

**UNIT 6 – LESSON 4****THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL****1. THE COURSES AND CHARACTER OF THE HISTORY**

The history of the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, is contained within the books of 1 and II Kings. A later account, drawing upon the account in Kings, is that of 1 and II Chronicles. The unknown historian who wrote Kings drew upon earlier sources in compiling his history. He names three such sources:

- a) The Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41).
- b) The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, mentioned 7 times in 1 Kings and 11 times in 2 Kings.
- c) The Book of Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, mentioned 4 times in 1 Kings and 11 times in 2 Kings

There were probably separate sources for the “Court History” of 2 Samuel 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2, and the stories of Elijah and Elisha.

Kings is not secular history in the modern sense. It is history written from a theological standpoint with the purpose of demonstrating God’s activity in dealing with Israel and its neighbours. It is didactic history: we are supposed to learn from the lessons of the past. We see exemplified in the history the Deuteronomic principle that obedience to God brings blessing, but disobedience brings God’s curse.

The history of the successive kings is built around certain formulae. King’s reigns are introduced by synchronising them with the reigning king in the other kingdom (Israel or Judah), mention of the length of the king’s reign, and a verdict on the king’s character. For kings of Israel this verdict is always unfavourable. The concluding formula mentioned the source for further details about the king, mentions his death and burial and notes the succession of his son.

2. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ISRAEL

The northern kingdom of Israel was instituted by Jeroboam in 922 and lasted until the downfall by Assyrian conquest in 721 B.C. Both Israel and Judah continued to worship Yahweh but for political reasons Jeroboam was unwilling to allow Israelites to go to Jerusalem to worship, since that city was within Judah. He therefore decreed that the ancient sanctuaries of Dan and Bethel should become Israel’s centres of worship. At these sanctuaries Jeroboam installed golden images of bull calves, an act which suggested association with Canaanite fertility rites. The sin of Jeroboam remained a constant trap for Israel and the historian frequently refers to the idolatrous practice of succeeding kings who followed Jeroboam's example.



Nineteen kings ruled in Israel, representing different dynasties. All are judged to have done evil in the sight of Yahweh and all are accordingly condemned. Some, such as Ahab, were notoriously evil. In the closing years of the kingdom the prophets Amos and Hosea preached but without outward result.

3. THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

NOTE: The dates are taken from J. Bright, The History of Israel.

<u>KING</u>	<u>REFERENCE</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>IMPORTANT EVENTS</u>
* Jeroboam	1 Kings 11:26-40 12:1 – 14:20	922-901	1. Division of Kingdom and setting up of independent Israel. 2. Setting up of 2 new shrines, Dan and Bethel.
Nadab	1 Kings 14:20	901-900	Killed in conspiracy of Baasha.
*Baasha	1 Kings 15:33-16:5	900-877	
Elah	1 Kings 16:6-14	877-876	Killed in conspiracy of Zimri.
*Zimri	1 Kings 16:15-20	876 (7 days)	Committed suicide when faced with Omri.
*Omri	1 Kings 16:22-27	876-869	Warfare to determine succession (1 Kings 16:21-22).
Ahab	1 Kings 16:28-22:39	869-850	1. Elijah c.850. 2. Influence of wife Jezebel.
Ahaziah	1 Kings 22:40- 53 2 Kings 1:17-18	850-849	
Jehoram (Joram)	2 Kings 1:17-9:24	849-842	Elisha – Joram killed in Jehu's revolt
*Jehu	2 Kings 9:24-10:34	842-815	Attempt at reform. Baal worshippers destroyed. But Jeroboam's sin persisted.
Jehoahaz (Joahaz)	2 Kings 10:35-13:8	815-801	



Jehoash (Joash)	2 Kings 13:9-14:15	801-786	
Jeroboam 11	2 Kings 14:15-28	786-746	Amos c.750; Hosea c.745. Foreign conquests of Jeroboam.
Zechariah	2 Kings 14:28-15:11	746-745	Killed in conspiracy of Shallum
*Shallum	2 Kings 15:13-15	745	
*Menahem	2 Kings 15:17-20	756-738	Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria, invaded surrounding states, including Israel. Menahem became a vassal of Assyria with regular payments of tribute (11 Kings 15:19f.)
Pekahiah	2 Kings 15:22-26	737-732	A vassal of Assyria.
*Pekah	2 Kings 15:27-31	737-732	Became king by assassinating Pekahiah. Led unsuccessful revolt against Assyria and was then assassinated by Israelites. Israel lost territory north of Plain of Jezreel and Trans-Jordanian territory.
*Hoshea	2 Kings 15:30,17:1-18	732-726	Hoshea replaced Pekah and ruled as a vassal of Tiglath-Pileser III. In 726 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser died and was succeeded by son, Shalmaneser V. Hoshea refused to pay tribute, tried to form an alliance with Egypt and probably tried to purge Israelite worship of Assyrian practices. Shalmaneser attacked, took him to Assyria and imprisoned him (724 B.C.) (11 Kings 17:3-4). Shalmaneser's army invaded Israel, besieged Samaria and took it after 3 years. Samaria became an Assyrian province with much of the population deported to Assyria. Sargon (Shalmaneser's successor) boasts that he captured Samaria and he may have succeeded to the throne before final the capitulation.

*Change of Dynasty.



4. SOME CONCLUDING POINTS

- a) Israel's destruction was seen as the judgement of God.
(2 Kings 17:7-18. 21-22).
- b) The land was populated from people of the Assyrian Empire.
(2 Kings 17:24).
- c) In order to appease the God of the land the new settlers adopted some facets of Israelite religion in addition to their own religions.
(2 Kings 17:25-41).
- d) 2 Kings 17 explains the origin of the Samaritans.

QUESTION 1

How did the kingdom of Israel come into being? (1 Kings 12).

QUESTION 2

Why was every Israelite king condemned by God?

QUESTION 3

Why was King Ahab a bad king in God's eyes?
(1 Kings 16:29-22:39).

QUESTION 4

What examples can you find of God's activity in Israel during the reign of Ahab?

QUESTION 5

Explain the origin of the Samaritans and describe their religion (1 Kings 17).

SUGGESTED FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR GROUP STUDY

If the book of Kings is supposed to be one that uses history to teach us about life, what personal lessons have you learned from this study on the Kingdom of Israel?