

SESSION 1: THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

PREPARATION FOR THE SESSION

Read 1 Kings 1:28-53, ch. 8, 11:1-13, 12:16-24, 16:29-34, ch. 18; 1 Kings 21:25-29; 2 Kings ch. 6, ch. 17, ch. 22, 24:10—25:21.

Summary of the Video: Module 3, Episode 1

Andrew Wilson begins by giving us two different visions of the “big picture” that show us the entire storyline of Scripture. We can get confused by all the details of the Old Testament, so it’s important for us to step back and view the whole thing. To do this, we watch a 10-minute overview of the Old Testament. The overview identifies five major points in the story: Eden (4000 BC), Election of Abraham (2000 BC), Exodus (1500 BC), Empire of David (1000 BC), and Exile of God’s people to Assyria and Babylon (500 BC).

We then jump into the history of Israel and Judah (two kingdoms rather than one).

1 and 2 Kings were originally written as one book, so we examine them together with a particular focus on how the Gospel comes through. The story doesn’t say “Israel keeps sinning so God constantly punishes them” as much as it says, “Israel learns that it can’t save itself and must always look to God for salvation.” Even the best human efforts (wisdom, law, temple, and prophets) won’t rescue God’s people. In each of these areas God’s people fail miserably but God demonstrates extraordinary patience and mercy. The fact that God “sides” with Judah doesn’t support the idea that it’s the “amount of goodness” of the nation that merits God’s favour; it’s the sheer grace of God that secures his protection.

Andrew Wilson lists several ways the story speaks the Gospel: it begins in death and ends with exaltation; it demonstrates that our best efforts cannot save us but only God can; God is merciful and gracious and abounding in love; and the king’s fate and nation’s fate are tied together.

At the hour mark, Andrew Wilson pauses to respond to the following questions:

In Israel, if the king did well, the nation did well. How does this relate to leadership in the church? Andrew Wilson says there’s a yes and no to this. In the ancient world, kings were the “federal head” of the people, but for Christians it is Jesus who is our federal head (rather than a human leader). Because he’s exalted, we’re always exalted. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which the church goes up and down according to human leaders, but in a different way and to a different extent.

Does the fact that David didn’t sleep with the young woman at the end of his life indicate only a sign of ageing or a sign of repentance or both? David does repent (Psalm 51 proves this). However, the opening details of 1 Kings all point toward ageing.

In some of the prophets, we hear about God's influence over the nations and their leaders. Does God still have sway over the nations in the same way? Andrew Wilson says yes but it's dangerous to speculate where and in what way he is operating.

Are the people of the northern (Israel) or southern (Judah) tribes of Israel living with and/or operating from a conscious awareness of the "inheritance of the land"? Were they seeking a "united kingdom"? There is no indication in the text that they are. Rather, they seem to be doing normal political and military maneuvering. Judah seems divided on the issue of uniting and Israel seems opposed to it.

"As the king goes, so the nation goes..." but Josiah led reforms and the nation wasn't elevated. Is this a contradiction? There were massive improvements in society, but that doesn't cut off the massive accumulation of judgment the leaders and their people had brought upon the people through the generations and centuries.

Terms You'll Need to Know:

Chiastic structure—a structure that writers use to highlight important points or to draw parallels in their content; for example, if a poem has five lines, a chiastic structure will have the 1st and 5th lines parallel, the 2nd and 4th lines parallel, and the 3rd line is like the centerpiece.

Peter Leithart, 1 & 2 Kings Commentary.

Cut covenant—to “cut” means to start or enact a covenant (it doesn't mean to end it).

Nadir—lowest point.

Federal unity—when the fate of a group of people is tied up in what happens to its leader.

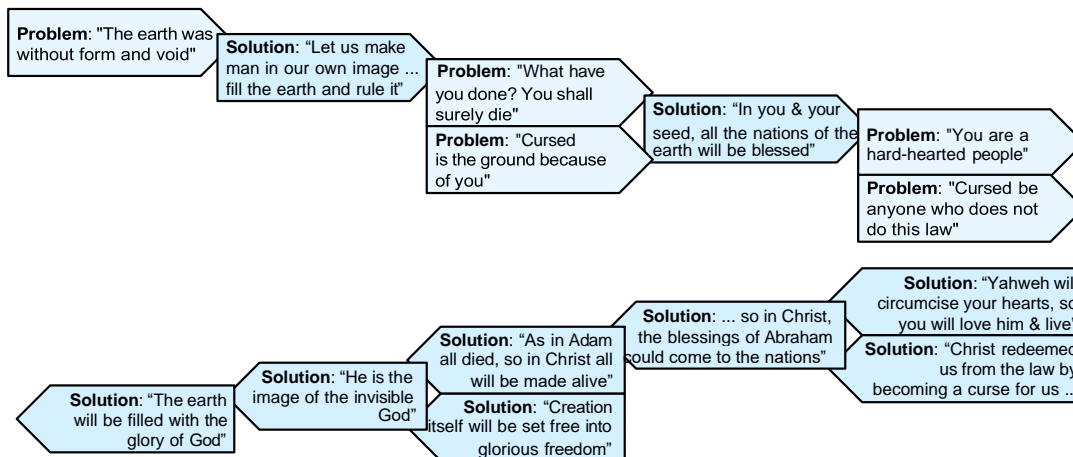
Watch Video

Watch Module 3, Episode 1 (1hr 18 minutes, or 1hr if the questions at the end are skipped)

Division to Exile

- I. The Story So Far
- II. The History of Israel and Judah from the Division to the Exile
- III. God
- IV. Gospel
- V. People
- VI. Mission

The Big Picture

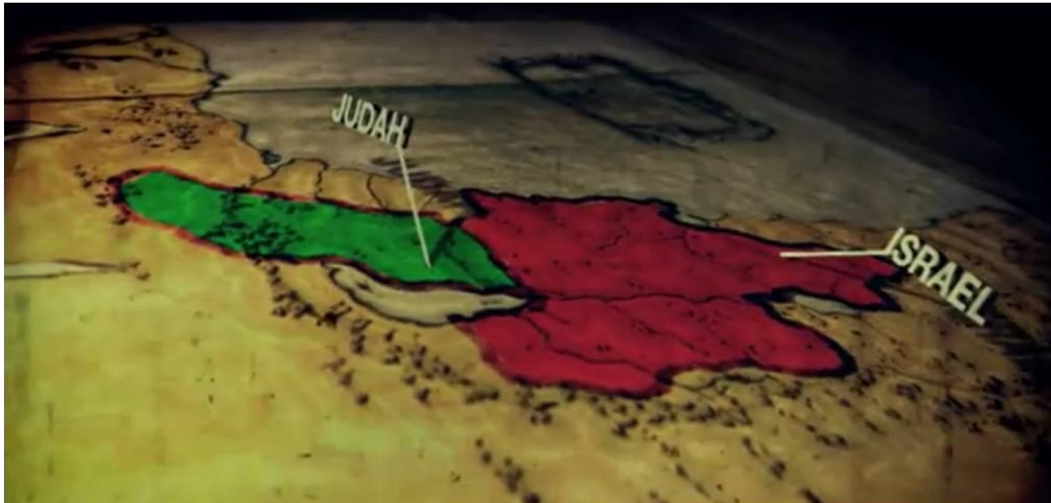


The Big Picture

- Image, Temple, Glory (Gen 1-2)
- Satan, Sin, Death (Gen 3-11)
- Blessing, Nations, Covenant (Gen 12-50)
- Passover, Exodus, Inheritance (Ex – Josh)
- Kingdom, Exclusion, Exile (1 Sam – Mal)
- **Jesus the Messiah**
- Kingdom, Welcome, Return (ministry and parables of Jesus; Jesus as New Israel)
- Passover (Lord's Supper), Exodus (Rom 6; 1 Cor 10), Inheritance (Rom 4; Heb 4)
- Blessing, Nations, Covenant People (Acts 15; Gal 3)
- Satan, Sin, Death (Rom 5; 1 Cor 15)
- Image, Temple, Glory (Eph 1; Rom 8; Rev 21)

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Old Testament Overview DVD



Source: <http://www.kingschurch.eu/godfirst>

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Division to Exile

- I. The Story So Far
- II. **The History of Israel and Judah from the Division to the Exile**
- III. God
- IV. Gospel
- V. People
- VI. Mission

The Near Eastern World, 931 – 620



Judah, Israel and Surrounding Nations, 931 – 722



The Gospel in 1&2 Kings

- "The curse threatened against sin is 'Dying you shall die,' and the same curse hangs over Israel after Yahweh cut covenant with it at Sinai. The message of the prophets is not, 'Israel has sinned; therefore Israel needs to get its act together or it will die.' The message is ... 'Israel has sinned; Israel is already dead. Cling to the God who raises the dead.' This is precisely the message of 1-2 Kings, which systematically dismantles Israel's confidence in everything but the omnipotent mercy and patience of God" (Leithart, *1&2 Kings*, p.18)
 - Wisdom cannot save (1 Kgs 1-11). Wisdom is the ultimate royal virtue, and Solomon has it in spades, but it fails to deliver in his case, and does not guarantee success anyway (Ecc > Prov; e.g. 2 Kgs 14:8-14)
 - Torah cannot save (2 Kgs 23). Josiah keeps Torah to perfection (23:25), but look at the very next verse: "Yahweh did not turn from the fierceness of his great wrath" (23:26)
 - The temple cannot save (1 Kgs 8; 2 Kgs 25). After being dedicated, the temple mainly appears to furnish pagan nations with gold and silver. Joash's repairs don't save Israel, neither do Josiah's reforms, and the only king who prays in the temple, Hezekiah, hands over to the worst king of the lot, Manasseh
 - Prophets cannot save – even Elijah, Elisha, Huldah, Isaiah and co
- Not only that, but (despite the fires, bears and sieges) God is presented as extraordinarily merciful and patient
 - He always gives more than people ask for (1 Kgs 3:10-14; 2 Kgs 3:17-18; 4:8-17)
 - He forgives the repentant, despite their savage evils (Ahab in 1 Kgs 21:25-29; cf. 2 Chr 33:10-20)
 - He raises the dead at will (1 Kgs 17:17-24; 2 Kgs 4:18-37), and miraculously heals, conquers & provides
 - Most importantly, he holds off judging his people for (literally) centuries
 - Idolatry will lead to temple's destruction (1 Kgs 9:6-7) → Solomon, Shishak, Asa, Azariah, Ahaz?
 - A king named Josiah will destroy Jeroboam's altar at Bethel (1 Kgs 13) → when? (60+ references!)
 - Elijah anoints Hazael of Aram, Jehu and Elisha (1 Kgs 19) to destroy Omrides → where are they?
- And, of course: as the king goes, so goes the nation. The nation's righteousness is that of its ruler (or not)

GROUP MEETING:

Discussion Questions

Before getting into these specific questions, spend a few minutes discussing what struck you or stuck with you from the video. What were some of the main points? Did any of Andrew's comments or questions open up the Bible in a profound way to you? Also, ask if anything was confusing or needs clarification.

1. Andrew Wilson gives a couple of different overviews of the story. Briefly look at his overview and then let's take his challenge and attempt to summarize the story of the Old Testament in 60 seconds.

2. We often expect people or human institutions (government, schools, popularity, celebrity, strength, finance, tech, wisdom, law, prophets, pastors, buildings, organizations, etc.) to save us. In what ways have you trusted people or human institutions to save people in your city?

3. In this section of Scripture, in what ways does God show grace, patience, mercy, and kindness beyond what Israel deserved? (Read verses if you know them.)

4. How does the ongoing failure of God's people in 1-2 Kings help us think through the current state of the church? How can we use what we learn about God in 1-2 Kings to share the Gospel with skeptical friends who have been turned off by church failings?

5. Discuss the idea that "as the king goes, so goes the nation" in light of Christ. How does this insight help you in your current church situation.

6. Reading about the kings can feel draining because of their failure. But Andrew Wilson draws out much about the Gospel. What have you gleaned about Christ and his salvation from this session?

Meditation on Scripture

1 Kings 18:36-39

2 Kings 8:18-19

2 Kings 13:1-3, 22-24

Putting This Session into Practice

One theme that emerges from this reading is that people both powerful and powerless, “in” and “out” of the church, of our culture and not of our culture, will fail us. And yet, it’s human nature to continue entrusting our hopes and dreams in other people. This week, ask the Lord to show you your tendency to trust humans for salvation. Repent of this misplaced trust and thank God that despite our tendencies, he is faithful and full of grace.