

JTB VIII. THE UNITED KINGDOM

Scripture: 1Samuel8 - 1Kings 11; paralleled in 1Chronicles 10 - 2Chronicles 9
Historical Era: from Samuel to Solomon [ca. 1051-931 B.C.]

A. The Roots of the "Earthly Kingdom" Notion

To understand the "Kingdom of God" issue, we need to begin with some basics.

(1) The "kingdom of God" does NOT refer to God becoming something (like "king") at some point in human history that He was not prior to that time. The Lord's throne is in heaven (Isaiah 66:1,2) and He has always reigned as king over His creation (Psalm 10:16; 29:10; 47:2; 95:3; Daniel 4:26,27; Romans 13:1-7).

(2) The first mention of God's "kingdom" plans for Israel reveal that He wanted Israel to be a "spiritual" kingdom - holy and priestly in nature (Exodus 19:5,6). This is what He has finally accomplished in the Church (1Peter 2:9,10).

(3) When finally mentioned, Israel's "earthly kingdom" would be their idea ("and you say, . . .") which would be requested after they were settled in Canaan. Limits were being placed on it ahead of time (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

(4) After defeating the Midianites, Gideon was asked to set up a dynasty in Israel. He refused on the basis that, according to his understanding, Israel already had a heavenly king and he wanted no part of it - YHWH! (Judges 8:22,23)

(5) Later, when his boys were not following his spiritual example, Samuel was approached about giving Israel an earthly monarchy so they could be "like all the nations" (1Samuel 8:1-5). This was immediately labeled by God as an evil, rebellious, and worldly-minded request (1Samuel 8:6-22; 10:19; 12:12-25). After a warning, God allowed them to have such a kingdom so that they might learn the hard way about the superiority of God's spiritual kingdom.

(6) God has worked to redeem man so that they may join Him in glory,¹ but there has been a long stream of "earthly-minded" kingdom-seekers who are infatuated with an earthly Messianic monarchy as God's desire, intention, and unfulfilled promise to Israel (Philippians 3:18,19). The nation that God had called to be His own special/different people chose to copy the ways of the world instead!

¹ John 14:1-3; 18:36,37; 1Corinthians 15:50-54; Philippians 3:20,21; Colossians 3:1-4; 1Thessalonians 4:17; 2Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 11:13-16; 12:22,23; 13:14

Saul's Reign

[1 Sam.9-31/1Chr.8:33-10:14; 1050-1010 B.C.]

(1) God's Spirit tried to guide Saul into both spiritual (1Samuel 10:5-13) and military leadership (1Samuel 11). While people tend to judge by outward/appearance qualities (1Samuel 9:2), God also sees the heart and mind (1Samuel 16:7; 1Chronicles 28:9).

(2) On two crucial occasions, Saul crossed the limits to "do his own thing" and lost his kingdom (1Samuel 13:8-14; 15:1-35). An important principle - obedience to God's revealed will is better than religious substitutes invented by men (1Samuel 15:22,23).

(3) Saul degenerated spiritually/emotionally, tried to kill David (1Samuel 19:1), and turned to spiritualism for aid (1Samuel 28)

(4) Without God's blessing, Saul died in battle against the Philistines (1Samuel 31)

David's Reign

[1 Sam.16-30; 2 Sam.1-1Kgs.2; par.1Chr.11-29; ca. 1010-970 B.C.]

(1) David was selected by God and anointed because of his heart (1Samuel 15:28; 16:1,7,13) and noble qualities (16:18); his music soothed Saul (16:14-23); he killed Goliath (1Samuel 17); was close to Saul's son, Jonathon (1Samuel 18:1; 19; 20); and avoided Saul's attempts to kill him (1Samuel 20:30-27:12).

(2) David reigned 7 1/2 years in Hebron over Judah (2Samuel 2-4) and 33 years in Jerusalem over all Israel (2Samuel 5:1-5). He was accepted by the northern 10 tribes because their elders knew that God's leaders are to be loving shepherds, not selfish tyrants (2Samuel 5:2; 1Kings 12:7; Matthew 20:25-28; 23:1-12).

(3) David's great military successes are recounted (2Samuel 5;8;10;12:26-31)

(4) David was barred from building the temple (2Samuel 7:1-7), but given dynastic/Messianic promises (2Samuel 7:8-29). Thus, David becomes the final predicted marker for the Messiah's lineage - Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:8-10) through the family of David (2Samuel 7:8,16).

The Messianic Lineage

Eve (Gen. 3:15,20)
Seth to Noah (Gen. 4:25 - 5:32)
Shem to Terah (Gen. 11:10-26)
Abram (Gen. 12:1-3)
Isaac (Gen. 26:1-4)
Jacob (Gen. 28:10-14)
Judah (Gen. 49:10)
David (2Sam. 7)

(5) David's great personal sin with Bathsheba, adultery & murder (2Samuel 11&12) was punished with family turmoil (2Samuel 12:9-15; 13; 14)

(6) David's son Absalom conspired to capture the throne and the rebellion was so successful that David had to leave Jerusalem for awhile (2Samuel 15-18)

(7) David, beginning to trust in worldly power, had Israel "numbered" (2Samuel 24)

(8) David's son Adonijah conspired to capture the throne (1Kings 1)

(9) David made preparations for the temple (1Chronicles 28; 29)

Solomon's Reign

[1Kgs.1-11; 1Chr.23-2Chr.9; 970-930 B.C.]

1Kings 1-2/ Solomon was hastily anointed king and several enemies were eliminated

1Kings 3-10/ His early reign demonstrated wisdom, wealth, and God's presence. Choosing wisdom in order to serve God's purposes "pleases God" (1Kings 3:8-10; cf. James 1:5).

1Kings 11/ Solomon's later reign displayed foolishness, disobedience, polygamy and God's wrath. Solomon established the idolatry that plagued the southern kingdom until its exile to Babylon.



The "earthly kingdom" was man's idea and it was a disaster. It was far from the perfect spiritual reign of the invisible God in the hearts of loyal people (Judges 8:22,23; Psalm 2:6; 5:2; 44:4; 68:24; 74:12; 84:3; 145:1), which has always been God's desire! The faithful continued to look for the appearance of Messiah until Jesus visited God's people (Matthew 1:23; 2:1,2; 12:28; 28:18; Mark 1:15; 9:1; John 1:45; Colossians 1:13,14; Romans 14:17). The true people of God do not desire an earthly kingdom, but seek a heavenly one (Philippians 3:18-21; Colossians 3:1-4; Galatians 4:21-31; Hebrews 11:10,13-16; 12:22-24; 13:14; Revelation 21&22).

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