

# HOW TO REACH THE JEW FOR CHRIST

by

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE UNITED KINGDOM

*Information source: I Samuel 9-1 Kings 12*

The facts of this period are best studied by analyzing the main characters of the period.

- A. The Anointing of Saul
- B. The Kingship of David
- C. The Rule of Solomon

#### A. SAMUEL AS PROPHET AND JUDGE

The life of Samuel provides the transition of the children of Israel from the period of the judges to the period of the kings.

Samuel was unquestionably the greatest of the judges. The influence of his upright character was of far greater value than the combined victories of the semi-military judges. The enemies of Israel had been subdued and now there was peace throughout the land.

The people recognized in Samuel a leader who was raised up by God to guide them. His stern execution of duty, his sense of right and justice and his marvelous faith in the Lord God makes him stand out as one of the finest characters in the Old Testament Scriptures.

As Samuel grew old he entrusted some of his duties to his sons but they were unworthy of their great father. “**And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.**” The people of Israel no longer wished to entrust their welfare to the judges; they desired a king “**like all the nations.**”

Samuel was disappointed; he went to God for guidance. God told him to hearken unto the people “**for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.**” Samuel warned the people that their kings would gradually deprive them of their personal liberties and would make their lives unbearable with taxation and compulsory military training. Even these warnings did not discourage the elders of Israel; they wanted a king.

## B. THE ANOINTING OF SAUL

The people demanded a king and God gave them Saul, a king after their own hearts. He was modest, able, above his fellows in stature and ability. He began well and was successful in some wars against the Philistines. But with all of this he was selfish and rebellious against God. He usurped for himself the duties of the priest by offering a sacrifice. Under the guise of an act of worship he disobeyed God, and God through Samuel told him: **“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams . . . Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king”** (I Samuel 15:22-23).

Because God rejected him from the kingship of Israel, Saul lost mental control, and was quite unable to manage the state. At times when Saul's insanity was particularly violent, a young musician, David, was called in to calm the troubled spirit of Saul by playing upon the harp. David, an obscure shepherd boy, had been anointed by Samuel to succeed Saul as king. David's God-controlled life was in sharp contrast to Saul's uncontrolled life. In spite of many opportunities for self-advancement, David persisted in touching not the **“Lord’s anointed.”**

Saul's lack of capacity as king and leader led to a disastrous battle with the Philistines on the Plain of Esdraelon. His troops badly beaten, Saul ended his career by committing suicide.

## C. THE KINGSHIP OF DAVID

Upon Saul's rejection, God selected David, a man after His own heart, as successor to the throne of Israel.

David was well trained for the office of king. As a shepherd boy he had communed with God. His contact with nature gave him a profound trust in the power of God. He learned wisdom; he developed in skill and devotion to duty. His later trials ripened his character. He sinned grievously, but the habit of his life was pure.

Under King David, God made Israel great. David's integrity inspired the people with confidence. He welded the weak confederation of twelve mutually suspicious tribes into a united nation with a strong central government. His successful wars gained complete independence for the entire nation of Israel. The area of the country was enlarged to extend eastward to the Euphrates River. Though a great soldier, David was a greater religious leader. He sinned but truly repented of his deeds, and realized that his punishment was just. It was David who brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem; it was David who made the plans for the Temple.

David was a man who felt deeply: a musician, a poet, a thinker. With him worship was a personal relationship between himself and God. In hours of deepest trial, he relied entirely upon the Lord, to whom alone he could unburden his guilt and look for forgiveness.

## D. THE RULE OF SOLOMON

Solomon, David's son by Bathsheba, was David's successor. Like David and Saul, he also reigned for forty years. His rule was marked by the building of the first Temple.

Solomon's life is one of the greatest paradoxes of history. Although he was wise beyond measure, mentally, yet his folly wrought havoc for his people, religiously. He maintained a harem of strange wives. These foreign women brought with them their national gods. He who in his younger years had rejoiced in the privilege of erecting the Temple, and who had pledged his people to eternal fidelity to the one true God, now tolerated idols in his palace! "**His wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord.**"

On account of his love for David, God did not take the kingdom from Solomon, but warned him that he would take it from his son. By the time of Solomon's death, there were unmistakable signs of decay and decline in the kingdom.

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## THIS LESSON APPLIED TO JEWISH MISSIONS

*"The Gospel According to David"*

David's experience of sins and forgiveness, his deep trust in God, his thankfulness for blessings spiritual and temporal, found expression in his Psalms, of which we have over seventy in our Bible. He realized that the Messiah would come from his own line.

The great king beheld in awe the coming of his greater Son, the Messiah. Many of the details of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ are foreshadowed in the Psalms of David.

Among the details which he prophesied are:

1. Messiah willingly going to His suffering (Psalm 40).
2. Messiah betrayed by His own familiar friend (Psalm 41).
3. The untold agonies and suffering of the Messiah (Psalm 22).
4. The Messiah raised again without corruption (Psalm 16).
5. The Messiah exalted, the Great High Priest who intercedes for His people (Psalm 68:18; 110).

The study of these and other Messianic Psalms will be of inestimable value to the Jewish mission worker.

## EXAMINATION

1. Why did the people ask for a king?
2. In one sentence each describe the chief characteristics of:
  - a. Samuel
  - b. Saul
  - c. David
  - d. Solomon

3. Give a brief summary of the incidents prophesied in the “Gospel According to David.”
4. How long did each of the first three kings of Israel reign?
5. Show how Solomon’s acts began a decline in the kingdom.

**~ end of chapter 4 ~**

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