Amon	643/642 – 641/640	bad		
Josiah	641/640 – 609	good		

<sup>240</sup> See Matthew 11:15, 13:9,43, Luke 14:35, Revelation 2:7,11,17,29, 3:6,13,22, 13:9

<sup>241</sup> These dates are based on Thiele; for more detailed information see the chart “**Chronology of the Divided Monarchy**” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>.

King	Dates	Assessment	Coregent	Dates
Jehoahaz / Shallum	609	bad		
Jehoiakim / Eliakim	609 – 598	bad		
Jehoiachin / Jeconiah / Coniah	598 – 597	bad		
Zedekiah / Mattaniah	597 – 586	bad		

### 2.4.1 Rehoboam & Abijam / Abijah

The data on Rehoboam and Abijam / Abiah comprise 1 Kings 12:1-24, 14:21-31, 15:1-8, 2 Chronicles chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, and Josephus Book 8 paragraphs 8.1, 8.2, chapter 10, paragraphs 11.2, 11.3. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. In paragraph 8.10.3, Josephus makes a dubious allusion to Herodotus. This is a period of about twenty years, 831BC-910BC.

#### Active prophets:

- Shemaiah the man of God, ~930-925BC, 1 Kings 12:22-24, 2 Chronicles 11:2-4, 12:5-8, 15
- Iddo the seer, ~910BC, 2 Chronicles 9:29, 12:15, 13:22

At the death of Solomon, Rehoboam's encounter with Jeroboam and the Northern Tribes at Shechem is famous. **The people demand relief from the burdens placed on them by Solomon.**<sup>242</sup> Rehoboam inquires of those with experience and wisdom:

Then **King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men,**  
who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying,  
"How do you advise me to answer this people?"

And they said to him,  
"**If you will be a servant to this people** today and serve them,  
and speak good words to them when you answer them,  
then they will be your servants forever."

(1 Kings 12:6-7 ESV // 2 Chronicles 10:6-7)

**The "old men" had come to understand that a King's job is to serve his people.**<sup>243</sup> Unfortunately, Rehoboam listened to the "young men" who saw opportunity for personal advantage.<sup>244</sup> As a result the Northern Tribes split away from the House of David.<sup>245</sup> This is a classic mistake of a "young" person. Wise counsel is all the more important for a person with little experience. After this Rehoboam exhibits classic behaviour of a person familiar with the Way of God, but NOT committed to it. When things were good, he ignored God and went his own way, only to resort to "**worldly repentance**"<sup>246</sup> as soon as things got bad:

**When the rule of Rehoboam was established and he was strong, he abandoned [torah]<sup>247</sup> of [YHWH], and all Israel with him.**

In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, because they had been unfaithful to [YHWH], Shishak<sup>248</sup> king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem ...

Then **Shemaiah the prophet** came to Rehoboam and to the princes of Judah, who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them,  
"Thus says [YHWH],

<sup>242</sup> See 1 Kings 12:1-4 // 2 Chronicles 10:1-4

<sup>243</sup> See 1 Kings 12:6-7 // 2 Chronicles 10:6-7

<sup>244</sup> See 1 Kings 12:8-14 // 2 Chronicles 10:8-14

<sup>245</sup> See 1 Kings 12:16-19 // 2 Chronicles 10:16-19

<sup>246</sup> See 2 Corinthians 7:10

<sup>247</sup> See footnote 13

<sup>248</sup> Ramses II, see Rohl (TT) pages 133-157, 175-204

‘You abandoned me, so I have abandoned you to the hand of Shishak.’”

**Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves** and said,

“[YHWH] is righteous.”

When [YHWH] saw that they humbled themselves, the word of [YHWH] came to Shemaiah:

“They have humbled themselves.

I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance ...”

(2 Chronicles 12:1-2, 5-7a ESV)

Clearly, Rehoboam did NOT take his commitment to YHWH seriously:

And **Judah did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH]**,

and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins that they committed,  
more than all that their fathers had done.

For they also built for themselves high places and pillars and Asherim  
on every high hill and under every green tree,  
and there were also male cult prostitutes in the land.

**They did according to all the abominations of the nations**

that [YHWH] drove out before the people of Israel.

(1 Kings 14:22-24 ESV)

Rehoboam’s son, **Abijam / Abijah**, was a “chip off the old block”:

Abijam began to reign over Judah.

And **he walked in all the sins that his father did before him,**

and **his heart was not wholly true to [YHWH] his God ...**

(1 Kings 15:1b, 3a ESV)

Rehoboam and his son Abijam / Abijah are examples of “**seed fell on rocky ground**”. They “paid lip service” to the Way of God but did NOT live it. A person called “**To be a King**” must take the commitment seriously – distinguish between good advice and bad advice and NOT stray when times are “good”.

## 2.4.2 Asa & Jehoshaphat

The data on Asa and Jehoshaphat comprise 1 Kings 15:9-24, 22:1-12, 29-32, 41-50, 2 Chronicles chapters 14 through 20, and Josephus Book 8 paragraphs 11.3, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.6, chapter 15, Book 9 chapter 1, paragraph 3.1. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. This is a period of about 60 years, 911BC-848BC.

### **Active prophets:**

- Iddo the seer, ~910BC, 2 Chronicles 9:29, 12:15, 13:22
- Azariah the son of Oded, ~895BC, 2 Chronicles 15:1-8
- Hanani the seer, ~890, 2 Chronicles 16:7-10
- Micaiah the son of Imlah, ~853BC, 1 Kings 22:8-28, 2 Chronicles 18:4-27
- Jehu<sup>249</sup> the son of Hanani the Seer, ~852BC, 2 Chronicles 19:2-3, 20:34
- Eliezer the son of Dodavahu, ~850BC, 2 Chronicles 20:35-37

With Asa we encounter the first King of the Divided Monarchy that appears to be identified by “**seeds fell into good soil and produced grain**”. Asa does appear to “**hear the word and accept it and bear fruit**”. Perhaps he is one “**who has ears to hear**”.

**The overall assessment of Asa is good** – he was personally committed to the Way of God; he removed idolatry from the land; and, he directed the people to the Way of God:

And **Asa did what was right in the eyes of [YHWH]**, as David his father had done.

He put away the male cult prostitutes out of the land  
and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

(1 Kings 15:11-12 ESV)

And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of [YHWH] his God.

He took away the foreign altars and the high places and broke down the pillars  
and cut down the Asherim and **commanded Judah to seek [YHWH]**, the God of their fathers,

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<sup>249</sup> This “Jehu” is almost certainly NOT the same “Jehu” of 1 Kings chapter 16. If it is the same person, he is extremely old.

and **to keep the [torah]<sup>250</sup> and the commandment.**

He also took out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the incense altars.  
(2 Chronicles 14:2-5a ESV)

As soon as Asa heard these words, the prophecy of **Azariah the son of Oded**,<sup>251</sup> he took courage and put away the detestable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim, and **he repaired the altar** of [YHWH] that was in front of the vestibule of the house of [YHWH].

And **they entered into a covenant to seek [YHWH]**, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their [being] (nephesh),<sup>252</sup> but that whoever would not seek [YHWH], the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether young or old, man or woman.

**They swore an oath to [YHWH]** with a loud voice and with shouting and with trumpets and with horns. And **all Judah rejoiced over the oath**, for **they had sworn with all their heart** and had **sought him with their whole desire**, and he was found by them, and [YHWH] gave them rest all around.  
(2 Chronicles 15:8, 12-15 ESV)

The Chronicler reports a war with Zerah the Ethiopian in which Asa prayed, and God delivered Israel.<sup>253</sup> Later Asa was under pressure from Baasha of the Northern Kingdom. Instead of relying on God for deliverance, Asa entered into a treaty with Ben-hadad King of Aram.<sup>254</sup> Asa is castigated for this action and his subsequent reaction is reported:

At that time **Hanani the seer** came to Asa king of Judah and said to him,  
“Because **you relied on the king of [Aram]**, and **did not rely on [YHWH] your God** ...  
You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.”

Then **Asa was angry with the seer** and put him in the stocks in prison, for he was in a rage with him because of this.  
And **Asa inflicted cruelties upon some of the people** at the same time.  
(2 Chronicles 16:7a, 9b-10 ESV)

Clearly, no human being is without sin.<sup>255</sup> David was severely castigated for his sins and suffered severe penalties, even though he repented and was forgiven. We do not have as much information on Asa as on David, but clearly criticism does NOT imply condemnation:

My son, **do not despise the [YHWH's] discipline** or be weary of his reproof, for **[YHWH] reproves him whom he loves**, as a father the son in whom he delights.  
(Proverbs 3:11-12 ESV)

Asa apparently suffered in his old age, and did not fully learn his lesson,<sup>256</sup> but we do NOT have enough information to know whether or NOT the injunction “**let him hear**” will or will NOT be positively answered for Asa. Asa’s son **Jehoshaphat has an even clearer record** than his father. The general assessment of him is very good:

Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah ...  
**He walked in all the way of Asa his father.**  
He did not turn aside from it, **doing what was right in the sight of [YHWH]**.  
(1 Kings 22:41a, 43a ESV)

[YHWH] was with Jehoshaphat, because **he walked in the earlier ways of his father David**. He did not seek the Baals, but **sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments**, and not according to the practices of Israel.  
**His heart was courageous in the ways of [YHWH]**.  
(2 Chronicles 17:3-4, 6a ESV)

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<sup>250</sup> See footnote 13

<sup>251</sup> See 2 Chronicles 15:1-7

<sup>252</sup> See footnote 21

<sup>253</sup> See 2 Chronicles 14:9-13

<sup>254</sup> See 1 Kings 15:16-22, 2 Chronicles 16:1-6

<sup>255</sup> See 1 Kings 8:46 // 2 Chronicles 6:36, Proverbs 20:9, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Romans 3:23, James 3:2, 1 John 1:8,10

<sup>256</sup> See 2 Chronicles 16:12

Jehoshaphat sent teams of officials, priests, and Levites, throughout the land to teach the Way of God.<sup>257</sup> He also reorganized civil judges in the land<sup>258</sup> with the following injunction:

... and said to the judges,

“Consider what you do, for **you judge not for man but for [YHWH]**.

He is with you in giving judgment.

Now then, **let the fear of [YHWH] be upon you.**

Be careful what you do,

for there is no injustice with [YHWH] our God, or partiality or taking bribes.”

And he charged them:

“Thus you shall do in the fear of [YHWH], in faithfulness, and **with your whole heart:** ...”

(2 Chronicles 19:6-7, 9 ESV)

The only reported criticism of Jehoshaphat is his attempt to foster cooperation with the Northern Kingdom. Jehoshaphat went to battle with King Ahab.<sup>259</sup> For his participation in the battle he castigated by the **Seer Jehu ben Hanani:**

**Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel.**

(1 Kings 22:44 ESV)

Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned in safety to his house in Jerusalem.

But Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat,

“**Should you help the wicked and love those who hate [YHWH]?**

Because of this, wrath has gone out against you from [YHWH].

(2 Chronicles 19:1-2 ESV)

The worst result of this friendship was securing Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, as a wife for his son Joram / Jehoram:

Now **Jehoshaphat** had great riches and honor, and he **made a marriage alliance with Ahab.**

(2 Chronicles 18:1 ESV)

Jehoshaphat is one who may be classified as “**seeds fell into good soil and produced grain**”. While Jehoshaphat was certainly a “good” King, almost certainly a True Worshipper of God and, therefore, a candidate for the gift of eternal life, his friendship with the evil King, Ahab, sowed the seeds of one of the darkest periods in the history of the Southern Kingdom.

A person called “**To Be a King**” needs to learn from the mistakes recorded of others. Asa apparently got to a state of mind where he choose to trust in man rather than God – “faith” says always look to God. Jehoshaphat perhaps thought he was doing well in cooperating with Ahab but working with evil people seldom brings good results. A person called “**To Be a King**” needs to clearly distinguish between “good” and “evil”, “right” and “wrong”, “clean” and “unclean”.<sup>260</sup>

### 2.4.3 Joram / Jehoram, Ahaziah, & Athalia

The data on Joram / Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athalia comprise 2 Kings 8:16-29, 9:27-29, 11:1-3, 2 Chronicles chapters 21 and 22, and Josephus Book 9 paragraph 4.1, chapter 5, paragraphs 7.1, 7.3. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. This is a period of about a dozen years, 848BC-835BC.

#### **Active Prophets:**

- Elijah ~875-845 2 Chronicles 21:12-15
- Elisha ~860-790
- Joel ~845 2 Chronicles 21:12-14

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<sup>257</sup> See 2 Chronicles 17:7-9

<sup>258</sup> See 2 Chronicles 19:5-11

<sup>259</sup> See 1 Kings 22:1-36, 2 Chronicles 18:1-34

<sup>260</sup> See Leviticus 10:11, Ezekiel 22:26, 44:23

**Joram / Jehoram was the first King of the Southern Kingdom to reject God and pursue pagan ways.**<sup>261</sup>

A large factor in this was his marriage to Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Having rejected the Way of God, he reverted to horrible crimes:

And **Joram walked in the way of the kings of Israel,**

as the house of Ahab had done,

for the daughter of Ahab was his wife.

And **he did what was evil** in the sight of [YHWH].

(2 Kings 8:18 ESV // 2 Chronicles 21:6 )

When **Jehoram** had ascended the throne of his father and was established,

he **killed all his brothers with the sword,**

and also some of the princes of Israel.

(2 Chronicles 21:4 ESV)

The son of Joram / Jehoram and Athaliah, Ahaziah, continued the apostasy of his father.<sup>262</sup> Ahaziah was executed by Jehu,<sup>263</sup> at which point his mother Athaliah attempted exterminate all the royal princes<sup>264</sup> and assumed the rulership herself as Queen.<sup>265</sup> One son of Ahaziah was saved by Ahaziah's sister, Jehosheba / Jehoshabath,<sup>266</sup> who was married to the high priest Jehoiada.

Joram / Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athalia were clearly **“seed fell among thorns”**. All blatantly pursued pagan ways rejecting God. All that can be learned from them is that **evil ensues when The Way of God is rejected**.

#### 2.4.4 Joash / Jehoash, & Amaziah

The data on Joash / Jehoash and Amaziah comprise 2 Kings 11:4-21, chapter 12, 14:1-20, 2 Chronicles chapters 23, 24, 25, and Josephus Book 9 paragraphs 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 8.7, chapter 9. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. This is a period of about 70 years, 835BC-767BC.

##### **Active Prophets:**

- un-named prophets, ~805BC, 2 Chronicles 24:19
- Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, ~805BC, 2 Chronicles 24:20-22
- An un-named prophet, ~785BC, 2 Chronicles 25:15-16
- Elisha ~860-790

One of the most famous incidents in the Bible is the story of Jehosheba / Jehoshabath and Jehoiada saving baby Joash / Jehoash and establishing him as King. Joash / Jehoash was hidden for six years<sup>267</sup> then Jehoiada arranged a coup-de-ta,<sup>268</sup> Athaliah was killed,<sup>269</sup> and eight-year-old Joash / Jehoash was made King.<sup>270</sup>

As King, **Joash / Jehoash is something of a tragic story**. He had the guardianship of Jehoiada the High Priest as he grew up, and Jehoiada remained his counsellor until the death of Jehoiada. During these years, Joash / Jehoash did well,<sup>271</sup> but at the death of Jehoiada, Joash / Jehoash turned from the Way of God:

And **Jehoash did what was right** in the eyes of [YHWH] all his days,

**because Jehoiada the priest instructed him.**

(2 Kings 12:2 ESV // 2 Chronicles 24:2 )

But **Jehoiada grew old and full of days, and died.**

He was 130 years old at his death.

Now after the death of Jehoiada **the princes of Judah came and paid homage to the king.**

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<sup>261</sup> See 2 Chronicles 21:11-13

<sup>262</sup> See 2 Kings 8:26-27, 2 Chronicles 22:2-4

<sup>263</sup> See 2 Kings 9:27-28, 2 Chronicles 22:7-9

<sup>264</sup> See 2 Kings 11:1, 2 Chronicles 22:10

<sup>265</sup> See 2 Kings 11:3, 2 Chronicles 22:12

<sup>266</sup> See 2 Kings 11:2, 2 Chronicles 22:11

<sup>267</sup> See 2 Kings 11:2-3, 2 Chronicle 22:11-12

<sup>268</sup> See 2 Kings 11:4-11, 2 Chronicles 23:1-10

<sup>269</sup> See 2 Kings 11:13-16, 2 Chronicles 23:12-15

<sup>270</sup> See 2 Kings 11:12, 2 Chronicles 23:11

<sup>271</sup> The Temple was repaired: 2 Kings 12:4-16, 2 Chronicles 24:4-14

Then **the king listened to them.**  
And **they abandoned the house of [YHWH]**, the God of their fathers,  
and **served the Asherim and the idols.**  
(2 Chronicles 24:15, 17-18a ESV)

Through the tutelage of Jehoiada, Joash / Jehoash had a better opportunity than most to know and fully embrace the Way of God. **He clearly only “paid lip service” to serving God.** He was easily swayed to embrace idolatry. After his apostasy, he degenerated to the horrible crime of murdering Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada.<sup>272</sup>

The son of Joash / Jehoash, Amaziah, followed a very similar path as his father. Amaziah started out well, but later in life fell into idolatry. **His early “fear of God” was clearly “lip service”:**

And **[Amaziah] did what was right in the eyes of [YHWH]**,  
yet not like David his father.

He did in all things as Joash his father had done.  
(2 Kings 14:3 ESV)

And he did what was right in the eyes of [YHWH], **yet not with a whole heart.**  
(2 Chronicles 25:2 ESV)

After Amaziah came from striking down the Edomites,  
**he brought the gods of the men of Seir**  
and **set them up as his gods and worshiped them,** making offerings to them.  
Therefore [YHWH] was angry with Amaziah  
and sent to him a prophet, who said to him,

“**Why have you sought the gods** of a people  
who did not deliver their own people from your hand?”  
(2 Chronicles 25:14-15 ESV)

Both Joash / Jehoash and Amaziah can be classed as **“seed fell on rocky ground”**. A person called **“To Be a King”** must value the opportunity and embrace it with the whole heart. Both Joash / Jehoash and Amaziah showed **some understanding of the Way of God**, but **they did NOT internalize it.**

#### 2.4.5 Azariah / Uzziah, & Jotham

The data on Azariah / Uzziah and Jotham comprise 2 Kings 14:21-22, 15:1-7, 32-38, 2 Chronicles chapters 26 and 27, and Josephus Book 9 paragraphs 10.3, 10.4, 11.2. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. This is a period of about 35 years, 767BC-731BC.

##### Active Prophets:

- Amos ~760BC
- Hosea ~755BC-710BC
- Isaiah ~745BC-680BC
- Micah ~735BC-710BC

Azariah / Uzziah started out well. Similarly to Joash / Jehoash with Jehoiada, Azariah / Uzziah had a mentor, a certain Zechariah, who is otherwise unknown:

And **[Azariah / Uzziah] did what was right in the eyes of [YHWH]**,  
according to all that his father Amaziah had done.  
He set himself to seek God in the days of **Zechariah,**  
who **instructed him in the fear of God,**  
and as long as he sought [YHWH], God made him prosper.  
(2 Chronicles 26:4-5 ESV see also 2 Kings 15:3)

Azariah / Uzziah like his contemporary in Northern Israel, Jeroboam II, was very able ruler.<sup>273</sup> Theirs was the “Golden Age” of the late history of Israel. Possibly his accomplishments went to his head because he became “proud” and acted foolishly:

But **when he was strong, he grew proud,** to his destruction.  
For **he was unfaithful to [YHWH] his God and entered the temple** of [YHWH]  
to burn incense on the altar of incense.

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<sup>272</sup> See 2 Chronicles 24:20-22

<sup>273</sup> Accomplishments of Azariah / Uzziah are noted in 2 Chronicles 26:6-15.

But **Azariah the priest** went in after him, with eighty priests of [YHWH] who were men of valor, and they withstood King Uzziah and said to him,  
“It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to [YHWH],  
but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense.  
Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong,  
and it will bring you no honor from [YHWH] God.”

**Then Uzziah was angry.**

Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, **leprosy broke out** on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of [YHWH], by the altar of incense.  
(2 Chronicles 26:16-19 ESV)

Due to the “leprosy”, Azariah / Uzziah was forced to cede the reins of government to his son Jotham. Under Jotham, the Golden Age continued in the South,<sup>274</sup> whereas it had collapsed with the death of Jeroboam II in the North. **There is reported no criticism of Jotham**, only that he did well:

And **he did what was right in the eyes of [YHWH]**  
according to all that his father Uzziah had done,  
except he did not enter the temple of [YHWH].  
(2 Chronicles 27:2a ESV see also 2 Kings 15:34)

Azariah / Uzziah seems to have followed the pattern of his father and grandfather. He started out well and showed promise in living by the Way of God, but clearly did NOT internalize it. He seems to be classed as “**seed fell on rocky ground**”. A person called “**To Be a King**” must value the opportunity and embrace it with the whole heart. Perhaps Jotham is one about whom the saying will be true, “**he who has ears to hear, let him hear**”, “**seeds fell into good soil and produced grain**”.

## 2.4.6 Ahaz

The data on Ahaz comprise 2 Kings chapter 16, 2 Chronicles chapter 28, Isaiah chapter 7, and Josephus Book 8 chapter 12. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. This is a period of about 15 years, 732BC-715BC.

### **Active Prophets:**

- Isaiah ~745BC-680BC
- Micah ~735BC-710BC
- Oded ~735BC, 2 Chronicles 28:9-11

Neither the author of the Book of Kings nor the Chronicler has anything good to say about Ahaz – in both books he is roundly castigated:

And **[Ahaz] did not do what was right** in the eyes of [YHWH] his God, as his father David had done, but **he walked in the way of the kings of Israel**.

**He even burned his son as an offering**, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom [YHWH] drove out before the people of Israel.

And he sacrificed and made offerings on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.  
(2 Kings 16:2b-4 ESV)

And he did not do what was right in the eyes of [YHWH], as his father David had done, but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel.

**He even made metal images for the Baals**,

and he made offerings in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom and burned his sons as an offering, **according to the abominations of the nations** whom [YHWH] drove out before the people of Israel.

And he sacrificed and made offerings on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.  
(2 Chronicles 28:1b-4 ESV)

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<sup>274</sup> The accomplishments of Jotham are noted in 2 Chronicles 27:3-7.

Ahaz fully rejected God and embraced the pagan ways of the world around him.<sup>275</sup> Ahaz's biggest mistake as a king was to willingly place himself as a vassal to Tiglath-pileser King of Assyria:

So **Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria**, saying,

**"I am your servant and your son.**

Come up and rescue me from the hand of the king of [Aram]  
and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me."

(2 Kings 16:7 ESV)

So **Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him.**

For Ahaz took a portion from the house of [YHWH] and the house of the king and of the princes,  
and **gave tribute to the king of Assyria**, but **it did not help him.**

(2 Chronicles 28:20-21 ESV)

The Southern Kingdom never recovered from this. It remained a vassal of the Assyrian Empire until the end of the Assyrian Empire. God had forbidden this, **"you may not put a foreigner over you"**,<sup>276</sup> and Ahaz suffered great punishment for it.<sup>277</sup> This inclination of Ahaz to resort to Assyria is perhaps the reason that Isaiah was sent to him at the beginning of his reign:

And **[YHWH] said to Isaiah**,

**"Go out to meet Ahaz**, you and Shear-jashub your son,  
at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field.

**And say to him**,

**'Be careful, be quiet, do not fear**, and do not let your heart be faint  
because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands,  
at the fierce anger of Rezin [even]<sup>278</sup> [Aram] and the son of Remaliah.  
Because [Aram], with Ephraim [even] the son of Remaliah, has devised evil against you,  
saying,

"Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves,  
and **set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it,"**

thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

**'It shall not stand**, and **it shall not come to pass.**

**If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.'"**

(Isaiah 7:3-7, 9b ESV)

**Due to the promise to David**, God would NOT allow Rezin and Pekah son of Remaliah to replace Ahaz by the son of Tabeel, a non-descendant of David, **"it shall not come to pass"**. At this point, at the beginning of his reign, God hoped to influence Ahaz to go the right way, **"if you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all"**.<sup>279</sup> Clearly, Ahaz chose poorly.

Ahaz is clearly to be classed as **"seed fell among thorns"**. Through Isaiah, God tried to reach him early in his career. It seems likely that he was forced to the throne by the "pro-Assyrian faction". That is the object lesson for anyone called **"To Be a King": avoid manipulation by special interest groups**. God was willing to work with Ahaz, but he chose to go the way of the world.

## 2.4.7 Hezekiah

The data on Hezekiah comprise 2 Kings chapters 18, 19, 20, 2 Chronicles chapters 29, 30, 31, 32, Isaiah chapters 36, 37, 38, 39, and Josephus Book 9 chapter 13, Book 10 chapter 1, paragraph 2.1. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. This is a period of about 30 years, 716BC-686BC.

### Active Prophets:

- Isaiah ~745BC-680BC
- Micah ~735BC-710BC

The Bible contains more information on Hezekiah than any other king of the divided monarchy. **The Bible does NOT tell us who provided the tutelage to Hezekiah** which made him so different from his

<sup>275</sup> See 2 Kings 16:1-16, 2 Chronicles 28:22-25

<sup>276</sup> See the discussion in section [2.1 The Concept of "Kingship"](#).

<sup>277</sup> See 2 Chronicles 28:5-8, 17-20

<sup>278</sup> See footnote [16](#)

<sup>279</sup> For further discussion of Isaiah's encounter with Ahaz, see [Excursus 1 – The Immanuel Cycle](#).

father Ahaz. His mother is identified as “Abi the daughter of Zechariah”.<sup>280</sup> No particular priest is identified to have mentored Hezekiah, but clearly, he was properly taught in the Way of God:

**And [Hezekiah] did what was right** in the eyes of [YHWH],  
according to all that David his father had done.  
He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah.  
And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made,  
for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan).

**He trusted in [YHWH]**, the God of Israel,  
so that **there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him,**  
**nor among those who were before him.**  
For **he held fast to [YHWH].**  
He did not depart from following him,  
but **kept the commandments** that [YHWH] commanded Moses.  
And **[YHWH] was with him**; wherever he went out, he prospered.  
(2 Kings 18:3-7a ESV)

**An overriding passion of Hezekiah was to free his Kingdom from Assyrian vassalage.** To accomplish this, Hezekiah looked in faith to God:

**He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him.**

And **Hezekiah prayed** before [YHWH] and said:

“[YHWH], the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim,  
**you are the God, you alone**, of all the kingdoms of the earth;  
you have made the heavens and the earth.

Incline your ear, [YHWH], and hear; open your eyes, [YHWH], and see;  
and **hear the words of Sennacherib**, which **he has sent to mock the living God.**  
Truly, [YHWH], the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands  
and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods,  
but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone.  
Therefore they were destroyed.

**So now, [YHWH] our God, save us**, please, from his hand,  
that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, [YHWH], are God alone.”  
(2 Kings 18:7b, 19:15-19 ESV // Isaiah 37:15-20)

**Hezekiah first rebelled against Assyria at the death of Sargon in 705BC.** It took Sennacherib until 701BC to come west, and Hezekiah was forced to capitulate: <sup>281</sup>

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah,

**Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.**

And **Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish**, saying,

“I have done wrong; withdraw from me.  
Whatever you impose on me I will bear.”

And the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah  
three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

And **Hezekiah gave him all** the silver that was found in the house of [YHWH]  
and in the treasuries of the king’s house.  
(2 Kings 18:13-15 ESV)

The occasion of **Hezekiah’s second rebellion** is NOT clear,<sup>282</sup> but this time God provided the deliverance:

When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, **Isaiah said to them**,

“Say to your master,

**‘Thus says [YHWH]:**

**Do not be afraid** because of the words that you have heard,  
with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me.  
Behold, I will put a spirit in him,  
so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land,  
and **I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.”**

(2 Kings 19:5-7 ESV see also verses 32-34 // Isaiah 37:33-35)

<sup>280</sup> See 2 Kings 18:2

<sup>281</sup> See Sennacherib’s account of this in **DOTT** pages 64-69, and **ANE** volume I pages 199-201.

<sup>282</sup> For a detailed analysis of the events of this period, see Bright, page 298-309.

And that night **the angel of [YHWH] went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians.**  
And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.  
(2 Kings 19:35 ESV // Isaiah 37:36)

Hezekiah was NOT without criticism.<sup>283</sup> He was all too quick to gussy up to the envoys of Merodach-baladin,<sup>284</sup> to which Isaiah replied:

Then **Isaiah said to Hezekiah,**

“Hear the word of [YHWH]:

Behold, the days are coming, when **all that is in your house,**  
and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, **shall be carried to Babylon.**  
Nothing shall be left, says [YHWH].  
And some of your own sons, who will come from you,  
whom you will father, shall be taken away,  
and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

(2 Kings 20:16-18 ESV // Isaiah 39:5-7)

**Hezekiah is most famous for his reforms** as reported by the Chronicler:<sup>285</sup>

**In the first year of his reign,** in the first month,

**he opened the doors of the house of [YHWH] and repaired them.**

**He brought in the priests and the Levites** and assembled them in the square on the east and said to them,

“Hear me, Levites! Now consecrate yourselves,  
and consecrate the house of [YHWH], the God of your fathers,  
and carry out the filth from the Holy Place.

For **our fathers have been unfaithful**

**and have done what was evil** in the sight of [YHWH] our God.

They have forsaken him and have turned away their faces from the habitation of [YHWH] and turned their backs.

They also shut the doors of the vestibule and put out the lamps  
and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the Holy Place to the God of Israel.

Therefore the wrath of [YHWH] came on Judah and Jerusalem,  
and he has made them an object of horror, of astonishment,  
and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes.

For behold, our fathers have fallen by the sword,  
and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this.

Now **it is in my heart to make a covenant with [YHWH]**, the God of Israel,  
in order that his fierce anger may turn away from us.

**My sons, do not now be negligent,** for [YHWH] has chosen you to stand in his presence,  
to minister to him and to be his ministers and make offerings to him.”

(2 Chronicles 29:3-11 ESV)

The Temple was cleansed and repaired.<sup>286</sup> The Temple service was restored.<sup>287</sup> Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread were celebrated with much enthusiasm, even keeping a second set of seven days.<sup>288</sup> Finally, the priests and Levites were reorganized.<sup>289</sup>

Although the Bible is NOT explicit, all that is said about Hezekiah would indicate that he is represented by the **“seeds fell into good soil and produced grain”**. Hezekiah seems to be among those about whom it may be positively stated, **“he who has ears to hear, let him hear”**. Hezekiah’s commitment to the Way of God surely puts him among the candidates for the gift of eternal life. The object lesson for anyone called **“To Be a King”** is to **persevere**. Repent of mistakes made and don’t waver from the Way of God. **Trust in God with faith.**

<sup>283</sup> The Chronicler asserts that he had a problem with “pride”, see 2 Chronicles 32:25.

<sup>284</sup> See 2 Kings 20:12-15 // Isaiah 39:1-4

<sup>285</sup> See the summary chart in [Appendix: Chart of Hezekiah’s Reform](#).

<sup>286</sup> See 2 Chronicles 29:12-19

<sup>287</sup> See 2 Chronicles 29:20-36

<sup>288</sup> See 2 Chronicles chapter 30

<sup>289</sup> See 2 Chronicles 31:1-19

### 2.4.8 Manasseh & Amon

The data on Manasseh and Amon comprise 2 Kings chapter 21, 2 Chronicles chapter 33, and Josephus Book 10 chapter 3, paragraph 4.1. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. This is a period of about 45 years, 687-640BC.

#### **Active Prophets:**

- Isaiah ~745BC-680BC
- Micah ~735BC-710BC
- Nahum ~650BC

The summary of Manasseh pretty much says all that needs be said about him:

And **Manasseh did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH]**, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom [YHWH] drove out before the people of Israel.

For **he rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had destroyed**, and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.

And he built altars in the house of [YHWH], of which [YHWH] had said,  
“In Jerusalem will I put my name.”

And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of [YHWH].

And **he burned his son as an offering** and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers.

He did much evil in the sight of [YHWH], provoking him to anger.

And the carved image of Asherah that he had made he set in the house of which [YHWH] said to David and to Solomon his son,

“In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever. ...”

... **Manasseh led** them astray

**to do more evil than the nations** had done whom [YHWH] destroyed before the people of Israel. (2 Kings 21:2-7, 9b ESV // 2 Chronicles 33:2-7, 9)

Manasseh clearly rejected God and vigorously pursued the way of the world, “**seed fell among thorns**”. However, **the Chronicler records a bout of repentance for Manasseh**.<sup>290</sup> Time will tell whether this was true repentance or worldly repentance. In any case, his son **Amon** followed his evil ways and did NOT repent:

And **Amon did what was evil** in the sight of [YHWH], as Manasseh his father had done.

Amon sacrificed to all the images that Manasseh his father had made, and served them.

And **he did not humble himself** before [YHWH], as Manasseh his father had humbled himself, but this **Amon incurred guilt more and more**.

(2 Chronicles 33:22-23 ESV see also 2 Kings 21:20-22)

An object lesson from Manasseh is that **the effect of evil cannot be easily undone**. Even if Manasseh’s repentance was real, the corrupting influence of his apostasy was such that the general population never emerged from it:

And I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth  
**because of what Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem**.

**Who will have pity on you**, O Jerusalem, or who will grieve for you?

Who will turn aside to ask about your welfare?

**You have rejected me**, declares [YHWH];

you keep going backward,

so I have stretched out my hand against you and destroyed you—**I am weary of relenting**.  
(Jeremiah 15:4-6 ESV)

### 2.4.9 Josiah

The data on Josiah comprise 2 Kings chapter 22, 23:1-30, 2 Chronicles chapters 34 and 35, and Josephus Book 10 chapter 4, paragraph 5.1. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. This is a period of about 30 years, 641BC-609BC.

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<sup>290</sup> See 2 Chronicles 33:10-17

### **Active Prophets:**

- Zephaniah ~640BC-609BC
- Jeremiah 627BC~575BC
- Habakkuk ~626BC-605BC

**King Josiah represents the last dying gasp of the nation of Israel.** As with Joash / Jehoash he was made king at eight years old. It is NOT explicitly stated, but the High Priest Hilkiah is frequently mentioned in conjunction with Josiah, so quite possibly Hilkiah provided tutelage and mentoring for Josiah. Josiah's mother is identified as "Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath".<sup>291</sup> Josiah's heart was inclined towards God from an early age:

And **Josiah did what was right** in the eyes of [YHWH], and **walked in the ways of David his father;** and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.  
For in **the eighth year of his reign,** while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in **the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem** of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images.  
(2 Chronicles 34:2-3 ESV)

Josiah was twenty years old when he started his reform.<sup>292</sup> He collected money to repair the Temple,<sup>293</sup> and when he was twenty-four, he commenced repairs, and a scroll was found:<sup>294</sup>

Now **in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had cleansed the land and the house,** he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz, the recorder, **to repair the house of [YHWH] his God.**  
**They came to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the money** that had been brought into the house of God ...  
While they were bringing out the money that had been brought into the house of [YHWH], **Hilkiah the priest found the Book of [torah]<sup>295</sup> of [YHWH] given through Moses.**  
(2 Chronicles 34:8-9a, 14 ESV)

### **Josiah's reaction to the teaching of God through Moses was swift and positive:**

Then **the king sent,** and **all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him.**  
And the king went up to the house of [YHWH],  
and with him all the men of Judah and **all the inhabitants of Jerusalem**  
and the priests and the prophets, **all the people,** both small and great.  
And **he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant**  
that had been found in the house of [YHWH].  
And **the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before [YHWH],**  
to walk after [YHWH] and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes  
with all his heart and all his [being] (nephesh),<sup>296</sup>  
to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book.  
**And all the people joined in the covenant.**  
(2 Kings 23:1-3 ESV)

Josiah's reform was thorough,<sup>297</sup> and he sponsored a celebratory Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread,<sup>298</sup> as Hezekiah had done. The summary of Josiah's reign pretty much says it all:

Before him **there was no king like him,**  
**who turned to [YHWH] with all his heart** and with all his [being] (nephesh) and with all his might,  
according to all [torah] of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him.  
(2 Kings 23:25 ESV)  
Then he made all who were present in Jerusalem and in Benjamin join in it.  
And **the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God,** the God of their fathers.  
**All his days they did not turn away from following [YHWH],** the God of their fathers.  
(2 Chronicles 34:32, 33b ESV)

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<sup>291</sup> See 2 Kings 22:1

<sup>292</sup> See 2 Chronicles 34:3-7

<sup>293</sup> See 2 Kings 22:3-7

<sup>294</sup> For a discussion of the contents of this scroll, see section **10.2 The Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah** in the paper "The Writings of Moses" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>295</sup> See footnote **13**

<sup>296</sup> See footnote **21**

<sup>297</sup> See 2 Kings 23:6-20,24

<sup>298</sup> See 2 Kings 23:21-23, 2 Chronicles 35:1-19

Josiah was certainly a True Worshipper of God. He can certainly be classed as “seeds fell into good soil and produced grain”, and one “who has ears to hear” and does “hear”. Josiah is surely among the candidates for the gift of eternal life. An object lesson from Josiah is that only God can control the “big picture”. Josiah’s zeal for the Way of God brought about a general resurgence among all the people to worship and obey God while he lived, but it did NOT last.

#### 2.4.10 Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, & Zedekiah

The data on Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah comprise 2 Kings 23:31-37, chapter 24, 2 Chronicles 36:1-16, Jeremiah 21:11-14, chapters 22, 34, 36, 37:1-10, 38:14-28, 39:1-10, and Josephus Book 10 paragraphs 5.2, 6.3, chapter 7, paragraph 8.1. The material of Josephus is again dependant on the Bible. This is a period of about 25 years, 609BC-586BC.

##### Active Prophets:

- Zephaniah ~640Bc-609BC
- Jeremiah 627BC~575BC
- Habakkuk ~626BC-605BC

Josiah’s three sons and grandson all rejected the Way of God. The all reverted to “evil” ways:

Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH], according to all that his fathers had done. (2 Kings 23:31-32 ESV)

Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Zebidah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. And he did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH], according to all that his fathers had done. (2 Kings 23:36-37 ESV)

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. And he did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH], according to all that his father had done. (2 Kings 24:8-9 ESV)

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did what was evil in the sight of [YHWH], according to all that Jehoiakim had done. (2 Kings 24:18-19 ESV)

##### The end of the nation of Israel was swift and sure:

Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged. He gave them all into his hand.

And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of [YHWH], and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon.

And they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its palaces with fire and destroyed all its precious vessels. (2 Chronicles 36:17-19 ESV)

There are no redeeming qualities reported for any of these kings. The are all clearly “seed fell among thorns”. The object lesson is the same as Manasseh’s: the deep-rooted evil he created may have lain dormant under Josiah, but it was NOT removed. Eradication of evil requires several generations of true teaching and demonstration of the Way of God.

#### 2.4.11 Assessment of the Southern Kings

Evil is insidious. Satan snares people by making evil look desirable.<sup>299</sup> It started with the apostacy of Solomon, but his son Rehoboam quickly embraced evil, “when the rule of Rehoboam was established and he was strong, he abandoned teaching of YHWH, and all Israel with him.” This set a pattern: when

<sup>299</sup> For further discussion of the problem of evil, see section 3.1.2 Rejecting the Way of the World in the paper “Third Pillar - The Way of God” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

the leaders were “evil”, the people quickly followed suit. The Kings Asa and Jehoshaphat took steps to set the people on a path of living by the Way of God. Asa “**commanded Judah to seek YHWH**”, and “**to keep the teaching and the commandment**”. Jehoshaphat sent teams of officials, priests, and Levites, throughout the land to teach the Way of God.<sup>300</sup>

The Athaliah years were, however, a watershed. The people, especially some of the “upper classes”, got a taste for “pagan ways”. As soon as Jehoiada died, some of the “princes” convinced Joash / Jehoash to embrace “pagan ways”, “**the king listened to them**”, “**they abandoned the house of YHWH**”, and “**served the Asherim and the idols**”. Although both **Azariah / Uzziah** and **Jotham** themselves took steps to live by the Way of God there was no far-reaching reform among the people. The period was a time of great prosperity and abundance. Both **Amos** and **Hosea** attest to the religious, moral, social, and civil crimes which developed among the people. With **Ahaz**, the nation reverted to blatant “paganism” – those elements of society which desired this, truly had their way. Both **Isaiah** and **Micah** roundly condemn the sins of this period.

With **Hezekiah** comes the first great reform. He, himself, is famous for adhering to the Way of God, “**he trusted in YHWH**”, “**he held fast to YHWH**”. He took steps to reform the worship of God and bring the nation back to the Way of God, “**it is in my heart to make a covenant with YHWH**”, “**my sons, do not now be negligent**”. However, Hezekiah’s son Manasseh was the most evil king of the Southern Kingdom and many of the people relished it, “**he rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had destroyed**”. The **Prophet Jeremiah** reports God’s assessment of the nation after the influence of Manasseh:

Then [YHWH] said to me,  
“Though Moses and Samuel stood before me,  
yet **my heart would not turn toward this people**.  
Send them out of my sight, and let them go!  
And when they ask you, ‘Where shall we go?’  
you shall say to them,  
Thus says [YHWH]:  
‘Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence,  
and those who are for the sword, to the sword;  
those who are for famine, to famine,  
and those who are for captivity, to captivity.’  
**I will appoint over them four kinds of destroyers**, declares [YHWH]:  
➤ the sword to kill,  
➤ the dogs to tear,  
➤ and the birds of the air  
➤ and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.  
And I **will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth**  
**because of what Manasseh** the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, **did in Jerusalem.**”  
(Jeremiah 15:1-4 ESV)

Again, Josiah, himself, was fully committed to the Way of God, and he made every effort to reform the people. His efforts met with success while he lived, “**the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God**”, “**all his days they did not turn away from following YHWH**”. But, the repentance of the people was only skin deep. His sons and grandson fully embraced pagan ways, the people loved it and were destroyed. Again, the **Prophet Jeremiah** reports God’s judgement on the nation:

Has **a nation** changed its gods, even though they are no gods?  
But **my people** have changed their glory for that which does not profit.  
Be appalled, O heavens, at this;  
be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares [YHWH],  
for **my people** have committed two evils:  
➤ they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters,  
➤ and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.  
(Jeremiah 2:11-13 ESV)

Because **the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place**  
by making offerings in it to other gods  
whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known;

and because **they have filled this place with the blood of innocents,**  
and **have built the high places of Baal** to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal,  
which I did not command or decree, nor did it come into my mind.

And in this place I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem,  
and will cause their **people to fall by the sword** before their enemies,  
and by the hand of those who seek their life.

I will give their **dead bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth.**

And I will make this **city a horror**, a thing to be hissed at.

Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its wounds.

(Jeremiah 19:4-5, 7-8 ESV)

A king is to be a “shepherd” to his people; to lead them; to nurture them; to teach them the Way of God.  
**Overall the kings of the Southern Kingdom failed.** The **Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel** report the word  
of God to the shepherds of Israel:

**Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep** of my pasture! declares [YHWH].

Therefore thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel, **concerning the shepherds who care for my people:**

You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and **you have not attended to them.**

Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares [YHWH].

(Jeremiah 23:1-2 ESV)

The word of [YHWH] came to me:

“Son of man, **prophecy against the shepherds of Israel;** prophesy, and say to them,  
even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

Ah, **shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves!**

**Should not shepherds feed the sheep?**

You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones,  
but you do not feed the sheep.

The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed,  
the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back,  
the lost you have not sought, and **with force and harshness you have ruled them.**

So **they were scattered, because there was no shepherd,**  
and they became food for all the wild beasts.

My sheep were scattered;

they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill.

My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth,  
with none to search or seek for them.”

“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of [YHWH]:

As I live, declares the Lord [YHWH], surely because my sheep have become a prey,  
and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd,  
and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep,  
but **the shepherds have fed themselves,** and have not fed my sheep,  
therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of [YHWH]:

Thus says the Lord [YHWH],

Behold, **I am against the shepherds,**

and **I will require my sheep at their hand**

and put a stop to their feeding the sheep.

**No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves.**

I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.”

(Ezekiel 34:1-10 ESV)

In spite of the reforming efforts of some of the Southern Kings, **“the people” never really bought into reform.** A large percentage of **“the people”** would **“pay lip service”** to the Way of God when they had to, but whenever conditions were right **“the people”** would eagerly revert to pagan ways. This tendency is noted several times:

Now **after the death of Jehoiada the princes of Judah came** and paid homage to the king.

Then the king listened to them.

(2 Chronicles 24:17 ESV)

He walked in all the way of Asa his father.

He did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of [YHWH].

Yet **the high places were not taken away,**

and **the people** still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.

(1 Kings 22:43 ESV)

**But the high places were not removed:**

**the people** still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.  
(2 Kings 14:4 ESV)

Nevertheless, **the high places were not taken away.**

**The people** still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.  
(2 Kings 15:4 ESV)

Nevertheless, **the high places were not removed.**

**The people** still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.  
(2 Kings 15:35a ESV)

**This demonstrates the proclivity to sin that is inherent in human nature.** Satan is able to use this propensity to sin to keep the majority of people locked into the way of the world. Only through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can human beings truly overcome sinful human nature. Among the last surviving vestiges of Israel in Jerusalem just prior to its destruction, **the Prophet Jeremiah catalogued this attitude of “the people”:**

Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look and take note!

Search her squares to **see if you can find a man,**

one who does justice and seeks truth, **that I may pardon her.**

Though **they say, “As [YHWH] lives,”** yet they swear falsely.

Then I said,

“These are only the poor; they have no sense;

for **they do not know the way of [YHWH],** the justice of their God.

I will go to the great and will speak to them,

for they know the way of [YHWH], the justice of their God.”

But **they all alike had broken the yoke;** they had burst the bonds.

For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have been utterly treacherous to me, declares [YHWH].

**They have spoken falsely of [YHWH]** and have said,

‘He will do nothing; no disaster will come upon us, nor shall we see sword or famine.

The prophets will become wind; the word is not in them.’

Thus shall it be done to them!

But **this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart;** they have turned aside and gone away.

They do not say in their hearts, ‘Let us fear [YHWH] our God ...’

An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land:

the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction;

**my people love to have it so,** but what will you do when the end comes?

(Jeremiah 5:1-2, 4-5, 11-13, 23-24a, 30-31 ESV)

Why then has this people turned away in perpetual backsliding?

**They hold fast to deceit;** they refuse to return.

I have paid attention and listened, but they have not spoken rightly;

**no man relents of his evil,** saying, ‘What have I done?’

**Everyone turns to his own course,** like a horse plunging headlong into battle.

(Jeremiah 8:5-6 ESV)

Sadly, as Western Civilization moves further and further away from the Judaeo-Christian Ethic, **this attitude is becoming more and more prevalent among the general population today.** We can expect the same reaction from God.

### 3. Kingship of Christians

The **Apostle John** was exiled on the Island of Patmos when he was given the revelations reported in **The Book of Revelation**. He was instructed to send the book along a mail route to seven churches.<sup>301</sup> John, himself, had lived and worked in Ephesus for many years, so he was no doubt intimately familiar with each city and each church along the mail route. Jesus is explicit about the purpose of **The Book of Revelation**:

**The revelation of Jesus Christ,**

which God gave him **to show to his servants** the things that must soon take place.

(Revelation 1:1a ESV)

**John to the seven churches** that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace **from him who is and who was and who is to come,**

and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,

and **from Jesus Christ** the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood

and **made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father,**

to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

(Revelation 1:4-6 ESV)

And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals,

for you were slain, and **by your blood you ransomed people for God**

from every tribe and language and people and nation,

and **you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,**

and **they shall reign on the earth.”**

(Revelation 5:9-10 ESV)

Then I saw **thrones**, and seated on them were **those to whom the authority to judge was committed.**

**They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

**This is the first resurrection.**

**Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!**

Over such the second death has no power,

but they will be priests of God and of Christ,

and **they will reign with him for a thousand years.**

(Revelation 20:4a, 4b, 5b-6 ESV)

Clearly, those people called to be True Worshipers of God, **are called “To Be a King”**. This is the whole focus of the Plan of God.<sup>302</sup> The message of Jesus Christ to the New Testament Church is summarized in the messages to the seven churches. **The key point of the messages is the emphasis on ruling as kings under the King of kings:**

To the angel of the church in **Ephesus** write:

To the one who conquers **I will grant to eat of the tree of life**, which is in the paradise of God.

(Revelation 2:1a, 7b ESV)

And to the angel of the church in **Smyrna** write:

Be faithful unto death, and **I will give you the crown of life.**

(Revelation 2:8a, 10b ESV)

And to the angel of the church in **Pergamum** write:

To the one who conquers **I will give some of the hidden manna,**

and I will give him a white stone, **with a new name** written on the stone

that no one knows except the one who receives it.

(Revelation 2:12a, 17b ESV)

And to the angel of the church in **Thyatira** write:

The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end,

to him **I will give authority over the nations ...**

(Revelation 2:18a, 26 ESV)

<sup>301</sup> See Revelation 1:9-11

<sup>302</sup> See the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

And to the angel of the church in **Sardis** write:  
The one who conquers **will be clothed thus in white garments**,  
and I will never blot his name out of the book of life.  
(Revelation 3:1a, 5a ESV)

And to the angel of the church in **Philadelphia** write:  
I am coming soon.  
Hold fast what you have, **so that no one may seize your crown**.  
(Revelation 3:7a, 11 ESV)

And to the angel of the church in **Laodicea** write:  
The one who conquers, **I will grant him to sit with me on my throne**,  
as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.  
(Revelation 3:14a, 21 ESV)

**This is the true fulfilment of the promises to Abraham.** The **Apostle Paul** verifies the fulfillment of the promises:

Now [YHWH] said to Abram,  
"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house **to the land that I will show you**.  
And **I will make of you a great nation**, and I will bless you and make your name great,  
so that you will be a blessing.  
I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse,  
and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed**."  
(Genesis 12:1-3 ESV)

Know then that **it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham**.  
And the **Scripture**, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,  
**preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham**, saying,  
"**In you shall all the nations be blessed**."

So then, **those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham**, the man of faith.  
Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring.  
It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one,  
"And **to your offspring**," **who is Christ**.  
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female,  
for **you are all one in Christ Jesus**.  
And **if you are Christ's**, then **you are Abraham's offspring**, **heirs according to promise**.  
(Galatians 3:7-9, 16, 28-29 ESV)

The following chart summarizes Jesus' final message to those persons called "**To Be a King**",  
"**heirs according to promise**":

## The Message of Jesus Christ to the Church

	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamum	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
<b>Revelation</b>	2:1-7	2:8-11	2:12-17	2:18-28	3:1-6	3:7-13	3:14-22
<b>Christ</b>	holds the seven stars, walks among the seven golden lampstands	first and last, died and came to life	has the sharp two-edged sword	eyes like flame of fire, feet like bronze	has the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars	holy one, true one, has key of David, opens and shuts	Amen, faithful and true witness, beginning of creation
<b>Commendation</b>	works, endurance, hate evil, tested false apostle	enduring tribulation, poverty, slander	hold fast my name, not deny my faith	works, love, faith, service, endurance	works	works, kept my word, NOT denied my name	
<b>Opposition</b>	false apostles	false Jews, synagogue of Satan	killers of Antipas	those who follow Jezebel		false Jews, synagogue of Satan	
<b>Danger</b>	growing weary	prison, tribulation	martyrdom	deep things of Satan	what remains is about to die	hour of trial to come on whole earth	saying "I am rich"

	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamum	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
<b>Rebuke</b>	abandoned first love		hold to teaching of Bil <sup>e</sup> am, and Nicolaitans	tolerate Jezebel	reputed alive, but dead, incomplete works		lukewarm, not hot, not cold, be zealous, repent
<b>Requirement</b>	remember, repent, do the works	be faithful unto death	repent	hold fast what you have	repent, wake up	hold fast	buy gold, white garments
<b>Failure</b>	removal of lampstand		war against with sword of mouth	throw into great tribulation	will come as a thief, not know hour	someone takes crown	spit you out of my mouth
<b>Mitigating factor</b>	hate woks of Nicolaitans	testing	dwell where Satan throne is	later works exceed first	a few have NOT soiled their garments	kept my word with patient endurance	those I love, I reprove and discipline
<b>Promise</b>	eat of tree of life	crown of life, not hurt by second death	give the hidden manna, new name on a stone	authority over nations, the morning star	clothed in white, name NOT blotted from Book of Life	pillar in temple of God, name of God, city of God, Christ's new name	sit with me on my throne

## 3.2 The Requirements of a King

**The first requirement of a person called “To Be a King” is to attain knowledge about the assignment.**

The knowledge a person requires “**To Be a King**”, serving the King of kings, is contained in the Bible. A human lifetime is too short to plum the length, the width, and the depth of the Bible, but **the Christian calling requires steady progress in attaining knowledge from the Bible**. Along with knowledge, **the training of living by the Way of God is essential**. God leads each person he calls through life experiences unique to that person, but which are carefully orchestrated by God to teach each person the life lesson required for that person “**To Be a King**”.

**Knowledge is the “raw material” of thought.** Without true knowledge, all conclusions to which a person comes, will be flawed. **Cogitation based on true knowledge leads to understanding.** Practical application of understanding leads to wisdom. Wisdom applied over a lifetime of living by The Way of God leads to discernment. This the progression required by God of those called “**To Be a King**”. The **Apostle Paul** emphasizes that **it all starts with true knowledge of God from the Bible:**

**Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!**

How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!  
(Romans 11:33 ESV)

And **it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,** so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.  
(Philippians 1:9-11 ESV see also 1 Timothy 2:3-4, Titus 1:1)

And so, from the day we heard, **we have not ceased to pray for you,** asking **that you may be filled with the knowledge** of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: **bearing fruit in every good work** and **increasing in the knowledge of God;**  
(Colossians 1:9-10 ESV)

For **I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you** and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, **to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**  
I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.  
(Colossians 2:1-4 ESV see also Ephesians 1:17, 4:13)

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:  
... seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices  
and have put on **the new self**,  
**which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.**  
(Colossians 3:5a, 9b-10 ESV)

The **Apostle Peter** summarizes the need for knowledge:

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,  
To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours  
by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

**May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.**

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness,  
**through the knowledge of him who called us** to his own glory and excellence,  
by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises,  
so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature,  
having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue,  
and **virtue with knowledge**, and **knowledge with self-control**,  
and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,  
and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing,  
they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in **the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

(2 Peter 1:1-8 ESV)

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand,  
take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

But **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

(2 Peter 3:17-18 ESV)

**God has appointed human beings a short, temporary, life so that each person can come to a decision as to whether to choose life or death:**

**The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty;**  
yet **their span is but toil and trouble;** they are soon gone, and we fly away.  
(Psalm 90:10 ESV)

**See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.**

**If you obey the commandments of [YHWH] your God** that I command you today,  
by loving [YHWH] your God, by walking in his ways,  
and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his [mish<sup>e</sup>patim],<sup>303</sup>  
**then you shall live** and multiply, and [YHWH] your God will bless you ...

But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear,  
but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them,  
I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today,  
that **I have set before you life and death,** blessing and curse.

**Therefore choose life,** that you and your offspring may live,  
loving [YHWH] your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him,  
for he is your life and length of days ...  
(Deuteronomy 30:15-18a, 19-20a ESV)

For persons called "**To Be a King**", **God provides discipline and testing** along the way to ensure that, for each person, the life lessons are learned that are required to prepare that person:

Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves;  
therefore **despise not the discipline of the Almighty.**  
(Job 5:17 ESV)

He who teaches man knowledge—[YHWH]—knows **the thoughts of man,**  
that **they are but a breath.**

**Blessed is the man whom you discipline,** [YHWH],  
and whom you teach out of your [torah],<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> See footnote [65](#)

<sup>304</sup> See footnote [13](#)

to give him rest from days of trouble, until a pit is dug for the wicked.  
(Psalm 94:10b-13 ESV)

My son, **do not despise [YHWH's] discipline** or be weary of his reproof,  
for **[YHWH] reproves him whom he loves,**  
as a father the son in whom he delights.  
(Proverbs 3:11-12 ESV)

For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light,  
and **the reproofs of discipline are the way of life** ...  
(Proverbs 6:23 ESV)

**Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,** but he who hates reproof is stupid.  
(Proverbs 12:1 ESV)

But when we are judged by the Lord,  
**we are disciplined** so that we may not be condemned along with the world.  
(1 Corinthians 11:32 ESV)

And have you forgotten **the exhortation that addresses you as sons?**

**"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,**  
nor be weary when reproved by him.  
For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."  
(alluding to Proverbs 3:11-12)

It is for discipline that you have to endure.

God is treating you as sons.

For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated,  
then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

... **he disciplines us for our good,** that we may share his holiness.  
For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant,  
but later **it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness** to those who have been trained by it.  
(Hebrews 12:5-8, 10b-11 ESV)

**Count it all joy,** my brothers, **when you meet trials of various kinds,**  
for you know that **the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.**  
And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.  
(James 1:2-4 ESV)

... but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel,  
so we speak, not to please man, but **to please God who tests our hearts.**  
(1 Thessalonians 2:4 ESV)

... may you **establish the righteous— you who test the minds and hearts,** O righteous God!

**[YHWH] tests the righteous.**

**You have tried my heart,** you have visited me by night,  
**you have tested me,** and you will find nothing;  
I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

**Prove me,** [YHWH], and **try me; test my heart and my mind.**

For you, O God, have tested us; **you have tried us as silver is tried.**  
(Psalm 7:9, 11:5a, 17:3, 26:2, 66:10 ESV)

But, [YHWH] of hosts, who judges righteously, who **tests the heart and the mind** ...

But you, [YHWH], **know me;** you **see me,** and test my heart toward you.

I, [YHWH], **search the heart** and test the mind,  
to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

[YHWH] of hosts, who **tests the righteous,** who sees the heart and the mind ...  
(Jeremiah 11:20a, 12:3a, 17:10, 20:12a ESV)

The purpose of discipline and testing is to grow, to learn. All persons called "**To Be a King**" must accept instruction. **The Bible is the source of knowledge,** but sometimes it helps to have a guide, a person elucidate. **There are always occasions when advice is required.** The best "counsel" comes from God, but other sources can also be useful:

With **God** are wisdom and might; he **has counsel** and understanding.  
(Job 12:13 ESV)

I bless **[YHWH] who gives me counsel;** in the night also my heart instructs me.

**The counsel of [YHWH] stands forever,** the plans of his heart to all generations.  
(Psalm 16:7, 33:11 ESV)

This also comes from [YHWH] of hosts; **he is wonderful in counsel** and excellent in wisdom.  
... declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying,  
**'My counsel shall stand,** and I will accomplish all my purpose,'  
(Isaiah 28:29, 46:10 ESV)

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
**I will counsel you** with my eye upon you.  
(Psalm 32:8 ESV)

**I have counsel** and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength.  
(Proverbs 8:14 ESV)

**Without counsel plans fail,** but with many advisers they succeed.

**Plans are established by counsel;** by wise guidance wage war.

**Have I not written for you thirty sayings of counsel** and knowledge ...  
(Proverbs 15:22, 20:18, 22:20 ESV)

Now in those days **the counsel that Ahithophel gave** was as if **one consulted the word of God;**  
**so was all the counsel of Ahithophel** esteemed, both by David and by Absalom.  
(2 Samuel 16:23 ESV)

**In the process of learning "To Be a King", all persons make mistakes, all sin.** As with David, the real problem is NOT the sin; it is the attitude after the sin – **true repentance is critical to learn the valuable lessons from mistakes made:**

**If a man does not repent,** God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow;  
(Psalm 7:12 ESV)

Therefore say to the house of Israel,  
Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

**Repent and turn away from your idols,**  
and turn away your faces from all your abominations.  
(Ezekiel 14:6 ESV)

Therefore **I will judge you,** O house of Israel, **every one according to his ways,** declares the Lord [YHWH].  
**Repent and turn from all your transgressions,** lest iniquity be your ruin.  
(Ezekiel 18:30 ESV)

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience,  
not knowing that **God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?**  
(Romans 2:4 ESV)

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach,  
patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

**God may perhaps grant them repentance** leading to a knowledge of the truth,  
and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil,  
after being captured by him to do his will.  
(2 Timothy 2:24-26 ESV)

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity,  
**not laying again a foundation of repentance** from dead works ...  
(Hebrews 6:1 ESV)

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness,  
but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish,  
but **that all should reach repentance.**  
(2 Peter 3:9 ESV)

In summary, **a person called "To Be a King" is required to:**

1. Get knowledge, find out what the job is about, **study the Bible**
2. Physical life is short, commit to live by the Way of God, **"choose life"**
3. Accept God's discipline eagerly, **learn the life lessons**
4. Always **take counsel** from God, seek other counsel as necessary
5. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, but don't make them twice, **repent**

### 3.1 The Role of a King

A king is required to “**govern**” and to “**judge**”. In the World Tomorrow, **the King of kings will delegate positions of Kingship:**

**In my Father’s house are many rooms.**

If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?  
And if **I go and prepare a place for you**, I will come again and will take you to myself,  
that where I am you may be also.  
(John 14:2-3 ESV)

**When the Son of Man comes in his glory**, and all the angels with him,  
then **he will sit on his glorious throne.**  
(Matthew 25:31 ESV)

Jesus said to them,  
“Truly, I say to you, **in the new world**, when **the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne**,  
**you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones**,  
**judging the twelve tribes of Israel.** ...”

(Matthew 19:28 ESV)

You are those who have stayed with me in my trials,  
and **I assign to you**, as my Father assigned to me, **a kingdom**,  
that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom  
and **sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**  
(Luke 22:28-30 ESV)

The parameters of both “**governing**” and “**judging**” are well **defined by the Way of God**.<sup>305</sup> The practicality of both aspects is related to the concept of “**shepherding**” – a king must be a shepherd to his / her subjects. The King of kings is prophesized to be **The Shepherd** and the kings under him must also be “**good shepherds**”:

**He will tend his flock like a shepherd;**

he will gather the lambs in his arms;  
he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.  
(Isaiah 40:11 ESV)

Hear the word of [YHWH], O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say,

**‘He who scattered Israel** will gather him,  
and **will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’**

(Jeremiah 31:10 ESV)

For **thus says the Lord [YHWH]:**

**Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out.**

**As a shepherd seeks out his flock** when he is among his sheep that have been scattered,  
so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered  
on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries,  
and will bring them into their own land.

And **I will feed them** on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines,  
and in all the inhabited places of the country.

**I will feed them with good pasture,**

and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land.

There they shall lie down in good grazing land,  
and **on rich pasture they shall feed** on the mountains of Israel.

**I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep,**

and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord [YHWH].

I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured,  
and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy.

**I will feed them in [justness] (mish’pat).**<sup>306</sup>

(Ezekiel 34:11-16 ESV)

And **I will give you shepherds after my own heart**,  
**who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.**  
I will set **shepherds over them who will care for them,**

<sup>305</sup> See the paper “Third Pillar - The Way of God” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>306</sup> See footnote 65

and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares [YHWH].  
(Jeremiah 3:15, 23:4 ESV)

And **I will set up over them one shepherd**, my servant David,  
and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.  
My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd.  
**They shall walk in my [mish\*patim] and be careful to obey my statutes.**  
(Ezekiel 34:23, 37:24 ESV)

**Jesus explicitly affirmed that he is the prophesized “Good Shepherd”, and the Apostles Paul and Peter affirm that those called “To Be a King” are the prophesized “good shepherds”:**

**I am the good shepherd.**

I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;  
and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And I have other sheep that are not of this fold.

I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

So **there will be one flock, one shepherd.**

(John 10:14-16 ESV)

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, **the shepherds** and teachers,  
to equip the saints for the work of ministry, **for building up the body of Christ** ...  
(Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV)

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ,  
as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:

**shepherd the flock of God that** is among you,

exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly,  
as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;  
not domineering over those in your charge,

but **being examples to the flock.**

And **when the chief Shepherd appears**, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

(1 Peter 5:1-4 ESV)

The metaphor of the “good pasture” is indeed beautiful, **“I will feed them with good pasture”, “on rich pasture they shall feed”**. The rich pasture is the truth of the Bible:

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain;  
for **the earth shall be full of the knowledge of [YHWH]** as the waters cover the sea.  
(Isaiah 11:9 ESV)

On this mountain [YHWH] of hosts will make  
for all peoples **a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,**  
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

And **he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples,**  
the veil that is spread over all nations.

**He will swallow up death forever;**

and the Lord [YHWH] will wipe away tears from all faces,  
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for [YHWH] has spoken.

It will be said on that day,

“Behold, **this is our God**; we have waited for him, that he might save us.

This is [YHWH]; we have waited for him; let us be glad and **rejoice in his salvation.**”

(Isaiah 25:6-9 ESV)

**Jesus Christ is the “beginning and the end”**. The beginning is instruction for the kings of Israel requiring them to “shepherd” the people, **“his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers”**.<sup>307</sup> In the end, this is what God requires of those called **“To Be a King” – feed the “sheep” on “good pasture”**.

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<sup>307</sup> See section **2.1 The Concept of “Kingship”**  
Saturday, May 17, 2025

### 3.3 The Attributes of a King

The meaning of “conversion” is to replace sinning human nature by sinless divine nature. The paper “Pillar One - The Nature of God” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca) discusses the divine nature in detail. In section **1.4.3 Attributes of God’s Character**, the following specific attributes of God’s nature are discussed:

- Holiness
- Grace
- Goodness
- Mercy
- Slow to anger
- Faithfulness
- Righteousness
- Uprightness
- Forgiving
- Beneficent
- All knowing
- Jealous
- Reliable
- Consistent
- Mighty

Clearly, **these are all character attributes that God would look for in a person called “To Be a king”.**

The most important word describing the Nature of God is *hesed*. The best English translation of *hesed* is “**covenant love**” – see the discussion of *hesed* in section **David’s Early Preparation**, where further references are identified. All of these godly character attributes are developed by living by the Way of God. To live by the Way of God, a person must be called by God, accept the calling, repent, and receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

**How does God decide when to call a person?** One aspect is clearly the “heart” of that person. This was discussed in section **2.2.2 King David**. **One thing God looks for in the “heart” is the ability to be humble.** This was discussed in section **Assessment of King Saul**.<sup>308</sup> The most common verbal root for “to be humble” is עָנָה - `anah. There are two derived adjective which mean “to be humble”, עָנָו - `anaw, and עָנִי - `ani. The feminine noun, עֲנָוָה - `anawah, means “humility”.<sup>309</sup> There are two other less common verbal roots translated “to be humble”, כָּנַע kana<sup>310</sup> and שָׁפַל - shapal.<sup>311</sup> Some examples of these words follow:

The whole commandment that I command you today **you shall be careful to do**, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that [YHWH] swore to give to your fathers. And you shall **remember the whole way** that [YHWH] your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, **that he might humble (`anah) you, testing you to know what was in your heart**, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

And **he humbled (`anah) you** and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but **man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of [YHWH]**.

**Know then in your heart** that, as a man disciplines his son, **[YHWH] your God disciplines you**. So **you shall keep** the commandments of [YHWH] your God by **walking in his ways** and by **fearing him**.

**Take care lest you forget** [YHWH] your God by not keeping his commandments and his [mish`patim]<sup>312</sup> and his statutes, which I command you today, lest,

<sup>308</sup> For a discussion of the difference between “**humility**” and “**contrition**”, see the presentation “**David – Contrition**” located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/presentations>.

<sup>309</sup> See **TWOT** article 1652 pages 682-684

<sup>310</sup> See **TWOT** article 1001 page 445

<sup>311</sup> See **TWOT** article 2445 pages 950-951

<sup>312</sup> See footnote **65**

when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, **then your heart be lifted up**, and you forget [YHWH] your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ... who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, **that he might humble (‘anah) you** and test you, **to do you good in the end**.

**Beware lest you say in your heart**,

‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’  
(Deuteronomy 8:1-3, 5-6, 11-14, 16-17 ESV)

**You save a humble (‘ani) people**, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down.  
(2 Samuel 22:28 ESV)

**He leads the humble (‘anaw) in what is right**, and **teaches the humble (‘anaw) his way**.  
(Psalm 25:9 ESV)

For [YHWH] takes pleasure in his people; **he adorns the humble (‘anaw) with salvation**.  
(Psalm 149:4 ESV)

All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares [YHWH].  
But **this is the one to whom I will look**:

**he who is humble (‘ani)** and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.  
(Isaiah 66:2 ESV)

**Seek [YHWH], all you humble (‘anaw) of the land**, who do his just commands;  
seek righteousness; **seek humility (‘anawah)**;  
perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of [YHWH].  
(Zephaniah 2:3 ESV)

... **he sets on high those who are lowly (shapal)**, and those who mourn are lifted to safety.  
(Job 5:11 ESV)

For though [YHWH] is high, **he regards the lowly (shapal)**, but the haughty he knows from afar.  
(Psalm 138:6 ESV)

if **my people who are called by my name humble (kana‘) themselves**,  
and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways,  
**then I will hear** from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.  
(2 Chronicles 7:14 ESV)

**God looks on the heart**. When a person is granted true repentance from God, God regards the person as “**blameless**” or “**justified**” – **sins are forgiven**,<sup>313</sup> and the person can learn to walk in the Way of God. The following scriptures demonstrate this:

**Noah was a righteous man, blameless** in his generation. **Noah walked with God**.  
(Genesis 6:9b ESV)

When Abram was ninety-nine years old [YHWH] appeared to Abram and said to him,  
“I am God Almighty; **walk before me**, and **be blameless** ...”  
(Genesis 17:1 ESV)

[YHWH] dealt with me according to my **righteousness**;  
according to the **cleanness of my hands** he rewarded me.  
For **I have kept the ways of [YHWH]** and have not wickedly departed from my God.  
For all his [mish‘patim]<sup>314</sup> were before me, and from his statutes I did not turn aside.  
**I was blameless before him**, and I kept myself from guilt.  
And [YHWH] has rewarded me according to my righteousness,  
according to my **cleanness in his sight**.

With the merciful you show yourself merciful;  
**with the blameless man you show yourself blameless**;  
This **God is my strong refuge** and has **made my way blameless**.  
(2 Samuel 22:21-26, 33 ESV)

<sup>313</sup> For a New Testament perspective of repentance, see [Excursus 2 – Justification in the New Testament](#).

<sup>314</sup> See footnote 65

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job,  
and that man was blameless and upright,  
one who feared God and turned away from evil.

And [YHWH] said to Satan,

“Have you considered my servant Job,  
that there is none like him on the earth,  
a blameless and upright man,  
who fears God and turns away from evil?”

(Job 1:1, 8 ESV)

[YHWH], who shall sojourn in your tent?

Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart;

(Psalm 15:1-2 ESV)

Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in [torah]<sup>315</sup> of [YHWH]!

Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart,  
who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways!

(Psalm 119:1-3 ESV)

**Having been forgiven**, living by the Way of God, **purifies a person’s “heart”**. The transformation of the “inner most being” occurs by living by the Way of God. This is reflected in the state of the person’s heart, **which only God can see**:

And as for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked,

with integrity of heart and uprightness,

doing according to all that I have commanded you,

and keeping my statutes and my [mish<sup>e</sup>patim]<sup>316</sup> ...

(1 Kings 9:4 ESV)

I will ponder the way that is blameless.

Oh when will you come to me?

I will walk with integrity of heart within my house;

I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous [mish<sup>e</sup>patim].

(Psalm 101:2, 119:7 ESV)

The spirit of man is the lamp of [YHWH], searching all his innermost parts.

(Proverbs 20:27 ESV)

As conversion deepens, **a person, called “To Be a King”, comes to know God more intimately**. This leads to greater awareness of who and what God is. **This is the basis of true “fear” of God**, “reverence” towards God, a deep respect for God learned by contact with God. This is discussed in more detail in

**Excursus 5 – Reverence** בְּרֵא in the paper “True Worship of the True God” located at

[www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca). **Another outcome of living by the Way of God is mish<sup>e</sup>patim**. As

discussed in the previous section, it all starts with knowledge of God from the Bible. **As a person learns**

**to apply the knowledge of God, the person grows in understanding**. The verbal root, בִּין - bin, carries

pretty much the same range of meaning as the English verbs “to understand”, “to perceive”. The derived

nouns, בִּינָה - binah and תְּבִינָה - t<sup>e</sup>vunah, are more or less synonymous and carry approximately the

same range of meaning as English “understanding”.<sup>317</sup> A less common but more or less synonymous

verbal root is שָׂכַל - sakal, with the derived noun שֵׂכֶל - sekel.<sup>318</sup>

**Give me understanding (bin)**,

that I may keep your [torah] and observe it with my whole heart.

Your hands have made and fashioned me;

give me understanding (bin) that I may learn your commandments.

**I have more understanding (sakal) than all my teachers**, for your testimonies are my meditation.

Through your precepts I get understanding (bin); therefore I hate every false way.

I am your servant; give me understanding (bin), that I may know your testimonies!

The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding (bin) to the simple.

<sup>315</sup> See footnote 13

<sup>316</sup> See footnote 65

<sup>317</sup> See TWOT article 239 pages 103-104

<sup>318</sup> See TWOT article 2263 pages 877-878

Your testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding (bin) that I may live.

Let my cry come before you, [YHWH]; give me understanding (bin) according to your word!

(Psalm 119:34, 73, 99, 104, 125, 130, 144, 169 ESV)

The heart of him who has understanding (bin) seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly.  
(Proverbs 15:14 ESV)

He made me understand (bin), speaking with me and saying,

“O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding (binah). ...”

(Daniel 9:22 ESV)

Living by the Way of God brings a person, called “To Be a King”, into greater understanding. The practical application of that understanding leads to wisdom. There is an integral relationship between understanding and wisdom. Knowledge of the Way of God comes from the Bible as a person is led by the Holy Spirit. Understanding comes from cogitation and application. Wisdom comes from experience based on understanding. The main words for “wisdom” are the verbal root חָכַם - ḥakam, “be wise”,

“act wisely”, the feminine noun חָכְמָה - ḥakmah, “wisdom”, and the adjective חָכָם - ḥakam,

“wise”.<sup>319</sup> A rare, but important, word for “wisdom” is the feminine noun תְּשׁוּבָה - tushiyah.<sup>320</sup>

The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom (hakmah), and his tongue speaks [justness] (mishpat).<sup>321</sup>

My mouth shall speak wisdom (hakmah);

the meditation of my heart shall be understanding (tʻvunah).

(Psalm 37:30, 49:3 ESV)

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom (hakmah).

(Psalm 90:12 ESV)

The fear (yir’ah) of [YHWH] is the beginning of wisdom (hakmah);

all those who practice it have a good understanding (sekel).

(Psalm 111:10a ESV)

The beginning of wisdom (hakmah) is this:

Get wisdom (hakmah), and whatever you get, get insight (binah).

(Proverbs 4:7 ESV)

On the lips of him who has understanding (bin), wisdom (hakmah) is found, ...

Wisdom (hakmah) rests in the heart of a man of understanding (bin) ...

(Proverbs 10:13a, 14:33a ESV)

For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom (hakmah) and knowledge and joy ...

(Ecclesiastes 2:26a ESV)

The Book of Job contains one of the classic descriptions of “wisdom”. Note the close relationship of “wisdom” with “understanding” and “fear of God”:

But where shall wisdom (hakmah) be found?

And where is the place of understanding (binah)?

Man does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living.

The deep says, ‘It is not in me,’ and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’

It cannot be bought for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price.

From where, then, does wisdom (hakmah) come?

And where is the place of understanding (binah)?

It is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the air.

God understands (bin) the way to it, and he knows its place.

For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.

When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure,

when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder,

then he saw it and declared it; he established it, and searched it out.

And he said to man,

‘Behold, the fear (yir’ah) of the Lord, that is wisdom (hakmah),

and to turn away from evil is understanding (binah).’

(Job 28:12-15, 20-21, 23-28 ESV)

<sup>319</sup> See TWOT article 647 pages 282-284, BDB pages 314-315

<sup>320</sup> See TWOT article 923 page 413

<sup>321</sup> See footnote 65

**The first nine chapter of the Book of Proverbs are more or less a definition of “wisdom”.** The “speaker” addresses the “listener” as a “son”, and **“wisdom” is personified as a fundamental attribute of God.** Again, the close relationship of wisdom with understanding is evident:

My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you,  
**making your ear attentive to wisdom (hak<sup>e</sup>mah)** and **inclining your heart to understanding (t<sup>e</sup>vunah)**;  
yes, if you call out for **insight (binah)** and raise your voice for **understanding (t<sup>e</sup>vunah)**,  
if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures,  
**then you will understand (bin) the fear (yir’ah) of [YHWH]** and find the **knowledge of God.**

For **[YHWH] gives wisdom (hak<sup>e</sup>mah)**; from his mouth come **knowledge** and **understanding (t<sup>e</sup>vunah)**;  
**he stores up sound wisdom (tushiyyah)** for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,  
guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.

Then you will **understand (bin)** righteousness and [justness] (mish<sup>e</sup>pat)<sup>322</sup> and equity, every good path;  
for **wisdom (hak<sup>e</sup>mah) will come into your heart**,  
and **knowledge** will be pleasant to your [mind] (nephesh);<sup>323</sup>  
**discretion (m<sup>e</sup>zimmah) will watch over you, understanding (t<sup>e</sup>vunah)** will guard you,  
(Proverbs 2:1-11 ESV)

**Does not wisdom (hak<sup>e</sup>mah) call?**

**Does not understanding (t<sup>e</sup>vunah) raise her voice?**

On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand;  
beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud:

“To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man.

O simple ones, **learn prudence (‘ar<sup>e</sup>mah)**<sup>324</sup>; O fools, **learn sense (lev).**<sup>325</sup>

Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right,  
for my mouth will utter truth;

“I, **wisdom (hak<sup>e</sup>mah), dwell with prudence (‘ar<sup>e</sup>mah),**

and **I find knowledge and discretion (m<sup>e</sup>zimmah).**

The **fear (yir’ah) of [YHWH]** is hatred of evil.

Pride and arrogance and the way of evil, and perverted speech I hate.

**I have counsel and sound wisdom (tushiyyah)**; I have **insight (binah)**; I have strength.

“**[YHWH] possessed me at the beginning of his work**, the first of his acts of old.

Agos ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

When there were no depths I was brought forth,

when there were no springs abounding with water.

... then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight,  
rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world  
and delighting in the children of man.

“And now, O sons, listen to me: blessed are **those who keep my ways.**

**Hear instruction and be wise (hakam),** and do not neglect it.

Blessed is the one who listens to me,  
watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors.

For **whoever finds me finds life** and obtains favor from [YHWH] ...”

(Proverbs 8:1-7a, 12-14, 22-24, 30-35 ESV)

The goal of attaining knowledge, coming to understanding, and developing wisdom, is **to be able to discern how to apply what is known to new situations**. This is critical for a person called “To Be a King”. The concept of “discretion” is related to “discernment” in that it applies to “decision making” especially on moral and ethical issues. The feminine noun מְזִמָּה - m<sup>e</sup>zimmah, “discretion”, is derive form the verbal root זָמַם - zamam, “purpose”, “devise”, “consider”.<sup>326</sup> The masculine noun טָעַם - ta’am “discernment”, “discretion”, is derived from verbal root טָעַם - ta’am, “perceive”.<sup>327</sup> Consider the following examples:

**Blessed be your discretion (ta’am),** and blessed be you,  
who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand!  
(1 Samuel 25:33 ESV)

<sup>322</sup> See footnote 65

<sup>323</sup> See footnote 21

<sup>324</sup> The feminine noun עֲרֵמָה - ‘ar<sup>e</sup>mah, “prudence”, “cunning”, occurs only in Exodus 21:14, Joshua 9:4, Proverbs 1:4, 8:5,12.

<sup>325</sup> The noun לֵב - lev, means literally “heart”.

<sup>326</sup> See TWOT article 556 pages 244-245

<sup>327</sup> See TWOT article 815 pages 351-352

To know **wisdom (hak<sup>e</sup>mah)** and instruction, to **understand (bin)** words of **insight (binah)**, to receive instruction in **wise dealing (sakal)**, in righteousness, [justness] (mish<sup>e</sup>pat),<sup>328</sup> and equity; to give **prudence (ar<sup>e</sup>mah)** to the simple, **knowledge and discretion (m<sup>e</sup>zimmah) to the youth**— Let **the wise (hakam)** hear and increase in learning, and the **one who understands (bin)** obtain guidance, to **understand (bin)** a proverb and a saying, the words of **the wise (hakam)** and their riddles. (Proverbs 1:2-6 ESV)

[YHWH] by **wisdom (hak<sup>e</sup>mah)** founded the earth; by **understanding (t<sup>e</sup>vunah)** he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew. My son, do not lose sight of these—**keep sound wisdom (tushiyyah) and discretion (m<sup>e</sup>zimmah)**, and they will be life for your [being] (nephesh)<sup>329</sup> and adornment for your neck. (Proverbs 3:19-22 ESV see also 5:1-2)

You have dealt well with your servant, [YHWH], according to your word.

**Teach me good judgment (ta'am)** and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments. (Psalm 119:65-66 ESV)

**Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion (ta'am)** to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. (Daniel 2:14 ESV)

When a person called **"To Be a King"** has done all this: acquired knowledge; attained understanding; developed wisdom; and, applied it all in discernment; then, **living by the Way of God, that person attains mish<sup>e</sup>patim** – the understanding, wisdom, and discernment, that come from loving by the Way of God. **This process is prerequisite to being considered a candidate for the gift of eternal life.** The gift of eternal life at the First Resurrection is required for a person **"To Become a King"** and **reign with the King of kings in the Kingdom of God.**

Moses provides the single best definition of *mish<sup>e</sup>patim*:

And now, O Israel, **listen to the statutes**<sup>330</sup> **and the [mish<sup>e</sup>patim] that I am teaching you,** and **do them**, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that [YHWH], the God of your fathers, is giving you.

**You shall not add to the word** that I command you, **nor take from it**, that you may **keep the commandments** of [YHWH] your God that I command you. But you who held fast to [YHWH] your God are all alive today.

See, **I have taught you statutes and [mish<sup>e</sup>patim]**, as [YHWH] my God commanded me, that you should **do them** in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

**Keep them and do them**, for **that will be your wisdom (hak<sup>e</sup>mah) and your understanding (binah)** in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say,

**'Surely this great nation is a wise (hakam) and understanding (bin) people.'**

For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as [YHWH] our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?

And **what great nation is there, that has statutes and [mish<sup>e</sup>patim]** so righteous as all this [torah]<sup>331</sup> that I set before you today? (Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 4-8 ESV)

The key to attaining understanding, wisdom, and discernment is to **live by the Way of God, "do them", "keep the commandments", "keep them and do them"**. Knowledge of the Way of God is prerequisite, **"listen to the statutes", "I am teaching you", "you shall not add to the word"**. Living by the Way of God **"will be your wisdom and your understanding"**. This will lead to discernment to apply **"statutes"** and live by **"mish<sup>e</sup>patim"**.

The process, **"To Be a King"**, entails the following:

1. Be called by God, become converted, strive to replace human nature by divine nature
2. Learn and take on the attributes of God's character

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<sup>328</sup> See footnote 65

<sup>329</sup> See footnote 21

<sup>330</sup> For a discussion of the role of "statutes", see *Excursus 4 – Statutes and Ancient Law Codes* in the paper **"The Writings of Moses"** located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>331</sup> See footnote 13

3. Learn humility, strive to be humble
4. Walk with God, purify the heart by living by the Way of God
5. Attain true reverence for God, come to know God and be known by God
6. Attain understanding, wisdom, and discernment
7. Live by God's *mish'patim*, serve God, look to the arrival of the King of kings

## 4. The Way of God

As we draw closer to the end-of-the-age, we find **Western Civilization in crisis of leadership**. We have uncontrolled megalomaniacs running amuck creating worldwide havoc. We have demented fools somehow finding themselves in leadership positions. **No where are there strong leaders with a commitment to the Way of God**, like King David. The success of Western Civilization was based on the **Judeo-Christian Ethic** – the belief that personal and national best interests were defined by the Ten Commandments of God. Society was based on the rule of law and personal freedom. Governments were there to serve the people. That is all gone now.

The key to making the World Tomorrow a worldwide utopia is the Way of God. **The King of kings will have a team of "kings" who have learned the Way of God and are committed to bring the Way of God to each and every person on the planet**. These "kings" will comprise the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God will bring peace, prosperity, good government, and personal freedom to each and every person on the planet.

The lessons recorded in the Bible based on the Kings of Israel are vital learning for any person called **"To Be a King"**. Certainly much more could be said than has been covered in this paper. Hopefully, this paper will be found useful as an introduction to the study of the Kings of Israel, most importantly, the lessons to be learned from those kings. Any person called **"To Be a King"** must learn the Way of God and commit to live by it. When the time comes, the "team" of the King of kings will be able to successfully change the world into a place where there will never again be a crisis of leadership.

## Excursus 1 – The Immanuel Cycle

**The Book of Isaiah chapters 7 through 12 contain some of the richest Messianic prophecies in the Bible**. The date is probably in 734BC.<sup>332</sup> Ahaz has just assumed the throne as "coregent" – he is in his early days as "King". **The Bible is NOT explicit as to why God sent Isaiah to Ahaz**. The message delivered to Ahaz, in **chapter 7**, suggests that **perhaps there was a hope to influence Ahaz in the right direction**. Ahaz rejects God's overtures. Then, in **chapter 8**, Isaiah delivers explicit prophecies of the impending Assyrian depredations. **Chapter 9** contains one of the most famous Messianic prophecies in the Bible along with a castigation of the Northern Kingdom for its coalition with Rezin of Aram. **Chapter 10** contains a judgement of Assyria as well as a prophecy of the Second Exodus. **Chapter 11** contains Messianic prophecies relating to both the First Advent and the Second Advent, as well as prophecies of the Second Exodus and the New Israel. **Chapter 12** is a prophecy of those people called to return to the New Israel in the Second Exodus. **The theme which ties these chapters together is the Messiah's carrying the Dynasty of David forward in perpetuity**.

### The Message to Ahaz

**In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham**, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, **Rezin** the king of [Aram] and **Pekah** the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack<sup>333</sup> against it. When **the house of David** was told,

<sup>332</sup> Jotham is still on the throne, see 2 Kings 15:37. Ahaz has just assumed the throne as "coregent", see 2 Kings 16:5, Isaiah 7:1. It is prior to the advance of Tiglath-pileser in 732BC.

<sup>333</sup> "but could not yet mount an attack"; 2 Kings 16:5 has, "but could not conquer him"

“[Aram] is in league with Ephraim,”

**the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook** as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.

And [YHWH] said to Isaiah,

Go out to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub<sup>334</sup> your son,  
at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer’s Field.  
And say to him,

**‘Be careful, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint**  
because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands,  
at the fierce anger of Rezin [even]<sup>335</sup> [Aram] and the son of Remaliah.  
Because [Aram], with Ephraim [even] the son of Remaliah,  
has devised evil against you, saying,

**“Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves,  
and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it.”**

Thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

**‘It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass.**

For the head of [Aram] is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin.

And within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered from being a people.

And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.

**If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.’**

(Isaiah 7:1–9 ESV)

Ahaz is a new King, a coregent, with his father Jotham. He is just twenty years old, very inexperienced. Jotham had pursued an anti-Assyrian policy. It was likely the pro-Assyrian faction that forced Ahaz to “usurp” his father. Pekah and Rezin wanted to force the Southern Kingdom into alliance with them against Assyria. Ahaz is clearly fearful, **“the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook”**. The message through Isaiah is to have faith in God, **“be careful, be quiet, do not fear, do not let your heart be faint”**. Pekah and Rezin intended to put the non-Davidic King, **Tabeel**, on the throne. God is explicit to Ahaz, that will NOT happen, **“it shall not come to pass”**. The message to Ahaz, as a young King starting his career, is to trust in God, **“if you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all”**.

Again [YHWH] spoke to Ahaz:

**“Ask a sign of [YHWH] your God;** let it be deep as [death] (sh<sup>e</sup>’ol)<sup>336</sup> or high as heaven.”

But Ahaz said, **“I will not ask,** and I will not put [YHWH] to the test.”

And he said,

**“Hear then, O house of David!**

Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also?

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

Behold, **the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**

He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

For **before the boy knows** how to refuse the evil and choose the good,

**the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted.**

**[YHWH] will bring upon you** and upon your people and upon your father’s house

such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—**the king of Assyria!**”

(Isaiah 7:10-17 ESV)

There is no indication of the time lapse between the first message and this second message, but it is likely that Ahaz had sent tribute to Tiglath-pileser prior to this message,<sup>337</sup> so Ahaz was committed to trust Assyria rather than God. Ahaz’s refusal to respond to God’s offer of a sign smacks of false piety. But, even if Ahaz had responded, **the sign of Immanuel** was almost certainly coming. The sign from God is NOT addressed to Ahaz, but to the Davidic Dynasty, **“hear then, O house of David”**. This is clearly a prophecy of the fate of the Davidic Dynasty. It was only by God’s grace due to the promise to David that the Dynasty had survived this long:

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<sup>334</sup> Shear-jashub means “a remnant shall return” and suggests both judgment (God’s people will be reduced to a remnant) and grace (that remnant will return; ESV footnote).

<sup>335</sup> See footnote 16

<sup>336</sup> See footnote 94

<sup>337</sup> See 2 Kings 16:7-8

Yet **[YHWH] was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant**, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.  
(2 Kings 8:19 ESV)

The Dynasty would terminate, but it would be reinstated by the Messiah, "**Immanuel**".<sup>338</sup> Ahaz would prove to be one of the worst kings of the Davidic Dynasty. It was appropriate to warn him of its demise. The prophecy also had an immediate application, "**the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted**". In 732, Tiglath-pileser incorporated Aram and much of Northern Israel into the Assyrian Empire – a rump state was left under the vassalage Hoshea. But the prophecy continued, "**YHWH will bring upon you**", "**the king of Assyria**". The tribute of Ahaz was sufficient to keep Tiglath-pileser away from the Southern Kingdom, but a generation later Sennacherib would come against Hezekiah. The rest of chapter 7 outlines some of the depredations of the Assyrian invasion.

## The Impending Assyrian Depredations

Isaiah and his wife fulfilled the immediate part of the Immanuel prophecy:

And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son.

Then [YHWH] said to me,

"Call his name **Maher-shalal-hash-baz**,"<sup>339</sup>

for **before the boy knows** how to cry 'My father' or 'My mother,'

the wealth of **Damascus** and the spoil of **Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria**."

(Isaiah 8:3-4 ESV)

The prophecy had specified a young child, "**before the boy knows**", during whose early years, the Aramean-Ephraimite coalition would be defeated, "**the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted**". Maher-shalal-hash-baz was a sign of the fulfillment, "**carried away before the king of Assyria**".

[YHWH] spoke to me again:

"Because **this people has refused the waters of Shiloah**<sup>340</sup> **that flow gently**,

and **rejoice over Rezin and the son of Remaliah**,

therefore, behold, the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of **the River**, mighty and many, **the king of Assyria** and all his glory.

And it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks,

and **it will sweep on into Judah**, it will overflow and pass on,

**reaching even to the neck**,

and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, **O Immanuel!**"

Be broken, **you peoples**, and be shattered; give ear, all you **far countries**;

strap on your armor and be shattered; strap on your armor and be shattered.

Take counsel together, but **it will come to nothing**;

speak a word, but it will not stand, for **God is with us (Immanuel)**.

(Isaiah 8:5-10 ESV)

The Northern Kingdom is castigated for NOT following God, but trusting in human alliances, "**Rezin and the son of Remaliah**". The metaphor of "**the River**" is used for the "**king of Assyria**" who will conquer the Northern Kingdom. But the prophecy continues, the River "**will sweep on into Judah**" "**reaching even to the neck**". This is a prophecy of Sennacherib's first attack on Hezekiah in 701BC where the Southern kingdom is conquered and must pay heavy tribute.<sup>341</sup> Then the prophecy extends to a universal perspective, "**you peoples**", "**far countries**". The countries of the world are called to a futile war, "**it will come to nothing**". This would seem to look to the Second Advent when the Messiah, Jesus Christ, "**Immanuel**", returns as King of kings, "**God is with us**", and defeats the nations at the Battle of Armageddon.<sup>342</sup>

<sup>338</sup> For a discussion of the name "Immanuel", see section **1.4.2.1 Explicit Form of God's Name** in the paper "**First Pillar - The Nature of God**" located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>339</sup> "Maher-shalal-hash-baz" means "the spoil speeds and the prey hastens"; ESV footnote.

<sup>340</sup> Three possible allusion for "Shiloah" are; first, the Messianic prophecy in Genesis 49:10; secondly, the stream in Jerusalem which fills the pool of Siloah / Siloam, see John 9:7; and, thirdly, the location of the Tabernacle in the promised land, Shiloh; see Joshua 18:1.

<sup>341</sup> See 2 Kings 18:13-16

<sup>342</sup> See Revelation 9:16, 16:16, 19:11,17-21

## Messianic Prophecies

For **[YHWH] spoke thus to me** with his strong hand upon me,  
and **warned me** not to walk in **the way of this people**, saying:  
“Do not call **conspiracy** all that this people calls conspiracy,  
and **do not fear** what they fear, nor be in dread.  
But **[YHWH] of hosts**, him you shall honor as holy.  
**Let him be your fear**, and let him be your dread.  
And **he will become a sanctuary** and **a stone of offense** and **a rock of stumbling**  
to **both houses of Israel**, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.  
And many shall stumble on it.  
They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.”  
(Isaiah 8:11-15 ESV)

This pericope starts off with some personal instruction from God to Isaiah, “**YHWH spoke thus to me**”. Isaiah is “**warned**” to be careful to avoid being drawn into the political goings-on around him, “**the way of this people**”, “**conspiracy**”. Isaiah is enjoined to keep focused on “**YHWH of hosts**”, “**let him be your fear**”. The last part is Messianic – looking to the First Advent, “**YHWH of hosts**” “**will become a sanctuary**”, “**a stone of offense**”, “**a rock of stumbling**”. Note that this clearly says that YHWH will be the Messiah. **The Apostles Paul and Peter allude to this Messianic prophecy:**

... but that Israel ... did not succeed ... Why?  
Because **they did not pursue it by faith**, but as if it were **based on works**.  
**They have stumbled over the stumbling stone**, as it is written,  
“Behold, I am laying in Zion **a stone of stumbling**, and **a rock of offense**;  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”  
(Romans 9:31-33 ESV)

So the honor is for you who believe, but **for those who do not believe**,  
“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” (citing Psalm 118:22)  
and  
“**A stone of stumbling**, and **a rock of offense**.”  
They stumble **because they disobey the word**, as they were destined to do.  
(1 Peter 2:7-8 ESV)

**Both Paul and Peter are alluding to the effect of the Messiah on their contemporaries**, “the Jews”. The contemporary “Jews” of Paul and Peter indeed represented “**both houses of Israel**”. The Southern Kingdom had always been something of a “melting pot” – many individuals from the Northern Tribes had over the generations merged to the Southern Kingdom.<sup>343</sup> Paul is specifically talking about the “pharisaic interpretations” – the Pharisees taught that perfect adherence to their interpretations was required for salvation, “**based on works**”. The teaching of the Pharisees was smashed by the Messiah, “**a stone of stumbling**”, “**a rock of offense**”. Jesus taught salvation “**by faith**”. Peter is talking more generally about those who refuse to believe the Gospel, “**those who do not believe**”, “**because they disobey the word**”. They are tripped up by the reality of the Messiah, “**a stone of stumbling**”, “**a rock of offense**”. In the World Tomorrow, the Messiah “**will become a sanctuary**” for “**both houses of Israel**” when the New Israel is created, as one nation, after the Second Exodus.

**Bind (tzazar) up the testimony (t`udah);**  
**seal (hatham) the teaching (torah) among my disciples.**  
**I will wait for [YHWH]**, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob,  
and **I will hope in him**.  
Behold, **I and the children whom [YHWH] has given me are signs and portents in Israel**  
from [YHWH] of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.  
And when they say to you,  
“**Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers** who chirp and mutter,”  
should not a people inquire of their God?  
Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?

<sup>343</sup> For a discussion of this, see *Excursus 3 – The Tribal Makeup of the Southern Kingdom*.  
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**To the teaching (torah) and to the testimony (t<sup>e</sup>udah)!**

If **they will not speak according to this word**, it is **because they have no dawn**.

(Isaiah 8:16-20 ESV)

This pericope starts off with a comment from Isaiah, **“bind up the testimony”, “seal the teaching among my disciples”**. Isaiah refers back to YHWH’s instruction:

Then [YHWH] said to me,

“Take a large tablet and write on it in common characters,

**‘Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz.’**”

And **I will get reliable witnesses**,

Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, **to attest for me**.

(Isaiah 8:1-2 ESV)

The word for “testimony” is תְּעֻדָּה - t<sup>e</sup>udah, a feminine noun derived from the verbal root עֹדַ - `ud; the same root from which עֲדוּת - `eduth, is derived.<sup>344</sup> The noun t<sup>e</sup>udah occurs only in this pericope and in Ruth 4:7 where it means “attestation”. The feminine noun `eduth occurs 81 times. It is frequently used as a synonym for מִצְוָה - mitz<sup>e</sup>wah,<sup>345</sup> the ten commandments; `eduth is also frequently used in the phrase “ark of the testimony” – the Ark of the Covenant which contained the two tablets upon which the ten commandments were inscribed. So t<sup>e</sup>udah is clearly related to the teaching of God, but it is NOT synonymous with `eduth, the ten commandments.

The verb “bind” is from צָרַר - tzarar, “to bind up”, “to tie”.<sup>346</sup> The verb “seal” is from חָתַם - hatham, “to seal”, either physically or metaphorically.<sup>347</sup> The verbs, tzarar and hatham, are in parallel; as are the nouns, t<sup>e</sup>udah and torah. So the meaning is quite clear: some teaching from God is to be secured among the “disciples” of Isaiah. Isaiah affirms his commitment to God, **“I will wait for YHWH”, “I will hope in him”**; then, he comments **“I and the children whom YHWH has given me are signs and portents in Israel”**. In the ancient world, “disciples” were commonly referred to as “sons”, so by “children” Isaiah may be implicating not only his physical children but also his disciples, which gets back to God’s original instruction, **“belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz”**. This child was the “typical” fulfillment of the “Immanuel prophecy”. The symbolism of this is that the revelation from God to Isaiah, i.e., this prophecy, was to be “bound up”, i.e., recorded by his disciples, and “sealed”, i.e., not fully understandable, until the antitypical fulfillment of the “Immanuel prophecy”, i.e., the First Advent.

Next Isaiah comments on a problem among the people, **“inquire of the mediums and the necromancers”**<sup>348</sup> – there was a tendency to lack faith in God and look to other sources, such as the occult. Isaiah calls for a return to the Way of God, **“to the teaching and to the testimony”**. The popular leaders and teachers<sup>349</sup> **“will not speak according to this word”** because they have **“put darkness for light”**,<sup>350</sup> **“they have no dawn”**.

**They will pass through the land**, greatly distressed and hungry.

And when they are hungry,

**they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God**,  
and turn their faces upward.

And they will look to the earth, but behold, **distress and darkness**, the gloom of anguish.

And they will be thrust into **thick darkness**.

(Isaiah 8:21-22 ESV)

<sup>344</sup> See TWOT article 1576 pages 648-650

<sup>345</sup> See TWOT article 1887b pages 757-758

<sup>346</sup> See TWOT article 1973 pages 778-779

<sup>347</sup> See TWOT article 780 page 334-335, see also *Excursus 1 – Survey of hatham* in the paper “The Seventy Periods Prophecy” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

<sup>348</sup> See Isaiah 2:6, 3:1-2, Micah 5:12

<sup>349</sup> See Isaiah 1:10,23, 3:12,14, 5:8-23

<sup>350</sup> See Isaiah 5:20

This last part of this pericope seems like “**vision report**”, although that is NOT explicitly stated. “**They will pass through the land**” is reminiscent of Psalm 107:

**Some wandered in desert wastes**, finding no way to a city to dwell in;  
hungry and thirsty, their [life] (nephesh)<sup>351</sup> fainted within them.  
(Psalm 107:4-5 ESV)

The **cursing of God** is featured in the Book of Revelation, “**speak contemptuously against their king and their God**”:

**The rest of mankind**, who were not killed by these plagues,  
**did not repent** of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons  
and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk,  
**nor did they repent** of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

They were scorched by the fierce heat,  
and **they cursed the name of God** who had power over these plagues.

**They did not repent** and give him glory.

People gnawed their tongues in anguish and **cursed the God of heaven** for their pain and sores.  
**They did not repent** of their deeds.

And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people;  
and **they cursed God** for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.  
(Revelation 9:20-21, 16:9, 10b-11, 21 ESV)

The last line, “**distress and darkness**”, “**thick darkness**”, sounds like the Sixth Seal, heavenly signs:

When he opened **the sixth seal**, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake,  
and **the sun became black as sackcloth**, the full moon became like blood ...

Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful,  
and everyone, slave and free, **hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains** ...  
(Revelation 6:12, 15 ESV)

**Chapter 9** starts out with a series of Messianic prophecies, starting with the **First Advent** and ending with the **Second Advent**. The first prophecy identifies the location of Jesus’ early ministry. The prophecy is specifically cited by the **Apostle Matthew**:

But there will be no gloom for **her who was in anguish**.

In the former time he brought into contempt **the land of Zebulun** and **the land of Naphtali**,  
but **in the latter time** he has made glorious the way of the sea,  
the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.  
(Isaiah 9:1-2 ESV)

And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea,  
in the territory of **Zebulun** and **Naphtali**,  
so that **what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled**:

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—  
the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light,  
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”

(Matthew 4:13-16 ESV)

The first line (9:1) uses the common personification of a “nation” as a female, “**her who was in anguish**”. The ancient “**anguish**” of Zebulun and Naphtali was the exile imposed by Tiglath-pileser in 732BC. The personification of “Israel” as a female is taken up in the Book of Revelation regarding the continuum of Ancient Israel morphing into the New Testament Church:

And a great sign appeared in heaven:

**a woman clothed with the sun**, with the moon under her feet,  
and **on her head a crown of twelve stars**.

She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.  
She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron,  
but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,

**and the woman fled into the wilderness** ...

(Revelation 12:1-2, 5-6a ESV)

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<sup>351</sup> See footnote 21

The next few verses of chapter 9, look to the work of the King of kings in establishing the New Israel in the World Tomorrow:

**You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy;**

they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

For **the yoke of his burden**, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor,  
**you have broken** as on the day of Midian.<sup>352</sup>

For every **boot of the tramping warrior** in battle tumult  
and every **garment rolled in blood** will be **burned** as fuel for the fire.  
(Isaiah 9:3-5 ESV)

The “**yoke of his burden**” is a specific allusion to the servitude imposed by Tiglath-pileser, but that is only a type of the general servitude imposed on the world under the sway of Satan the Devil. Starting with the New Israel, Satan’s grip on mankind will be “**broken**”. The “**boot**” and the “**garment**” are symbols of war. All things pertaining to war, represented by such symbols, will be “**burned**” out of existence in the World Tomorrow – there will be no war.

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;**

and **the government shall be upon his shoulder**,  
and his name shall be called

- Wonderful Counselor,
- Mighty God,
- Everlasting Father,
- Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace **there will be no end**,  
**on the throne of David** and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it with [justness] (mish’pat)<sup>353</sup> and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of [YHWH] of hosts will do this.  
(Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV)

This pericope starts out looking to the First Advent, “**to us a child is born**”, alluding back to the promise of “**Immanuel**”, “**a son is given**”, “**the virgin shall conceive and bear a son**”. The prophecy then jumps to the Second Advent, “**the government shall be upon his shoulder**”. The perpetuity of the Dynasty of David through the Messiah is emphasized, “**on the throne of David**”, “**there will be no end**”.

**Chapter 11** continues the Messianic prophecies:

There shall come forth **a shoot from the stump of Jesse**,  
and **a branch from his roots shall bear fruit**.

And the Spirit of [YHWH] shall rest upon him,

- the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
- the Spirit of counsel and might,
- the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of [YHWH].

And **his delight shall be in the fear of [YHWH]**.

He shall not **judge** by what his eyes see,  
or **decide disputes** by what his ears hear,  
but with righteousness he shall **judge** the poor,  
and **decide with equity** for the meek of the earth;

and he shall **strike the earth with the rod of his mouth**,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall **kill the wicked**.<sup>354</sup>

Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.  
(Isaiah 11:1-5 ESV)

Again, this pericope starts with the First Advent, “**a shoot from the stump of Jesse**”, “**a branch from his roots shall bear fruit**”. The “**stump of Jesse**” is the dormant Davidic line identified by Matthew and Luke in their genealogies from David to Joseph, Jesus’ legal father. The “**shoot**” is of course the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The “**roots**” are again the dormant line of David. The “**branch**” is the Messiah. Some

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<sup>352</sup> See Judges 7:25, Isaiah 10:26

<sup>353</sup> See footnote 65

<sup>354</sup> See Revelation 1:16, 2:12, 11:18, 19:15

characteristics of the Messiah are listed. The phrase “**his delight shall be in the fear of YHWH**” seems somewhat ambiguous, but it applies to both the First Advent and the Second Advent. In the First Advent, Jesus “delighted” in those members of the remnant community who did have “**the fear of YHWH**” – they became his disciples. After the Second Advent, all persons in all nations over the whole world will learn “**the fear of YHWH**” – indeed that will be a “**delight**” to the King of kings. Next, the work of the Messiah after the Second Advent is taken up: as King of kings, he will “**judge**” and “**decide disputes**” “**with equity**”. Finally, the prophecy reverts to the **Day of YHWH** when the King of kings will “**strike the earth**” and “**kill the wicked**”.

**A striking feature of these prophecies**, which is generally common to all prophecy, **is the lack of temporality**. From the perspective of “**eternity**”, where God dwells, where **there is no time**,<sup>355</sup> **temporality is irrelevant**. Prophecies are generally related to each other “topically”. One pericope can flow seamlessly between “topically” related events without any regard to their temporal sequencing.

For example, **consider the first seven verses of chapter 9**:

- (1) But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish.  
In the former time **he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali**,  
but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea,  
the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.
- (2) The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, **on them has light shone**.
- (3) **You have multiplied the nation**; you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
- (4) For the **yoke** of his burden, and the **staff** for his shoulder, the **rod of his oppressor**,  
**you have broken** as on the day of Midian.
- (5) For every boot of the **tramping warrior** in battle tumult and every **garment rolled in blood**  
**will be burned** as fuel for the fire.
- (6) For to us **a child is born**, to us a son is given;  
and the **government** shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- (7) Of the increase of his **government** and of peace there will be no end,  
on the **throne of David** and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it with [justness] (mish\*pat)<sup>356</sup> and with righteousness  
from this time forth and **forevermore**.  
The zeal of [YHWH] of hosts will do this.  
(Isaiah 9:1-7 ESV)

- **Verse 1** relates to the contemporary depredations of Tiglath-pileser in North Israel, as it turns out this is only a “typical” relationship
- **Verse 2** in the contemporary setting is completely ambiguous – only when **the New Testament authors apply verses 1-2 to the early ministry of Jesus Christ** does the actual meaning of verses come clear
- From the contemporary perspective, **verse 3** would sound like something desirable, but unattainable
- **Verse 4** again would be very desirable contemporarily, but how to throw off the Assyrian yoke?
- **Verse 5** makes no sense contemporarily: end war? how?
- **Verse 6a** clearly relates to **the earlier prophecy of the birth of a child**, verse 7:14 and its apparent fulfillment in verse 8:3
- **Verses 6b and 7** blow away all the contemporary associations made so far: only within the context of other prophecies is it possible to relate the prophecy of the “**government**” to the “**Messianic Age**”, the World Tomorrow, the Kingdom of God
- **This brings into focus the previous verses**: verses 3-5 relate to the “Messianic Age”; verse 6a, therefore, is the Messiah
- But, **there is no apparent temporal break between verse 6a and 6b**

<sup>355</sup> For a complete discussion of “eternity”, see section **1.3 Where is God?** in the paper “**First Pillar - The Nature of God**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>356</sup> See footnote **65**

- The understanding of the temporal break is given by the New Testament's application of the first two verses to the First Advent, and the subsequent clarification from the New Testament of the distinction between the First Advent and the Second Advent

**Understanding this lack of temporality is very important in understanding prophecy.**

## **Punishment of Israel**

This section comprises verses 9:8-21 and 10:1-4. All four of the pericopes in this section end with **“his anger has not turned away”, “his hand is stretched out still”**. **The punishment in these pericopes is aimed at the Northern Kingdom**. Yet, this cycle of prophecies was given to Ahaz of the Southern Kingdom. The iniquity of the Northern Kingdom was complete – it was about to be destroyed. The final chapters of the Southern Kingdom were yet to be written. **God’s extended anger was aimed at the Southern Kingdom**. Also, God’s anger will NOT finally be **“turned away”** until after the ultimate Day of YHWH when the end-time nations of the world are finally punished, and the Kingdom of God is established.

The Lord has sent a word against Jacob, and it will fall on Israel;  
and all the people will know, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria,  
**who say in pride and in arrogance of heart:**

“The **bricks have fallen**, but we will build with dressed stones;  
the **sycamores have been cut down**, but we will put cedars in their place.”

But [YHWH] raises the adversaries of Rezin against him, and stirs up his enemies.  
The [Arameans] on the east and the Philistines on the west devour Israel with open mouth.

**For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.**  
(Isaiah 9:8-12 ESV)

Apostasy and idolatry are always accompanied by **“pride and in arrogance”**. God had punished the Northern Kingdom through the attack of Tiglath-pileser. Now the people were thumbing their noses at God, saying that, ‘whatever is **“fallen”** or **“cut down”**, we’ll build it better – we do NOT accept your punishment’.

**The people did not turn to him who struck them**, nor inquire of [YHWH] of hosts.  
So [YHWH] cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day—  
the elder and honored man is the head, and **the prophet who teaches lies** is the tail;  
for **those who guide this people** have been leading them astray,  
and those who are guided by them are swallowed up.

Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over their young men,  
and has **no compassion** on their fatherless and widows;  
for everyone is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly.

**For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.**  
(Isaiah 9:13-17 ESV)

God’s punishment is always intended to bring repentance. The people of the Northern Kingdom did NOT respond, **“did not turn to him who struck them”**. As always, when leaders, **“those who guide”**, and teachers, **“the prophet who teaches lies”**, are corrupt, the people become corrupt. God can express **“no compassion”** for anyone who refuses to repent.

For **wickedness burns like a fire**; it consumes briars and thorns;  
it kindles the thickets of the forest, and they roll upward in a column of smoke.

**Through the wrath of [YHWH] of hosts the land is scorched,**  
and the people are like fuel for the fire; no one spares another.

**They slice meat** on the right, but are still hungry,  
and they devour on the left, but are not satisfied;  
each devours the flesh of his own arm,

**Manasseh devours Ephraim**, and Ephraim devours Manasseh;  
together they are against Judah.

**For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.**  
(Isaiah 9:18-21 ESV)

Evil is insidious, it spreads like a wildfire, **“wickedness burns like a fire”**. God is the author of the punishment. God accepts responsibility for the destruction, **“through the wrath of YHWH of hosts the land is scorched”**. The metaphor of eating without satisfaction, **“they slice meat”**, is applied to the folly of internecine strife, **“Manasseh devours Ephraim”**.

Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, to **turn aside the needy from justice** and to **rob the poor** of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!

**What will you do on the day of punishment**, in the ruin that will come from afar?

To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your wealth?

Nothing remains but to crouch among the prisoners or fall among the slain.

**For all this his anger has not turned away**, and **his hand is stretched out still**.

(Isaiah 10:1-4 ESV)

Apostasy and idolatry are always accompanied by civil and social crimes **“turn aside the needy”**, **“rob the poor”**. God tolerates this only so long, then he acts, **“what will you do on the day of punishment”**. **These crimes and their impending punishment scream loudly to end-time Western Civilization.**

## Punishment of Assyria

**Assyria was a dominant nation of the world from the time of the Tower of Babel until the final destruction of the Assyrian Empire in 609BC.**<sup>357</sup> God gave to Isaiah many detailed prophecies of the transition from the dominance of Assyria to the period of the Four World Empires,<sup>358</sup> the details of which would later be revealed to Daniel.<sup>359</sup> During this period, Assyria represented **“world city”**,<sup>360</sup> the nations of the world under the sway of Satan the Devil in opposition to God. **The prophecies in the Immanuel cycle look to the destruction of the Assyrian Empire.**

**Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury!**

Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

But he does not so intend, and **his heart does not so think**;

but **it is in his heart to destroy**, and to cut off nations not a few; for he says:

“Are not my commanders all kings?

Is not Calno like Carchemish?

Is not Hamath like Arpad?

Is not Samaria like Damascus?

As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols,

whose carved images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria,

shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols as I have done to Samaria and her images?”

(Isaiah 10:5-11 ESV)

God used Assyria to punish the Northern Kingdom, **“the rod of my anger”**, but later Assyria herself would receive God’s punishment, **“woe to Assyria”**. Assyria did not realize or acknowledge that she was working on behalf of YHWH, the God of the very people she was destroying, **“the staff in their hands is my fury”**, **“his heart does not so think”**. Yet, Assyria was a fierce destroyer of other nations, **“it is in his heart to destroy”**. To Assyria, Israel was no different than the other nations she had conquered.

**When the Lord has finished all his work** on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem,

**he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria**

and the boastful look in his eyes.

For he says:

**“By the strength of my hand** I have done it, and **by my wisdom**, for **I have understanding**;

I remove the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures;

like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones.

<sup>357</sup> For a graphic depiction of this, see the chart **“Summary of History”** located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/chronological-charts>.

<sup>358</sup> This is the purpose of the “transitional section”, chapters 36 through 40. In the second part of the Book of Isaiah, see, for example 41:21-23, 42:9, 43:18-19a, 46:8-10, 48:3-8.

<sup>359</sup> See section **2.4.1.2 The Writing Prophets (The Prophet Daniel)** in the paper **“Second Pillar - The Plan of God”** located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>360</sup> See section **3.1.2.2 World City** in the paper **“Third Pillar - The Way of God”** located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

My hand has found like a nest the wealth of the peoples;  
and as one gathers eggs that have been forsaken, so I have gathered all the earth;  
and there was none that moved a wing or opened the mouth or chirped.”

**Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it**, or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it?  
As if a rod should wield him who lifts it, or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood!

**Therefore the Lord [YHWH] of hosts will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors**,  
and under his glory a burning will be kindled, like the burning of fire.

The **light of Israel** will become a fire, and **his Holy One** a flame,  
and it will burn and devour his thorns and briers **in one day**.

The glory of his forest and of his fruitful land [YHWH] will destroy, both [mind] (nephesh)<sup>361</sup> and body,  
and it will be as when a sick man wastes away.

The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few that a child can write them down.  
(Isaiah 10:12-19 ESV)

All that Assyria was doing was according to the Plan of God, **“when the Lord has finished all his work”**.  
Assyria’s punishment was sure due to her arrogance, **“the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria”**, **“the strength of my hand”**, **“my wisdom”**, **“I have understanding”**. Assuming this prophecy was given to  
Isaiah around 730BC, the punishment was still two generations in the future, **“the Lord YHWH of hosts will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors”**. This is a prophecy of the destruction of  
Sennacherib’s army in about 688BC. The prophecy was sure, and it was fulfilled. The **“light of Israel”**,  
**“his Holy One”**, is of course the Messiah, Jesus Christ, YHWH, who will put down all opposition, as  
symbolized by Assyria, in the Day of YHWH, **“in one day”**.

Therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH] of hosts:

**“O my people, who dwell in Zion,**  
**be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you**  
as the Egyptians did.

For in a very little while my fury will come to an end,  
and **my anger will be directed to their destruction**.

And [YHWH] of hosts will wield against them a whip,  
as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb.<sup>362</sup>

And his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt.

And **in that day his burden will depart from your shoulder**,  
and his yoke from your neck; and the yoke will be broken because of the fat.”  
(Isaiah 10:24-27 ESV)

This pericope is directed to the Southern Kingdom, **“my people, who dwell in Zion”**, at the time of  
Sennacherib’s second attack in about 688BC, **“be not afraid of the Assyrians”**. While the Assyrian army  
was amassed waiting to attack Jerusalem, God destroyed them, **“my anger will be directed to their destruction”**.<sup>363</sup> This destruction was the beginning of the end for the Assyrian Empire. It would be two  
more generations before the end came, but it was sure to happen. Again, the destruction of the  
Assyrian Empire was only a type of the liberation of humanity from the oppression of Satan the Devil to  
occur at the Second Advent, **“in that day his burden will depart”**.

He has come to Aiath;  
he has passed through Migron;  
at Michmash he stores his baggage;  
they have crossed over the pass;  
at Geba they lodge for the night;  
Ramah trembles;  
Gibeah of Saul has fled.  
Cry aloud, O daughter of Gallim!  
Give attention, O Laishah!  
O poor Anathoth!  
Madmenah is in flight;  
the inhabitants of Gebim flee for safety.  
This very day he will halt at Nob;

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<sup>361</sup> See footnote 21

<sup>362</sup> See Judges 7:25

<sup>363</sup> See Isaiah 37:36 // 2 Kings 19:35

**he will shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.**

Behold, the Lord [YHWH] of hosts will lop the boughs with terrifying power;

**the great in height will be hewn down**, and the lofty will be brought low.

He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon will fall by the Majestic One.

(Isaiah 10:28-34 ESV)

There is no documentation on the details of Sennacherib's approach to Jerusalem for his second attack in about 688BC. If he came straight from the North, this pericope would be his approximate itinerary.

However he got there, he did **"shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion"**, but God carried out his plan, **"the great in height will be hewn down"**.

God had allowed **Assyria** to be a dominant nation, **"world city"**, for many centuries, from the Tower of Babel until the end of the Empire at the **Battle of Haran in 609BC**. In 609BC the **Neo-Babylonian Empire** assumed the hegemony, it would last for 70 years as prophesized by Jeremiah.<sup>364</sup> This was the beginning of the World Empires symbolized by the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and interpreted by Daniel<sup>365</sup> which would represent **"world city"** until the coming of the Kingdom of God:

**You, O king, the king of kings**, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—**you are the head of gold**.

**Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you**, and yet **a third kingdom of bronze**, which shall rule over all the earth.

And there shall be **a fourth kingdom, strong as iron**, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.

And **in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed**, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people.

It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and **it shall stand forever** ...

(Daniel 2:37-40, 44 ESV)

## The Second Exodus and the New Israel

**The first major event after the Second Advent will be the Second Exodus**. God will call people from the four corners of the earth to return to the Land of Israel and form the New Nation of Israel.<sup>366</sup>

**In that day** the **remnant of Israel** and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but **will lean on [YHWH], the Holy One of Israel, in truth**.

**A remnant will return**, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.

For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return.

**Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness**.

**For the Lord [YHWH] of hosts will make a full end**, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth.

(Isaiah 10:20-23 ESV)

The time setting is just after the Second Advent, **"In that day"**. The **"remnant of Israel"** is the people called to the New Israel who will return to the Promised Land via the Second Exodus. This prophecy alludes to the sons of Isaiah, **"I and the children whom YHWH has given me are signs and portents in Israel"**.<sup>367</sup> **"Shear-jashub"** means **"a remnant shall return"**. **"Maher-shalal-hash-baz"** means **"the spoil speeds and the prey hastens"**, **"destruction is decreed"**. The prophesized **"full end"** of the Ancient Nation of Israel occurred between 732BC and about 580BC. The Northern Kingdom was destroyed by Shalmaneser V in 722BC with subsequent deportations. The Southern Kingdom was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC with subsequent deportations. The returnees in the Second Exodus **"will lean on YHWH, the Holy One of Israel, in truth"**. It will be a time **"overflowing with righteousness"**.

**In that day the root of Jesse**,

who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—**of him shall the nations inquire**, and his resting place shall be glorious.

<sup>364</sup> See Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10, Daniel 9:2

<sup>365</sup> See Daniel 2:31-36

<sup>366</sup> For a discussion of this, see sections **2.4.5.1 The Second Exodus** and **2.4.5.2 The New Israel** in the paper **"Pillar Two - The Plan of God"** located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>367</sup> See Isaiah 8:18, discussed in the section **Messianic Prophecies**.

**In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant** that remains of his people,  
from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam,  
from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.  
(Isaiah 11:10-11 ESV)

The "**shoot from the stump of Jesse**"<sup>368</sup> and "**the root of Jesse**" are the same – the Messiah.<sup>369</sup> When Jesus returns as King of kings, "**of him shall the nations inquire**":

It shall come to pass **in the latter days** that the mountain of the house of [YHWH] shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the **nations shall flow to it**, and many peoples shall come, and say:  
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of [YHWH], to the house of the God of Jacob, that **he may teach us his ways** and that **we may walk in his paths**."  
For out of Zion shall go forth **[torah]**,<sup>370</sup> [even]<sup>371</sup> **the word of [YHWH]** from Jerusalem.  
(Isaiah 2:2-3 ESV)

After the Second Advent, "**in that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time**", the Second Exodus will occur. The objective of the Second Exodus is to bring those called into the Land of Israel, "**to recover the remnant**".

He will raise a signal for the nations and will **assemble the banished of Israel**, and **gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth**.

**The jealousy of Ephraim shall depart**, and those who harass Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and **Judah shall not harass Ephraim**.

But they shall **swoop down** on the shoulder of the Philistines in the west, and together they shall **plunder the people** of the east.

They shall **put out their hand against** Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them.

And [YHWH] will utterly destroy the tongue of **the Sea of Egypt**, and will wave his hand over the River with his scorching breath, and strike it into seven channels, and he will lead people across in sandals.

And there will be **a highway from Assyria** for the remnant that remains of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt.  
(Isaiah 11:12-16 ESV)

In the World Tomorrow, the differences between the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom, will NOT exist, "**the jealousy of Ephraim shall depart**", "**Judah shall not harass Ephraim**". The New Israel will be God's example nation to carry the Gospel to all nations of the world. The "**metaphor of violence**" implies "**conquering**" the world through the Gospel, "**swoop down**", "**plunder the people**", "**put out their hand against**". As Assyria was a destroyer of Israel, symbolically "**a highway from Assyria**" will exist to the Promised Land, the Land of Israel.

**Chapter 12 is very special.** It could be entitled "**The Song of the Returnees**". It expresses the gratitude, the joy, and the desire to serve, of the people called to the New Israel who successfully participate in the Second Exodus:

You will say in that day:

"I will give thanks to you, [YHWH], for **though you were angry with me**, your anger turned away, that **you might comfort me**.  
Behold, **God is my salvation**; I will trust, and will not be afraid;  
for [YAH] [YHWH] is my strength and my song, and **he has become my salvation**."  
(Isaiah 12:1-2 ESV)

The people called to the Second Exodus will be general "people of the world", "**you were angry with me**". God will have identified them as people he can call, "**you might comfort me**". The calling to the New Israel is a call to conversion, to salvation, "**God is my salvation**", "**he has become my salvation**".

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<sup>368</sup> See Isaiah 11:1

<sup>369</sup> See Revelation 5:5, 22:16

<sup>370</sup> See footnote 13

<sup>371</sup> See footnote 16

With joy you **will draw water from the wells of salvation.**

And you will say in that day:

“Give thanks to [YHWH], call upon his name,

**make known his deeds among the peoples**, proclaim that his name is exalted.

Sing praises to [YHWH], for he has done gloriously;

**let this be made known in all the earth.**

Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for **great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.**”

(Isaiah 12:3-6 ESV)

Once converted, “**draw water from the wells of salvation**”, those people called to the New Israel will respond with zeal to accomplish the Plan of God. The New Israel will fulfill God’s purpose for Israel to be an example nation to the whole world, “**make known his deeds among the peoples**”, “**let this be made known in all the earth**”, “**great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel**”.

**The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,**

and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;  
and a little child shall lead them.

**The cow and the bear shall graze;** their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,  
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den.

**They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain;**

for **the earth shall be full of the knowledge of [YHWH] as the waters cover the sea.**

(Isaiah 11:6-9 ESV)

This famous passage defines the joy, the bliss, the serenity, – the superlatives fail, of **the Kingdom of God** and **the utopia it will bring to the whole world in the World Tomorrow!**

## **Excursus 2 – Justification in the New Testament**

What is “**justification**”? How is it related to “**repentance**”? What does it mean to be “**blameless**”?

How is “**righteousness**” related to “**justification**”?

This excursus first examines **the process of “repentance”**. Through “repentance” a person can start to learn the Way of God; this allows God to consider the person “**justified**”, and the person can proceed on **the process of actual “justification”**. The process of “justification” is examined, then three different perspectives of “justification” are reviewed:

- The Epistle of James
- The Epistle of Galatians
- The Book of Romans

When a person is considered by God to be in the process of “justification”, that person is accounted “**blameless**” by God. To be accounted “blameless” is to have **all sins propitiated by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ**. To a person who is accounted “blameless”, God can grant **the gift of faith**. Having faith, a person can be accounted “**righteous**” by God. A person remains in a “blameless” state by **learning to live by the Way of God**. Living by the Way of God teaches a person “righteousness”. To be considered by God to be **a candidate for the gift of eternal life**, a person must remain in a “blameless” state. The process of “justification” is completed at the **First Resurrection** – those who participate will become truly “righteous”, truly holy, as members of the God Family.

# Repentance

Two Greek words that relate to “repentance” are:

- μετανοέω - metanoēō, verb, “repent”
- μετάνοια - metanoia, feminine noun, “repentance”<sup>372</sup>

The only appropriate response to the “**calling of God**” is to repent:

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that **God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance (metanoia)**? (Romans 2:4 ESV)

And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

**God may perhaps grant them repentance (metanoia)** leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

(2 Timothy 2:24-26 ESV)

You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears

and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews;

how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable,

and teaching you in public and from house to house,

**testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance (metanoia) toward God**

and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Acts 20:18b-21 ESV)

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity,

**not laying again a foundation of repentance (metanoia)** from dead works and of faith toward God ... (Hebrews 6:1 ESV)

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that **all should reach repentance (metanoia)**.

(2 Peter 3:9 ESV)

The purpose of repentance is to **receive forgiveness of sins**:

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them,

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,

and that **repentance (metanoia) for the forgiveness of sins**

should be proclaimed in his name to all nations,

beginning from Jerusalem. ...”

(Luke 24:45-47 ESV)

And Peter said to them,

**“Repent (metanoēō) and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins,** and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ...”

(Acts 2:38 ESV)

**The God of our fathers raised Jesus,** whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.

**God exalted him** at his right hand as Leader and Savior,

**to give repentance (metanoia) to Israel and forgiveness of sins.**

(Acts 5:30-31 ESV)

Having repented, **a person called by God must change**. The former, sinful, way of life must be replaced by a way of life consistent with the Way of God:

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them,

“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

**Bear fruit in keeping with repentance (metanoia).** ...”

(Matthew 3:7-8 ESV // Luke 3:7-8a)

Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea,

and also to the Gentiles,

that they should **repent (metanoēō) and turn to God,**

**performing deeds in keeping with their repentance (metanoia).**

(Acts 26:19-20 ESV)

<sup>372</sup> See [www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org), “Language Tools”, “Lexical Form”

I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; **repent (metanoēō)**, and **do the works you did at first**. (Revelation 2:3-5a ESV)

### **The objective of repentance is to become a candidate for the gift of eternal life:**

When they heard these things they fell silent.

And they glorified God, saying,

“Then to the Gentiles also God has granted **repentance (metanoia) that leads to life.**”

(Acts 11:18 ESV)

For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while.

As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because **you were grieved into repenting (metanoia)**.

For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

For **godly grief produces a repentance (metanoia) that leads to salvation** without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

(2 Corinthians 7:8-10 ESV)

But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

**Repent (metanoēō) therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,**

that **times of refreshing may come** from the presence of the Lord,

and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus,

whom heaven must receive until **the time for restoring all the things**

about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

(Acts 3:18-21 ESV)

**Repentance is the beginning of the process of “justification”.** Having repented, a person can receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, God imparts faith to the repentant person. Living a life of faith, through the Holy Spirit, according to the Way of God, puts a person on the path to justification.

## **Justification**

There are several Greek words which relate to “justification”:<sup>373</sup>

- δικαίωσις - dikaiōsis, feminine noun, “justification”
- δικαίωμα - dikaiōma, neuter noun, “regulation”, “righteous act”
- δικαιοῶ - dikaiōō, verb, “justify”, “vindicate”, “free”
- δίκαιος - dikaios, adjective, “righteous”, “just”
- δικαιοσύνη - dikaiosynē, feminine noun, “righteousness”, “justice”

### **Justification is an action of God the Father made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ:**

**He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all,**

how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

**It is God who justifies (dikaiōō).**

(Romans 8:32-33 ESV)

... but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us.**

Since, therefore, **we have now been justified (dikaiōō) by his blood,**

much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

(Romans 5:8-9 ESV)

But you were washed, you were sanctified,

**you were justified (dikaiōō) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ**

and by the Spirit of our God.

(1 Corinthians 6:11b ESV)

It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead **Jesus our Lord,** who was delivered up for our trespasses and **raised for our justification (dikaiōsis).**

(Romans 4:24b-25 ESV)

<sup>373</sup> See [www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org), “Language Tools”, “Lexical Form”

Justification is clearly a function of **repentance** and **faith in the efficacy of Jesus sacrifice**:

... the righteousness of God **through faith [of] Jesus Christ** for all who believe.

For there is no distinction:

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

and are **justified (dikaioō) by his grace as a gift,**

**through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,**

whom God put forward as **a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.**

(Romans 3:22-25a ESV)

Therefore, since **we have been justified (dikaioō) by faith,**

we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Romans 5:1 ESV)

And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin.

For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation,

but **the free gift following many trespasses brought justification (dikaiōma).**

For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man,

much more will those who receive the abundance of grace

and **the free gift of righteousness (dikaiosynē)** reign in life **through the one man Jesus Christ.**

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men,

so **one act of righteousness (dikaiōma) leads to justification (dikaiōsis) and life for all men.**

(Romans 5:16-18 ESV)

... because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord

and **believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,** you will be saved.

For **with the heart one believes and is justified (dikaiosynē),**

and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

(Romans 10:9-10 ESV)

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,

he [is saving] us, **not because of works** done by us in righteousness (dikaiosynē),

**but according to his own mercy,**

**by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,**

[which] he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

so that **being justified (dikaioō) by his grace**

we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

(Titus 3:4-7 ESV)

The modern **debate over "justification by faith" versus "justification by works"** is completely off base because it ignores the context of both James and Paul and therefore completely misunderstands the teaching of each. Clearly there was debate going on in the ancient Church. James most likely wrote his letter prior to 45AD. It is likely that James' audience was mainly Jewish Christians among the Diaspora; thus, among some, there would be a background of Pharisaic teaching. The Pharisees were very particular about who was their "neighbour" – they would do good works for a "neighbour", but NOT for others, especially Gentiles, among whom James' audience lived. **Jesus confronted some Pharisees concerning this propensity:**

And behold, **a lawyer stood up to put him to the test,** saying,

"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

He said to him, "What is written in the [nomos]?<sup>374</sup> How do you read it?"

And he answered,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your [being] (psyche)<sup>375</sup>

and with all your strength and with all your mind, and **your neighbor as yourself.**"

And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

But he, desiring to justify (dikaioō) himself, said to Jesus, **"And who is my neighbor?"**

(Luke 10:25-29 ESV)

Jesus responded with the **Parable of the Good Samaritan.**<sup>376</sup> If justification is based on faith through the sacrifice of Christ, to a person of Pharisaic background, the necessity of Christian works could be

<sup>374</sup> See footnote 29

<sup>375</sup> The Greek word, ψυχή - psyche, is correctly translated by the English word "soul". However, the English word "soul" has been rendered an unusable word due to the implication of the pagan concept of the "immortal soul". Hence, in this paper, a more meaningful word is substituted. The most general word is "being", but more specific words such as "mind", "heart", "life" are also used. For further discussion, see [Excursus 2 - ܡܢܗܐ and ψυχή](#) in the paper ["The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle"](#) located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>376</sup> See Luke 10:30-37

doubted.<sup>377</sup> This could particularly be the case if the person were trying to justify the Pharisaic propensity to be selective as to who is a “neighbour”. **This is the issue that James addresses:**

What good is it, my brothers, if **someone says he has faith** but does not have works?

**Can that faith save him?**

If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them,

**“Go in peace, be warmed and filled,”**

without **giving them the things needed** for the body, **what good is that?**

So also **faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.**

But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.”

**Show me your faith apart from your works,** and **I will show you my faith by my works.**

(James 2:14-18 ESV)

#### **Analysis of James’ argument:**

- The person has repented and received the Holy Spirit; therefore, the person is in the process of being “justified”, **“someone says he has faith”**
- James questions whether or not the “faith” alone will be sufficient to ensure that the person remains a candidate for the gift of eternal life, **“can that faith save him”**
- James sites a situation where Christian works are required, **“giving them the things needed”**
- The person of only faith gives nothing, **“go in peace, be warmed and filled”**, which is useless, **“what good is that”**
- James answers his rhetorical question, **“faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead”**
- Christian works are required to demonstrate faith, **“show me your faith apart from your works”**, **“I will show you my faith by my works”**

Jesus addressed this in the **Parable of the Sheep and the Goats:**

**For I was** hungry and you gave me no food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,  
I was a stranger and you did not welcome me,  
naked and you did not clothe me,  
sick and in prison and you did not visit me.

**Then they also will answer, saying,**

‘Lord, **when** did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison,  
**and did not minister to you?**’

Then he will answer them, saying,

‘Truly, I say to you, **as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.**’

(Matthew 25:42-45 ESV)

#### **James goes on to site the example of Abraham:**

Do you want to be shown, **you foolish person,** that **faith apart from works is useless?**

**Was not Abraham our father justified (dikaioō) by works** when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

You see that faith was active along with his works, and **faith was completed by his works;**

and the Scripture was fulfilled that says,

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness” (citing Genesis 15:6)  
—and he was called a friend of God.

You see that **a person is justified (dikaioō) by works** and **not by faith alone.**

(James 2:20-24 ESV)

Faith, like repentance, is a gift from God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.<sup>378</sup> A person who is converted and has been granted faith by God, but does NOT exhibit Christian works, is indeed a **“foolish person”**. For that person, James’ rhetorical question, **“can that faith save him”**, will almost certainly be answered in the negative. **James is NOT suggesting in any way that Christian works can “earn” salvation.** James’ contention is that for a Christian, a person who is being “justified” by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Christian works are required as a natural outgrowth of faith.

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<sup>377</sup> See the discussion in section **11:3 Christian Works** in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>378</sup> See Acts 5:31, 11:18, Romans 2:4, 2:timothy 2:25, 1 Corinthians 12:8-9, Ephesians 2:8

**A “Christian” who refuses to do Christian works, will almost certainly come under Jesus’ castigation:**

And these will go away into eternal punishment ...  
And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness.  
In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.  
(Matthew 25:46a, 30 ESV)

**A few years after James wrote his letter**, Paul wrote his letter to the Churches of Southern Galatia which he had just formed on his First Missionary Journey. There is no way to know whether or NOT Paul was familiar with James’ letter, but the situation with which Paul is dealing is totally different. Soon after Paul had started the Churches of Galatia, they were beset upon by false teachers trying to convince the people that they must accept “Judaism”, become Jews, i.e., be circumcised.<sup>379</sup> These false teachers were clearly of strict Pharisaic background. **Paul’s whole focus is that the physical act of circumcision, which would draw the people into Judaism, would obviate their Christianity:**<sup>380</sup>

Look: I, Paul, say to you that **if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.**

I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep **the whole [nomos]**.<sup>381</sup>

**You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified (dikaioō) by the [nomos]; you have fallen away from grace.**

For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness (dikaiosynē).  
For **in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything**,  
but only faith working through love.  
(Galatians 5:2-6 ESV)

Paul is explicit, to “**accept circumcision**” is to become a “Jew” which would obviate the sacrifice of Christ. As a Jew, **all of the Pharisaic interpretations are binding, “the whole nomos”**. Paul is again explicit, that **to become a “Jew”, to seek justification by “works”, “by the nomos”, is to fall away from grace, to be cut off from Christ, to go back to being under the penalty of death.** This is the context of Paul’s teaching to the Galatian Churches.

Paul states his position bluntly. By *nomos*, Paul is specifically thinking of “circumcision” and “Pharisaic interpretations”. No physical works can justify a person:

... yet we know that **a person is not justified (dikaioō) by works of the [nomos]**  
but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus,  
**in order to be justified (dikaioō) by faith in Christ** and not by works of the [nomos],  
because by works of the [nomos] no one will be justified (dikaioō).  
(Galatians 2:16 ESV)

Paul goes on to point out that in seeking justification through Christ, if a person sins, it does NOT reflect on Christ, but if a person rejects Christ by returning, “**if I rebuild**”, to former ways, “**what I tore down**”, that person will be accounted “**a transgressor**”:

But if, **in our endeavor to be justified (dikaioō) in Christ**, we too were found to be sinners,  
is Christ then a servant of sin?  
Certainly not!  
For **if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.**  
I do not nullify the grace of God,  
for **if justification (dikaiosynē) were through the [nomos]**, then **Christ died for no purpose.**  
(Galatians 2:17-18, 21 ESV)

Like James, Paul appeals to the example of Abraham. Paul looks to the promise to **Abraham**, as the “**father of the faithful**”, that **the Gentiles would be justified by faith**:

Know then that **it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.**  
And the Scripture, **foreseeing that God would justify (dikaioō) the Gentiles by faith**,  
preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying,  
“In you shall all the nations be blessed.” (citing Genesis 15:6)

<sup>379</sup> For more detail on the situation, see section **11:1 False Teachers in Galatia** in the paper “True Worship of the True God” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>380</sup> For a discussion of Paul’s use of the word *nomos*, see section **11.6.2 The Epistle to the Galatians** in the paper “The Writings of Moses” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

<sup>381</sup> See footnote **29**

So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.  
Now it is evident that **no one is justified (dikaioō) before God by the [nomos]**, for  
**“The righteous shall live by faith.”** (citing Habakkuk 2:4)  
(Galatians 3:7-9, 11 ESV)

Paul summarizes the relationship of faith, *nomos*, and justification:

Now **before faith came**, we were **held captive under the [nomos]**,  
imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.  
So then, **the [nomos] was our guardian until Christ came**,  
in order that we might be **justified (dikaioō) by faith**.  
(Galatians 3:23-24 ESV)

Only through the sacrifice of Christ is it possible to be released from the penalty of death for sinning.  
All human beings fall under this sentence, **“held captive under the *nomos*”, “the *nomos* was our guardian”**. With the sacrifice of Christ, **“until Christ came”**, it became possible through faith, **“faith came”**, for human beings to be justified, released from the death penalty, **“justified by faith”**.

Paul wrote the **Book of Romans** some ten years after the **Letter to the Galatians**. The official decision by the Jerusalem conference that Christians DO NOT have to become Jews had been well known for many years by time Paul wrote the Book of Romans. The Church in Rome comprised a mix of “Jewish” Christians and “Gentile” or “Greek” Christians.<sup>382</sup> Certain problems had developed in the Church of Rome, most notably:

- Some held to a notion of **“justification by works”**:  
But if you call yourself a Jew and **rely on the [nomos]**<sup>383</sup> and boast in God ...  
For **by works of the [nomos] no human being will be justified (dikaioō)** ...  
For **the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking** ...  
(Romans 2:17, 3:20a, 14:17a ESV)
- Some held that only **“faith”** is required, not Christian **“works”**:  
**That is why it depends on faith**, in order that the promise may rest on grace ...  
Therefore, since **we have been justified (dikaioō) by faith** ...  
I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God,  
to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**,  
holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ...  
**Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them** ...  
(Romans 4:16a, 5:1, 12:1, 6a ESV)

Many modern commentators try to argue that in the **Book of Romans**, Paul is somehow obviating the teaching of Moses.<sup>384</sup> However, with respect to the teaching of Moses, **Paul makes several clear and specific statements** to the contrary. Paul’s stated position must always be used as the starting point to interpret the more difficult passages:

For it is not the hearers of the [nomos] who are righteous (dikaioi) before God,  
but **the doers of the [nomos] who will be justified (dikaioō)**.  
(Romans 2:13 ESV)

**Do we then overthrow the [nomos] by this faith?**

By no means!

On the contrary, **we uphold the [nomos]**.

(Romans 3:31 ESV)

What then?

**Are we to sin because we are not under [nomos] but under grace?**

By no means!

(Romans 6:15 ESV)

So **the [nomos] is holy**, and **the commandment is holy and righteous (dikaioi) and good**.

For we know that **the [nomos] is spiritual**, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.

(Romans 7:12, 14 ESV)

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<sup>382</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the situation in Rome, see section **11.6.1 The Book of Romans** in the paper “The Writings of Moses” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

<sup>383</sup> See footnote 29

<sup>384</sup> For a detailed discussion of Paul’s use of the word “*nomos*”, see section **11.6 Paul and *nomos*** in the paper “The Writings of Moses” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

In the **Book of Romans**, Paul is considering “justification” in its broadest sense. James was looking at “justification” in the context of “Christian works”. In the **Letter to the Galatians**, Paul was looking at “justification” in the context of the false teachers’ attempts to corrupt the new converts.

**In chapter 3 of the Book of Romans**, Paul first establishes in verse 9-18 that all human beings do sin. Then he makes it clear that **nomos defines what is sin**. By “*nomos*”, Paul is here thinking primarily of the Writings of Moses. Paul’s assertion is that knowing what is sin, and, therefore, **avoiding sin, cannot bring about justification**. To be “under the *nomos*”, is to be under the penalty of death for sin:

Now we know that whatever the [nomos] says it speaks to those who are **under the [nomos]**, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For **by works of the [nomos] no human being will be justified (dikaioō)** in his sight, since **through the [nomos] comes knowledge of sin**.  
(Romans 3:19-20 ESV)

Paul then asserts that **justification only comes about through God’s grace** in response to **repentance** and **acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ** to propitiate sins and the subsequent **granting of faith by God**:

But now the righteousness (dikaiosynē) of God has been manifested apart from the [nomos],<sup>385</sup> although the [nomos] and the Prophets bear witness to it —the **righteousness (dikaiosynē) of God through faith [of] Jesus Christ for all who believe**.

For there is no distinction:

for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, **and are justified (dikaioō) by his grace** as a gift, **through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

This was to show God’s righteousness (dikaiosynē), because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness (dikaiosynē) at the present time, so that **he might be just (dikaios)** and **the justifier (dikaioō) of the one who has faith in Jesus**.

For we hold that **one is justified (dikaioō) by faith apart from works of the [nomos]**.  
(Romans 3:21-26, 28 ESV)

**Paul is in no way suggesting the Writings of Moses are in any way obviated**. To be accounted “just” by God, a person must repent of sin, which is defined by the Writings of Moses. Then through God’s grace, faith is granted by God to the repentant person so that the person can learn to live by the Way of God, which is defined by the Writings of Moses, avoiding sin, but **the process of “justification” in no earns salvation**.

**In Romans chapter 4**, Paul returns to the example of Abraham. The author of Hebrews asserts that it was Abraham’s faith which gave him the trust to go through with the killing of Isaac:

**By faith Abraham**, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac**, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said,

“Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” (citing Genesis 21:12)

**He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead**, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.  
(Hebrews 11:17-19 ESV)

Paul affirms that it was because of his faith, that Abraham was accounted “righteous” by God; hence, he was in a state of being “justified”:

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?

For **if Abraham was justified (dikaioō) by works**, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

For what does the Scripture say?

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” (citing Genesis 15:16)

Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.

And to the **one who** does not work but **believes in him who justifies (dikaioō) the ungodly**, his faith is counted as righteousness (dikaiosynē) ...

(Romans 4:1-5 ESV)

Paul later asserts that the **Christian calling is prerequisite to the process of justification**, and that once justified, the **conversion** of the person **is determined by the state of the heart AND the actions** of the person, the **things they say**, their **Christian works**:

And those whom he predestined **he also called**,  
and those whom he called **he also justified (dikaioō)**,  
and those **whom he justified (dikaioō)** he also glorified.  
(Romans 8:30 ESV)

For **with the heart one believes and is justified (dikaioōsynē)**,  
and **with the mouth one confesses** and is saved.  
(Romans 10:10 ESV)

During the Second Tour of Galilee, Jesus faces an accusation by some Pharisees.<sup>386</sup> Jesus' responds that a person's "**works**", either good or evil, as **demonstrated by their words**, will come into consideration by God the Father in making his decision regarding the gift of eternal life:

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad,  
for **the tree is known by its fruit**.

You brood of vipers!

How can you speak good, when you are evil?

For **out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks**.

The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good,  
and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

I tell you, **on the day of judgment people will give account** for every careless word they speak,  
for **by your words you will be justified (dikaioō)**, and by your words you will be condemned."  
(Matthew 12:33-37 ESV)

Towards the end of his ministry, in Perea, Jesus makes one of his most scathing castigations of the attitude of the **Pharisees**. Jesus asserts that their attitude of **exclusivity and self-righteousness precluded their justification**:

He also told this parable to **some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous (dikaioōs)**,  
and **treated others with contempt**:

**"Two men went up into the temple to pray**, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

**The Pharisee**, standing by himself, prayed thus:

'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers,  
or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'

But **the tax collector**, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven,  
but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'

I tell you, **this man went down to his house justified (dikaioō)**, rather than the other.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled,  
but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

(Luke 18:9-14 ESV)

Prerequisite to the **process of justification** is the **calling of God**. In response to the calling of God, a person must **repent** and **accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ** as a propitiation for sin. Then through the **indwelling of the Holy Spirit** a person can learn to live by the **Way of God**. Through the Holy Spirit, God grants the **gift of faith**. Living a life of faith results in **justification**, all sins are removed, and the person is accounted "**blameless**" by God. To be accounted "blameless" is the same as being accounted "righteous", "holy", to God. This state allows a person free and immediate access to God the Father and Jesus Christ, our advocate, in eternity.

**The Christian life, The Way of God, requires Christian works**. Christian works are a result of justification. Nothing of any kind that any human being can do puts God in a position where he must grant eternal life to that person. The giving of the gift of eternal life remains entirely at the discretion of God the Father. Salvation CANNOT be earned.

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<sup>386</sup> See Matthew 12:22-32 // Mark 3:22-30  
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## Righteousness

The same Greek words that relate to “justification” also relate to “righteousness”. The context must be considered:

- δικαίωμα - dikaiōma, neuter noun, “regulation”, “righteous act”
- δίκαιος - dikaios, adjective, “righteous”, “just”
- δικαιοσύνη - dikaiosynē, feminine noun, “righteousness”, “justice”

### **Only God the Father and Jesus Christ are truly “holy” and inherently “righteous”.**<sup>387</sup>

Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty!

**Just (dikaios) and true are your ways**, O King of the nations!

Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?

**For you alone are holy.**

All nations will come and worship you,

for **your righteous acts (dikaiōma) have been revealed.**

(Revelation 15:3b-4 ESV see also 3:7, 4:8, 6:10, 16:5, Luke 1:35)

And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.

**Holy Father**, keep them in your name, which you have given me,

that they may be one, even as we are one.

O **righteous (dikaios) Father**, even though the world does not know you,

I know you, and these know that you have sent me.

(John 17:11, 25 ESV)

And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit.

And he cried out,

“What have you to do with us, **Jesus of Nazareth?**

Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are—**the Holy One of God.**”

(Mark 1:23-24 ESV // Luke 4:33-34, see also John 6:67-69, Acts 2:27, 3:14, 4:27, 30, 7:52, 13:35, 22:14)

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father,

**Jesus Christ the righteous (dikaios).**

(1 John 2:1 ESV)

Human beings are inherently unrighteous, naturally disposed to sin:

**None is righteous (dikaios)**, no, not one;

no one understands; no one seeks for God.

All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;

no one does good, not even one. (alluding to Psalm 14:1-3 // 53:1-3)

For there is no distinction: for **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God** ...

(Romans 3:10b-12, 22b-23 ESV)

However, **God requires those he calls to strive for “holiness” and “righteousness”:**

But **seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (dikaiosynē)**,

and all these things will be added to you.

(Matthew 6:33 ESV)

... to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,

might **serve him without fear**,

**in holiness and righteousness (dikaiosynē)** before him all our days.

(Luke 1:73b-75 ESV)

... to put off your old self,

which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to **put on the new self**,

created after the likeness of God **in true righteousness (dikaiosynē) and holiness.**

(Ephesians 4:22-24 ESV see also 2 Corinthians 7:1, Colossians 3:12)

<sup>387</sup> For discussion of the concept of “holiness”, see section [6. Holiness](#) in the paper “[To Be a Priest](#)”; for discussion of “holiness” and “righteousness” as characteristics of God, sections [1.4.1 God is Holy](#) and [1.4.3 Attributes of God’s Character](#) in the paper “[First Pillar - The Nature of God](#)”; both papers are located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but **as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct**, since it is written,

“You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (citing Leviticus 11:44)  
(1 Peter 1:14-16 ESV)

The question is, how does a person transition from being “**inherently unrighteous, naturally disposed to sin**” to a state of “**holiness and righteousness**”? This where the concept “**blamelessness**” comes in. To be “blameless” is to have one’s sins forgiven. **Upon repentance and acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as propitiation for sins, God accepts a person as blameless.**

There are several Greek words in the range of meaning under consideration:<sup>388</sup>

- ἄμemptos - amemptos, adjective, “blameless”, “faultless”
- ἄμωμος - amōmos, adjective, “without defect”, “unblemished”, “blameless”, “faultless”
- ἀπρόσκοπος – aproskopos, adjective, “clear”, “blameless”
- ἀνέγκλητος – anenklētos, adjective, “blameless”, “above reproach”

The **Apostle Paul** defines what it means to be accounted “blameless” by God:

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, **he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless (amōmos) and above reproach (anenklētos) before him,** if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard ...  
(Colossians 1:21-23a ESV see also Ephesians 1:4)

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so **be pure and blameless (aproskopos) for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness (dikaiosynē)** that comes **through Jesus Christ,** to the glory and praise of God.  
(Philippians 1:9-11 ESV see also 2:15)

Having been forgiven, accounted blameless, a person can through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit learn to live by the Way of God. God can then grant **the gift of faith** and **through faith account the person “righteous” and “holy”**:

... and the Scripture was fulfilled that says,  
“**Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness (dikaiosynē)**”  
(citing Genesis 15:16)

—and he was called a friend of God.  
(James 2:23 ESV)

... just as Abraham “**believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness (dikaiosynē)**”?  
(citing Genesis 15:16)  
(Galatians 3:6 ESV)

For what does the Scripture say?  
“**Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness (dikaiosynē).**”  
(citing Genesis 15:16)

For we say that **faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness (dikaiosynē).**  
(Romans 4:3, 9b ESV)

**Paul explains that forgiveness of sin, combined with the gift of faith, allows God to account a person as “righteous”**:

And to the one who does not work but **believes in him who justifies (dikaioō) the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness (dikaiosynē),** just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness (dikaiosynē) apart from works:  
“Blessed are those whose **lawless deeds are forgiven,** and whose **sins are covered;**  
**blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.**” (citing Psalm 32:1-2a)

<sup>388</sup> See [www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org), “Language Tools”, “Lexical Form”  
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[Abraham] **did not weaken in faith** when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

**No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God**, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness (dikaiosynē)."

But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also.

**It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification (dikaiōsis).**

(Romans 4:5-8, 19-25 ESV)

**Paul's emphasis on avoidance of trusting in "works"** stems from his Pharisaic background. No "works" of any kind can put God in a position where he must grant the gift of eternal life to any person. The Pharisees strictly believed adherence to their interpretations, their *nomos*, was necessary to earn salvation. **Paul specifically endorses Christian works as a natural expression of faith:**

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

**Having gifts** that differ according to the grace given to us, **let us use them:**

if prophecy, **in proportion to our faith**;  
if service, in our **serving**;  
the one who teaches, in his **teaching**;  
the one who exhorts, in his **exhortation**;  
the one who **contributes**, in generosity;  
the one who leads, **with zeal**;  
the one who does **acts of mercy**, with cheerfulness.

**Love one another** with brotherly affection.

**Outdo one another** in showing honor.

Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, **serve the Lord**.

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant **in prayer**.

**Contribute** to the needs of the saints and seek to **show hospitality**.

(Romans 12:1, 6-8, 10-13 ESV)

Paul asserts that "**overseers**" and "**deacons**" must **demonstrate themselves "blameless", "above reproach"** in their lives before they can be ordained, and that in fact **he himself had proved himself "blameless"**:

Therefore **an overseer must be above reproach (anepilēmptos)**,<sup>389</sup> the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

**Deacons likewise must be dignified**, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.

They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

And **let them also be tested first**;

then let them serve as deacons if they **prove themselves blameless (aneklētos)**.

(1 Timothy 3:2-3, 8-10 ESV)

For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: **we worked night and day**, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

You are witnesses, and God also,

how **holy** and **righteous(dikaiōs)** and **blameless (amemptōs)** was **our conduct** toward you believers.

(1 Thessalonians 2:9-10 ESV)

**To continue in a "blameless" state a person must learn to live by the Way of God.** A life of repentance, striving in faith to avoid sin, allows God to continue to account a person "blameless", "righteous":

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named **Zechariah**, of the division of Abijah.

And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was **Elizabeth**.

And they **were both righteous (dikaiois) before God**,

**walking blamelessly (amemptos)** in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

(Luke 1:5-6 ESV)

<sup>389</sup> The adjective, ἀνεπίλημπος - anepilēmptos, "above criticism", "irreproachable" occurs only three times, 1 Timothy 3:2, 5:7, 6:14; see [www.esv.org](http://www.esv.org), Language Tools, Lexical Form.

But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated.

For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

For you have need of endurance,

so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

For,

“Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one (dikaïos) shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my [being] (psyche)<sup>390</sup> has no pleasure in him.” (alluding to Isaiah 26:20, Haggai 2:6, Habakkuk 2:3-4)

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their [lives] (psyche). (Hebrews 10:32-39 ESV)

And now, little children, abide in him,

so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

If you know that he is righteous (dikaïos),

you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness (dikaïosynē) has been [begotten] (gennaō) of him.

Little children, let no one deceive you.

Whoever practices righteousness (dikaïosynē) is righteous (dikaïos), as he is righteous (dikaïos). (1 John 2:28-29, 3:7 ESV)

When the First Resurrection occurs, God the Father will consider all person who are candidates for the gift of eternal life. God the Father will make the decision for each person whether or NOT they are to participate in the First resurrection. To be a candidate for the gift of eternal life, those who are dead must have been accounted “blameless” when they died; the living must be accounted “blameless” at the time of the resurrection:

Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless(amemptōs) in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and [mind] (psyche)<sup>391</sup> and body be kept blameless (amemptōs) at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

(1 Thessalonians 3:11-13, 5:23-24 ESV)

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling

and to present you blameless (amōmos) before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord,

be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

(Jude 24-25 ESV)

Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb,

and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.

... and they were singing a new song before the throne

and before the four living creatures and before the elders.

No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.

It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins.

It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb,

and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless (amōmos).

(Revelation 14:1, 3-5 ESV)

The objective of the Plan of God is for those called is to become “righteous”, to be holy, by being granted the gift of eternal life at the First Resurrection. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the propitiation

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<sup>390</sup> See footnote [375](#)

<sup>391</sup> See footnote [375](#)

of sin, allows a person called by God to repent and enter into **the process of justification**. A person who has had their sins propitiated by the sacrifice of Christ is considered “**blameless**” by God. Living by the Way of God is required to remain in a state of “blamelessness”. To be considered a candidate for the gift of eternal life, a person must remain accounted “blameless” by God. The process of justification ends with the granting of **the gift of eternal life**.

## **Excursus 3 – The Tribal Makeup of the Southern Kingdom**

From earliest times, **the Southern Kingdom of Israel was something of a “melting pot”**. From the allocation of the land, it was clear the at the **Tribe of Simeon** would be assimilated into the Southern Kingdom. Certain **non-Israelite tribes** were also in the allocated territory. The **Tribe of Levi** was initially allocated cities in both the North and the South, but with the innovations of Jeroboam, most Levites gravitated to the South. As the apostasy in the North became more threatening to the worship of YHWH, many individuals from the **various Northern Tribes** are reported to have migrated south. The Bible records no reason why the **Tribe of Benjamin** chose to be associated with the South, but it was from earliest times.

### **The Division of the Land**

**The Book of Joshua reports the allocation the Tribe of Judah first.** The Tribe of Judah was assigned by far the largest tract of land West of the Jordan River. The details of the boundaries are reported in the Book of Joshua chapter 15 verses 1-12. The encompassed cities, towns, and villages are listed in the Book of Joshua chapter 15 verses 20-62. The map approximates the allocation:

The allocation to the **Joseph tribes**, Ephraim and West Manasseh, is reported next in Joshua chapters 16 and 17. Then chapter 18 reports that it was necessary to do **a survey of the remaining land** in order to proceed with the allocation to the remaining tribes:

Provide three men from each tribe,  
and I will send them out that they may set out  
and go up and down the land.

**They shall write a description** of it  
with a view to their inheritances, and then come to me.  
They shall divide it into seven portions.

And you shall describe the land in seven divisions  
and bring the description here to me.

And **I will cast lots** for you here before [YHWH] our God.  
(Joshua 18:4-5a, 6 ESV)

**The second lot came out for Simeon,**

for the tribe of the people of Simeon, according to their clans,  
and **their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the people of Judah.**

**The inheritance of the people of Simeon formed part of the territory of the people of Judah.**

Because the portion of the people of Judah was too large for them,  
the people of Simeon obtained an inheritance in the midst of their inheritance.  
(Joshua 19:1, 9 ESV)



Given an allocation of land surrounded by the territory of the Tribe of Judah, it was inevitable that the **Tribe of Simeon** would be assimilated into the Tribe of Judah. When the schism between North and South occurred, the Tribe of Simeon was theoretically included with the “Ten Tribes” of the North, but in practice, **the Tribe of Simeon was never part of North Israel.**

In the Plains of Moab, before the Israelites crossed into the Promised Land, **Moses made provision for the Tribe of Levi to have cities scattered throughout Israel.** The Tribe of Levi was to have no parcel of land, but only cities scattered throughout the land:

[YHWH] spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying,

“Command the people of Israel to **give to the Levites** some of the inheritance of their possession as **cities for them to dwell in**.  
 And you shall give to the Levites **pasturelands around the cities**.  
 The cities shall be theirs to dwell in,  
 and their pasturelands shall be for their cattle and for their livestock and for all their beasts.  
 “The cities that you give to the Levites shall be the six cities of refuge,  
 where you shall permit the manslayer to flee, and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities.  
**All the cities that you give to the Levites shall be forty-eight**, with their pasturelands. ...”

(Numbers 35:1-3, 6-7 ESV)

The actual allocation of cities to the Tribe of Levi is recorded in Joshua chapter 21. **The cities are distributed throughout all the tribal territories**. When the **Patriarch Jacob** pronounced his final blessing on his sons, he **lumped Simeon and Levi together**. Their “blessing” is more of a curse due to their having taken violent vengeance on the city of Shechem for the rape of their sister Dinah.<sup>392</sup> Jacob was grieved by the extreme nature of their reprisal, so he **laid the curse upon them**:

Then **Jacob said to Simeon and Levi**,

“You have brought trouble on me by making me stink to the inhabitants of the land,  
 the Canaanites and the Perizzites.  
 My numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me,  
 I shall be destroyed, both I and my household.”

(Genesis 34:30 ESV)

**Simeon** and **Levi** are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords.

**Let my [life] (nephesh)<sup>393</sup> come not into their council**;

O my glory, be not joined to their company.

For in their anger they killed men, and in their willfulness they hamstrung oxen.

**Cursed be their anger**, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel!

**I will divide them in Jacob** and **scatter them in Israel**.

(Genesis 49:5-7 ESV)

This curse was fulfilled in the assimilation of Simeon into the Southern Kingdom and the lack of tribal territory assigned to Levi. Throughout the rest of the Bible, there is no record of the Tribe of Simeon ever exhibiting any independent action – indeed it was simply assimilated into the Southern Kingdom. Similarly, the Tribe of Levi is only associated with the Southern Kingdom.

## The Divided Monarchy

Due to the apostasy of King Solomon, God determined to divide the kingdom but leave the descendants of David with a rump state. **The idealized division** was **ten tribes to the North** and **one tribe to the descendants of David in the South**, with the **Levites scattered** as they were allocated:

Then **Ahijah** laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces.

And he **said to Jeroboam**,

“Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel,  
 ‘Behold, **I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon**  
**and will give you ten tribes**  
 (but **he shall have one tribe**,  
**for the sake of my servant David** and for the sake of Jerusalem,  
 the city that I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel) ...”

(1 Kings 11:30-32 ESV)

The actions of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, which precipitated the division, were discussed in section **2.4.1 Rehoboam & Abijah / Abijah**. Clearly, **the Tribes Simeon and Benjamin were intended to be part of the North**. However immediately after the schism, we find Benjamin aligned with Judah:

When **Rehoboam** came to Jerusalem,  
 he **assembled all the house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin**,  
 180,000 chosen warriors, to fight against the house of Israel,  
 to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

<sup>392</sup> See Genesis 34:1-29

<sup>393</sup> See footnote **21**

But **the word of God came to Shemaiah** the man of God:

“**Say to Rehoboam** the son of Solomon, king of Judah,  
and **to all the house of Judah and Benjamin**, and to the rest of the people,

‘Thus says [YHWH],

You shall not go up or fight against your relatives the people of Israel.

Every man return to his home, for this thing is from me.’”

So they listened to the word of [YHWH] and went home again, according to the word of [YHWH].

(1 Kings 12:21-24 ESV)

**The Bible contains no information as to how or why the Tribe of Benjamin associated with the Southern Kingdom.** Similarly, there is no record that the Tribe of Simeon was ever associated with the Northern Kingdom. From the outset, the Southern Kingdom comprised the **Tribe of Judah**, the **Tribe of Benjamin**, and the **Tribe of Simeon**, along with a significant percentage of the **Tribe of Levi**.

## Tribal Groups

**Caleb** was the spy who, with Joshua, made a positive report. Caleb represented the tribe of Judah, but his father, **Jephunneh**, was a “**Kenizzite**” a tribe already in Canaan at the time of Abraham:

On that day [YHWH] made a covenant with Abram, saying,

“To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, **the Kenizzites**, the Kadmonites ...”

(Genesis 15:18-19 ESV)

[YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying,

“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel.

From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a chief among them.”

... **from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh;**

(Numbers 13:1-2, 6 ESV)

Then **Joshua** blessed him, and he **gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh** for an inheritance.

Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of **Jephunneh the Kenizzite** to this day, because he wholly followed [YHWH], the God of Israel.

(Joshua 14:13-14 ESV)

**Clearly, the “Kenizzites” became associate with the Tribe of Judah during the time at Horeb.** This is the first example of the assimilation of non-Israelite tribe. It is possible that the Kenizzites were among the “mixed multitude” that came out of Egypt with Israel.<sup>394</sup>

The “**Kenites**” are also mentioned in Genesis 15:19. The Kenites seem to have become associated with the Midianites among which Moses lived for forty years. “Hobab” was a son of Moses’ father-in-law, Reuel/Jethro, making him Moses’ brother-in-law. **Hobab is identified as a Kenite.** A group of Kenites settled in the territory of the Tribe of Judah near the south-west end of the Dead Sea. **They were identifiable at the time of King Saul:**

And Moses said to **Hobab the son of Reuel** the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law,

“We are setting out for the place of which [YHWH] said, ‘I will give it to you.’

Come with us, and we will do good to you, for [YHWH] has promised good to Israel.”

(Numbers 10:29 ESV)

Now Heber the Kenite had separated from **the Kenites, the descendants of Hobab**

the [brother]-in-law of Moses ...

(Judges 4:11a ESV)

And **the descendants of the Kenite, Moses’ [brother]-in-law,**

went up with the people of Judah from the city of palms **into the wilderness of Judah**, which lies **in the Negeb near Arad**, and **they went and settled** with the people.

(Judges 1:16 ESV)

Then **Saul said to the Kenites,**

“Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them.

For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.”

So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

(1 Samuel 15:6 ESV)

When Achish asked, "Where have you made a raid today?"

**David would say,**

"Against the Negeb of Judah," or,

"Against the Negeb of the **Jerahmeelites**," or,

"Against the Negeb of **the Kenites**."

(1 Samuel 27:10 ESV)

We have no further information on the "Jerahmeelites", but they, like the Kenites, were apparently a tribe friendly to Israel living in the area in which David was operating. **These tribes were absorbed into the Southern Kingdom.** During the conquest, Joshua's greatest mistake was to make a covenant with the **Gibeonite cities**.<sup>395</sup> At first, the people were used as slave labour,<sup>396</sup> but later they were fully assimilated into Israel. **By the time of David, Gibeon was fully assimilated as a city of the Tribe of Benjamin.**<sup>397</sup>

## Migrations

**Jeroboam's innovations** included replacing the Levitical Priesthood by priests of his own choosing from among the common people. As a result the **vast majority of the Tribe of Levi** which had been in the Northern Kingdom, migrated to the Southern Kingdom. Along with them came **many from various of the Northern Tribes** who wanted to continue in the worship of YHWH:

After this thing **Jeroboam** did not turn from his evil way,  
but **made priests for the high places again from among all the people.**

Any who would, he ordained to be priests of the high places.

(1 Kings 13:33 ESV)

And **the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel presented themselves**  
to [Rehoboam] from all places where they lived.

For **the Levites left their common lands and their holdings and came to Judah and Jerusalem,**

because Jeroboam and his sons cast them out from serving as priests of [YHWH],

and he appointed his own priests for the high places

and for the goat idols and for the calves that he had made.

And **those who had set their hearts to seek [YHWH]**, God of Israel,

**came after them from all the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem** to sacrifice to [YHWH], the God of their fathers.

They strengthened the kingdom of Judah,

and for three years they made Rehoboam the son of Solomon secure,

**for they walked for three years in the way of David** and Solomon.

(2 Chronicles 11:13-17 ESV)

During the reign of **King Asa**, reforms were initiated, and as a result, **many people from North Israel came to South Israel:**

As soon as Asa heard these words, **the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded,**

he took courage and put away the detestable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin

and from the cities that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim,

and he repaired the altar of [YHWH] that was in front of the vestibule of the house of [YHWH].

And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin,

and **those from Ephraim, Manasseh,** and Simeon who were residing with them,

for **great numbers had deserted to him from Israel** when they saw that [YHWH] his God was with him.

They were gathered at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.

(2 Chronicles 15:8-10 ESV)

The years from 721 to 705 were very unsettled. Shalmaneser V died almost immediately after the conquest of Samaria, and for most of his reign Sargon II was heavily involved in putting down rebellions. The vestigial population left in Northern Israel was basically left to itself. **This opened the door for Hezekiah to attempt to gain some control over Northern Israel.** Almost immediately after his accession, Hezekiah began his reforms:

**In the first year of his reign, in the first month,**

he opened the doors of the house of [YHWH] and repaired them.

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<sup>395</sup> See Joshua chapter 9

<sup>396</sup> See Joshua 9:21,27

<sup>397</sup> See 2 Samuel 2:12-17, 1 Chronicles 12:4, 16:39, 21:29, 1 Kings 3:4-5, 2 Chronicles 1:13

He brought in the priests and the Levites and assembled them in the square on the east and said to them,  
“Hear me, Levites!  
Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of [YHWH], the God of your fathers,  
and carry out the filth from the Holy Place. ...”  
(2 Chronicles 29:3-5 ESV)

**As soon as the Temple was cleansed, Hezekiah sponsored a Passover** to recommit the people to serve YHWH. Hezekiah made every effort to draw in the people from the North, **some responded**, and most likely many of those who came remained in the South:

**Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah**, and wrote letters also to **Ephraim** and **Manasseh**, that they should come to the house of [YHWH] at Jerusalem to keep the Passover to [YHWH], the God of Israel.

For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had taken counsel to keep the Passover in the second month—for they could not keep it at that time because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient number, nor had the people assembled in Jerusalem—and the plan seemed right to the king and all the assembly.

So they decreed to make **a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan**, that the people should come and keep the Passover to [YHWH], the God of Israel, at Jerusalem, for they had not kept it as often as prescribed.

So **couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah** with letters from the king and his princes, as the king had commanded, saying,

“**O people of Israel, return to [YHWH]**, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may turn again to the remnant of you  
**who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria**. ...”

(2 Chronicles 30:1-6 ESV)

However, some **men of Asher**, of **Manasseh**, and of **Zebulun** humbled themselves and **came to Jerusalem**.

For a majority of the **people**, many of them **from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun**, had not cleansed themselves, yet they **ate the Passover** otherwise than as prescribed.

For Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying,

“May the good [YHWH] pardon everyone who sets his heart to seek God,  
[YHWH], the God of his fathers, even though not according to the sanctuary’s rules of cleanness.”

And [YHWH] heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

(2 Chronicles 30:11, 18-20 ESV)

About a century later, when Josiah promulgated his reform, he, like Hezekiah, attempted to include the population of North Israel in the reform:

... **in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places**, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images.

And they chopped down the altars of the Baals in his presence,

and he cut down the incense altars that stood above them.

And he broke in pieces the Asherim and the carved and the metal images,

and he made dust of them and scattered it over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.

He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.

And in the cities of **Manasseh, Ephraim**, and Simeon, and as far as **Naphtali**, in their ruins all around,

he broke down the altars and beat the Asherim and the images into powder

and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel.

Then he returned to Jerusalem.

(2 Chronicles 34:3b-7 ESV see also 2 Kings 23:19)

**After the exile, the people returning to the Land of Israel, were very specific that they represented all Israel**. Some of the returnees had maintained their tribal heritage:

So **all Israel** was recorded in genealogies, and these are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel.

And Judah was taken into exile in Babylon because of their breach of faith.

Now the first to dwell again in their possessions in their cities were Israel,

the priests, the Levites, and the temple servants.

And some of the people of **Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim**, and **Manasseh** lived in Jerusalem:

(1 Chronicles 9:1-3 ESV)

The Books of Nehemiah and Ezra are very particular to refer to the population as the “**people of Israel**”:

- The returnees under Zerubbabel were called the “**people of Israel**”, the “**rest of Israel**”, the “**children of Israel**”:  
They came with Zerubbabel ... The number of the men of the **people of Israel**:  
Now the priests, the Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants lived in their towns, and all the **rest of Israel** in their towns.  
When the seventh month came, and the **children of Israel** were in the towns, the people gathered as one man to Jerusalem.  
(Ezra 2:2, 70, 3:1 ESV)
- At the dedication of the Temple, offerings were made for all twelve tribes:  
And the **people of Israel**, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy.  
They offered at the dedication of this house of God 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and as **a sin offering for all Israel 12 male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel**.  
(Ezra 6:16-17 ESV)
- When Nehemiah prayed, it was on behalf of the “**people of Israel**”:  
As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.  
And I said,  
“[YHWH] God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and [hesed]<sup>398</sup> with those who love him and keep his commandments,  
let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the **people of Israel** your servants, confessing the sins of the **people of Israel**, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father’s house have sinned.  
(Nehemiah 1:4-6 ESV)
- When Ezra arrived in 428BC, his authorization from Artaxerxes specified the “**people of Israel**”:  
And there went up also to Jerusalem, in the [thirty-seventh] year of Artaxerxes the king, some of the **people of Israel**, and some of the priests and Levites, the singers and gatekeepers, and the temple servants.  
**Artaxerxes**, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law<sup>399</sup> of the God of heaven.  
“Peace.  
And now I make a decree that anyone of the **people of Israel** or their priests or Levites in my kingdom, who freely offers to go to Jerusalem, may go with you. ...”  
(Ezra 7:7, 12-13 ESV)
- On arrival in Jerusalem, Ezra offer twelve bulls for “**all Israel**”:  
At that time those who had come from captivity, the returned exiles, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel, **twelve bulls for all Israel**, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and as **a sin offering twelve male goats**.  
All this was a burnt offering to [YHWH].  
(Ezra 8:35 ESV)
- When Ezra commenced his reforms, it was on behalf of the “**people of Israel**”:  
After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said,  
“The **people of Israel** and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations ...”  
(Ezra 9:1a ESV)
- In dealing with the issue of “mixed marriages”, Ezra clearly regards the extant population as representing “**all Israel**”:  
While **Ezra prayed and made confession**, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him **out of Israel**, for the people wept bitterly.

<sup>398</sup> See footnote 80, and the discussion around it.

<sup>399</sup> The word used here is דָּת -dath, it is a Persian loan word, which means “law”, see **TWOT** article 458 page 199.

And Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, of the sons of Elam, addressed Ezra:

“We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is **hope for Israel** in spite of this. Therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the [torah].<sup>400</sup>  
Arise, for it is your task, and we are with you; be strong and do it.”

Then Ezra arose and made the leading priests and Levites and **all Israel take an oath** that they would do as had been said. So they took the oath.  
(Ezra 10:1-5 ESV)

**Throughout the history of Isarel there was a continuous concentration of all twelve tribes into the Southern Kingdom.** The groups retuning from exile explicitly considered themselves to represent all Israel. Almost certainly, considerable numbers among these groups were from the Northern Tribes.

## The Jews of Jesus' Day

**The genetic stock of the “Jews” in Jesus’ day clearly included all Tribes of Isarel<sup>401</sup> and much non-Israelite DNA.<sup>402</sup>** In the **Synoptic Gospels**, the terms “Isarel” and “Jews” are more or less synonymous referring to the contemporary population. The preferred term of all three Synoptists is “Isarel”. The **Apostle John** continues this use of “Isarel” but only uses it three times. In most cases, John uses the term “Jews” pejoratively as the opponents of Jesus; quite often “Pharisees” are implied. Luke continues to use “Israel” in this way throughout the **Book of Acts**, but in the Book of Acts, the term “Jews” is almost always used of the **Diaspora**, who are also clearly considered “Israelites”.

In the **nativity narratives**, both Matthew and Luke are clear and specific that **Jesus is coming to “Isarel”**: Matthew explicitly calls Jesus’ subjects “**Jews**”:

But the angel said to him,

“Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard,  
and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.  
And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,  
for he will be great before the Lord.  
And he must not drink wine or strong drink,  
and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.

**And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God ...”**

And the child grew and became strong in spirit,  
and he was in the wilderness **until the day of his public appearance to Israel.**  
(Luke 1:13-16, 80 ESV)

And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for **from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.**  
(Matthew 2:6 ESV)

**He has helped his servant Israel**, in remembrance of his mercy,  
as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.  
(Luke 1:54-55 ESV)

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king,  
behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying,  
“**Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?** ...”  
(Matthew 2:1-2a ESV)

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<sup>400</sup> See footnote 13

<sup>401</sup> Only thrice is a tribal affiliation mentioned, see Luke 2:36, Romans 11:1, Philippians 3:5.

<sup>402</sup> In addition to the tribal groups mentioned in **Tribal Groups**, large numbers of Canaanites were assimilated especially in the Northern Kingdom; see 1 Kings 9:20-21.

When Jesus as a child is presented to **Devout Simeon**, **Luke explicitly uses “Isarel” to refer to Jesus’ contemporaries** and **Simon’s blessing explicitly refers to the contemporary population as “Israel”**:

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon,  
and this man was righteous and devout,  
**waiting for the consolation of Israel**, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.  
... he took [Jesus] up in his arms and blessed God and said,  
“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;  
for my eyes have seen your salvation  
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for **glory to your people Israel**.”  
And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,  
“Behold, **this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel** ...”  
(Luke 2:25, 28-32, 34 ESV)

**John the Baptist** affirms that his work was preparatory for Jesus’ work in Israel. **Jesus explicitly stated that he was sent to “Israel”**, and when he sent the Apostles on their first preaching tour, he enjoined them to avoid “Gentile” and “Samaritan” towns but go only to “Israelite”, i.e., “Jewish”, towns:

I myself did not know him,  
but for this purpose I came baptizing with water,  
that **he might be revealed to Israel**.  
(John 1:31 ESV)  
He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of **the house of Israel**.”  
These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them,  
“Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans,  
but **go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**.  
And proclaim as you go, saying,  
‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ...”  
(Matthew 15:24, 10:5-7 ESV)

After a dramatic healing, **Jesus commented on the faith of his contemporaries**, “Israel”, i.e., the “Jews”, and Matthew reports a similar statement:

When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him,  
and turning to the crowd that followed him, said,  
“I tell you, **not even in Israel have I found such faith**.”  
(Luke 7:9 ESV // Matthew 8:10)  
And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke.  
And the crowds marveled, saying,  
“**Never was anything like this seen in Israel**.”  
(Matthew 9:33 ESV)

The popular **Messianic expectation** clearly associated the “Jews” with the prophecies of “Israel”:

And they said to him,  
“Concerning Jesus of Nazareth,  
a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,  
and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.  
But **we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel**.  
Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ...”  
(Luke 24:19b-21 ESV)  
So when they had come together, they asked him,  
“Lord, **will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?**”  
(Acts 1:6 ESV)

Jesus is equivalently called the “**King of Israel**” and the “**King of the Jews**”:

Nathanael answered him,  
“Rabbi, you are the Son of God!  
**You are the King of Israel!**”  
(John 1:49 ESV)  
So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out,  
“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even **the King of Israel!**”  
(John 12:13 ESV)

So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him,  
“**Are you the King of the Jews?**”  
(John 18:33 ESV)

**The genetic makeup of the Jews of the Diaspora** was almost certainly more complex than the genetic makeup of the Jews of Palestine. At the first Christian Pentecost, there were **Jews of the Diaspora**. Peter addresses them as “**Israelites**”:

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem **Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven**.

**Men of Israel, hear these words:**

Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ...

**Let all the house of Israel therefore know**

for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

(Acts 2:5, 22, 36 ESV see also 3:12, 4:10, 5:21, 31 )

God’s commission for the **Apostle Paul** was threefold:

But the Lord said to him,

“Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine

to carry my name before the **Gentiles** and **kings** and the **children of Israel**. ...”

(Acts 9:15 ESV)

At the end of his life, Paul did go before kings.<sup>403</sup> Paul considered his primary responsibility was to the Gentiles.<sup>404</sup> Nevertheless, **Paul always went first to the Israelites of the Diaspora, “children of Israel”**.

Most of the time, there were Jewish Christians of the Diaspora and Gentiles in the Churches Paul originated. For example, on his first journey, at **Antioch of Pisidia**, Paul established his approach:

Now Paul and his companions ... came to Antioch in Pisidia.

And on the Sabbath day **they went into the synagogue** and sat down.

After the reading from the [nomos]<sup>405</sup> and the Prophets,

the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying,

“Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.”

So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said:

**“Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. ...”**

(Acts 13:13a, 14-16 ESV)

Paul went first to **the synagogue** because he knew there would be people there with some knowledge of God. Paul addressed the Jews of the Diaspora as, “**men of Israel**”, but it was the other group from which he hoped to glean most converts, “**you who fear God**”. The “**God fearers**”<sup>406</sup> were Gentiles who were attracted to the teaching of Judaism but were NOT ready to become “Jews”. Many of the people responded positively to Paul’s message but, as nearly always, the Jewish establishment opposed Paul:

As they went out, **the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath**.

And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up,

**many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas,**

who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.

But when **the Jews** saw the crowds, they **were filled with jealousy**

and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.

(Acts 13:42-45 ESV)

**Paul had similar experiences everywhere he took the Gospel.** The key points are:

- Paul considered the Jews of the Diaspora to be Israelites
- Most Churches Paul originated comprised both Gentiles and Jews
- In most cities the Jewish establishment opposed Paul

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<sup>403</sup> See Acts 25:11-27, 26:1-32

<sup>404</sup> See Galatians 1:16, 2:2,8-9

<sup>405</sup> See footnote 29

<sup>406</sup> See Bruce pages 145-147, 266-267, 275-277

**The Church in Rome was NOT originated by Paul.** Among those present at the first Christian Pentecost, were **“visitors from Rome”**.<sup>407</sup> Whoever these **“visitors”** were, they apparently took the Gospel to Rome. When Paul addresses the Roman Church, it is clear that it was self originated:  
I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and **able to instruct one another**.  
(Romans 15:14 ESV)

As with other Gentile Churches, the Church in Rome comprised both “Gentile Christians” and “Jewish Christians”:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, **to the Jew first and also to the Greek**. ...

Then what advantage has the Jew? ...

What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all.

For we have already charged that all, **both Jews and Greeks, are under sin** ...

Or is God the God of Jews only?

Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also ...

**For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek** ...

(Romans 1:16, 3:1a, 9, 29, 10:12a ESV; see also Romans 2:9-11, 4:9, 15:8-13)

In dealing with this dynamic in the Roman Church, **Paul presents his analysis of God’s treatment of the Nation of Israel:**

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying;  
my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow  
and unceasing anguish in my heart.

For **I could wish that I myself were accursed** and cut off from Christ **for the sake of my brothers**,  
my kinsmen according to the flesh.

**They are Israelites**, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law,<sup>408</sup>  
the worship, and the promises.

To them belong the patriarchs,  
and **from their race**, according to the flesh, **is the Christ**, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.  
(Romans 9:1-5 ESV)

Paul considers all **“Israelites”**, those in the Land of Israel and those of the Diaspora, to be his **“brothers”**. He would be willing to sacrifice himself to bring salvation to them, but Paul recognizes that **the Plan of God will work to bring salvation at all**, both “Jews” and “Greeks”. **Paul’s logic is difficult:**

- He briefly allegorizes the promise to Abraham, see Romans 9:6-13  
But it is not as though the word of God has failed.  
For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,  
and **not all are children of Abraham** because they are his offspring, but  
“Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” (citing Genesis 21:12)  
**This means that it is not the children of the flesh** who are the children of God,  
but **the children of the promise are counted as offspring**.  
(Romans 9:6-8 ESV)
- He solves the problem through “election”, see Romans 9:14-18  
What shall we say then? **Is there injustice on God’s part?**  
By no means! For he says to Moses,  
“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,  
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” (citing Exodus 33:19)  
So then **it depends** not on human will or exertion, but **on God**, who has mercy.  
(Romans 9:14-16 ESV)

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<sup>407</sup> See Acts 2:10; the traditions that Peter spent time in Rome are based on late and unverifiable legends. If Peter had been in Rome, Paul would NOT likely have interfered: “... I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised ...” (Galatians 2:7 ESV); “... and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else’s foundation ...” (Romans 15:20 ESV). There is certainly no indication in the Book of Romans or the prison epistles that Peter had ever been in Rome. It is far more likely that Peter ended up in the area of Babylon, where there were large numbers of Jews: “She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.” (1 Peter 5:13 ESV)

<sup>408</sup> The word used here is a hapax legomenon, νομοθεσία - nomothesia, it alludes to “collecting laws”, see GEL page 543. Paul implies the whole process of assembling the Writings of Moses.

- He uses the metaphor of the “potter and the clay”<sup>409</sup> to explain the fate of Israel, see Romans 9:19-29  
 You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?”  
 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God?  
Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”  
Has the potter no right over the clay,  
 to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?  
 (Romans 9:19-21 ESV)
- Paul summarizes his arguments thus far by addressing righteousness through faith, see Romans 9:30-33, 10:1-4  
 What shall we say, then?  
 That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it,  
 that is, a **righteousness that is by faith**;  
 but that **Israel** who pursued a [nomos]<sup>410</sup> that would lead to righteousness  
 did not succeed in reaching that [nomos].  
 Why?  
 Because **they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works**.  
 (Romans 9:30-32a ESV)
- Paul then resorts to a long series of allusions to and citations from the Old Testament to demonstrate the validity of righteousness based on faith, see Romans 10:5-21<sup>411</sup>  
 But the **righteousness based on faith** says,  
 “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (citing Deuteronomy 30:12)  
 (that is, to bring Christ down)  
 “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (alluding to Deuteronomy 30:13)  
 (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).  
 But what does it say?  
 “**The word is near you**, in your mouth and in your heart” (citing Deuteronomy 30:14)  
 (that is, **the word of faith** that we proclaim);  
 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord  
 and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, **you will be saved**.  
 (Romans 10:6-9 ESV)
- Paul explains that God has always worked with a “remnant”, see Romans 11:1-10  
 I ask, then, **has God rejected his people?**  
 By no means! For I myself am an **Israelite**,  
 a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.  
**God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew**.  
 Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel?  
 “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars,  
 and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” (citing 1 Kings 19:10)  
 But what is God’s reply to him?  
 “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”  
 (citing 1 Kings 19:18)  
 So too **at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace**.  
 (Romans 11:1-5 ESV)
- **Israel’s current status is according to God’s Plan**, so that Gentiles can be included in salvation, see Romans 11:11-16  
 So I ask, **did they stumble in order that they might fall?**  
 By no means!  
 Rather, **through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles**, so as to make Israel jealous.  
 Now if their trespass means riches for the world,  
 and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles,  
**how much more will their full inclusion mean!**  
 (Romans 11:11-12 ESV)

<sup>409</sup> See Isaiah 45:9, 64:8, Jeremiah 18:1-11

<sup>410</sup> See footnote 29

<sup>411</sup> For a detailed analysis of this section see [Appendix 2: Romans 10:1-17](#) in the paper “The Inner Workings of Faith” located at [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca).

- Paul uses the **metaphor of the Olive Branch** to demonstrate the place of Gentiles, see Romans 11:17-24  
 But if some of the branches were broken off,  
 and you, although **a wild olive shoot**, were grafted in among the others  
 and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,  
**do not be arrogant toward the branches.**  
 If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but **the root that supports you.**  
 Then you will say,  
 “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”  
 That is true.  
 They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you **stand fast through faith.**  
 So **do not become proud,** but fear.  
 (Romans 11:17-20 ESV)
- Paul explains the mystery – Israel is temporarily hardened, but **in the end**, all, **Gentiles and Israelites, will have access to salvation**, see Romans 11:25-36  
 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery,  
 brothers: **a partial hardening has come upon Israel,**  
**until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.**  
 And in this way **all Israel will be saved** ...  
 (Romans 11:25-26a ESV)

The New Testament is clear and specific that the “Jews” of Jesus’ day comprised genetic stock of all twelve tribes of Israel. At the end of the day, however, **genetic stock means nothing to God:**

For I am not ashamed of **the gospel**,  
 for it is the power of God for **salvation to everyone who believes,**  
**to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**  
 (Romans 1:16 ESV)

The **theoretic notion** that there was a clear distinction between the various tribes of Israel is **clearly demonstrated to be false** by the actual history of the tribes as recorded in the Bible. The people that have come to be regarded as the “Jews” comprise people of all twelve tribes and many people of strictly non-Israelite descent. Only God knows who has or has not got Israelite DNA, but God has no interest in genetic descent. **Calling is by election through God’s mercy. Salvation is by grace through faith.**

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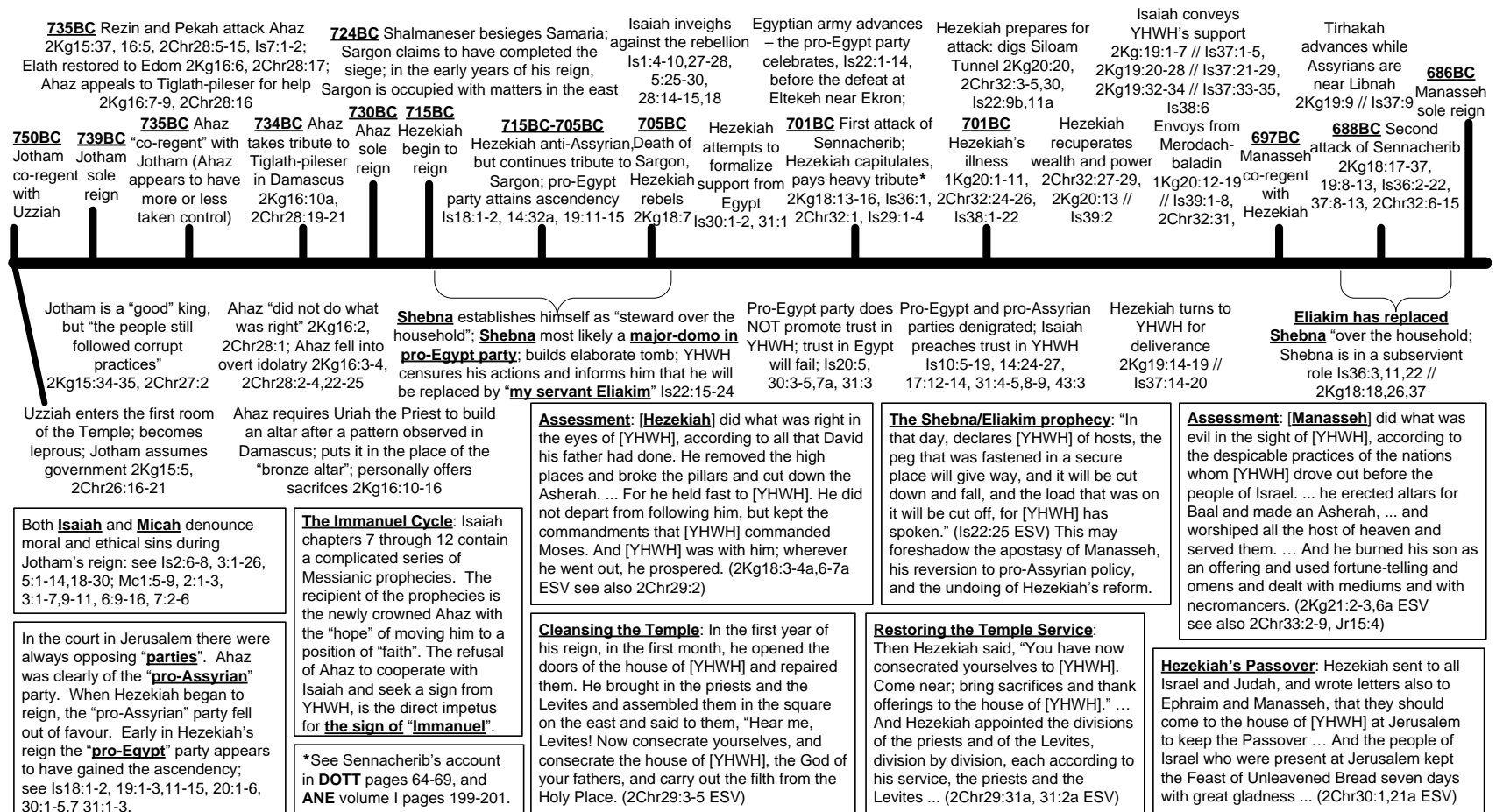
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## Appendix: Chart of Hezekiah's Reform

# The Reform of Hezekiah

<b>Assyrian Kings:</b> Ashur-dan III (771-754) Ashur-nirari V (753-746) Tiglath-pileser III (745-727)			Shalmaneser V (726-722) Sargon II (721-705)		Sennacherib (704-681)		Esarhaddon (680-669)
<b>Babylonian Kings:</b> Nabonassar (747-734)			Pulu (Pul, Tiglath-pileser III) (728-727)	Merodach-baladin (721-710, again 703)	Belibni (702-700)	Ashur-nadin-shumi (699-694) son of Sennacherib	Nergel-ushezib (693) Mushezib-marduk (692-689)
<b>Egyptian Kings:</b> Dynasty 22, 23, & 24 many concurrent Pharaohs - before 716 Dynasty 25 (Nubian): Piankhi (747-716)							
<b>North Israelite Kings:</b> Zechariah (752) Jeroboam II (781-753) Shallum (752)			Menahem (752-741)	Pekahiah (741-739)	Pekah (739-731)	Hoshea (731-724)	
<b>South Israelite Kings:</b> Jotham (739-730) Uzziah (767-739)			Ahaz (730-715) (co-regent with Uzziah from 750)	Hezekiah (715-686)			Manasseh (686-643) (co-regent with Hezekiah from 697)



## Shebna & Eliakim: History

**Isaiah 22:1-14** set the context: in **701BC**, Jerusalem was under siege and Egyptian army advanced to Eltekeh (see Bright page 286). This was taken as a sign of deliverance by Egypt from Assyria, so the people rejoiced:  
What do you mean that you have gone up, all of you, to the housetops, you who are full of shoutings, tumultuous city, exultant town? (Isaiah 22:1b-2a ESV)  
Then **verse 15 addresses Shebna**. Clearly, he is related to this rejoicing. Most likely, he was a major-domo of the pro-Egypt party. The advance of the Egyptian army is taken as vindication of their trust in Egypt.

### Who is Shebna?

Thus says the Lord [YHWH] of hosts, Come, go to this **steward**, to Shebna, who is **over the household** ... (Isaiah 22:15 ESV)  
Shebna had worked his way into the number two position under the king. But he abused his position:  
What have you to do here, and whom have you here, that you have cut out here a tomb for yourself, you who cut out a tomb on the height and carve a **dwelling for yourself in the rock?** (Isaiah 22:16 ESV)  
**He used his position for his personal benefit rather than to fulfill his responsibility as a leader.**

### Who is Eliakim?

In that day I will call **my servant Eliakim** the **son of Hilkiah**, and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. **And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.** (Isaiah 22:20-21 ESV)  
There is no background information on Eliakim or his father Hilkiah. He is designated "**my servant**" indicating him to be a **True worshipper of YHWH**. He will replace Shebna and prove a worthy leader in the upcoming crisis.

**The Crisis:** is the second attack of Sennacherib in 688BC. Eliakim has replaced Shebna as "**steward over the household**" with Shebna reduced to a subordinate role:  
As soon as **King Hezekiah** heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of [YHWH]. And he sent **Eliakim, who was over the household**, and Shebna the secretary ... (Isaiah 37:1-2a ESV // 2 Kings 19:1-2a)  
There is no further information, but presumably, Eliakim dispatched his responsibilities with honour.

## Prophecies

### Shebna:

Behold, [YHWH] will hurl you away violently, O you strong man. He will seize firm hold on you and whirl you around and around, and **throw you like a ball into a wide land. There you shall die**, and there shall be your glorious chariots, you shame of your master's house. **I will thrust you from your office**, and you will be pulled down from your station. (Isaiah 22:17-19 ESV)  
There is no confirmation of the fulfillment of Shebna's ultimate fate. Almost certainly, he went captive at some point and died in a foreign land. **Both Isaiah and Second Kings record that Shebna was replaced in his office by Eliakim.**

### Eliakim:

(A) And I will place on his shoulder **the key of the house of David**. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.  
(B) And **I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place**, and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house.  
(C) And they will hang on him **the whole honor of his father's house**, the offspring and issue, every small vessel, from the cups to all the flagons.  
(D) In that day, declares [YHWH] of hosts, **the peg that was fastened in a secure place will give way**, and it will be cut down and fall, and the load that was on it will be cut off, for [YHWH] has spoken. (Isaiah 22:22-25 ESV)  
There are clearly **four distinct parts to this prophecy**, marked A, B, C, and D above.

**The key of the house of David:** historically, this applied to Eliakim's position as "**steward over the household**". There may have been a physical "key" which locked and unlocked the various Royal Premises; however, there was also symbolic meaning in that the Steward would control access to the King by petitioners.

**The phrase is, of course, also pregnant with Messianic implications.**

**A peg in a secure place:** This relates to the dispatching of his duties as "**steward over the household**". Whereas Shebna had proven a worthless steward, more concerned with his own affairs than the effective dispatching of his duties as a leader; Eliakim would dispatch his duties with honour.

**His father's house:** Eliakim will be so successful that all his "**relatives**", "**offspring and issue**", will begin to "**hang off the secure peg**". The symbolism is a bit obscure, but most commentators take "small vessels", "cups", and "flagons" to represent even the most obscure of Eliakim's relatives – like when someone wins a lottery, long lost relatives and old friends appear abundantly out of nowhere.

**The peg will give way:** this part is somewhat obscure and there is no explicit confirmation of its fulfillment. For Eliakim's "**father's house**" the implications are clear: Eliakim simply cannot sustain the weight of supporting all his relatives. They will all come crashing down to reality.

**But there may also be a symbolic meaning.** Eliakim came to prominence during the crises of 688BC when YHWH defeated the army of Sennacherib. This action of YHWH could be seen as the final vindication of the reform of Hezekiah. Hezekiah was a True Worshipper of God. **Hezekiah had done everything in his power to restore the true worship of YHWH.** Although Isaiah had many harsh words along the way, in the end Isaiah was aligned with Hezekiah against the Assyrian threat.

**Hezekiah's reform** was far reaching and thorough, but it **did NOT reach the hearts of the people**. Most "paid lip service" to it while Hezekiah was in power. **Most notably his son, Manasseh**. If Manasseh had shown his true colours during the period of co-regency, almost certainly Hezekiah would have replaced him as "crown prince". When Manasseh took the throne, he reversed all the good that Hezekiah had done, the "**secure peg**" established by Hezekiah "**gave way**", and all the good of his reform was "**cut off**" and "**fell**" to ground.

**The fate of the nation was sealed, "for YHWH has spoken".**

## Messianic Implications

**The House of David: O house of David!** Thus says [YHWH]: "Execute justice in the morning, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed, lest my wrath go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it, because of your evil deeds." (Jeremiah 21:12 ESV)  
On that day there shall be a fountain opened for **the house of David** and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. (Zechariah 13:1 ESV)

**The Remnant:** And **the surviving remnant** of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. For **out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant**, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. (2 Kings 19:30-31a ESV)  
Thus says [YHWH], the God of Israel: Like these good figs, **so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah**, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. (Jeremiah 24:5 ESV)

... **saying through David** so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." ... So then, **there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God**. (Hebrews 4:7b,9 ESV)

**The Keys:** The words of the holy one, the true one, who has **the key of David**, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. ... Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. (Revelation 3:7b-8a ESV)

I will give you **the keys of the kingdom of heaven**, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19 ESV)

**The Door: I am the door.** If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. (John 10:9 ESV)  
**Strive to enter through the narrow door.** For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luke 13:24 ESV)  
Truly, truly, I say to you, **he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber**. (John 10:1 ESV)  
... they declared all that **God** had done with them, and how he **had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles**. (Acts 14:27b ESV)