



THE TIMES OF JUDGES AND KINGS

Reading: 2 Samuel 7

The Judges of Israel

After the death of Joshua and the elders who followed him, Israel quickly turned aside from worshipping Yahweh their God to follow the idolatrous practices of the nations of the land (Judges 2:6-13). Because of their wickedness, God allowed Israel's enemies to overcome them so that they might turn back to Him for help and safety.

During the next 400 years God raised up a series of faithful men, called Judges, to deliver Israel from the hand of those who afflicted them and to encourage the people to return again to worshipping their God (Judges 2:16-19). Sadly, when each judge died, many of the people quickly reverted to idolatry and God again allowed the neighbouring nations to afflict them. Weary of oppression, the people cried to God once more, and He raised up another judge. Some of the judges who ruled during this period were men like Gideon, Samson, and Jephthah. The last judge to rule Israel was Samuel.

The period of the Judges has been described in these words: "*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" (Judges 21:25).

Ruth the Moabitess

This little book tells of an incident that took place "*in the days when the judges ruled*" (Ruth 1:1). Although the book of Judges tells of widespread wickedness in the land, here we have the moving story of the faith of Ruth the Moabitess, who confessed to her mother-in-law Naomi, "*Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God*" (Ruth 1:16). She turned her back on the idols of Moab and went with Naomi to Bethlehem where she met God-fearing Boaz, who took her for his wife. Their offspring included King David (Ruth 4:22), and from him the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5, 16).

Samuel—the Last Judge

The two books of Samuel cover the history of Israel from the end of the period of the Judges through to the appointment of Saul and then David as kings over Israel. It was Samuel who, as judge and prophet (Acts 3:24), established the framework of "the Kingdom of Israel".

The People Desire a King

Although Samuel was faithfully executing his office as Judge, the people were continually looking at the nations about them, and eventually approached Samuel with their request for a king: "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:4-5). Samuel was not pleased with this and turned to God in prayer. God's answer is very illuminating: "*Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say to thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them*" (v7). God was their King, but they had not acknowledged nor appreciated this fact.

God granted their request and chose Saul to be their first king, a man whose outstanding physique impressed them. Saul, however, failed to obey God's specific commandments and so the Kingdom was taken from him (1 Samuel 15:22-28).

David Chosen to be King

Because of Saul's failure to follow the instructions Samuel gave him, God told Samuel that He would find someone more suitable to be king over Israel. Samuel told Saul: "*The LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people*" (1 Samuel 13:13-14). David the son of Jesse, a shepherd boy of Bethlehem, was the one whom God chose. Paul refers to David this way: "*I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will*" (Acts 13:22).

Some Facts about David

- When he finally came to the throne, David reigned for seven and a half years at Hebron over the tribe of Judah, and then for 33 years over all Israel from Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:4-5).



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- He wrote many of the Psalms which give us an insight into his love for his God. The following examples illustrate this:

“Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end” (Psalm 119:33).

“O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

- He had been a diligent shepherd in his youth, and so could write with rich feeling and understanding: *“The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want”* (Psalm 23:1).
- The Lord Jesus Christ is specifically identified as *“the son of David”* (Matthew 22:41-46; 1:1; Romans 1:1-3).
- God made a remarkable promise to David, which is recorded in 2 Samuel 7. This promise foretells the coming of Jesus, who would be both son of David and Son of God.

There are many other important and interesting facts that you will note as you read through the life of David.

The Promise to David (2 Samuel 7:12–16)

This promise is one of the most important in the Bible concerning the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In reading through 2 Samuel 7 we see that David wished to build a house for God. Although God was pleased with David's intention, He had other plans in mind. It was God who would build David a 'house', not a house of wood and stone, but a family whose foundation was to be the Lord Jesus Christ, who would be both the son of David and the Son of God. Let us look at verses 12–16.

Verse 12

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers”

This promise was to be fulfilled after David was dead and buried.

“I will set up thy seed after thee”

God would superintend the exact fulfilment of this promise.

“which shall proceed out of thy bowels”

The one spoken of in this promise would be a direct lineal descendant of David. Jesus Christ is this one spoken of. **Consider Luke 1:30-33** and the words that the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary:

- Mary would have a son who would be called Jesus (verse 31)
- This son would also be *“the Son of the Highest”*, that is, of God (verse 32)
- He would sit on the throne of his father David (verse 32)
- He would reign over the house of Jacob (that is, Israel) for ever (verse 33).

This promise is yet to be fulfilled. At his first coming the Jews rejected Jesus of Nazareth as their King and crucified him (John 19:13-16). But God has told us that he will return to the earth (Acts 1:11) and establish the Kingdom of God, which will last for ever (Daniel 2:44; Psalm 72:17).

The prophet Isaiah also identified Jesus as the one who would ultimately reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 2:11).

Jesus himself said that he was this promised Son of David (Revelation 22:16), and the apostle Peter confirmed it to the Jews after his resurrection (Acts 2:34–36).

Verse 13

“He shall build an house for my name”

This has a spiritual as well as a literal application. Jesus will supervise the building of a house of worship in the Kingdom Age—a “house of prayer” for all nations (Isaiah 56:7; Zechariah 6:12). He



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is also the foundation stone of the spiritual house of God, made up of men and women of faith (Ephesians 2:20-22; Hebrews 3:6).

“I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever”

God will establish His Kingdom and set the Lord Jesus Christ as king over it, as David was before him (Jeremiah 23:5-8; 33:15-16; Amos 9:11; Isaiah 9:6-7; Psalm 132:11 cp Acts 2:30). The capital of this worldwide Kingdom will be Jerusalem (Jeremiah 3:17), as it was in David’s day.

Verse 14

“I will be his father, and he shall be my son”

David’s son (descendant) will also be Son of God. This definitely refers to Jesus Christ, as the New Testament makes clear (Hebrews 1:5).

This remarkable prophecy foretells that Jesus Christ will reign on earth over the re-established Kingdom of God. We can understand Mary’s excitement when Gabriel told her that she was the one in the line of David to bear the child who would be both “Son of David” and “Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

David in the Psalms also spoke of the death and resurrection of the Messiah (Christ). Peter quotes psalms of David which foretell these things (Acts 2:22-36; see Psalm 16:8-11; 132:11; 110:1). He foretold that Christ would ascend to heaven but would certainly return to the earth again (Psalm 110:1; cp Acts 2:34). Since he is now immortal (Romans 6:9), Jesus Christ will be king over an everlasting kingdom. Assisting him will be the faithful of all ages who, sharing his glorious immortal nature, will live and reign with him (Revelation 5:10).

Isaiah tells us of the remarkable changes to world government that will take place at this time. The Kingdom will be based on principles of truth and righteousness, in order to bring about a state of peace throughout the whole world (Isaiah 2:2-4; 32:17). David in Psalm 72 has given a beautiful picture of this Kingdom and the social changes which the Lord Jesus Christ will effect because he is both just and very merciful.

We can now understand why Jesus taught his disciples to pray: “Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

Summary Points

1. The people came to Samuel, the last judge of Israel, and asked for a king to reign over them like the nations about them. In doing so they rejected God, their true King (**1 Samuel 8:5-7**).
2. Israel’s first king was Saul but because he treated God’s word lightly, God rejected him from being king (**1 Samuel 15:22-23**).
3. God chose David to replace him, because he was “a man after God’s own heart” (**1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22**).
4. God was pleased with David and promised that he would have a son who would sit on his throne *for ever* (**2 Samuel 7:12-16**). This seed would be both son of David and Son of God (v14).
5. This promise has reference to Jesus who was born in the line of David, yet through the power of the Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary was also the Son of God (**Luke 1:30-33; Hebrews 1:5**).
6. Jesus Christ will return to re-establish the Kingdom of God on earth, ruling from Jerusalem on the restored throne of David (**Jeremiah 23:5-8**).



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Lesson 14 - Questions

1. God raised up certain men to rule Israel after Joshua. What were they called?
2. How does the Bible describe the days of the Judges?
3. What was the great confession that Ruth made when she left Moab behind and came to Israel with Naomi?
4. Who had Israel rejected when they asked Samuel for a king to reign over them?
5. Who was Israel's first King?
6. Why did God choose David to be King?
7. What was the great promise that God gave to David?
8. Who is the "seed" promised to David?
9. This seed would not only be the son of David. Who would also be his Father?
10. What does Luke 1:30-33 tell us about this promise?
11. Where will this promised Kingdom be set up?
12. When will it be set up?
13. In what way will the kingdom of God be different from the world in which we live?