

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

“The Historical Books – Pt. 1”

CONQUEST AND LIFE IN CANAAN (Joshua – 1 Samuel)

6. JOSHUA

The book of Joshua covers about 25-30 years of Israel's history. **The book demonstrates three things...**

1. God kept his promise to Abraham involving the land of Canaan.
2. God, though rich in mercy, eventually judges sin.
3. God judges sin in all nations, Canaan and Israel.

Joshua's strategy to possess the land was to divide and conquer. Canaan consisted of two major power blocks, the Amorites in the South and the Canaanites in the North. The reason he started in the center or middle of Canaan was to drive a wedge between these two powers and isolate them so they couldn't form an alliance against him. However, to control the central region they had to defeat Jericho.

Key Principle: The understanding that “the battle was the Lord's and because it was his battle, **ONLY** His methods could bring success.” Leadership needed to **ALWAYS** inquire of the Lord before taking action.

Israel defeated the Gibeonites and Amorites in the south and the Canaanites in the north to possess the land. However, because they did not obey and completely destroy the Canaanites, they would continue to be a thorn in their side. During this period the city of Shiloh was designated as the religious center for Israel and is where they set up the tabernacle.

Six cities of refuge were created in the land, three on the east and three on the west side of the Jordan. **A city of Refuge** was a place where those who killed someone unintentionally could flee and be safe.

7. JUDGES

This book covers about 400 years if you include Eli and Samuel's rule and priesthood. During these years Israel consisted of a twelve tribes that were governing themselves. The book of Judges records the history between Joshua and Samuel and reveals the spiritual cycles of Israel in Canaan.

Israel repeated the following cycle...They disobeyed God, worshipped idols, God sent a nation to conquer them, Israel cried out for deliverance, God heard and sent a judge to deliver them.

There were a total of thirteen judges, six considered to be minor judges (Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon). The remaining judge was Abimelech (Judges 9) who did not deliver anyone. The major Judges were...

Othniel: His uncle was Caleb and led Israel in war against the King of Aram and secured 40 yrs. of peace for Israel.

Ehud: He hid a double edged sword under his clothing and killed the King of Moab who was so fat that the handle of the knife got lost in his skin. This led to the defeat of the Moabites.

Deborah: Along with the commander of Israel's army Barak they defeated the Canaanites. She is one of the most famous women in Israel's history.

Gideon: In this famous story Gideon lays out several fleeces before the Lord to insure that God was with him. Gideon defeated the armies of Midian to deliver Israel.

Jephthah: Jephthah was an illegitimate child born out of an affair his father had and so was driven from his family. But God chose Jephthah and he became a mighty warrior and defeated the Ammonites. A famous part of this story is the foolish vow he made to God that the first thing he saw come out of his house he would sacrifice to God for giving him victory. It was his daughter.

Samson: Samson is best known for his unusual physical strength and spiritual weakness for Philistine women. Samson falls prey to Delilah, loses his strength, is imprisoned, and his eyes are gauged out.

The last five chapters of Judges (17-21) ends on a negative note telling of Israel's decline into immorality, violence and idolatry.

8. RUTH

Ruth's story demonstrates how God's mercy is extended to all people in every nation that will seek Him. Ruth becomes part of the ancestral line of Jesus. Her story occurs during the time of the Judges.

Key Principle: The concept of the Kinsmen-Redeemer. This was when a relative came to the rescue of another family member to redeem them from a bad situation. In this case, Naomi's relative Boaz ends up marrying Ruth, buying back Naomi's property and redeeming Naomi's legacy. The idea is that Jesus has redeemed us and therefore is our Kinsmen-Redeemer.

9. 1 SAMUEL

This book records the important point in Israel's history when Israel rejects God as king, asking to have their own king. This book covers 100 years of history from Samuel's birth to King Saul's death.

The story of Hannah is where we derive the idea of Baby Dedication.

Samuel held three roles in Israel, Judge, Prophet and Priest. He was the last of the Judges. He anointed Saul as the first King of Israel, but because of his pride and other character issues, Saul failed miserably. The message in God's selection of David as king was that while man looks on the outward appearance, God looks at the heart. David was a man after God's heart. David wasn't perfect, he committed murder and adultery and even disobeyed God by counting his troops. However, his heart was repentant and he continually chased after God.

Key Principle of Book: The error of running ahead of the promises of God to bring about with human effort what only God can and should do illustrated by Saul's impatience.

THE ISRAELITE EMPIRE (2 Sam. 1 & 2 Kings, 1 Chon., 2 Chron. 1-9)

This section of the historical books tells the story of David's reign, Solomon's reign and the establishment of the Northern Kingdom.

David's Reign: 2 Sam. covers David's rule which is a period of 40 years. Most regard David as Israel's greatest king. David is crowned King in Hebron. In one of his first acts as King, he moves the capitol of Israel to Jerusalem which becomes the center of worship and is where the tabernacle was placed. Jerusalem is referred to by two other names, "The City of David" and "Zion." Although David longed to build the Temple, God would not allow it because David's hands had shed blood. So David amassed the resources for his son Solomon to build the Temple.

Solomon's Reign: The book of 1 & 2 Kings covers 400 years of history and was written for the Jews exiled in Babylon to show them the reason the kingdom of Israel was divided and how they ended up as slaves and captives. Solomon's Reign is often referred to as "The Golden Years" of Israel's history because of the peace and prosperity Israel enjoyed for 40 years. Solomon was 21-25 when he became King.

Solomon's greatest accomplishment was the building of the Temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. It was completed in 950BC. When Nebuchadnezzar defeated Judah in 586BC he destroyed the Temple. Later another temple was built through the efforts of Ezra, Haggai and others, which was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD.

Key Principle: Solomon's life illustrates the truth that it doesn't matter how you start, it only matters how you finish. Despite, wealth and wisdom his life ended in failure and defeat. Solomon took on foreign wives that turned his heart from God. God's judgment was that the Kingdom of Israel would be split.

The Northern Kingdom: After Solomon's death the people turned against the new king Rehoboam and the result was that Israel was divided into two kingdoms, the Northern Kingdom Israel and the Southern Kingdom, Judah. There were 10 tribes in the north with Jeroboam as their king. There were 2 tribes in the south Judah and Benjamin. The remainder of 1 Kings and the beginning of 2 Kings describes the history of the five dynasties of the northern kingdom.

First Dynasty: Jeroboam and His Sons. Jeroboam ruled for 22 years. He did not lead Israel in god's ways and introduced idolatry. He died, his son Nadab took over and died in two years.

Second Dynasty: Baasha continued the idolatrous lifestyle of his predecessors. He ruled for 24 yrs. then his son Elah took over for two. He was killed and the prophecy of Jehu was fulfilled that Baasha and his family line would be killed.

Third Dynasty: Omri headed up the most evil family to rule the north. Omri moved the capitol from Tirzah to Samaria. He ruled for 12 years until Ahab came into power. While the kingdom became wealthy under Ahab, he was the most sinful of kings because he and his wife Jezebel led Israel into Baal worship. It was in Ahab's reign that Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel and was chased by Jezebel. Following Ahab, his son Ahaziah took over and then his brother Joram. This dynasty lasted 47 years and they were all wicked.

Fourth Dynasty: Jehu took over and his dynasty lasted longer than any other...almost 100 years. Jehu and his son Jehoahaz didn't do very well ruling, but Jehoahaz's son Jehoash began to turn things around. Jehoash's son Jeroboam II ruled 41 years and was considered the greatest king of the northern kingdom. He re-established true worship, the north prospered and peace reigned. But after his death weak leaders led the north into decline and it eventually fell.

Fifth Dynasty: Menahem and his son Pekahiah ruled during the last few years of the northern kingdom. They tried to stave off invasion from Assyria by paying taxes but to no avail. After Pekahiah's son Pekah overthrew him, Pekah himself was killed and Hoshiah became the last King of the northern kingdom. The Assyrians attacked the capitol city of Samaria in 722 BC and took the people into captivity.