

## BIBLE OVERVIEW

### SESSION IV: THE KINGDOM RISE AND FALL

#### What do you think?

1. Are politicians solely responsible for the fate of the nations?
2. What do you consider as the major functions of political office?
4. What major factors contribute to the instability of nations?
5. What major considerations are made in the election of political leaders?

Through a remarkable set of circumstances Samuel met Saul, the man chosen by God to be Israel's first king (1 Sam 9:1-10:16), and the people receive Saul as their king (1 Sam 10:17-11:15). God's purpose for this people has not been abandoned.

Saul fails as king (1 Sam 15) by disobeying God. When presented with his disobedience Saul presents excuses, and even thinks that his disobedience is justified because its purpose is religious (1 Sam 15:15). Samuel's response is to remind Saul that the essence of true relationship with God is obedience to his words, not sacrifices or other ritual (v22). Saul's rebellion amounted to a rejection of the Lord; and the consequence is that the Lord rejects Saul as the king over Israel (v23b).

The question raised by Saul's failure is what now is the future for Israel?

*1 Samuel 16:1 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."<sup>2</sup> But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'<sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"<sup>5</sup> Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.<sup>6</sup> When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either."<sup>9</sup> Jesse then made Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one."<sup>10</sup> Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these."<sup>11</sup> So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."<sup>12</sup> So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint*



*him; he is the one.*<sup>13</sup> So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.

The answer begins to take shape in the remaining pages of 1 Samuel. God appoints David as the next king over Israel. The fact that the new king-to-be will be God's choice is underlined in several ways and we are told that once Samuel had anointed him 'the Spirit of the Lord came on him from that day forward' (1 Sam 16:1-13). In the very next verse we are told that the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and the remainder of 1 Samuel is dominated by tensions created by a king on the throne in Israel who has been rejected by God, and a man who has been chosen to be king, but who cannot yet reign. It is only with the death of Saul that the next stage of Israel's history can begin.

After the death of Saul Judah makes David their King (2 Sam 2:4) and eventually David becomes king of all the tribes of Israel (2 Sam 5:3). The first thing David does as king is to take Jerusalem, not yet taken over by the Israelites (2 Sam 5:6-9). Jerusalem was not, therefore, the property of any one tribe, and so it became the royal city of all Israel, 'the city of David' (2 Sam 5:9).

David also had the 'ark of God' brought into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6). The ark was the box containing a copy of the law given to Moses. It was the focal point of the tabernacle, and was the symbol of God's presence among his people. In doing this David joyfully recognises that his reign is a gift from God, and that it was not absolute. His people are the Lord's people, and therefore the true king in Jerusalem is God. The city of David was the city of God! (see Ps 48:1).

## The Promised Future King

### **Read 2 Samuel 7:1-17**

*After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him,<sup>2</sup> he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent."<sup>3</sup> Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you."<sup>4</sup> That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying:<sup>5</sup> "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?'<sup>6</sup> I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling.<sup>7</sup> Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"<sup>8</sup> "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel.<sup>9</sup> I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth.<sup>10</sup> And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant*



*them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people shall not oppress them any more, as they did at the beginning<sup>11</sup> and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you:<sup>12</sup> When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.<sup>13</sup> He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.<sup>14</sup> I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men.<sup>15</sup> But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.<sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever."*<sup>17</sup> Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

What did David intend to do?

What does God say to this?

What does God promise for the people? (v10-11)

What does God promise to David? (v12-13)

How will what has promised come about?

What is the time scope for what is promised?

This promise of God's is fundamental for an understanding of the rest of the Bible's story. From this point onwards God's purpose will include an anointed king in the line of David. This is the origin of the idea of 'Messiah', a Hebrew word meaning anointed one, and translated in Greek as 'Christ'.

### **Read Psalm 2**

This Psalm was possibly used at the coronation of kings in David's line. It expresses the great significance of the Davidic king, because of his place in God's purposes.



*Psalm 2:1 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One.<sup>3</sup> "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."<sup>4</sup> The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.<sup>5</sup> Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,<sup>6</sup> "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."<sup>7</sup> I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."<sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.<sup>9</sup> You will rule them with an iron sceptre; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."<sup>10</sup> Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.<sup>11</sup> Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.<sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

### **How is this Psalm used in the New Testament?**

see Acts 4:25; 13:33; Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15

None of the kings of ancient Israel lived up to the high expectations expressed in 2 Samuel 7 or in Psalm 2. David sins by committing murder and adultery (2 Sam 11&12) - which shows just how unworthy he was of the gracious promises given to him. Once again human sinfulness robs the people of God of the full experience of God's blessing.

King Solomon succeeds David, and has a promising start. He fulfils the predictions of Nathan with respect to building God's house, and being David's son. He asks God for wisdom (1 Kings 3), and under his rule Israel reaches its peak. In 1 Kings 4 we find Israel is numerous, happy, and Solomon rules over all the areas God promised to Abraham (this is the only time this occurs). There is also peace on all sides and people come to Israel from afar, and so Israel is a blessing to other nations as well.

### **Read 1 Kings 10:14-29**

*1 Kings 10:14 The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents,<sup>15</sup> not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the land.<sup>16</sup> King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred bekas of gold went into each shield.<sup>17</sup> He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold, with three minas of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.<sup>18</sup> Then the king made a great throne inlaid with ivory and overlaid with fine gold.<sup>19</sup> The throne had six steps, and its back had a rounded top. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them.<sup>20</sup> Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom.<sup>21</sup> All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's days.<sup>22</sup> The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.<sup>23</sup> King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.<sup>24</sup> The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.<sup>25</sup> Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift-- articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.<sup>26</sup>*



*Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem.<sup>27</sup> The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills.<sup>28</sup> Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt-- and from Kue the royal merchants purchased them from Kue.<sup>29</sup> They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.*

However in his later years Solomon goes astray as he marries pagan women (1 Kings 11:1-13). God is sad and angry, and so promises to tear the kingdom from Solomon after his death, and not give it to his son. However God says v13 *'Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.'*

1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 25 describes what happens as the land gets torn apart. The great kingdom splits after Solomon's death. The kingdom splits in two: the 10 northern tribes, called Israel, set up other gods and quickly head for judgement. In 721BC the Northern Kingdoms are captured by the Assyrians, and vanish (2 Kings 17:1-6). The 2 southern tribes, called Judah, have about 20 kings, some good some bad. In 597BC the Babylonians take all the educated elite from Jerusalem and set up a puppet king (2 Kings 24:12-14). The king rebels and in 587BC the Babylonians capture Jerusalem, destroy the temple and take many more into captivity.

### **Read 2 Kings 24:20-25:13**

*2 Kings 24:20 It was because of the LORD's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence. Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. 25:1 So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it.<sup>2</sup> The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.<sup>3</sup> By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city had become so severe that there was no food for the people to eat.<sup>4</sup> Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled at night through the gate between the two walls near the king's garden, though the Babylonians were surrounding the city. They fled towards the Arabah,<sup>5</sup> but the Babylonian army pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his soldiers were separated from him and scattered,<sup>6</sup> and he was captured. He was taken to the king of Babylon at Riblah, where sentence was pronounced on him.<sup>7</sup> They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. Then they put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.<sup>8</sup> On the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, an official of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup> He set fire to the temple of the LORD, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down.<sup>10</sup> The whole Babylonian army, under the commander of the imperial guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup> Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile the people who remained in the city, along with the rest of the populace and those who had gone over to*



*the king of Babylon.<sup>12</sup> But the commander left behind some of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.*

*Psalm 137:1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.<sup>2</sup> There on the poplars we hung our harps,<sup>3</sup> for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"<sup>4</sup> How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?<sup>5</sup> If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill.<sup>6</sup> May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.<sup>7</sup> Remember, O LORD, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. "Tear it down," they cried, "tear it down to its foundations!"<sup>8</sup> O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us--<sup>9</sup> he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.*

There is a small return in 538BC, but Israel never returns to its full glory. This is where the history books of the Old Testament end. We have a small remnant of God's people, with a small land - no kingdom though, and they certainly do not seem to be particularly blessed; neither are they a blessing to other nations. Ezra returns and builds a temple, and Nehemiah returns to build the walls of Jerusalem.

## God's anointed King

Who is God's perfect king who will reign on David's throne forever, who's kingdom will never end?

Read Isaiah 9:6-7

Read Luke 1:32-33

Read Mark 1:1; Matthew 1:1-17

Read Matthew 12:42

Read Revelation 11:15



## Think about it

### **British Empire**

By 1922 the British Empire held sway over about 458 million people, one-fifth of the world's population at the time. The empire covered more than 33,700,000 km<sup>2</sup> (13,012,000 sq mi), almost a quarter of the Earth's total land area. As a result, its political, legal, linguistic and cultural legacy is widespread. At the peak of its power it was often said that "the sun never sets on the British Empire" because its span across the globe ensured that the sun was always shining on at least one of its numerous territories. Now it is no more.

What often causes civilisations and kingdoms to fall?

How do we know that the Kingdom of God will last forever?

