

God's Rule in God's Land

Outline of biblical history, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings 1-10 (1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles 1-9):¹ *"Samuel became judge and prophet in all Israel at a time when the Philistines threatened the freedom of the nation. An earlier movement for kingship was revived and the demand put to reluctant Samuel. The first king, Saul, had a promising start to his reign but eventually showed himself unsuitable as the ruler of the covenant people. While Saul still reigned, David was anointed to succeed him. Because of Saul's jealousy, David became an outcast. However, when Saul died in battle, David returned and became king (about 1000 B.C.). Due to his successes Israel became a powerful and stable nation. He established a central sanctuary at Jerusalem and created a professional bureaucracy and a permanent army. David's son, Solomon, succeeded him (about 961 B.C.) and the prosperity of Israel continued. The building of the temple at Jerusalem was one of Solomon's more notable achievements."* (164).

1. Samuel—the herald of David
 - a. Serves in the role of judge over *all* of Israel—the only one to judge the whole nation
 - i. While called a judge, his actions are not very well developed or described
 - ii. Not described as a 'deliverer' or 'savior' like other judges and never leads Israel in battle
 - iii. Seems to serve as 'judge' in similar form as Deborah, the prophetess
 - b. Also serves as a priest in Shiloh (where the Ark was kept during this time)
 - i. Dedicated to God as an infant (1 Sam 1.27-28)
 - ii. Served as Eli's apprentice (1 Sam 3)
 - iii. Performs the function of high priest—building altars (1 Sam 7.17), offering sacrifices (1 Sam 7.10; 13.8-15; 16.1-5), interceding before God on behalf of the nation and ruler (1 Sam 7.8-9; 8.6-9; etc.)
 - c. Also serves as a prophet of Yahweh/Jehovah
 - i. His most significant role, if we take into account the amount of narrative devoted to this role
 - ii. Called a 'prophet,' 'seer,' and 'man of God'
 - iii. Served as the spokesman for God (1 Sam 8.10; 10.18; 15.1b-2)
 - iv. Called the people back to faithfulness to God and his covenant (1 Sam 7.3; 8.11-18; 10.18-19; 12.6-25; 13.13-14; 15.17-23)
 - v. Served (most importantly) as the 'king-maker'
 1. Promise to Abraham of descendants as kings fulfilled
 2. The agent through whom the Mosaic charter of Deut 17.14-20 is fulfilled
2. Saul—Israel's first king
 - a. When the Promised Land is threatened, Israel looks for help...but not the right kind of help
 - i. Tried to establish Gideon as king (cf. Judges 8.22-23)
 - ii. During the time of Samuel, military disasters revived the people's desire for a king
 - b. Was it wrong for the people to want a king like Saul?
 - i. Much ink has been spilled trying to answer this question, with conservatives falling on both sides
 - ii. Let us break this down into two questions and answer them accordingly...
 - iii. Was it wrong for Israel to want a king? No.

¹ Section outline taken from Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1991).

1. Abraham and Sarah promised by God that kings would be his descendants (Gen 17.6, 16)
 2. Jacob prophesied the kingship of Judah (Gen 49.8-10)
 3. Regulations concerning future kings given in the Law / Torah (Deut 17.14-20)
 4. Never in these words are kings described negatively...in fact, through Moses, God says he will select the king to be placed over Israel (effectively mediating God's rule of his people)
- iv. What is wrong for Israel to want a king 'like all the nations' (1 Sam 8.5)? Yes.
1. Israel wanted a king to provide protection (1 Sam 8.19-20), not to mediate between them and God
 2. Saul is described favorably by his external appearance but doesn't measure up to kingly standards
 - a. Positively:
 - i. Saul is rich, tall, and good looking (1 Sam 9.1-2)
 - ii. From a worldly perspective, he looks like a good choice for leadership
 - b. Negatively
 - i. He is a Benjamite (not from Judah)
 - ii. He lived five miles from Samuel (judge of Israel) but had no idea who he was (1 Sam 9.18)
 - iii. He hides with the luggage during his coronation (1 Sam 10.20-24)
 3. In short, Israel sought a model of kingship from the nations rather than from the covenant
 - a. Rejecting God's rule, God gives them what they want to learn the hard way
 - i. Saul is the 'anointed' ruler...but his anointing even foreshadows that he is not God's choice—he is anointed from a 'flask' not the customary 'horn'...something isn't right here...
 - ii. Even though he was not God's true 'anointed' (lit. 'Messiah'), he still serves in shadowy form as a deliverer / savior of Israel²
 - b. Israel is concerned more for security, safety, and strength (physical) than spiritual matters of walking according to God's will, rule, and covenant
 - c. How quickly they have forgotten God's promises and power!
- c. Evaluating Saul's reign
- i. Becomes Israel's first king around 1050 B.C.
 - ii. Begins with promise—credits God for defeating the Ammonites (1 Sam 11.12-15)
 - iii. Quickly falters:
 1. Wrongly takes upon himself the office of priest (1 Sam 13.8-15)
 2. Foolishly leads his men out of pride without properly caring for their welfare (1 Sam 14.24 ff.)
 3. Fails to obey the word of God in battle with the Amalekites (1 Sam 15.8-9)
 - iv. Israel God the kings of king they asked for...an autocratic oaf 'like the nations'
 - v. Rejected as king by God (1 Sam 15) for the one 'after God's own heart'
- d. Summary: "Saul shows that kingship is God's will for his people, but only if it reflects the covenant relationship" (166).
3. David

² Of the five kings who were 'anointed' into their offices, two were anointed by a 'horn' of oil as was customary (David and Solomon), two were anointed almost in jest from a 'flask' (Saul and Jehu) and one's anointing is not described (Joash). Each of these kings served a 'messianic' role as deliverer/savior of Israel, even those whose reigns are ultimately evaluated negatively in Scripture (Saul, Jehu, and Joash). At the same time, even the 'good' kings, David and Solomon, had great character flaws. It was during this time that the idea of the coming 'Anointed One' ('Messiah') began to develop strongly within Judaism—as it was apparent to all that none of these kings lived up to the descriptions given by the prophets, they were all 'types' of the true Messiah... someone else would have to fulfill that role, Christ.

- a. Comparing Saul and David—a matter of appearances
 - i. Saul is tall but David is short
 - ii. Saul is handsome but David is ‘ruddy’
 - iii. Saul is rich but David is a shepherd
 - iv. What’s going on here? God isn’t concerned with externals—1 Sam 16.6
 - b. David and Goliath—clear picture of the savior-king (1 Sam 17)
 - i. All Israel is captive and trembling in fear from the seemingly invincible enemy
 - ii. God’s anointed (lit. ‘Messiah’) comes on the scene—apparently weak and insignificant
 - iii. God’s anointed stands alone in the place of the multitude
 - iv. Through the anointed one, God works the salvation of Israel
 - c. Highpoints of David’s early reign...after a rocky transition
 - i. Ascends to the throne about 1000 B.C.
 - ii. Launches a successful campaign against the Philistines, securing Israel’s borders (2 Sam 5.17-25)
 - iii. Brings the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6)
 - 1. The importance of this event is often minimized in light of 2 Sam 7, but it is very significant!
 - 2. For the first time, God’s rule (through kings) and God’s presence (through the ark) are collocated
 - 3. Here is another big step in the unfolding of God’s plan...ultimately fulfilled in Christ
 - d. God’s covenant with David (2 Sam 7)
 - i. In terms of biblical theology (i.e., the development of the ‘plot’ of Scripture), this covenant and God’s covenant with Abraham are the two most important building blocks of the OT
 - ii. Promises to Abraham (Gen 12, 15, 17)
 - 1. Make for Abraham a great name
 - 2. Promised Land
 - 3. Descendants (including kings)
 - 4. Blessing / be a blessing
 - 5. God’s presence
 - iii. Promises to David (2 Sam 7)
 - 1. Make for David a great name
 - 2. Dwelling place for his people
 - 3. A descendant on the throne forever
 - 4. Rest from enemies
 - 5. God’s presence
 - iv. Like previous and future covenantal promises, there is an unconditional and conditional side
 - 1. Unfaithfulness of the covenant people invites God’s judgment but never annuls God’s faithfulness
 - 2. There also always emerges a faithful remnant, faithful because God is faithful
 - e. Summary: “David receives promises from God which sum up all the previous covenant promises and focus them on David’s line of descendants” (168).
4. Solomon
- a. Succeeds his father to the throne around 960 B.C.
 - b. Notable features of Solomon presented as to show him putting the finishing touches on David’s reign
 - i. David sought the counsel of wise men...Solomon was an exceedingly wise man

- ii. David brought the Ark to Jerusalem...Solomon built the temple
- c. Solomon is the covenant of God who mediates God's rule in God's land (per God's promise in 2 Sam 7)
 - i. The blemishes on his character point to a future, perfect fulfillment of the messianic reign
 - ii. Hallmarks of the messianic king's reign: true wisdom, the glory of the land, the royal court, and the house of God...all find partial (typical) fulfillment in Solomon but await true fulfillment in Christ