

REVIEW MATERIAL

After the Hebrews [for various reasons the people we know today as Jews have been called Hebrews, Israelites and Jews at different times in history] left slavery in Egypt and arrived back in Canaan (roughly today's Israel), the land was divided into 12 areas, each inhabited by one of the 12 tribes of Israel. These tribes functioned separately for the most part, coming together only when there was some common problem – often a threat of invasion by some foreign enemy.

But whether the problem was connected to only one tribe or several, the custom was to choose a “judge” to be a leader. Such a judge usually served for a limited time, perhaps months or even a few years.

At the request of the people and the permission of God, Samuel (the last judge) anointed Saul as the first king of Israel. Saul started well, but fell into idolatry. God told Samuel to anoint David as the second king – even while Saul still ruled.

We learned the story of David and Goliath and of the death of Saul, which meant David became the true king. David started well and finally united all the tribes of Israel under his rule. But David also made a serious mistake when he arranged for the death of the husband of Bathsheba so that David could marry her. David was repentant and forgiven by God, but he still suffered punishment – including, among other things, armed rebellion by one of his sons. David also wrote many of the psalms – some of which we still use in church songs today. We also learned that David was assured by God that someone from his family line would be on the throne forever. And we learned that this promise was misused much later by some of the Jewish leaders when they accused Christ of attempting to become a worldly king.

After the death of David his son with Bathsheba became king. We found out that Solomon became famous for both wealth and wisdom. But he fell into a kind of idolatry by constructing altars to the false gods of his many wives. On the plus side, Solomon is credited with building the Temple in Jerusalem and with writing many of the proverbs.

Upon the death of Solomon (in approximately 922 B.C.) the kingdom of Israel was divided into two parts. The southern part used the name of the tribe of Judah; Jerusalem was in this part. The northern part kept the name of Israel and made Samaria its capital. The northern part drifted into idolatry.

So God sent a prophet called Elijah to confront King Ahab and his wife, Queen Jezebel. Elijah delivered God's message that Israel would have a drought until Israel gave up idolatry. Jezebel especially did not like to hear this, so Elijah had to flee to another country, where he worked a miracle, proving that he truly was a man of God. This is where our last class ended and where we will begin in the next attachment.