

# **BASIC BIBLE STUDY**

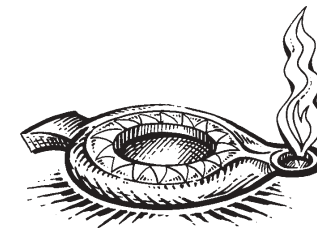
## **An Introductory Guide To Understanding The Scriptures**

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### **PART NINE**

#### **The Kingdom Era**

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"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet,  
and a light unto my path"  
PSALM 119:105

## **BBS#9 • The Kingdom Era**

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During the previous eras the Israelites had been **under the rule of God** – He was their only Head and Leader. Those who rose up to deliver the nation from servitude were appointed directly by God to this service (eg. the Judges). However, during the period of God's government there were indications of a radical change that would take place in the future: the people would want a king of their own! Then, the heavenly throne would be set aside for the earthly, and the invisible for the visible rule.

### **INDICATORS**

- After Gideon had defeated the Midianites, the people plotted to establish a kingdom, and to make Gideon and his family line their kings. Gideon refused to agree to this: "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you" (**Judges 8:2&3**). However, after Gideon's death "the men of Shechem gathered together ... and made Abimelech **king**" (**Judges 9:6**).
- When Samuel was old, the people approached him outlining their desire for a king like the other nations (**1 Samuel 8:5,19&20**).

### **NO SURPRISE IN HEAVEN**

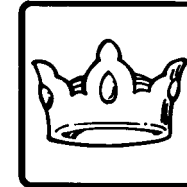
God, while grieved at the people's request, was not taken by surprise. In fact, in His permissive will, He had made arrangements for a king to rule over His people - and predicted it in generations past.

- Moses had spoken of it, almost four centuries before the monarchy period (**Deuteronomy 17:14&15**). Moses' counsel was given for a time when the people would say, "I will set a king over me."
- We can go back still further. The Abrahamic Covenant was conditioned upon the kind of kingdom that was established eleven centuries before Christ (**Genesis 12**). Plus a memorable word comes from the mouth of aged Jacob as he blesses his son Judah: "The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the peoples be" (**Genesis 49:10**). Here a visible king is predicted to come to an universal kingdom through the line of Judah - a prediction which had its partial fulfilment in the first coming of Jesus Christ, and which will be fulfilled in all aspects at His second coming. We are given a glimpse of the triumphant King who will rule in righteousness over all the earth (**Revelation 20**) in the One who came in lowliness (**Matt. 2:2**), and was crowned with thorns (**Matthew 27:29**).

This is another example of the mysterious providence of God. What was a departure by the people of Israel from God's choice for them

becomes the fulfilment of prophecy, and the ground of all God's future dealings with Israel and the Gentiles (**Jeremiah 18:4**).

**THE ARC OF BIBLE HISTORY**  
**#6 ... THE KINGDOM ERA**



**I. Review:**

Fill in the blanks to bring the chart up-to-date with this era.

ERA	FIGURE	LOCATION	STORYLINE SUMMARY
_____	_____	_____	Adam is created by God, but he _____ and _____ God's original _____ for man.
_____	_____	_____	Abraham is _____ by God to _____ a people to _____ God to the world.
_____	_____	_____	Moses _____ the Hebrew people from _____ in Egypt and then gives them the _____ .
_____	_____	_____	Joshua leads the _____ of the _____ .
_____	_____	_____	Samuel and others were chosen as _____ to _____ the people for _____ rebellious years.
_____	_____	_____	To be completed in this study.

II. Story-Line Summary:

**David, the greatest king in the new monarchy, is followed by a succession of mostly unrighteous kings, and God eventually judges Israel for her sin, sending her into exile.**

III. Story-Line Expansion:

This period extended to 490 years - and can be divided into three clearly-defined parts:

1. **The United Kingdom:** (120 years): From Saul to Solomon.
2. **The Divided Kingdom:** (254 years): From Rehoboam to Hezekiah.
3. **The Single Kingdom:** (135 years): From Hezekiah to Zedekiah.

This history is presented to us in the Books of the **Samuels, Kings, and Chronicles**, and is, of course, reflected in **the Prophets** and **the Psalms**.

**1. THE UNITED KINGDOM:  
A NEW MONARCHY  
(1 and 2 Samuel)  
[1095-975 BC ... 120 years]**

The twelve tribes of Israel, jealous of other nations around them, are united in their demand to God for a king. God allows Samuel, the last judge, to anoint Saul to be the first king, beginning a new monarchy. Because of Saul's disobedience, God does not establish his family on the throne of Israel. His successor, David, though having shortcomings, is a righteous king, and Israel prospers under him. David's son Solomon becomes king upon David's death. Solomon rules righteously at first, then drifts away from the Lord.

**1. THE KINGDOM UNDER SAUL  
[1095-1055 BC ... 40 years]  
(1 Samuel 8-21; 1 Chronicles 10).**

Saul is a most extraordinary character – both exciting our admiration and evoking our pity.

**THE DIVIDED KINGDOM PERIOD**

**KINGS OF JUDAH**

1. Rehoboam	975	18
2. Abijam	958	2
3. Asa	956	40
4. Jehoshaphat	916	24
5. Jehoram	892	7
6. Ahaziah	885	1
7. Athaliah	884	6
8. Joash	878	40
9. Amaziah	838	29
10. Azariah	809	52
11. Jotham	757	15
12. Ahaz	742	16
13. Hezekiah	726	29

(Northern kingdom of Israel carried away captive into Assyria during 5th year of Hezekiah's reign)

**KINGS OF ISRAEL**

1. Jeroboam I	975	21
2. Nadab	954	1
3. Baasha	953	23
4. Elah	930	1
5. Zimri	929	7 days
6. Omri	929	11
7. Ahab	918	21
8. Ahaziah	897	1
9. Jehoram	896	12
10. Jehu	884	28
11. Jehoahaz	856	17
12. Jehoash	839	16
13. Jeroboam II	823	41
14. Zachariah	772	7mths
15. Shallum	772	1mth
16. Menchem	772	10
17. Pekahiah	762	2
18. Pekah	760	20
19. Hoshea	730	9

**CAPTIVITY!!! ... 721 BC**

**Test #4: Story-Line of the Old Testament** (Fill in the blanks).

ERA	FIGURE	LOCATION	STORYLINE SUMMARY
_____	_____	_____	Adam is created by God, but he _____ and _____ God's original _____ for man.
_____	_____	_____	Abraham is _____ by God to _____ a people to _____ God to the world.
_____	_____	_____	Moses _____ the Hebrew people from _____ in Egypt and then gives them the _____ .
_____	_____	_____	Joshua leads the _____ of the _____ .
_____	_____	_____	Samuel and others were chosen as _____ to _____ the people for _____ rebellious years.
_____	_____	_____	David, the greatest king in the new _____ , is followed by a succession of mostly _____ kings, and God eventually _____ Israel for her sins, sending her into exile.

**(a) HIS RISE (1 Samuel 8-12).**

Saul rose to power on the back of the people's discontent with Samuel's sons and disobedience to God's commands. As the judgeship of Samuel drew near to its close, he made his sons judges over Israel. They were the complete opposite of their father (**1 Samuel 8:1-3**). This gave the people opportunity to file their request for a king. This request for a king amounted to a rejection of God. Also, it clearly meant the sacrifice of their unique position as the only nation on earth ruled by the Lord (**Deuteronomy 7:6**, cf. **1 Samuel 8:7**).

On three occasions - at Ramah, Mizpeh and Gilgal - Samuel confronted the people with their sin, and told them of some of its consequences (**1 Samuel 8:10-22; 10:17-25; 12**), but they persisted in their choice ... and went on to pay the price of their perverseness!

**i. Saul was Anointed at Ramah (1 Samuel 9-10:16).**

This passage, (describing how Saul was brought into contact with Samuel and heard the news that he was nominated to rule over Israel), is full of instruction concerning the providence of God.

The lost asses, the servants, the maidens, the feast, and the prophet are all links in the chain of God's providence that lead to Saul's enthronement as first king of Israel.

**ii. Saul was Appointed at Mizpeh (1 Samuel 10:17-27).**

Samuel presented the new king before an assembled people - and wrote down his instructions regarding the governing of the kingdom.

**iii. Saul was Acclaimed at Gilgal (1 Samuel 11).**

Saul did not receive the unanimous approval of the people at Mizpeh, but after his defeat of the Ammonites, and deliverance of the men of Jabesh, the kingdom was renewed at Gilgal and Saul's kingship unanimously confirmed.

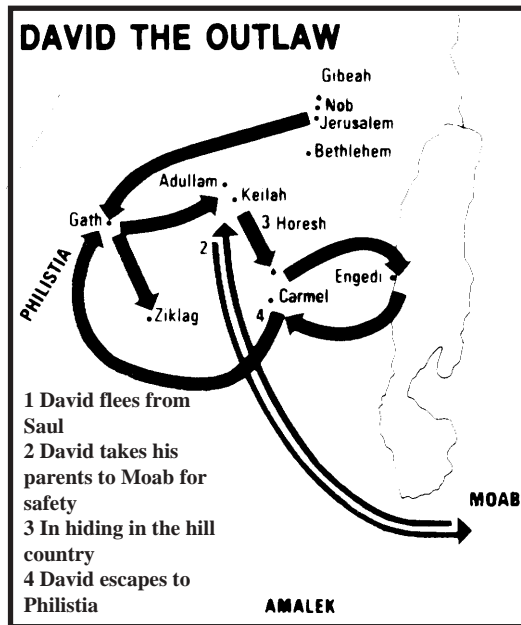
**(b) HIS REIGN (1 Samuel 13-15).**

Saul began well ... God turned his heart, and the Spirit of prophecy and power came upon him. When the sons of Belial mocked him, he ignored them; when the Ammonites attacked part of his kingdom he utterly routed them. Everything augured well for a glorious reign ... but it quickly spiralled downwards into a sad and solemn record of sin and defeat.

- Instead of looking to the Lord for power over the Philistines, Saul depended on fasting and a rash oath (**1 Samuel 14**). This had the net result of leading the whole army into sin - in their exhaustion they ate

the raw flesh and drank the hot blood of cattle (cf. **Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 3:17, 17:10**).

• Goaded on by an insatiable jealousy and lust for supremacy, Saul made repeated attempts on the life of David – “and when time after time he was baffled, he vomited the anger of his bilious and rebellious soul upon the priests at Nob” (**1 Samuel 22**).



**A JEALOUS CAMPAIGN**  
**1 Samuel 18:9** marks the beginning of Saul’s jealous crusade, “And Saul eyed David from that day and forward”, while **1 Samuel 28:4** speaks of the end of it: “He sought no more again for him.” Between those two verses there are no less than 32 passages which describe the king’s hatred of, and hunt for, David. The youth of giant stature who humbly wanders onto the scene of history in **1 Samuel 9&10** as the servant of God passes from it 40 years later, a sinner and a suicide. How quickly and low a man may fall!

**(c) HIS RUIN (1 Samuel 16-31; 1 Chronicles 10).**  
 The cruse behind Saul’s ruin is summarized in the words of **1 Chronicles 10:13&14**. Three steps are identified in his downfall:

i. **First step downward ... Offering the Sacrifice (1 Samuel 13).**

**TESTS**

**Test #1: Major Subjects in the Kingdom Era** (Write in the correct subject from the options at left).

OPTIONS:	SUBJECT:	DESCRIPTION:
United Kingdom		The unrighteous kingdom
Divided Kingdom		A new monarchy
Northern kingdom		The inconsistent kingdom
Southern kingdom		A civil war

**Test #2: Story-Line Summary** (Fill in the blanks from memory).

ERA	STORYLINE SUMMARY
Kingdom	David, the greatest king in the new _____, is followed by a succession of mostly _____ kings, and God eventually _____ Israel for her sins, sending her into exile.

**Test #3: The Geography of the Kingdom Era** (Draw an arrow from Israel to Assyria. Draw another arrow from Judah to Babylonia. This represents the geographical movement of the Kingdom Era).



- Zedekiah and his family, trying to escape, were captured and brought to Nechadnezzar at Riblah. Zedekiah's sons were slain before him, then his own eyes were put out, and he was carried in chains to Babylon where he was kept a prisoner to the day of his death (**Jeremiah 52:11**).

- Nebuchadnezzar burnt the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem.

- Gedaliah was installed as ruler over Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, but his period of power came to a shameful end when he was murdered by one of the royal seed, Ishmael.

**CAPTIVITY COMPLETE**

This was **the third and final stage** of the captivity of Judah ... and it was all but complete. Great consideration was shown to Jeremiah by the Babylonian king, and God's prophet was allowed to stay in Jerusalem.



Everything had been done to save the people of Judah from a long and humiliating captivity, but they refused to hear the voice of the Lord. The removal of the ten northern tribes into captivity should have been sufficient warning, but they missed its meaning and remained both blind and deaf to the truth for 135 years after that event. It was all to no avail. The threats and promises of the prophets, coupled with the reformations of Hezekiah and Josiah, proved insufficient to arrest the downward rush of this iniquity-saturated people. Captivity was inevitable.

JUDAH			
SAUL	DAVID	SOLOMON	ISRAEL
40	40	40	
T	H	E	K I N G D O M
<b>UNITED</b> 120 Years (1095-975 BC)			<b>DIVIDED</b> 254 Years (975-721 BC)
			<b>SINGLE</b> 135 Years (721-586 BC)
			ASSYRIA (721 BC)
			BABYLONIA (586 BC)

Saul exercised an office that he was not entitled to; he acted in the office of priest by offering the sacrifice when he saw that Samuel was delayed.

Only twice in all of scripture are the two offices of king and priest combined:

**a.** In the person of Melchisedec - the King of Salem, and Priest of the Most High God, and -

**b.** In the person of Christ - the promised Messiah - who will, according to prophecy, be "a priest upon his throne" (**Zechariah 6:13**).

By offering the burnt and peace offerings, Saul interfered with God's order of office and therefore fell under the punishment of heaven.

**ii. Second step downward ... Sparing Agag (1 Samuel 15).**

In defiance of God's command, Saul "would not utterly destroy" the Amalekites (**1 Samuel 15:9**). God has issued a decree; Saul revised it - and in that action challenged the supremacy of God. Rejection of Saul was the result.

**iii. Third step downward ... Consulting a Witch (1 Samuel 28).**

The lessons of Saul's life should prompt us to plead to be preserved from:

- disobeying the revealed will of God for us, **1 Samuel 13**;
- giving any place to the self-life, **1 Samuel 15**;
- going to other sources for help when the way to God is blocked by our sin, **1 Samuel 28**.

**2. THE KINGDOM UNDER DAVID**

[1055-1015 BC ... 40 years]

(**1 Samuel 16 - 1 Kings 2:11; 1 Chronicles 11-29; Psalms**).

The story of David's life is one of the most instructive ever committed to record. It may be considered under 4 headings:

**(a) HIS TESTINGS**

David was compelled to go through a time of probation and preparation, during which God moulded him into an instrument that would perform His will. On both occasions when Saul sinned, it was predicted that David would succeed him (**1 Samuel 13:14; 15:28**). He was the man who was "better than Saul" and the "man after God's own heart."

- In **1 Samuel 16** David is chosen and anointed privately at Bethle-

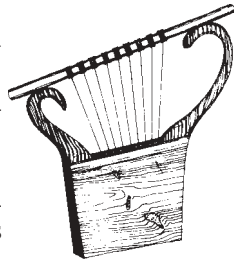
hem as king. Around the same time, Saul was plagued by fits of depression - and David was contacted to play on his harp before Saul.

• It is after the defeat of Goliath (**1 Samuel 17**) that Saul launched repeated attempts on David's life (cf. **1 Samuel 18:25, 19:10, 20:30&31, 22:6-8, 23:7,22,23&25, 24:2, 26:2**). God protected David (**1 Samuel 23:14**). All of this pressure and persecution was a necessary preparation for the responsible task that David was set to perform. These were the days of training for high honour - and whether that training took place as:

(1) a Shepherd, in pastoral solitude and meditation, **1 Samuel 16&17**;

(2) a Courtier, singing before Saul, and then married to the king's daughter, Michal, **1 Samuel 18-19:10**;

(3) a Fugitive, hunted like a partridge on the mountains, for no other 'crime' other than his loyalty to Jehovah, **1 Samuel 19:11-31** ... each of these phases in his early life was ordered and controlled by the Lord to prepare David for much higher things. The Lord always tests His tools.



It must also be remembered that David received encouragements during this testing period. He had the benefit of:

- the wise counsel of Samuel,
- the friendship with Jonathan,
- notable victories (eg. over Goliath),
- assurance from great deliverances,
- a whole retinue of people who assisted him in his flight (e.g. Michal, helping him to escape; Abimelech the priest, giving him the shewbread; Gad the prophet, dwelling with him in the cave; Abigail, supplying David and his soldiers with food; Abishai, risking his own life to accompany his leader on an incursion into the camp of Saul). Through it all, David interpreted his troubles as "the will of an infinitely wise and loving God, who would make good all His purposes for His servant."

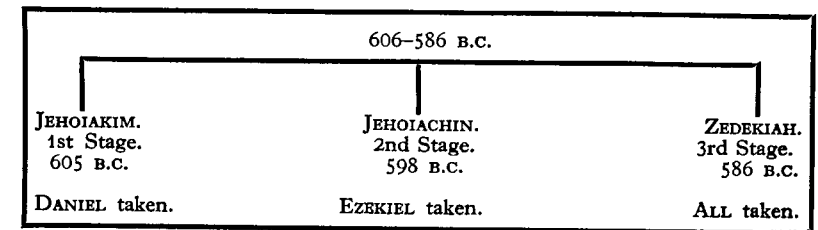
**(b) HIS TRIUMPHS**

On Saul's death, David is publicly anointed at Hebron to reign over the house of Judah. At that time ten of the tribes were in revolt under Abner and Ishbosheth. This rebellion continued for seven-and-a-half years - then a quarrel between Abner and Ishbosheth led to the

interests at home, Jehoiakim rebelled. Nebuchadnezzar did not deal with the insurrection himself, but four years later (598 BC), when the king of Tyre also rebelled against him, he felt it necessary to go and deal with the rebels. Jehoiakim was executed and received (as Jeremiah had prophesied) "the burial of an ass."

**19. Jehoiachin** (3 months ... 598 BC)

Jehoiachin (also called 'Coniah') was placed on Judah's throne by Nebuchadnezzar. He only lasted 3 months. Probably suspecting him of revolt, the king of Babylon came and besieged Jerusalem, overcame it, and carried away thousands of the men of Judah into Babylonian captivity: only the poorest of the people were left behind. This was **the second stage** of Judah's captivity (**2 Kings 24:8-17**).



**20. Zedekiah** (11 years ... 598-586 BC)

Nebuchadnezzar now set up the third son of Josiah - Zedekiah - as king in Jerusalem. He was **the last king of Judah**.

At the commencement of his 11-year tenure, Zedekiah showed some signs that he wanted to obey the law of Moses, persuading the nobler and wealthier classes to set free all of their Jewish slaves (cf. **Jeremiah 34:8-10 with Exodus 21:2; Leviticus 25:39-41**). He sent a peaceful embassy to Babylon, with advice to the Jewish exiles who were living there to remain quiet subjects of the king (**Jeremiah 39:3-7**). He also paid a personal visit to Babylon in his fourth year (594 BC), probably to reassure Nebuchadnezzar of his loyalty.

However, in the 9th year of his reign, he took a fatal step: contrary to the counsel of Jeremiah, he entered into a rebellion with Hophra, king of Egypt, and rebelled against Babylon (**Jeremiah 27:3; Ezekiel 17:15; 2 Kings 24:20**). It was a foolish - and suicidal - move.

Nebuchadnezzar brought his army up against Jerusalem and, after a desperate siege lasting 18 months (cf. **Lamentations 2:11,12,19&20; 4:5&10; Ezekiel 5:10**) when men and women inside Jerusalem resorted to cannibalism to survive, the Babylonians broke into the city. The end had come!



Despite all this, the inevitable demise of the kingdom was merely delayed for a generation.

After the death of Josiah, the kingdom period of Judah's history sped to its close. Within 3 years of his decease the great Assyrian empire fell, and another mighty power rose up to replace it - the Babylonian Empire.

Josiah left three sons ... Eliakim, Shallum (whose name was changed to Jehoaahaz; **Jeremiah 22:1**), and Mattanian (better known as Zedekiah, the last king of Judah).

**17. Jehoaahaz** (3 months ... 609 BC)

Jehoaahaz occupied the throne for a mere three months, during which time he "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (**2 Chronicles 36:5**). At that time Pharaoh Necho was on his way back to Egypt after a massive victory in northern Syria, Coele-Syria and Phoenicia. As he passed through Judah, he asserted his authority over the people by dethroning the king of their choice and setting up his elder brother, Eliakim (other name, Jehoiakim), in his place. Pharaoh Necho put Jehoaahaz in chains and took him down to Egypt, where he died - the first Jewish prince to die in exile (cf. **Ezekiel 19:3; Jeremiah 22:10&12**).

**18. Jehoiakim** (11 years ... 609-598 BC)

A most infamous king. Placed by Pharaoh Necho on the throne of Judah in place of his brother, and under a heavy tribute from the land of Egypt, the kingdom of Judah was relatively unmolested by foreign powers for 3/4 years.

Jehoiakim surrounded himself with luxuries and built a palace for himself (**Jeremiah 22:13-19**). He acted against the prophets, murdering Urijah and hacking the book of the Law to pieces with his penknife (**Jeremiah 36**).

**However, outside his kingdom, many and mighty changes were taking place in the balance of power.** Assyria fell under the power of Babylon (606 BC), and in the next year Nebuchadnezzar marched against the Egyptians. He fought against Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish - one of the most important battles in the history of the world. Necho was defeated, and the whole land lay open to Nebuchadnezzar (cf. **Jeremiah 46**).

Jehoiakim submitted to Nebuchadnezzar, and acted as his vassal for three years. Then, realising that the Babylonians were occupied with

fragmentation of this rebellious party and caused them to acknowledge David as their king too. David was then made king over all Israel, and reigned over the whole country for 33 years.

Two notable features can be detected in his reign:

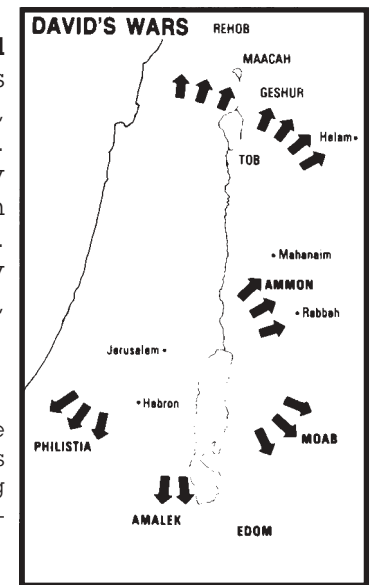
(1) His Home Policy. David introduced **Centralisation of power and worship**. Until this time, there had been many centres of worship, but David, recognising that the strength of the future depended on a common centre of meeting for worship, defeated the Jebusites, took their city Jebus, and established it as the centre of his kingdom. From this time on Jebus became known as the City of David. He brought the ark there (later purchased Mount Moriah - the site of the Temple - from Araunah the Jebusite); from this time Jerusalem becomes the greatest city in the history of the world.

(2) His Foreign Policy.

This was simply **the Subjugation of all enemies**. **2 Samuel 8** mentions David's victories over Syria, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Zobah and the Philistines. The secret of all of David's success lay in his confidence in, and consultation with, the Lord about all of his affairs (cf. **2 Samuel 5:17-25**). Success can only be enjoyed along the line of perpetual, persistent prayer.

**THE COVENANT**

One of the greatest passages in the Bible occurs in **2 Samuel 7:12-16**. God made his great covenant with David concerning the future of the kingdom. The seed referred to in this passage is Christ.



(c) **HIS TROUBLES**

**2 Samuel 11:1** underlines the root cause of all of the trouble that entered into David's life. When the army of Israel marched forward into battle, David stayed at home: this selfish indulgence resulted in the sin which stands as a dark blot on his character, and the breakdown of a tremendous career.

(1) His Sin commenced with idleness and led on to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the murder of an unsuspecting man.

(2) His Suffering as a result of his sin was intense. There was the:

- condemnation by Nathan,
- the death of his son,
- the incest and murder of Amnon,
- the banishment of Absalom, followed by Absalom's rebellion and usurpation of the throne,
- the wandering of David, now dethroned,
- the deception by Ziba,
- the curses of Shimei,
- the death of Absalom. Backsliding is a bitter path.

(3) His Sorrow is nowhere more fully revealed or frankly presented than in **Psalm 51**: this is 'A Psalm of Sobs.' David obtained the restoration he pleaded for.

**(d) HIS TESTIMONIES**

David comes back to his throne. Wrongs are rectified; the faithful are rewarded; and his enemies are routed. He writes a song full of gratitude and hope unto the Lord (**2 Samuel 22:31&33**). While David was not without problems in his later days, he was not without the Lord. His lapse into sin stands as a constant warning to us - but his life is a continual inspiration.

THE LIFE OF DAVID: A Man after God's own heart						
1041 B.C.		1011			971 B.C.	
DAVID'S 70 YEARS						
David as Subject (30 Years)				David as King (40 Years)		
As a son to his father	As a servant to King Saul		King over the South	King over all 12 tribes		
	His rise over Saul	Rejected by Saul	Refuge with Philistines	Growing		Growing
	17-18	19-26	27-31	Success		Crisis
Psalms	1 Samuel		2 Samuel		1 Kings	
23	17	19:1-10	31	7	11 14-18 24	2:10
↑ David the Shepherd	↑ Kills Goliath	↑ Protected by Jonathan	↑ Saul and Jonathan killed at Gilboa	↑ Promise of Christ	↑ Sins with Bathsheba	↑ Absalom's Rebellion
					↑ David's Census	↑ David Dies

**3. THE KINGDOM UNDER SOLOMON**

[1015-975 BC ... 40 years]

(1 Kings 1-11; 2 Chronicles 1-9; Psalms; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes).

Solomon was the third and last king of the United Kingdom of Israel.

late. Manasseh had:

- encouraged the people to do worse than the heathen around them, whom the Lord had destroyed (**2 Chronicles 33:9**);
- slain the nation's greatest asset, the prophet Isaiah;
- brought up a whole generation without any sound teaching in the ways of the Lord. He himself was saved - but it was out of the hopeless wreckage of his life's work.

**15. Amon** (2 years ... 642-640 BC)

22 years of age when he began to rule, his 2 years of authority in Judah saw the reintroduction of the darkest days of his father's reign. He gave the Temple over to the worship of Baal, set up an Asherah idol there, re-established the worship of the host of heaven on altars in the two courts of the Temple, restored the horses of the sun to their position near one of the entrances to the Temple, set up "houses of the sodomites" near the house of the Lord, re-lighted the fires of Tophet in the valley of Hinnom and caused incense to be burned on rebuilt altars to the sun, moon and zodiacal signs in Jerusalem and throughout the cities of Judah.

**16. Josiah** (31 years ... 640-609 BC)

The fact that the kingdom of Judah survived so long despite its sin must go down to the efforts of two godly kings, Hezekiah and Josiah. Called to the throne between periods of swift declension and shameless iniquity, Josiah was "a lily in a garden of weeds, or a burst of sunshine through an awful darkness."

As his father was murdered when Josiah was 8 years of age (a mercy in itself, for it delivered the young lad from the evil example of that wicked parent), Josiah was guided in his early years as king by his mother, Jedidah. She was a major influence for good, as was a little group of God-fearing people which surrounded him in Jerusalem at this time; comprising (among others), Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Shaphan, Asahiah and Huldah the prophetess. **It is significant that it was in the midst of these people that Judah's last great king, Josiah, and also Judah's last great prophet, Jeremiah, grew up!**

Josiah embarked on a wide-ranging reformation. He cleansed the Temple, then the city, and then the country, putting an end to every form of false and cruel worship. That purging was followed by planting: the Temple was repaired; the law of God was recovered and read in the hearing of the people; the Passover was reinstated.

During the 135 years between the captivity of Israel and the captivity of Judah, 8 kings reigned over the southern kingdom. It becomes more and more evident as we move down the line of those 8 kings, that the end is in view. There is a rapid decline – arrested only by two revivals; one in the days of Hezekiah, the other during Josiah's reign. However, in each case the work of restoration was only temporary.

### **13. Hezekiah** (29 years ... 726-697 BC)

[ Hezekiah was reigning for 5 years before the northern kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity ].

Hezekiah was the good son of a bad father (**2 Kings 21:1; Isaiah 62:4**). He was a man of prayer, of simple trust in his God; a statesman, a warrior, a poet, an engineer, and a reformer. No king of Judah is more unreservedly commended than Hezekiah (cf. **2 Kings 18:5&6**). His work included:

- the Purification of the Temple,
- the Restoration of Worship,
- the Observance of the Passover, and
- the Reformation of the People.

The Reformation that Hezekiah instituted in the land (including the destruction of the brazen serpent which Moses had made that had become an item of idolatry) was thorough in its extent ... but it did not reach to the foundation of evil in the hearts of the people. Hezekiah was placed between a bad father and an evil son - and by the time he counteracted the evil of his father's reign, his son came to the throne and reversed all the reforms. However, there is no doubt that Hezekiah's good work gave Judah a fresh lease of life and allowed her to outlive her sister kingdom in the north by almost 150 years.

### **14. Manasseh** (55 years ... 697-642 BC)

The bad son of a good father: Manasseh's life was spent in wrecking the life-work of his godly father. While he had a longer reign than any other monarch over the kingdom of Judah, little is said about it, other than it was characterised by injustice, idolatry and immorality. It was so dark and sinful that God's penman hurries over it and quickens his pace towards the brighter days of Josiah.

During his reign the Babylonians swept into the country, burned Jerusalem with fire, and carried Manasseh away in chains. When he was sent back to Judah by the Babylonians, repentance had been worked in his heart and he attempted to rectify the ruin he had caused (**2 Chronicles 33:12-20**). Sadly, his repentance had come too

### **(a) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THRONE**

As David passes over the 'reins of power' to Solomon, he gives him a solemn charge to walk in the ways of the Lord; to remove every rebellious spirit from the kingdom; and to build the Temple of the Lord.

To establish his throne, Adonijah, Abiathar, Joab and Shimei are all dealt with (**1 Kings 2:13-46**). When Solomon is offered a choice of gift, he passes over long life, affluent circumstances, and military skill, choosing wisdom (**1 Kings 3; 2 Chronicles 1**). A memorable example of his wisdom is given in **1 Kings 4**.

### **(b) THE ERECTION OF THE TEMPLE**

Solomon entered into a contract with Hiram, king of Tyre, for the construction of the Temple (**1 Kings 5; 2 Chronicles 2**). Minute details of construction are given, together with those for Solomon's other houses; **1 Kings 5-7; 2 Chronicles 3-5**. The great House of the Lord is completed, dedicated, and filled with the glory of the Lord.

The Lord appears to Solomon the second time, and gives him both promises and warnings, **1 Kings 9:1-9; 2 Chronicles 7:11-22**. This passage is vital in that it throws light on much of the history that follows (i.e. **1 Kings 10; 2 Chronicles 9**).

### **(c) THE ENFEBLEMENT OF THE KINGDOM**

A detailed statement is provided of Solomon's degeneracy, and of the adversaries that the Lord raised up against him - Hadad, Rezon and Jeroboam - to rend the kingdom from him.

There is little doubt that Solomon was a regenerate man, yet his life is very disappointing. His early humility, his wise choice of a gift, his building of the Temple and his tremendous prayer at the dedication of that Temple ensure that his life had its bright spots - but there were plenty of dark blots too. Moses had said that the future kings of Israel should not multiply wealth, horses, or wives (**Deuteronomy 17:14-20**) - but Solomon did all three. He took 700 wives, including those from the very nations that Israel had been warned against (**1 Kings 11:1&2**). This led to the introduction of false gods and idol worship.

If any man could ever have been satisfied with what this world offers it would have been Solomon - and yet he places it on record that everything under the sun is vanity and vexation of spirit (**Ecclesiastes**).

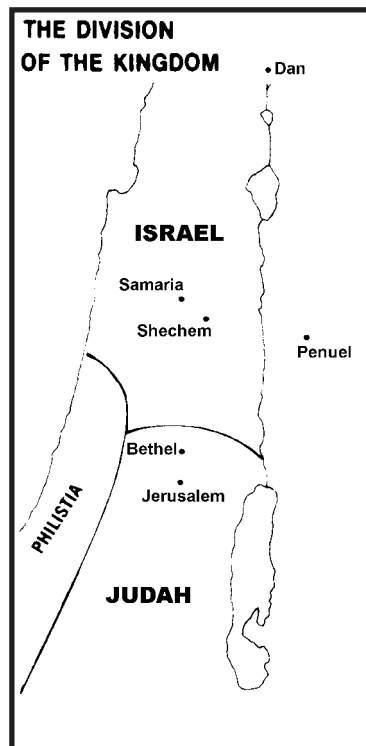
Solomon shows the self-life having its full fling, and at the end turning away sad and sick of it all. "Let none of us be so foolish as to seek satisfaction in this direction, without one-hundredth part of Solomon's opportunities of realising it. He has pronounced the final verdict against self - let it suffice!"

**2. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM:  
A CIVIL WAR**

**(1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 18:12; 2 Chronicles 10-31)**

[975-721 B.C. ... 254 years]

As a result of Solomon's spiritual drifting, a civil war breaks out after his death, and the kingdom is divided. There is now a northern kingdom, consisting of ten tribes, and a southern kingdom, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The northern ten tribes retain the name "Israel," and the southern two tribes adopt the name "Judah," after the name of the larger tribe.



**A. Northern Kingdom:  
The unrighteous kingdom (2 Kings)**  
In the civil war that splits the kingdom, Jeroboam commands the northern kingdom of Israel. He is unrighteous, and every other king (nineteen total) who succeeds him during the 250-year life of the northern kingdom is also unrighteous. Because of this unrighteousness, God raises up Assyria to conquer the northern kingdom and scatter His people to the four winds. The unrighteous kingdom is never restored.

**B. Southern Kingdom:  
The inconsistent kingdom (2 Kings)**  
Rehoboam, Solomon's son, commands the southern kingdom of Judah. He is also unrighteous. The southern kingdom fares somewhat better than the northern. Lasting for 400 years, its life is prolonged

**3. THE SINGLE KINGDOM:  
JUDAH SOLDIERS ON,  
THEN SHUDDERS TO A STOP**

**(2 Kings 18:13 - ch25; 2 Chronicles 32-36:21)**

[721-586 BC ... 135 years]

Judah's sins finally catch up with her, and God brings judgment on this inconsistent kingdom by raising up Babylonia (which had conquered Assyria) to conquer Judah. Babylonia gathers all the leaders, artisans, musicians, and promising children (including Daniel), and takes them away to captivity in Babylonia.

Judah survived as an independent kingdom for 135 years [721-586 BC] **after** the northern kingdom had been carried into captivity by Shalmaneser V, king of Assyria.

**KINGS OF JUDAH**

1. Rehoboam
2. Abijam
3. Asa
4. Jehoshaphat
5. Jehoram
6. Ahaziah
7. Athaliah
8. Joash
9. Amaziah
10. Azariah
11. Jotham
12. Ahaz
13. Hezekiah
14. Manasseh
15. Amon
16. Josiah
17. Jehoahaz
18. Jehoiakim
19. Jehoiachin
20. Zedekiah

**(4) THE RELATION OF THE KINGDOMS TO THE PROPHETS.**

It is **vitaly important** to understand the place the Hebrew prophets occupy in the Old Testament - and where they fit in the historical timescale. We need to recognise that:

- The prophets spoke to their own generation and their messages were relevant to the circumstances when they lived. However, these men, raised up and inspired of God, also spoke to an age and circumstances far beyond their own day. Therefore their function was two-fold: it was to forthtell and to foretell - to describe and to prophesy.

- We have no written prophecies concerning the first 280 years of the Kingdom Era (with the possible exception of Joel), although men like Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Iddo, Shemiah, Jehu, Hanani, Azariah, Micah, Elijah, Jahaziel, Eliezer and Elisha delivered specific messages from God during this time.

From the reign of Jeroboam II in Israel and Azariah and Jotham in Judah, men began to minister. It is the ministry of these men that we have in the prophetic books of the Old Testament.

**NORTHERN TRIBES HAD FEW PROPHETS**

In addition to Micah (who prophesied to both the northern and southern kingdom), the northern tribes had only 3 prophets: Jonah, Amos and Hosea. By way of contrast, the southern tribes had 12 prophets.

**The message of the prophets was full of pathos and warning, particularly warnings against the sin that both northern and southern kingdoms had fallen foul of - the sin of idolatry.**

The prophets stand out in striking contrast to all that was going on around them - and they had to suffer for it. From the reign of Azariah to Hezekiah (+ 115 years), 5 prophets sounded out the notes of appeal and warning ... and then almost 70 years pass in silence (the reigns of Manasseh, Amon and part of Josiah's) before the Lord communicates again with His people through the prophets. The prophetic voices multiplied as the time of the Captivity drew near.

**LEADING FACTS ABOUT DIVIDED KINGDOM**

DIVISIONS	NAMES	CAPITALS	KINGS	DYNASTIES	CAPTIVITY	CAPTORS	AFTERWARDS
North	Israel	Samaria	19	9	Assyria	Shalmaneser	Lost
South	Judah	Jerusalem	19 / 1	1	Babylon	Nebuchadnezzar	Returned

by eight righteous kings out of a total of twenty.

W.G. Scroggie has said: "For readers of the Bible in general, the period now before us is by far the most difficult to grasp, but when grasped, it is perhaps one of the most highly profitable to study."

**DIFFICULTY STEMS FROM ARRANGEMENT OF OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS**

The arrangement of the O.T. Books is, of course, not chronological, and that largely accounts for the difficulty which arises here. If, for example, we are to read the Bible 'straight through,' we:

- come to the history of **Esther** before that of **Job**, (and yet Job lived more than 1000 years before Esther);
- come to the end of Judah's Captivity in **Daniel** (and yet, in the next book in our Bible - **Hosea** - neither Israel nor Judah have been carried into captivity by anyone yet: we are still at the latter days of the Kingdom of Israel);
- come to **Obadiah** and read how that prophet denounces Edom for rejoicing over the Fall of Jerusalem, (and yet, when we come to the next book in the Bible - **Jonah** - we find that we are in a period that is 200 years before the Fall of Jerusalem. Nineveh had been swept away before Jerusalem was attacked!).

If we do not understand the arrangement of the Old Testament books, we will inevitably end up with a confused and hazy view of Old Testament history (cf. 'Basic Bible Study, Part One: The Structure of the Bible').

**OUTLINE OF THE PERIOD**

A clear outline of this period will allow us to read and study it intelligently.

**DIVISION INTO TWO PARTS**

We have seen that the United Kingdom was ruled over by three kings, Saul, David, and Solomon, and lasted for 120 years. After the death of Solomon, the Kingdom was divided in two:

**(i.) The NORTHERN KINGDOM**, with its Centre, first at **Shechem**, then at **Samaria**. This northern kingdom was composed of 10 of the 12 Tribes. It had 19 kings in its history, who were divided into nine dynasties. These 10 tribes were eventually taken away captive by Shalmaneser into Assyria. They never returned.

**(ii.) The SOUTHERN KINGDOM**, with its centre at **Jerusalem**, com-

posed of 2 of the 12 tribes, and ruled over by 19 kings and 1 queen, all from the same dynasty. These tribes were taken away captive by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylonia and ultimately returned in large numbers.

**BASIC FACTS TO CLARIFY THE RECORD OF HISTORY**

If a number of basic facts are kept in mind, the double accounts of the Divided Kingdom as given in **Kings** and **Chronicles** will become plain:

- \*1\* The histories of the two Kingdoms are given parallel with one another from **1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17**, when Israel is taken captive.
- \*2\* The history of Judah is continued alone from **2 Kings 18-25**.
- \*3\* The history of Israel (the 10 tribes) is not given at all in the books, **1&2 Chronicles**.
- \*4\* The great Period from the Death of Solomon to the Captivity of Judah, is recorded for us *from three distinct points of view*:

- (1) The ROYAL, in the Books of KINGS.
- (2) The PRIESTLY, in the Books of CHRONICLES.
- (3) The PROPHETIC, in the Books of the PROPHETS.

If these four facts are remembered, and we read the books of **Kings and Chronicles** in the light of them, the O.T. will be a new Book to us.

In the study of the Divided Kingdom period there are four issues that should claim our attention:

- 1. the relation of these two Kingdoms to God,**
- 2. the relation of these two Kingdoms to one another,**
- 3. the relation of these two Kingdoms to the surrounding nations, and**
- 4. the relation of these two Kingdoms to the prophets;** (this will also include the relation of God, the nations, and the prophets to them).

**(1) THE RELATION OF THE KINGDOMS TO GOD.**

**ISRAEL.**

The Northern Kingdom of Israel had 19 kings; they were all bad. The foundation of this Kingdom was rotten, so there is little wonder that all which stood upon it was insecure.

**(2) THE RELATION OF THE KINGDOMS TO ONE ANOTHER.**

There were three distinct phases in the relationships between the northern and southern kingdoms ... hostility - friendship - hostility.

**(a) THE PERIOD OF FIRST ANTAGONISM**

(975-918 BC ... 57 years)

This lasted from the reigns of Jeroboam to Omri in Israel, and Rehoboam to Asa in Judah. During these 57 years, Judah hoped to regain by conquest what it had lost by folly, but the hope was vain (**1 Kings 12:21-24, 14:30, 15:7,16&32**).

**(b) THE PERIOD OF FATEFUL ALLIANCE**

(918-839 BC ... 79 years)

This stretched from the reigns of Ahab to Jehoahaz in Israel, and Jehoshaphat to Jehoash in Judah. This period of friendship was brought about by a marriage between the house of Ahab (Israel) and the house of Jehoshaphat (Judah). Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel - and after the death of Ahaziah her son, Athaliah seized the throne of Judah and reigned as Queen for several years, thus putting the security and future of the southern kingdom in peril (cf. Table of Dynasties for Northern Kingdom).

**(c) THE PERIOD OF FINAL ANTAGONISM**

(839-721 BC ... 118 years)

This lasted from the reigns of Joash to Hoshea in Israel, and from Amaziah to Hezekiah in Judah.

The days of friendship were destined not to last. Jehu (who founded the 5th dynasty in Israel) destroyed the house of Ahab and forced a breach between the northern and southern kingdoms which never healed. Jehu's grandson fought against Judah - and the conflict between the two kingdoms continued until the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken captive by Assyria (**2 Kings 13:12, 14:8-14&28, 15:37, 16:5**).

**(3) THE RELATION OF THE KINGDOMS TO THE NATIONS.**

An overwhelming body of archaeological research has, at every point, confirmed the historical accuracy of the Bible story-lines. These witnesses from the past do not make the Bible record more sure - but should make the critics of God's Word much less sure!

Asa removed the high places and the altars to strange gods; he took the sodomites out of the land; he broke down the images and cut down the groves of idolatry, even to the extent that he removed his mother from being queen on account of her idolatry and smashed her idol. The Lord rewarded Asa's zeal and righteousness with a season of peace and rest for the kingdom. During this time Asa built and fortified cities in Judah.

(2) JEHOSHAPHAT: **1 Kings 15:24, 22:2-33,41-50; 2 Chronicles 17-21:3.**

- \* Subjection to God's Word, **2 Chronicles 17:7-9**
- \* Communion with God in Prayer; **2 Chronicles 20:1-12**
- \* Antagonism to all that is Evil; **2 Chronicles 17:3, 19:3**
- \* Pursuit of all that is Good; **2 Chronicles 17:5.**

(3) HEZEKIAH: **2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chronicles 29-32.**

- \* Subjection to God's Word, **2 Kings 18:5&6**
- \* Communion with God in Prayer; **2 Kings 19:14-19; 20:2**
- \* Antagonism to all that is Evil; **2 Kings 18:4**
- \* Pursuit of all that is Good; **2 Chronicles 30.**

(4) JOSIAH: **2 Kings 22-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34&35.**

- \* Subjection to God's Word, **2 Kings 23:2&3**
- \* Communion with God in Prayer; **2 Kings 23:25; 22:13&14**
- \* Antagonism to all that is Evil; **2 Kings 23:4-20**
- \* Pursuit of all that is Good; **2 Kings 22:3&7.**

While these kings showed remarkable faithfulness to the path of goodness, each of them, failed in one aspect or another. Asa and Hezekiah were guilty of prayerlessness (**1 Ki. 15:18-21; 2 Ki. 20:12&13**); Jehoshaphat was guilty of compromise with evil (**2 Chron. 19:2; 20:35**); and Josiah was guilty of disregarding God's Word (**2 Chron. 35:20&21**).

**SUMMARY OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL & JUDAH** (cf. Table, p21)

KINGS OF JUDAH.			KINGS OF ISRAEL.	
GOOD.	UNSTABLE.	BAD.		
3	8	1	14	
4	9	2	15	
13	10	5	17	
16	11	6	18	
		7	19	
		12	20	
				ALL BAD.

**KINGS OF ISRAEL**

1. Jeroboam I
2. Nadab
3. Baasha
4. Elah
5. Zimri
6. Omri
7. Ahab
8. Ahaziah
9. Jehoram
10. Jehu
11. Jehoahaz
12. Jehoash
13. Jeroboam II
14. Zachariah
15. Shallum
16. Menahem
17. Pekahiah
18. Pekah
19. Hoshea

The first king was Jeroboam, and he framed the Constitution of the new Kingdom. The record is found in **1 Kings 12:26-33**. Jeroboam deliberately instituted:

**(a) A New Object of Worship.**

Jeroboam fashioned two golden calves and proclaimed, "Behold thy gods, O Israel" (**1 Kings 12:28**) ... a shameful transgression of the Divine law, which demanded that the people should have no god but Jehovah, neither should they worship any image.

**(b) A New Centre of Worship.**

The golden calves were positioned in Bethel and Dan (**1 Kings 12:29**). The kingdom which was established under David had Jerusalem for its centre. The Temple was built there. Ceremonies were performed there. Jehovah was manifested among His people there. This was the place where God had chosen to put His name (**Deuteronomy 12:21; 1 Kings 11:13**). Jeroboam not only led Israel into the sin of setting aside the appointed object of worship; he caused them to turn their backs on the appointed place of worship.

**(c) A New Order of Priests.**

Jeroboam set aside the ordination that God had made of the tribe of Levi to the office of the priesthood and made appointments of his own from among the lowest of the people (**1 Kings 12:31**).

**(d) A New Altar of Sacrifice.**

“He offered upon the altar” (**1 Kings 12:32&33**).

**(e) A New Festal Month.**

The new festal month that Jeroboam introduced was intended to mirror that of the Feast of Tabernacles that would be celebrated in Judah. By law the Feast of Tabernacles was to be celebrated on the 15th day of the 7th month (**Leviticus 23:34,39&41**): this was the great feast of the year and, as the feast of harvest or ingathering, it was the most joyous. Jeroboam laid on a counter-attraction in his northern kingdom, to be celebrated on the 15th day of the 8th month - a date “which he had devised of his own heart” (**1 Kings 12:33**).

**THE COUNTERFEIT**

This new constitution for the 10 northern tribes (which Jeroboam tried to make as similar to the old as possible so that he could maintain his hold on the people) was framed in violation of four of the greatest features of the covenant that Jehovah had made with His people. One wise preacher has said, commenting on the fact that this feast was “like unto” that which was celebrated in Judah: “Let us fear most that wrong which is ‘like unto’ right; let us beware of and shun all counterfeits.”

All that has been said of the new constitution for the 10 northern tribes on the basis of **1 Kings 12:25-33** summarizes the relationship of the entire northern kingdom to God over its 254-year history. 21 times during this period we read concerning the northern kings, “For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities” (**1 Kings 16:26, etc.**).

**JEROBOAM'S NAME A SYNONYM FOR EVIL**

Jeroboam’s name became a synonym for all that is evil. It was a sufficient condemnation of any of his successors if they could be compared to him. He - and they - set God aside ... and God set them aside! Of the kings of Israel, one was slain, one committed suicide, and six were murdered. During the 254 years of the existence of this

kingdom, there were no less than 9 different dynasties: idolatry, immorality and bloodshed were the order of the day - and at last the kingdom sank into a grave without hope of resurrection.

**TABLE OF DYNASTIES FOR NORTHERN KINGDOM (ISRAEL)**

975 B.C.—		254 YEARS.						—B.C. 721.	
I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.		IX.
Jeroboam. Nadab.	Baasha. Elah.	Zimri.	Omri. Ahab. Ahaziah. Joram.	Jehu. Jehoahaz. Jehoash. Jeroboam II. Zachariah.	Shallum.	Menahem. Pekahiah.	Pekah.	(Interregnum).	Hoshea.
975— 953	953— 929	929	929—884	884—772	772	772— 760	760— 740	740— 730	730— 721

**JUDAH.**

Of the 19 kings (and 1 queen) of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, only 8 could be described as ‘good’ ... Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Hezekiah and Josiah. Of these eight, the goodness of only four of them lasted for a prolonged length of time. However, even among these four, none had a stainless record.

**WHAT IS ‘GOODNESS’?**

We measure goodness in four ways:

- Subjection to God’s Word
- Communion with God in Prayer
- Antagonism to all that is Evil
- Pursuit of all that is Good.

**THE FOUR GREATEST KINGS OF JUDAH**

(1) ASA: **1 Kings 15:9-24; 2 Chronicles 14-16.**

\* Subjection to God’s Word, **2 Chronicles 14:4**

\* Communion with God in Prayer; **2 Chronicles 14:8-11**

\* Antagonism to all that is Evil; **1 Kings 15:11-13**

\* Pursuit of all that is Good; **2 Chronicles 14:6&7.**