**The Story of the Old Testament**

**Lecture #5 – 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles**

**The Continued Progression of Fulfillment: Kingdom & Exile**

1. **Worship**

*Creed* by Rich Mullins.

1. **Quick Review of the Covenants**

Does anyone remember the **6 covenants**? Let’s review them. You will find me repeating myself over and over again on the main parts of the story because that is the only way that I can learn and, I believe, that anyone can learn (unless you have a photographic memory, and, in that case, I don’t like you very much!). So, here they are:

* **The Adamic Covenant (#1) – Genesis 2**
* **The Noahic Covenant (#2) – Genesis 9**
* **The Abrahamic Covenant (#3) – Genesis 12, 15, 17**
* **The Mosaic Covenant (#4) – Exodus 19-24**
* **The Davidic Covenant (#5) – 2 Samuel 7**
* **The New Covenant (#6) – Hint in Deuteronomy 30:6, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:22-32, Deut. 30:6**
1. **1-2 Samuel** (takes about *4 hours* to read for the average person)
	1. *Placement on the Storyline*

The book of 1-2 Samuel (one book in the Hebrew bible), picks the narrative up where we left off in Judges, as tempered by the book of Ruth. As to the Lord’s promises to Abraham regarding land, numerous offspring, and worldwide blessing, we are at the following stages of fulfillment:

* *Land* – the people of Israel are still in the Promised Land, so this promise is still in a state of fulfillment.
* *Numerous offspring* – the people of Israel are still exceedingly numerous, and a ray of hope has been given through the book of Ruth to the dark description of the people and times in the book of Judges.
* *Worldwide blessing* – the partial fulfillment of the promise of worldwide blessing through the mediation of the Lord’s presence by Israel being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation that was seemingly completely evaporated in the book of Judges has been somewhat revived through the ray of light and hope provided by the book of Ruth. The fact that the promised worldwide blessing would come through a king is coming into focus, and the book of Ruth ends with the name of Israel’s famous king, David. While all is not well, the Lord is still working to fulfill his covenant promises!
	1. *The Period of the Judges Comes to An End (1 Samuel 1:1-7:17)*

The last verse of Judges summarized well the root of the darkness that we saw there: “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 21:25) The book of Ruth then qualified that darkness by shining a ray of hope in the fact that there were still some in Israel who lived under the Lord’s kingship and sought to do what was right in his eyes. This remnant of the line of restoration within the nation of Israel was symbolized through Boaz and Ruth and the genealogy at the end of the book of Ruth points us to the one who would be the one through whom the promised restoration and fulfillment would ultimately come – David!

 The story of 1-2 Samuel is ultimately about the transition from the period of the judges to the period of the monarchy and the rise of David as the king with whom the Lord makes a covenant to establish an eternal kingdom which shall be ruled by an eternal king from the line of David – the Davidic Covenant (#5)!

 The story begins with a barren woman named Hannah. We have seen the Lord overcome barrenness several times in the story to this point and we see it here once again. Hannah cries out to the Lord in her distress and the Lord hears her and gives her a son – Samuel. (1 Samuel 1:1-20) When Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought him to the house of the Lord and “lent him to the Lord” for the duration of his life. (1 Samuel 1:21-28)

 After Hannah gave Samuel to the Lord, she sang a hymn to the Lord in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, which serves as one of the interpretive keys to the book.[[1]](#footnote-1) Hannah’s hymn recounts the unique goodness and sovereignty of the Lord and how he will bring down the proud, arrogant, mighty, wicked, rich, and exalted and raise up the feeble, hungry, poor, and lowly. He alone is able to order the events of human history and right the wrongs committed by humanity because is over all: “The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and on them he has set the world.” (1 Samuel 2:6-8)

 Schreiner rightly notes: “The seemingly small events in history must be read against the canvas of the Lord’s rule and reign over all of history. And how should history be interpreted? It must be read upside down (1 Sam. 2:1-10). Those who are strong and rich and wicked will not finally triumph. It is the poor who trust in Yahweh who will finally be vindicated. The humble who trust in the Lord will be fed, while the arrogant, who trust in themselves, will go hungry.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

 We see Hannah’s hymn in action as we compare the lives of Samuel and the sons of Eli (Hophni and Phinehas). 1 Samuel 2:12 makes it clear that “the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord.” Their sins are explicitly set forth in 1 Samuel 2: (1) they “treated the offering of the Lord with contempt” (1 Sam. 2:13-17) and (2) they had sexual relations with the women who were serving at the entrance of the tent of meeting (1 Sam. 2:22). In contrast, Samuel is presented as righteous: “Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.” (1 Sam. 2:26)

 As Hannah’s hymn pronounced, the sons of Eli, and Eli himself, are brought low because of their pride and the boy Samuel is raised because of his humility. The house of Eli is rejected from serving before the Lord (1 Samuel 2:27-3:18). Samuel, on the other hand, enjoyed the presence of the Lord and the recognition of the people of Israel that he was a prophet of the Lord (1 Samuel 3:19-21).

 The people of Israel, like the house of Eli, presumed upon the presence and blessing of the Lord and were brought low because of it. They were defeated by the Philistines with 30,000 Israelite soldiers falling in the battle, the ark of the Lord was captured, and the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were killed. (1 Sam. 4:1-11) The defeat of Israel and the death of his sons was the end of Eli. When he heard the devastating news he fell, broke his neck, and died. (1 Sam. 4:12-18)

 Hannah’s hymn is also proved true through what happens to the Philistines after taking possession of the ark. First, the ark is brought into the temple of Dagon, the god of the Philistines. For two consecutive mornings, the statue of Dagon was found face down before the ark of the Lord. The second morning Dagon was face down and cut to pieces. The proud will be brought low before the Lord! A lifeless statue is seen as nothing compared to the presence of the only uncreated one! (1 Samuel 5:1-5) Second, the Lord afflicted the Philistines with tumors. (1 Samuel 5:6) Those who raise their hands in rebellion against the Lord will feel the full force of his hand stretched out against them.

 The Philistines, to their credit, get the picture and send the ark on its way and back to the people of Israel. (1 Samuel 5:7-6:16). But, just as the Lord inflicted the Philistines for their improper possession of the ark, the Lord inflicted the people of Israel who improperly handled the ark: “And he struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the Lord.” (1 Samuel 6:19) The holiness and supremacy of the Lord was a tangible reality for both the Lord’s people and his enemies.

The Lord’s elevation of the humble and righteous Samuel is seen more directly in 1 Samuel 7:3-4 where Samuel calls the nation of Israel to repentance and Israel’s positive response to his call: “‘If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.’ So the people of Israel put away the Baals and Ashtaroth, and they served the Lord only.” This is quite a remarkable and swift response to the call of repentance. One that is not enjoyed by many who make a similar call later in the story of the Old Testament!

 As the people are gathered to draw near to the Lord, the Philistines attack them. Here, we see Hannah’s hymn ring true once more. The proud Philistines are brought low and the repentant Israel is given victory. (1 Samuel 7:5-14) This victory extends for “all the days of Samuel.” (1 Samuel 7:13) As the people of Israel did under the leadership of Joshua, the people of Israel responded to the Lord with grateful obedience under the leadership of Samuel. Samuel served as the last judge of Israel and he did so “all the days of his life.” (1 Samuel 7:15)

* 1. *The Period of the Monarchy Begins (1 Samuel 8:1-14:52)*

Samuel’s sons did not follow the path of righteousness and humility that was pioneered by the father. They “did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice.” (1 Samuel 8:3) Samuel’s sons are reminiscent of Eli’s sons and so the reader is naturally worried about the future of Israel if left in their hands.

But, the people recognize the problem and reject the leadership of Samuel’s sons and ask for a king. (1 Samuel 8:4-5) As we noted in our discussion of Judges, Genesis 49:8-12, Numbers 24:17, and Deuteronomy 17:14-20, among other texts to this point in the story have made it increasingly clear that the Lord will ultimately bring out the promised restoration and fulfillment through a king. So, the people’s request for a king appears to be in line with the Lord’s will and design. However, Samuel is displeased by the request and, even more significantly, the Lord himself is displeased with the request: “And the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.” (1 Samuel 8:7)

How could the people be rejecting the Lord by seemingly requesting the very thing that he had planned? Again, Goldsworthy insight is helpful here: “Israel’s kings must fear the Lord, keep his law and not lift up their heart above their brethren. In other words, kingship for Israel is defined by the covenant. Unfortunately the people don’t always see it that way. Rather than taking the covenant as the model of kingship, they undoubtedly desire the benefits that appear to come from the autocratic rule of the Canaanite and Philistine kings. Thus, the request for a king . . . is born of the desire to imitate the pagan nations. This was indeed a rejection of the covenant model and, therefore, a rejection of God’s rule.”[[3]](#footnote-3) The request for a king was not in error, but the type of king that was being requested was. In other words, the people were placing their trust in the protection of a created human king rather than the only uncreated one who is the king of kings.

The people’s request for a king was granted, but Samuel makes it clear that the reality of what they are asking for is far different than the ideal they have in mind. If they want a Canaanite king rather than a Covenant king, they will have to put up with the baggage that comes with such a king. Samuel sets forth that baggage before the people in 1 Samuel 8: 11-17. In these verses, Samuel tells that people that their king will:

* *take* their sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots;
* *appoint* for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots;
* *take* their daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers;
* *take* the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants;
* *take* the tenth of their grain and vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants;
* *take* their male servants and female servants and the best of their young men and their donkeys, and put them to his work;
* *take* the tenth of your flocks, and they shall be his salves.

Like everything that we look to outside of the Lord to meet a real or perceived need, the king desired by Israel will take from Israel rather than give them what they seek. And, when Israel realizes that they have experienced loss rather than gain, they “will cry out because of your king, whom who have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.” (1 Samuel 8:18)

Saul was chosen to be the first king of Israel. It is remarkable that he was from the tribe of Benjamin. Recall that it was the tribe of Benjamin that was credited with the evil that was inflicted upon the Levite’s concubine in Judges 19-21 and was almost wiped out as a result. Not only that, but Saul’s home was in Gibeah, the very city in which the Levite’s concubine was brutally raped and murdered! (1 Samuel 10:26) Saul acknowledges the irony of the Lord’s gracious treatment of him in his response to Samuel’s blessing of him: “Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?” (1 Samuel 9:21) As we have seen in the story to this point, the Lord often choses those that defy human expectation. Saul is no exception. As Schreiner puts so well, “God’s grace . . . is free and unpredictable.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

 After Saul is anointed by Samuel as king (1 Samuel 10:1), we learn that “God gave him another heart” (1 Samuel 10:9) and that the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him and he was “turned into another man.” (1 Samuel 10:6, 10) But, Saul the new man was not a man of perfect courage for when Samuel was to present himself before the people as their king, he was found hiding among the baggage. (1 Samuel 10:22) But, he was found and presented to the people as their king and was received as such with the universal shout of “Long live the king!” (1 Samuel 10:24)

 The beginning of Saul’s rule was marked with victory. The Ammonites threaten to disgrace Israel and when the news reached Saul, “the Spirit of God rushed upon” him and “his anger was greatly kindled.” (1 Samuel 11:6) Saul summoned the people to gather against the Ammonites and the Lord gave Israel victory. (1 Samuel 11:7-11)

 But, not all was well. Israel’s request for a king represented their rejection of the Lord’s kingship and is described by Samuel as an act of great wickedness. (1 Samuel 12:17) And, Israel is judged for this wicked request through a great storm. (1 Samuel 12:18) But, the Lord’s temporary judgment upon his people does not mean that he has abandoned them. Samuel makes this plain in his words to Israel in the wake of the storm: “Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty. For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name’s sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself. . . . Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider the great things he has done for you. But if you do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.” (1 Samuel 12:20-22, 24)

 Schreiner rightly notes: “Samuel says that Israel’s future is secure because their destiny is tied to Yahweh’s name and will. Despite their sin, Yahweh has chosen Israel to be his people and will not finally forsake them, for to do so would be to blemish is own name. Since Israel’s destiny is tied to Yahweh’s name, he will never abandon them. But this ultimate promise for Israel can never become a pretext for disobedience. Israel must ‘fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart (12:24). If they turn against Yahweh and practice wickedness, both the nation and the king ‘shall be swept away’ (12:25). At the end of the day, the Lord will not forsake Israel and will fulfill his saving promises to his people. Nevertheless, no generation of Israel can presume upon that promise. Finally there will be an obedient king, but a disobedient king and a rebellious generation of Israelites will experience judgment, not salvation.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Again and again this theme surfaces – only an obedient people will experience the fulfillment of God’s redemptive promises. A disobedient people will experience will be aligned with the line of rebellion and experience the curses that flow from such an alignment.

 The shift in the mood of the narrative from bright to gloomy in 1 Samuel 12 is continued and furthered in 1 Samuel 13. Rather than waiting for Samuel to perform the sacrifice, Saul performed it himself. (1 Samuel 13:8-9) When Samuel confronts him for his disobedience, Saul “clothed his actions in religious fervor . . . . Instead of admitting that he was motivated by fear and disobeyed, Saul acted as if what he did was actually holy.”[[6]](#footnote-6) That is all to common within the Church today, as well.

But, Samuel sees through Saul’s religious smokescreen, calls sin for what it is, and pronounces a stunning and devastating judgment: “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom will not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.” (1 Samuel 13:13-14) As we have seen in the story to this point, curses flow from disobedience. And, this curse was severe in the extreme. Saul’s dynasty would not continue because he was not a man after the Lord’s heart. Only the obedient king would enjoy a lasting dynasty and Saul was evidently not that king.

But, despite the pronouncement of the removal of the kingdom from Saul, not all was lost, for in 1 Samuel 14:47-48 we read that: “When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned he routed them. And he did valiantly and struck the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.”

But the final blow to Saul’s reign is delivered in 1 Samuel 15. The Lord commanded Saul to totally destroy the Amalekites. (1 Samuel 15:2-3) But, Saul disobeyed the Lord and repeated the sin of Achan in Joshua 7 and kept some of the plunder for himself and spared the life of Agag, king of the Amalekites. (1 Samuel 15:9) As we saw with Achan’s rebellion, Saul’s rebellion here was no small thing. For, the Lord declared: “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.” (1 Samuel 15:11)

Rather that admitting his wrongdoing, Saul, once again, tried to put a positive spin on his rebellion when confronted by Samuel. Saul claims that they spared the best of the sheep and oxen so that they could be sacrificed to the Lord. (1 Samuel 15:15) But, once again, Samuel sees through Saul’s smokescreen and says: “Stop! I will tell you what the Lord said to me this night.” (1 Samuel 15:16) Samuel goes on to tell Saul that the Lord has rejected him as he has rejected the word of the Lord: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king.” (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

Saul finally admits that his rebellion was based not upon religious motives but out of fear of the people. (1 Samuel 15:24) But, the ship has sailed at this point and Saul has reached the point of no return for the Lord will not turn back his rejection of his line. (1 Samuel 15:26) And the Lord’s rejection of Saul’s line was practically reflected by the fact that Samuel did not see Saul for the rest of his life. (1 Samuel 15:35) This was, no doubt, very significant because Samuel was recognized by all of Israel as the Lord’s prophet.

* 1. *The Conflict Between Saul and David Pictures the Conflict Between the Two Lines (1 Samuel 16:1-31:13)*

In 1 Samuel 16, the narrative shifts abruptly from the Lord’s rejection of Saul to the Lord’s selection of David as king over Israel. We will see the theme of Hannah’s hymn once again rise to the surface as we trace the enmity between Saul and David. The Lord will humble the proud and raise up the humble. Saul, who had turned into the proud, arrogant, mighty, wicked, rich, and exalted one in Hannah’s hymn would ultimately lose the coming struggle and be humbled in defeat. While, David, the feeble, hungry, poor, and lowly one would be raised up by the Lord through triumphing over Saul and becoming king of Israel and the one through whom an eternal king would come and rule over an eternal kingdom wherein the ultimate fulfillment of the promised restoration would come.

Samuel is sent to *Jesse* for the Lord has chosen one of his sons to be king. (1 Samuel 16:1) As readers, we know which of his sons is going to be chosen because we have already seen the genealogy of the coming king at the end of Ruth. Jesse, we learn in Ruth 4:18-22, is the father of David.

Armed with the knowledge that David is the one that the Lord has already appointed, it is easy to criticize Samuel for his error in thinking the Lord had chosen the other sons. But, remember, the Lord’s selection is done on the basis of a criterion that is beyond mere human logic. For, the Lord does not look on the outward appearance but, rather, “on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7) Humanity does not have to ability to look into another person’s heart, that is the unique purview of the only uncreated one. And, ultimately, his grace as we have seen, is “free and unpredictable.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

As the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon Saul after he was anointed king, so “the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.” (1 Samuel 16:13) The anointing of David as king meant that the Lord was no longer with Saul. In 1 Samuel 16:14 we learn that “the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him.” (1 Samuel 16:14) David still viewed Saul as the Lord’s anointed because he still formally held the office of the king of Israel. However, as we will see, though Saul was still formally the king of Israel, he had aligned himself with the line of rebellion through his own rebellion. Just as Israel was in the land but not in the Lord in the book of Judges, so Saul was the king of Israel but not aligned with the king of Israel.

Ironically, David the newly anointed king of Israel, is sent to serve the formal king of Israel who had been rejected by Israel’s king. (1 Samuel 16:14-23) Among David’s many skills, he was skilled at playing the lyre. When the harmful spirit from the Lord came upon Saul, David was summoned to play and minister to Saul in his suffering.

1 Samuel 17 shifts from Saul’s chamber to the battlefield and the famous battle between David and Goliath. This story has often been ripped out of its context and preached to the end that we can all overcome our giants with the Lord’s help. While there is no doubt that our God is greater than all of our adversaries and that if God is for us, none can stand against us, that is simply not the point of the story of David and Goliath as it finds its place in the narrative of 1 Samuel and the Old Testament in general. For starters, we are not David in this story. We are members of the army of Israel cowering in the shadows and waiting for someone to save us while the Lord’s enemy taunts us in our shame!

Understood in the context of the narrative, David’s victory of Goliath serves at least three main purposes:

* David’s victory points us back to Hannah’s hymn that the Lord will bring down the proud and raise up the humble. The proud Goliath in all of his glory (9 feet tall, bronze helmet, 125 pounds of armor, javelin of bronze, etc.) was brought down by a humble boy without armor and armed only with five smooth stones and a sling.
* David’s victory makes it clear that he is the anointed and true leader of Israel who the Lord will use to defeat Israel’s enemies while Saul, while he is the formal leader of Israel, has been rejected by the Lord and who cowers in the shadows with the rest of Israel in the wake of adversity. Again, we see Hannah’s hymn come to life as the proud Saul is proud low and a humble David is raised up by the Lord.
* David’s victory points to the ultimate reality that the Lord will one day completely defeat his great enemy, the serpent, through the return of his anointed one Jesus Christ!

David’s victory over Goliath is a turning point in Israel’s struggle with the Philistines. When they saw Goliath dead on the ground, they fled. (1 Sam. 17:51) Israel pursued the Philistines and experienced great victory. (1 Sam. 17:52-53)

Because of David’s victory over Goliath, Saul sent him on several military missions and David “was successful wherever Saul sent him.” (1 Sam. 18:5) David’s military victory won him great popularity with the people of Israel such that the people sang a song of victory elevating David over Saul: “Saul has struck down his thousands and David his ten thousands.” (1 Sam. 18:7)

The elevation of David above Saul in the people’s praise did not go unnoticed by Saul and bitterness crept into Saul’s already hardened heart. The narrative presents Saul as being very angry with David, having his eye on David, trying to pin David to the wall with his spear, being afraid of David because the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul, trying to kill David by giving him the bride’s price as a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. (1 Sam. 18:8-29) The progressive deterioration of Saul’s relationship with David is captured well by 1 Samuel 18:28-29: “But when Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul’s daughter, loved him, Saul was even more afraid of David. So Saul was David’s enemy continually.”

Again, we can safely say at this point of the narrative that Saul represents the line of rebellion and David represents the line of restoration. The battle between Saul and David, therefore, represents the promised battle between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman back in Genesis 3:15. We know that the seed of the woman, the line of restoration, will ultimately be victorious, but as the story of Saul and David shows, this victory will be long and painful in coming about.[[8]](#footnote-8) 1 Samuel 18-31 contains the disturbing narrative of Saul’s relentless pursuit of David and attempts on his life and the Lord’s protection of David through it all. Schreiner rightly notes: “The remainder of the narrative in 1 Samuel (chaps. 18-31) reflects the conflict between the offspring of the serpent (Saul) and the offspring of woman (David), showing the triumph of the latter even through persecution.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

Throughout these conflict-ridden chapters, there are several significant proclamations of David’s (the line of restoration’s) ultimate victory:

* *Jonathan* encouraged David in the midst of the battle by saying: “Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this.” (1 Samuel 23:17)
* *Saul* himself acknowledges David’s coming triumph after his life is spared the first time by David: “[M]ay the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.” (1 Samuel 24:19-20)
* *Abigail* acknowledged David’s victory as she encouraged him not to respond in sin to her husband Naban’s folly in refusing to pay David and his men for their service of protecting his shepherds: “Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. If men rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the Lord your God. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling. And when the Lord has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, my lord shall have no cause of grief or pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause or for my lord working salvation himself.” (1 Samuel 25:28-31)
* *Saul* again acknowledges David’s coming triumph after his life is spared the second time by David: “Blessed be you, my son David! You will do many things and will succeed in them.” (1 Sam. 26:25)
* *Samuel*, when he was summoned for counsel by a medium called upon by Saul because the Lord turned away from Saul and answered him no more: “The Lord has done to you as he spoke by me, for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David.” (1 Samuel 28:17)

The ultimate downfall of Saul comes in 1 Samuel 31. The Philistines overtook Saul and his sons. They killed his sons, was wounded by archers, and then took his own life by falling upon his sword. (1 Samuel 31:1-6) The death of Saul and his sons caused the people of Israel to flee and temporarily lose possession of portions of the Promised Land. The disgrace of Saul’s defeat is graphically captured in 1 Samuel 31:8-10: “The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. So they cut off his head and stripped off his armor and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to the people. They put his armor in the temple of Ashtaroth, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.”

The proud Saul had been brought low. Now, we are expecting for the humble David to be raised up by the Lord.

* 1. *David Becomes King in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 1:1-6:23)*

David’s rise to power in the wake of Saul’s demise begins to gain momentum as we begin 2 Samuel.[[10]](#footnote-10) David’s humility is clearly seen in his response to the news of Saul’s demise. Rather than celebrating the death of the one who persecuted him and sought his life relentlessly for many years, he mourned. (2 Samuel 1:11-27) David then is anointed king of the house of Judah. (2 Samuel 2:7)

However, David’s rise to the kingship over all of Israel would continue to come through struggle. For “Abner, Saul’s uncle, put forward Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son, as king (chap. 2). A struggle ensued for a number of years between Israel and Judah (chaps. 2-4), with David gradually growing stronger (3:1).”[[11]](#footnote-11) The battle between the line of rebellion and the line of restoration promised in Genesis 3:15 continued. But, as Hannah’s hymn made clear, the proud would be brought low and the Lord would raise the humble.

2 Samuel 3:1 summarizes these years of struggle as follows: “There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David grew stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker.” David, throughout these years of struggle is shown, again and again, as the humble one who is to be raised up by the Lord.

Rather than celebrating the death of Abner, the general of Ish-bosheth’s army, he mourned. (2 Samuel 3:31-39) Rather than celebrating the death of Ish-bosheth, Saul’s descendant and rival king in Israel, he condemned those who brought about the downfall of his enemy. (2 Samuel 4:9-12) Schreiner rightly notes: “He was, in accord with Hannah’s song (1 Sam. 2:1-10) and his own song (2 Sam. 22), looking to the Lord to exalt him. He was a righteous king, and the Lord was his rock and fortress who would bring him victory and the kingdom. He had no need to turn evil to advance himself.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

The Lord did finally raise David up as king over all of Israel in 2 Samuel 5. We read in 2 Samuel 5:3-5 that: “[A]ll the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.” The establishment of Jerusalem as David’s capital “was significant because of its central location between the north and the south, and it was ‘independent of the tribes of Judah and Israel.’”[[13]](#footnote-13)

The elevation of David, and the increase of his renown, was based upon the Lord’s doing and not his own might. This reality is clearly set forth in 2 Samuel 5:10 and 12: “And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him. . . . And David knew that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.”

The Lord’s elevation of David included military victory over the Philistines. (2 Samuel 5:17-25) and the return of the ark to Jerusalem with great rejoicing (2 Samuel 6:1-19). The victory enjoyed by the line of restoration brought about healing and restoration within the nation of Israel that had been torn apart by war for a long period of time and the defeat of Israel’s enemies that had inflicted great harm upon the people of Israel. The promise of restoration in Genesis 3:15 seems to be coming to pass in the life of the nation of Israel.

* 1. *The Lord Enters Into Covenant With David (2 Samuel 7:1-29)*

Like Genesis 3:15 (the promise of restoration) and Genesis 12:1-3 (the promises to Abraham), 2 Samuel 7 plays a key role in the progressive fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises. The chapter begins with David’s desire to built a house for the Lord. (1 Samuel 7:1-3) But, as the chapter continues the Lord makes it clear that David will not built a house for the Lord but, rather, that the Lord will make a house for David: “[T]he Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” (2 Samuel 7:11-17)

As Schreiner notes: “The chapter began with David wanting to build the Lord a house, but the story dramatically changes. Instead of David erecting a home for the Lord, the Lord says that he will make a secure place for Israel so that ‘they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more’ (7:10). A new day is coming when Israel will not be troubled (7:10-11). In fact, David will not build Yahweh a house, but the Lord ‘will make you a house’ (7:11). In other words, a dynasty will be established so that David’s son will succeed him as king (7:12). And this son (Solomon) will build the temple, and his kingdom will never end (7:13). If Solomon or his descendants sin, the Lord will discipline them, but he will never withdraw his ‘steadfast love’ (7:14-15). In other words, his covenant with David and his sons will endure perpetually. Individual kings will be disciplined, but he covenant will never be withdrawn. Ultimately a Davidic king will rule over Israel. ‘Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’ (7:16).”[[14]](#footnote-14)

The covenant between the Lord and David in 2 Samuel 7 is known appropriately as the Davidic Covenant. It is the fifth (5th) covenant that we have encountered in the story of the Old Testament. But, how does this covenant relate to the others that have come before it? It is worth pausing here and engaging in a review of what has come before so that we can properly understand the important role that the Davidic Covenant plays in the story of the Old Testament.

Recall that Adam was created in covenant relationship with God. If he responded to the Lord’s command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil with grateful obedience, he got to enjoy the continued intimacy of that covenant relationship. But, he disobeyed and broke the one requirement of the covenant. He ate of the forbidden fruit. Thus, he experienced the curses that flowed from his disobedience which are outlined in Genesis 3.

But, in the midst of Genesis 3, a promise is made. We learn in Genesis 3:15 that the offspring of the woman would one day crush the head of the serpent and restore all that was lost in the fall. The rest of the bible records the progressive fulfillment of this great promise of restoration. The Lord’s covenant with Noah made clear that he meant to restore all of creation, not just his relationship with the chief of creation, man and woman. He also made clear that he would not destroy his creation before the promised restoration was brought to fulfillment.

The Lord then entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham and made three promises through which the restoration promised in Genesis 3:15 would ultimately come about. (See Genesis 12:1-3) The Lord promised Abraham land, numerous offspring, and worldwide blessing. The promises were handed down from Abraham to Isaac, and from Isaac to Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel. Of those twelve tribes, there was something unique about the tribe of Judah. In Genesis 49:10, we learn that “a scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.” In other words, a king would come from the tribe of Judah through whom the restoration promised in Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 12:1-3 would come about.

Abraham’s descendants, the nation of Israel, found themselves in captivity in Egypt. They cried out to the Lord and he delivered them through the sending of plagues and the leadership of Moses. He parted the Red Sea, brought them to the foot of Mt. Sinai and entered into a covenant relationship with them. Through this covenant the Lord told Israel that they would be his treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation if they would respond to his revealed will with grateful obedience. That is, the promise of restoration in Genesis 3:15 as expressed through the Lord’s promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 (land, numerous offspring, and worldwide blessing) would be experienced through the nation of Israel if they lived lives of grateful obedience. They would be in the Promised Land, as a numerous people, and mediate the presence (blessing) of the Lord by being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. All three promises fulfilled!

However, Israel was not able to live lives of grateful obedience because their hearts were not circumcised, meaning that their was an internal problem that caused them to rebel against the Lord and forfeit their enjoyment of the fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises through their life as a nation. Even as early as Deuteronomy, we learn of a future day when the Lord would circumcise the hearts of his people (fix the internal problem) so that they could live lives of grateful obedience and experience the fulfillment of the Lord’s restorative promises.

The failure of Israel under the Mosaic Covenant and through their history as a nation to this point in the story pointed to the need of a king who could rule over them and mediate the Lord’s kingship over them so that they would respond to the Lord in grateful obedience. It is to this end that the Lord enters into a covenant with David and promises to raise up from his line an eternal ruler who would rule over an eternal kingdom through which the promise of Genesis 3:15 as expressed to the covenant promises made to Abraham of land, numerous offspring, and worldwide blessing would be ultimately brought about and experienced.

The Davidic Covenant changes the way we read the story of the Old Testament going forward. We are now looking for the son of David who will be the eternal ruler over the eternal kingdom through which the restoration promised in Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 12:1-3 will find their ultimate fulfillment!

* 1. *The Height of David’s Victorious Reign (2 Samuel 8:1-10:22)*

The tone of 2 Samuel 8:1-10:22 is reminiscent of Joshua. David experiences victory over the Philistines, Moab, Zobah, the Syrians, Edom, the Ammonites, and Amalek for the “Lord gave victory to David wherever he went.” (2 Samuel 8:6, 14) The victorious nature of this period of David’s rule is captured well by 2 Samuel 8:15: “So David reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people.”

But, as soon as the reign of David hits its stride, disaster strikes. One can only think back to the transition between the books of Joshua and Judges. The triumphant tone of the book of Joshua is turned on its head in the first chapter of the book of Judges. The long and hard-fought battle for the land yielded only a thankless people who rebelled against the Lord as soon as the first opportunity arose. So, David, after the long and hard-fought battle for the throne rebelled against the Lord at the seemingly first real opportunity.

* 1. *David’s Rebellion and Its Aftermath: Grace & Consequence (2 Samuel 11:1-24:25)*

The turn in the narrative found in 2 Samuel 11 is unexpected and comes as quite a shock. To this point in the narrative David has been presented as the humble one in Hannah’s hymn whom the Lord has raised up and who has lived a life of grateful obedience to the Lord. However, David limitations and faults come to the forefront as we come to this portion of the story.

David remained in Jerusalem while his men went out to battle. One afternoon he got up from his nap and saw Bathsheba bathing. Despite knowing that Bathsheba was married to Uriah, David slept with her and she became pregnant. David then tried to cover up his sin by calling Uriah home from the battlefield and giving him the opportunity to sleep with Bathsheba. But, Uriah was more honorable than David expected and, so, David had him put to death by handing him over to the enemy in battle. David then took Bathsheba as is wife and all seemed to be covered up and taken care of. But, we learn in 2 Samuel 11:27 that “the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.”

We have seen from the beginning of the story that blessings flow from obedience and curses from disobedience. David’s disobedience and the Lord’s displeasure announced in 2 Samuel 11:27 casts trouble and curses upon the horizon.[[15]](#footnote-15)

The Lord’s displeasure of David’s blatant disobedience was clearly articulated by his prophet, Nathan. Nathan told David a story about a rich man who had many flocks and herds and a poor man who just had one lamb that was very dear to him. The rich man stole the poor man’s only lamb to feed a guest rather than taking one from his large flock. This story greatly angered David until Nathan made it clear that the story was merely a retelling of what David had done to Uriah. David’s anger turned to shame. But Schreiner rightly notes, “David’s greatness surfaces even in this hour. Unlike Saul, he did not introduce a parade of excuses to justify his wickedness. He simply and humbly acknowledged, ‘I have sinned against the Lord’ (12:13).”[[16]](#footnote-16)

The Lord responds to David’s repentance by extending is grace and forgiveness to him: “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.” (2 Samuel 12:13) However, David’s son would not be spared: “Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child who is born to you shall die.” (2 Samuel 12:14) The Lord’s response to David’s rebellion illustrates the truth that forgiveness does not always remove the practical consequences that flow from sin and rebellion. The Lord has forgiven David’s sin but he still must live with the practical consequences that flow from that sin.

The death of David’s son was not the only practical consequence that flowed from his sin against the Lord. 2 Samuel 13-20 recount in great detail the consequences that flowed from David’s actions. David’s son Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar which led Absalom, her brother, to had Amnon killed. Absalom’s actions caused him to flee into exile for a period of three years. (2 Samuel 13:1-39) Even after Absalom’s return from exile, he was not allowed to enter into David’s presence for two additional years. (2 Samuel 14:1-33)

However, the Absalom’s separation from the king for a period of 5 years had done irreparable harm. As Schreiner notes: “Absalom had come to resent David, plotting to overthrow his father.”[[17]](#footnote-17) Absalom “stole the hearts of the men of Israel” by persuading them that if he was in charge they would have his attention and that he would act on their behalf. (2 Samuel 15:1-6)

With the hearts of many swayed in his favor, Absalom went to Hebron mounted his charge against David from there. (2 Samuel 15:7-12) The news of Absalom’s rebellion reached David in Jerusalem and he fled Jerusalem. (2 Samuel 15:13-17) David’s trust in the faithfulness and justice of the Lord is seen clearly in several places throughout the narrative. First, his trust in the Lord is seen through his instructions for the ark to be taken back to Jerusalem despite his exile from Jerusalem: “Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back and let me see both it and his dwelling place. But if he says, ‘I have no pleasure in you,’ behold, here I am, let him do to me what seems good to him.” (2 Samuel 15:25-26)

Second, his trust in the faithfulness and justice in the Lord is seen in his response to Shimei’s cursing of him during his time of exile. Those with David encouraged David to kill Shimei in response to his cursing. But, David rebuked those with him saying: “If he is cursing because the Lord has said to him, ‘Curse David,’ who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’ . . . . Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. It may be that the Lord will look on the wrong done to me, and that the Lord will repay me with good for this cursing today.’” (2 Samuel 16:10-12) These words of David express a deep sense of the Lord’s sovereignty and a trust in the goodness of the Lord.

As he trusted the Lord to raise him to power, he is now trusting in the Lord to restore him to power. But David’s trust in the Lord did not remove the pain that accompanied the Lord’s judgment upon him. For, “David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered.” (2 Samuel 15:30)

 Absalom’s greatest act of treachery was sleeping with his father’s concubines. This tragic scene is graphically set forth in text: “So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went in to his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel.” (2 Samuel 16:22) This act of treachery fulfilled the judgment pronounced upon David for his sins related to Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 12:11-12: “Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.” Schreiner rightly notes that Absalom’s treachery here “demonstrated that there was no turning back, that there would be no reconciliation between David and Absalom.”[[18]](#footnote-18)

Absalom’s treachery would not go without punishment. Hannah’s hymn comes to the surface once again. The Lord will bring down the proud and raise up the humble. Absalom has chosen the proud path of Saul and Goliath. David has chosen the humble path of casting his hopes upon the Lord’s faithfulness and grace. Absalom has aligned himself with the line of rebellion and David is once again aligned with the line of restoration.

Hannah’s hymn proved true as Absalom rejected the wise counsel of Ahithophel and took the unwise counsel of Hushai (who was aligned with David) because “the Lord had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, so that the Lord might bring harm upon Absalom.” (2 Samuel 17:14) The rejection of this wise counsel led to his defeat and, ultimately, to his death. (2 Samuel 18:1-18)

David’s greatness is once again seen in his reaction to Absalom’s death. For as David mourned the death of his enemy Saul in 2 Samuel 1:11-27 and the death of his enemy Abner (2 Samuel 4:9-12), so David mourned for his rebellious son Absalom. When David heard the news of Absalom’s death, he “was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, ‘O my son Absalom, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!’” (2 Samuel 18:33) These are remarkable words in light of the pain and hardship that Absalom had inflicted upon his father. This are words birthed from a love that is deeper than what the typical human heart is able to generate.

The theme of Hannah’s hymn rises to the surface again in 2 Samuel 19-21 as David is brought back to power and unites a divided kingdom once more. After David finally has rest from all of his enemies, he sings a psalm to the Lord which serves as an interpretive key to the book of 1-2 Samuel, as did Hannah’s hymn in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. In this great psalm David declares the Lord to be “my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior.” (2 Samuel 22:2-3) David acknowledges that it was the Lord who raised him up and delivered him from his enemies. (2 Samuel 22:4)

 David’s psalm then repeats the theme of Hannah’s hymn – the Lord raises the humble: “You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down. . . . This God-his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.” (2 Samuel 22:28, 31) The Lord exalted David in his humility and brought low his adversaries in their pride – from Saul, to Abner, to Absalom. As Schreiner notes: “The point of David’s story is that the Lord saves the humble (22:28), which fits with Hannah’s theme. Yahweh saves those who make him their refuge and put their faith in him (22:31). David’s victories, then, are due to God’s favor and the empowerment that he received from the Lord (22:34-46).”[[19]](#footnote-19)

 The “last words of David” in 2 Samuel 23:1-7 serve as a final interpretive key to the book of 1-2 Samuel. The importance of these “final words” are found primarily in the reality that they are not merely David’s words but, rather, those of the Spirit of the Lord: “The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me; his word is on my tongue. The God if Israel has spoken; the Rock of Israel has said to me . . . .” (2 Samuel 23:3) Yet, the Lord chose to speak his words through David, “the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob. . . .” (2 Samuel 23:1) David is the humble one of Hannah’s hymn and David’s psalm in 2 Samuel 22 that the Lord has exalted. And, now, the Lord exalts him further by choosing him as the one to declare his words.

And these words, as Schreiner notes, call “attention to the ideal king. The king with whom Yahweh is pleased is radically God-centered. He rules ‘in the fear of the God” (23:3) and dispenses justice in the land. Hannah in her song looked forward to such a king, and by the end of 1-2 Samuel we recognize that Saul failed utterly in this regard, while David mainly succeeded. Israel needs a king who dawns like the light of the sun and blesses the people through gentle rains (23:4). David identifies himself and his house as such a kingdom (23:5), acknowledging that the covenant made with him will stand in perpetuity, whereas the wicked will be destroyed forever (23:6-7). Again, there is an incongruity between the justice of the king and the stains on David’s rule. Canonically, we look for a king who is perfectly just, one who will fulfill the covenant with Abraham and bring blessing to the entire word.”[[20]](#footnote-20)

If only 1-2 Samuel would end on these words and this moment of victory and obedience. Finally, all of Israel is under David’s rule and the disastrous aftermath of David’s sin with Bathsheba has calmed down. There is peace and unity in the land. All is well. But, like all stories where humans are involved, the reign of order and peace never seems to last that long. 2 Samuel ends with David, once again, rebelling against the Lord. David’s rebellion this time did not involve seeking satisfaction in the arms of a woman rather than the loving embrace of the Lord but, rather, seeking security in the number of his army rather than in the “God of Israel” and the “Rock of Israel” that David just got done praising in 2 Samuel 23.

The result of the census showed that Israel was, in fact, a great and numerous nation for there were 1,300,000 “valiant men who drew the sword.” (2 Samuel 24:9) But, like all sin, the large numbers did not bring lasting satisfaction to David. Instead, “David’s heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the Lord, ‘I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly.’” (2 Samuel 24:10)

The Lord brought judgment upon the Land which was only averted because David offered sacrifices to the Lord. David requested that the plague be diverted from the people to himself and his father’s house. (2 Samuel 24:17) In other words, David sought to provide atonement for the people. But, the Lord rejected his request and required sacrifice. The last verse of 1-2 Samuel records David’s offering and the Lord’s response: “David built there an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.” (2 Samuel 24:25)

It is significant that this is the last verse in 1-2 Samuel. David was a great man and a great king, but he was a flawed man and an imperfect king. David’s imperfections point us forward to a coming perfect king whose reign would never end and who would reign over an eternal kingdom where the full restoration promised in Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 12:1-3 would come about. Schreiner rightly notes: “David was not *the* king through whom the Lord would bless the whole world. Although his trust in and obedience to Yahweh were exemplary, the narrative also emphasizes his sin against Yahweh and the terrible consequences that were unleashed on the kingdom through his sin. David offered to atone for the nation’s sin, but a better offering was needed to atone for Israel. David points forward to a better king, a king who always did the will of the Lord, Jesus the Christ. Just as David was persecuted by Saul, so too Jesus was persecuted by his enemies. Just as David did not turn to evil when he was mistreated, so too Jesus ‘continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly’ (1 Pet. 2:23). ‘He is the True King, who rises like a sun and causes the vegetation of the land to flourish.’ Finally, Jesus, unlike David, could offer himself for the forgiveness of sins because he was the sinless one, and therefore the blessing promised to the whole world through Abraham would become a reality through him. Jesus was not only the true king but also the ‘faithful priest’ (1 Sam. 2:35)

* 1. *Where Are We As We Leave 1-2 Samuel?*

As we leave the book of 1-2 Samuel, where are we in the progressive fulfillment of God’s redemptive promises made within the context of the Abrahamic Covenant?

* *Land* – the people of Israel are in the Promised Land, and this Land has now become the place where God’s kingdom and rule is mediated through a king – King David, a man after God’s own heart. It is becoming clearer that all the Lord’s covenant promises are going to be fulfilled through an eternal kingdom over which there is an eternal ruler.
* *Numerous offspring* – we saw at the end of the book that there were 1,300,000 men of war in Israel – so, the people are more numerous than they had ever been. These numerous people are no longer sojourners but, rather, people of a kingdom living in the land of the kingdom.
* *Worldwide blessing* – the partial fulfillment of the promise of worldwide blessing through the mediation of the Lord’s presence by Israel being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation that was seemingly completely evaporated in the book of Judges and somewhat revived through the ray of light and hope provided by the book of Ruth, is now further revived through the appointment of king who would lead Israel to lives of grateful obedience so they could experience the fulfillment of the Lord’s covenant promises. It will be through an eternal king ruling over an eternal kingdom that all the nations of the earth will experience the blessing originally promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.
1. **1-2 Kings** (takes about 4 1/2 hours to read for the average person)
	1. *Placement on the Storyline*

As we begin the book of 1-2 Kings (one book in the Hebrew bible), were are we in the progressive fulfillment of God’s redemptive promises to Abraham? We see:

* *Land* – the people of Israel are in the Promised Land, and this Land has now become the place where God’s kingdom and rule is mediated through a king – King David, a man after God’s own heart. It is becoming clearer that all the Lord’s covenant promises are going to be fulfilled through an eternal kingdom over which there is an eternal ruler.
* *Numerous offspring* – we saw at the end of the book that there were 1,300,000 men of war in Israel – so, the people are more numerous than they had ever been. These numerous people are no longer sojourners but, rather, people of a kingdom living in the land of the kingdom.
* *Worldwide blessing* – the partial fulfillment of the promise of worldwide blessing through the mediation of the Lord’s presence by Israel being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation that was seemingly completely evaporated in the book of Judges and somewhat revived through the ray of light and hope provided by the book of Ruth, is now further revived through the appointment of king who would lead Israel to lives of grateful obedience so they could experience the fulfillment of the Lord’s covenant promises. It will be through an eternal king ruling over an eternal kingdom that all the nations of the earth will experience the blessing originally promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.
	1. *The Anticipation of the Complete Fulfillment of God’s Redemptive Promises (1 Kings 1-10)*

We begin the book of 1-2 Kings looking for the promised son of David who would be an eternal ruler and who would rule over an eternal kingdom through which the promised restoration and fulfillment would come. David has already proven that he is not the perfectly obedient king who would usher in the ultimate restoration and fulfillment of what has been promised.

In 1-2 Samuel we saw a significant theme introduced: the fate of the nation of Israel was dependent upon the obedience or disobedience of its king. When David walked in grateful obedience, all was well with the nation. But, when David rebelled against the Lord, the fate of the nation was significantly affected and things began to unravel. This is a crucial concept to understand as we begin 1-2 Kings, as it will be highlighted again and again. As Schreiner notes: “The fate of both Judah and Israel is encapsulated in the life of the kings who represented the people. It seems that both blessing and curse come to the people through the lives of the various kings. . . .Thus, the history in this narrative is focused on the kings, those of Judah and those of Israel.”[[21]](#footnote-21)

1 Kings 1 tells the story of Solomon’s rise to the throne of his father, David. Maybe this would be the son of David who would usher in the eternal kingdom and the promised restoration and fulfillment? On his deathbed, David made clear how this could possibly come about. As Joshua was instructed when leadership was transferred from Moses, so Solomon is instructed when leadership was transferred from David: “Be strong, and show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn, that the Lord may establish his word that he spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If you sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all of their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.” (1 Kings 2:2-4)

As we have seen again and again in the story, only the obedient will experience the fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises. And now, the fate of the nation is dependent upon the obedience of the king. This is a high calling and responsibility and David instructs Solomon to delve deeply in the Law of Moses that he could walk before the Lord in faithfulness with all of his heart and all of his soul. In so walking, the promise of the Davidic Covenant would be experienced and the promised restoration and fulfillment would become a reality.

1 Kings 2 records the death of David and briefly recounts his reign, as in passing, and then notes that “Solomon sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established.” (1 Kings 2:12, 46)

The first crack in the foundation shows up unexpectedly in 1 Kings 3:1 where “Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt.” Recall that in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, Moses gave laws that were to govern the conduct of the kings of Israel once the monarchy was established. One of the rules set forth in that portion of Deuteronomy was the requirement that the king “shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away . . . .” David had urged Solomon to obey the Law of Moses; Solomon is already showing that he will not be the perfect king who will bring about the eternal kingdom of restoration and fulfillment.

The mixed nature of Solomon is also presented in 1 Kings 3:3: “Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father, only he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places.”[[22]](#footnote-22) Despite Solomon’s imperfect obedience the Lord appeared to him and asked Solomon to make a request of him. Solomon famously asked for wisdom: “Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil . . . .” (1 Kings 3:9)[[23]](#footnote-23)

The request pleased the Lord and the he granted Solomon’s request: “Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.” (1 Kings 3:12-13) Solomon used the wisdom granted Lord to usher in a level of restoration and fulfillment that had not been seen since the Fall in Genesis 3. Schreiner rightly notes: “Life was practically idyllic, so that Israel was close to experiencing a new Eden. The rule that God intended human beings to exercise over the word was virtually becoming a reality through a son of David, Solomon. The kingdom was well organized (4:1-19), and there were ample provisions for Solomon’s household (4:22-23, 26-28). The joy in Israel was palpable: ‘Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea. They ate and drank and were happy’ (4:20). Clearly, the promise to Abraham of countless offspring was becoming a reality. And Israel was living under Yahweh’s lordship in the land, so that the land promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were also coming to pass.”[[24]](#footnote-24) The promise of worldwide blessing also showed signs of fulfillment for “people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.” (1 Kings 4:34)

The source of the restoration and fulfillment experienced by the nation of Israel under the leadership of Solomon was the Lord. Solomon acknowledges this and the narrative now turns in 1 Kings 5 to Solomon’s preparations for the construction of the Temple where the Lord could permanently dwell among, and bless, his people.

The construction of the Temple begins in 1 Kings 6. We are told that the ground was broken for the Temple “in the four hundred and eightieth year after the people came out of the land of Egypt.” (1 Kings 6:1) These 480 years have been recounted in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, and 2 Samuel. There have been great highs and devastating lows:

* The Lord entered into a covenant with his people in the wilderness (the Mosaic Covenant)
* The Lord revealed his will for them in the form of his Law,
* The Lord provided for them in the wilderness,
* The brought them into the Promised Land and gave them victory over those who possessed the Land,
* The Lord’s faithfulness was greater than the peoples rebellion and the repeated cycle of rebellion, judgment, repentance, and restoration throughout the book of Judges,
* The Lord graciously worked through the faithful remnant in the book of Ruth and gave his people the genealogy of the king with whom he would make a covenant that would change everything,
* The Lord raised up King David and in 2 Samuel 7 entered into a covenant with him that a son from his line would be an eternal king over an eternal kingdom “by which the covenant with Abraham becomes a reality.”[[25]](#footnote-25)

The journey has been long to this point of Israel’s history and this is an incredibly significant moment. For, the temple is the place where the Lord would dwell among his people as long as they respond to him with grateful obedience to his revealed will: “Concerning this house that you are building, if you will walk in my statutes and obey my rules and keep all my commandments and walk in them, then I will establish my word with you, which I spoke to David your father. And I will dwell among the children of Israel and will not forsake my people Israel.” (1 Kings 6:12-13) As Schreiner notes: “The temple represents ‘the junction between heaven and earth, Zion, the Temple mount, is a preeminent locus of communication between God and man.”[[26]](#footnote-26)

The construction of the Temple took 7 years. (1 Kings 6:37-38) When the Temple was completed, the ark was placed within the Holy Place and “when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a could filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.” (1 Kings 8:10-11) This, no doubt, calls the reader’s thoughts back to the end of Exodus when the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle when it was completed so that Moses was not able to enter because of the tangible presence of the Lord’s glory! (Exodus 40:34-35)

Solomon worships the Lord after the construction of the Temple and the filling of the Temple with the Lord’s glory. He acknowledges that while the Lord dwells with his people through the Temple, the Lord is not limited or restricted by it because he is the infinite, all-powerful, omnipresent, uncreated one: “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!” (1 Kings 8:27) As Schreiner notes: “If the Lord is too immense for the heavens, then certainly he cannot be limited to the temple. And yet he has graciously condescended to put his name there (8:16, 20, 29, 43, 44, 48).

Solomon’s worship of the Lord for his greatness then turns into his prayer that the Lord would graciously condescend to his people and cause his eyes to be open day and night toward the temple so that he will listen to the prayers of his people and forgive them. (1 Kings 8:28-30) Solomon’s prayer then outlines several different contexts of rebellion and a request that the Lord would provide forgiveness in those different context. Of note, Solomon’s prayer also requests that the Lord hears the prayer of the foreigner: “Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name’s sake (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.” (1 Kings 8:41-43) Schreiner rightly notes that: “Here we have a glimpse of the universal blessing promised to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).”[[27]](#footnote-27)

As we have seen in several other points in the narrative to this point,[[28]](#footnote-28) Solomon’s prayer anticipates the people’s rebellion, the judgment that would follow that rebellion, and the repentance and promised restoration to follow. (1 Kings 8:46-53) Solomon prays that the Lord would bring them back from exile when they “repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive.” (1 Kings 8:48) Schreiner rightly notes: “Here is one of the most important texts in the book, which points to hope after exile.”[[29]](#footnote-29) This hope for a return from exile is about to come into sharp focus and play a central role in the story going forward because the exile will become a reality before we leave the book of 1-2 Kings.

Solomon then reminded the people of the Lord’s faithfulness and encouraged them to respond with lives of grateful obedience: “Blessed by the Lord who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us, that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers. Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the Lord, be near to the Lord our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other. Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.” (1 Kings 8:56-61)

Solomon then offered a great number of sacrifices in dedication of the Temple and held a great feast before the Lord for seven days. At the end of the feast, “he sent the people away and they blessed the king and went to their homes joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had shown to David his servant and to Israel his people.” (1 Kings 8:66)

After the people have been sent home, the Lord appears to Solomon again and lets him know that his prayer has been heard and answered: “I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.” (1 Kings 9:3) The Lord then reminds Solomon that only those who respond to him with grateful obedience will experience the fulfillment of his redemptive promises and anticipates the coming exile because of the disobedience of Solomon’s sons and the people of Israel. (1 Kings 9:6-9)

In 1 Kings 10 we have the clearest and most glorious picture of the promised fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises that we have seen to this point in the story. The queen of Sheba comes to hear of Solomon’s wisdom. Once again, this is a glimpse of the worldwide blessing promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. For, after seeing the glories of Solomon’s reign for herself, she offers the following praise to the Lord: “Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in your and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.” (1 Kings 10:9)

 The description of Solomon’s reign in the latter portion of 1 Kings 10 is astonishing. We see huge reserves of gold, a remarkable throne room, a fleet of ships, chariots, horsemen, and imported horses. The fame and renown of Solomon’s reign is vividly described in 1 Kings 10:23-35: “Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. Every one of them brought his present, articles of sliver and gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year.” The wealth of Solomon’s reign is describes as so great that: “[T]he king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephelah.” (1 Kings 10:27)

 This was the high point of the kingdom of Israel. As Schreiner notes: “Israel was in the land, Yahweh was in the temple, and the nation was prospering. It seemed that universal blessing was just around the corner.”[[30]](#footnote-30) If only the trajectory of the story went that way. But, like the transition from Joshua to Judges, so is the transition from 1 Kings 10 to 1 Kings 11. This is one of the most significant transitions in the story of the Old Testament.

* 1. *The Transition From Blessing to Curses Ending With The Division of the Kingdom and Exile (1 Kings 11-2 Kings 25)*

The transition from 1 Kings 10 to 1 Kings 11 plays a central role in the “threefold structure of revelation” which serves as the framework for all of Graeme Goldsworthy’s works.[[31]](#footnote-31) Goldsworthy summarizes this structure, and the transition between 1 Kings 10 and 11, as follows: “The basic biblical timeline from creation to the new creation [is marked] with the three main stages of revelation: biblical history from creation [especially Abraham] to Solomon; the eschatology of the writing prophets; and the fulfillment of all things in Christ. The prophetic ministry . . . of the prophets . . . coincided with the post-Solomonic decline of Israel’s fortunes due to rebellion and disobedience. Whereas the history from Abraham to Solomon’s temple showed an overall advance or development in the revelation of the blessings of God’s covenant made with Abraham, the history from Solomon’s apostasy (1 Kgs 11) to the exile showed an overall manifestation of the curses of the covenant. Even the return from the Babylonian exile did not bring the true blessings that were expected, and the nation limped on under the judgment of God while the faithful were sustained only by his promises. The Old Testament, then, can be represented as a manifestation of promise and blessing reaching a high point in David’s Jerusalem as the focal point of the land of inheritance, in Solomon as David’s heir, and in the temple representing the presence of God to dwell among and bless his people. After Solomon’s apostasy it is history primarily as a manifestation of judgment that is overlaid with the prophetic promises that the Day of the Lord will come and bring ultimate blessing and judgment. The story may seem to end in failure, especially as the four hundred years between the Testaments perpetuates the scenario of judgment with Israel’s fortunes at a low ebb. It takes the person of Jesus, his teaching and the proclamation of his apostles to restore hope in the original promise of God.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

1 Kings 11 begins by noting “King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh. . . . And his wives turned away his heart.” (1 Kings 11:1-3) This is a direct violation of Deuteronomy 17:17 where the Lord prohibited the king from taking on many wives “lest his heart turn away.” Solomon disobeyed the Lord’s revealed will and suffered the fate from which the Lord’s gracious command aimed to prevent. 1 Kings 11:4-8 explicitly sets forth Solomon’s tragic end: “For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his hear after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mount east of Jerusalem. And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.”

The significance of Solomon’s rebellion here can hardly be overstated. From this point on in the story, the progression is from the height of 1 Kings 10 to the depth of exile. Schreiner notes: “Solomon and Israel turned toward evil and unleashed forces that split the kingdom and culminated in exile for both Judah and Israel.”[[33]](#footnote-33) Solomon’s rebellion caused the Lord to be angry with him and resulted in the Lord telling Solomon that “I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.” (1 Kings 11:9-11)

The Lord promised in 2 Samuel 7 that an eternal rule would come from the line of David to rule over an eternal kingdom where the promised restoration and fulfillment would take place. David proved that he was not the promised king. Solomon has now proved that he is not the promised king. We are left looking for another son of David who will be the eternal king over an eternal kingdom.

Not only do we not have the promised son of David in Solomon, but we will no longer have a united kingdom after Solomon’s death. The Lord made it clear that he was going to tear the kingdom from Solomon in 1 Kings 11:9-11. We learn in 1 Kings 11:30-39 that this meant that 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel would abandon the Davidic king.[[34]](#footnote-34) Rather than the nation of Israel bringing about the promised worldwide blessing, it would be divided from within.

After Solomon’s death, his son Rehoboam became king. (1 Kings 11:43) Rehoboam was not blessed with the wisdom of his father and because of his poor leadership, which worked perfectly in the furtherance of the Lord’s will, the 10 northern tribes rebelled against Rehoboam, the Davidic king, and made Jeroboam their king. (1 Kings 12:16-19) The kingdom was now officially divided and would remain that way. The northern kingdom, composed of 10 tribes, would from this point be known as Israel and the southern kingdom, composed of 2 tribes, from this point would now be known as Judah.

While there are ups and downs in both Israel and Judah from this point on in the story, the overall trajectory is alignment with the line of rebellion rather than the line of restoration and both Israel and Judah experience, in increasing measure, the promised curses and are both eventually sent into exile.

The overarching downward trajectory of the northern kingdom of *Israel* can be traced through the kings as follows:

* *Jeroboam* made two calves of gold (reminiscent of Exodus 32!) and made temples on the high places (affiliated with idol worship) and appointed priests who were not Levites, and feasts that were not appointed by the Lord, was rejected by the Lord (1 Kings 13:33-34);
* *Nadab* “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.” (1 Samuel 15:26)
* *Baasha* rose to power in Israel by killing Nadab and “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.” (1 Kings 15:34)
* *Elah’s* only recorded act is getting drunk and then killed (1 Kings 16:9-10);
* *Zimri* rose to power by killing the drunk Elah and only reigned for a period of 7 days because he himself was killed “because of his sins that he committed, doing evil in the sight of the Lord, walking in the way of Jeroboam, and for his sin which he committed, making Israel to sin.” (1 Kings 16:19)
* *Omri* “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did more evil than all who were before him. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in the sins that he made Israel to sin, provoking the Lord the God of Israel, to anger by their idols.” (1 Kings 16:25-26)
* *Ahab* “did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him.” (1 Kings 16:30) Ahab also famously married Jezebel and “went and served Baal and worshiped him.” (1 Kings 16:31)
* *Ahaziah* “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger in every way that his father had done.” (1 Kings 22:51-53)
* *Jehoram (also called Joram)* “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, though not like his father and mother, for he put away the pillar of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless, he clung to the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from it.” (2 Kings 3:2-3)
* ***Jehu***was anointed by the Lord as king and went into battle killing Joram (king of Israel) and Ahaziah (king of Judah) and then executed Jezebel according to the word of the Lord because of their sin and rebellion (9:1-37) and the house of Ahab was put to death because of the Lord’s pronounced judgment: “Know then that there shall fall to the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab, for the Lord has done what he said to his servant Elijah.” (2 Kings 10:10) He then put to death the prophets of Baal (2 Kings 10:18-27). But, despite all of Jehu’s accomplishments and zeal for the Lord, he “did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin-that is, the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan.” (2 Kings 10:29)
* *Jehoahaz* “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin; he did not depart from them.” (2 Kings 13:2) Though judgment came to Israel during Jehoahaz’s reign, “the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, nor has he cast them from his presence until now.” (2 Kings 13:23)
* *Joash (also called Jehoash)* “also did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin, but he walked in them.” (2 Kings 13:11)
* *Jeroboam* “he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, which he made Israel to sin.” (2 Kings 14 :24) Thought judgment flowed from Jeroboam’s disobedience, “the Lord had not said that he would blot out the name of Israel form under heaven, so he saved them by the hand of Jerobaom the son of Joash.” (2 Kings 14:27)
* *Zechariah* “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his fathers had done. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, which he made Israel to sin.” (2 Kings 15:9)
* *Shallum* rose to power by killing Zechariah and was put to death after reigning for one month (2 Kings 15:13-15)
* *Menahem* “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not depart all his days from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.” (2 Kings 15:18)
* *Pekahiah* “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.” (2 Kings 15:24)
* *Pekah* rose to power by killing Pekahiah and “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not part from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.” (2 Kings 15:28) It was under the reign of Pekah that Assyria began to capture portions of Israel and carry “the people captive of Assyria.” (2 Kings 15:29)
* *Hoshea* rose to power by putting Pekah to death and “he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.” (2 Kings 15:30, 2 Kings 17:2)

It was under the reign of Hoshea that Assyria took control of Israel and sent the Israelites into **exile** because “the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced.” (2 Kings 17:7-8)

The continual rebellion of the people was done despite the Lord warning Israel with prophets who called them to “Turn form your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets.” (2 Kings17:13) The people did not respond to the word of the Lord in grateful obedience. Rather than looking like the line of restoration, they progressively looked more like the line of rebellion. And, as we have seen, the curses of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 flow from disobedience. The ultimate curse being that of exile. We see this curse coming to reality in 2 Kings 17:23: “So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.” Israel went into exile in 722 B.C.[[35]](#footnote-35)

This is an incredibly significant moment in the story of the Old Testament. The promise of Land that had been fulfilled according to the Lord’s promise to Abraham is now no longer fulfilled as to the northern Tribes of exile. The land gained in Joshua has been lost in 2 Kings 17. It is with the loss of the Land that the prophets begin to bring into focus a future time of fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises. We will discuss this “future focus” of the prophets in more detail in the wake of Judah’s exile. As Schreiner notes: “[Israel was] in exile because of [its] blatant failure to keep covenant stipulations. The future looked bleak. . . . [But,] [t]he Lord is king, and he will fulfill his promises. Nothing can thwart his word. The offspring of the woman will triumph over the serpent through a son of David. No matter how improbable that hope seems, it will not be thwarted.”[[36]](#footnote-36)

The overarching downward trajectory of the southern kingdom of *Judah* can be traced through the kings as follows:

* *Rehoboam’s* rule is summarized in 1 Kings 14:22-24: “And Judah did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins that they committed, more than all their fathers had done. For they also built for themselves high places and pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, and there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.” Because of Rehoboam’s evil reign the king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem and “took way the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king’s house. He took away everything.” (1 Kings 14:25-26)
* *Abijam (also called Abijah)* “walked in all the sins that his father did before him, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father.” (1 Kings 15:3)
* ***Asa*,** and his reign, was a bright spot in the life of Judah. He “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as David his father had done. He put away the male cult prostitutes out of the land and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.” (1 Kings 15:11-12) But, he was not the promised son of David who would serve as the eternal king over the promised eternal kingdom.
* ***Jehoshaphat***was also a bright spot as well, for [h]e walked in all the way of Asa his father. He did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the Lord.” (1 Kings 22:43) But, he was not the promised son of David who would serve as the eternal king over the promised eternal kingdom.
* *Jehoram* “walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Abab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife. And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.” (2 Kings 8:18)
* *Ahaziah* “also walked in the way of the house of Ahab and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as the house of Abab had done, for he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab (2 Kings 8:27)
* *Athaliah*, the mother of Ahaziah, rose to power upon the death of her son by killing all of the royal family (2 Kings 11:1-3)
* ***Joash (also called Jehoash)***was spared from Athaliah’s slaughter of the royal family. He was seven years old when he began to reign and he “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all his days, because Jehoiada the priest instructed him.” (2 Kings 12:2) But, Joash was not the promised son of David who would be an eternal ruler over an eternal kingdom through which the promised restoration and fulfillment would take place.
* ***Amaziah***“did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, yet not like David his father. He did in all things as Joash his father had done. But the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.” (2 Kings 14:3-4) Though he was a good king, he was not to the quality of David, who was not qualified to be the perfect and eternal king who would rule over the eternal kingdom of restoration and fulfillment.
* ***Azariah*** *(also called Uzziah)* “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away. The people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.” (2 Kings 15:3-4)
* ***Jotham*** “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Nevertheless the high places were not removed. The people still sacrificed and made offerings on high places.” (2 Kings 15:34-35)
* *Ahaz* ended the string of faithful kings in Judah and “did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord his God, as his father David had done, but he walked in the way of the kings of Israel. He even burned his son as an offering, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel. And he sacrificed and made offerings on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.” (2 Kings 16:2-4)
* ***Hezekiah***“did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah . . . . He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord. He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him; wherever he went out, he prospered. . . .” (2 Kings 18:3, 5-6) At this point, we might think that Hezekiah is the promised son of David who would be an eternal ruler over an eternal kingdom where the promised restoration and fulfillment would take place! But, as Schreiner rightly notes: “Hezekiah’s reign ended on a dismal note. He invited the Babylonians to his palace, showing them all his wealth. Isaiah predicted that Judah in the future would be exiled to Babylon (20:17). Hezekiah’s callousness is evident, for he was unconcerned because the exile would not occur in his day.”[[37]](#footnote-37) Alas, Hezekiah was not the promised son of David.
* *Manasseh* “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel. . . . And Manasseh led them astray to do more evil than the nations had done whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel.” (2 Kings 21:2) What a drastic shift! This shift receives a pronouncement of judgment from the Lord that the curses of the covenant are coming – particularly that of exile. (2 Kings 21:10-14)
* *Amon* continued the trend of Manasseh and “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord., as Manasseh is father had done. He walked in all the way in which his father walked and served idols that his father served and worshiped them. He abandoned the Lord, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the Lord.” (2 Kings 21:20-22)
* ***Josiah***turned the leadership of Judah back to the line of righteous rulers: “He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left.” (2 Kings 22:2) Toward the end of the account of his reign we learn that: “Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him.” (2 Kings 23:25) But, Josiah was not the promised son of David for his life ends in battle. (2 Kings 23:29) But, before his death, Josiah repairs the temple (2 Kings 22:3-7), found the Book of the Law and responded in repentance upon hearing it read aloud (2 Kings 22:8-13), and brought about significant reforms in Judah that brought them back more in line with the righteous requirements of the Law (2 Kings 23:1-24). Josiah sought the word of the Lord regarding the fate of Judah because of its rebellion and Hilkiah the priest made it clear that the curses of the covenant set forth in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 were about to come upon Judah as they had previously come upon Israel. But, not in Josiah’s lifetime. (2 Kings 22:14-20) Despite the significant reforms brought about under Josiah’s direction and leadership: “Still the Lord did not turn from the burning of his great wrath, by which his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him. And the Lord said, ‘I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and I will cast off this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.’” (2 Kings 23:26-27)
* *Jehoahaz* turned the tide once again and “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done.” (2 Kings 23:32) He was removed from power by Pharaoh Neco and he died in Egypt. (2 Kings 23:33-34)
* *Jehoaikim* was placed upon the throne by Pharaoh Neco and “he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done.” (2 Kings 23:37) Under his reign, Judah’s exile under Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon began because of “the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord would not pardon.” (2 Kings 24:3-4)
* *Jehoiachin* “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done.” (2 Kings 24:9) Judah’s exile was brought nearer during Jehoiachin’s rule: “At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged.” (2 Kings 24:10) Jehoiachin was taken prisoner, the treasures of the house of the Lord and the king’s palace were taken and “[h]e carried away all Jerusalem and all the officials and all the mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained, except the poorest people of the land.” (2 Kings 24:14)
* *Zedekiah* was made king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon and “he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Johoiakim had done. Israel’s complete exile was immanent, for we read in 2 Kings 24: “For because of the anger of the Lord it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence.”

It was during the reign of Zedekiah that all of Judah was sent into exile. Zedekiah thought that rebelling against the Lord was not enough, so he also rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. In retaliation, Nebuchadnezzar burned down the house of the Lord, the king’s palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem. (2 Kings 25:9) Jerusalem’s walls were torn down and everyone but the poorest of the land was sent into exile. (2 Kings 25:10-11) As Goldsworthy notes, “The curses of the covenant, so plainly stated in Deuteronomy, are now reality.”[[38]](#footnote-38) The exclamation point on the reality of the curses is found in 2 Kings 25: “So Judah was taken into exile out of its land.” Judah was sent into exile in 586 B.C.[[39]](#footnote-39)

What are we to think at this point of the story? Things have been progressing forward, with significant highs and lows, to this point of the story. The Promised Land had become Israel’s home. Israel had become a numerous nation. There were echoes of the promised worldwide blessing. But, now, everything that had been fulfilled appeared to be lost. Was the promise of restoration in Genesis 3:15 now beyond reach? Were the Lord’s promises to Abraham now forgotten? Was there any hope?

We end 1-2 Kings with, as Schreiner rightly notes, a whisper of hope. Jehoiachin, a previous king of Judah, was freed from prison after being in exile for 37 years. (2 Kings 25:27) Jehoiachin was treated with favor and given a seat at the royal table in Babylon. Schreiner provides: “What happened to Jehoiachin seems almost trivial. But the narrator sees hope in this turn of events. The Davidic king survived, and he was, in a sense, thriving in exile. . . . And we know that the Lord promised that the dynasty with David would not end. He has preserved a ‘lamp’ for David. The Lord is king, and he will fulfill his promises. Nothing can thwart his word. The offspring of the woman will triumph over the serpent through a son of David. No matter how improbable that hope seems it will not be thwarted. . . The conclusion of the narrative whispers hope instead of shouting it.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

That whisper of hope is the message of the prophets, especially those prophets that we will encounter later in the Old Testament canon. However, that hope was also found in the prophets we have seen to this point in the story. There were several prophets featured in 1-2 Kings, the most prominent of which are Elijah and Elisha. Elijah and Elisha continue the line of prophets from Moses to Samuel to Gad and Nathan. Moses’ prophetic task was set forth “the covenant and . . . God’s acts for the salvation of his people” in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.[[41]](#footnote-41) The task of the prophets from “Samuel to Elisha is to call Israel to faithfulness to the covenant. Samuel and Nathan also round off the prior revelation by showing the proper place of kingship in God’s purposes. Adequate record of these prophetic ministries is given in the historical accounts.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

The record of the prophetic ministries of Elijah is found in 1 Kings. In 1 Kings 17:1 Elijah pronounced a drought during the reign of Ahab over the northern kingdom, Israel. The Lord miraculously provided for Elijah during the drought. Part of this provision was through the widow of Zarephath (a Gentile!). Because of the Gentile widow’s provision of Elijah, she was provided for, as well. Elijah raises her son from the dead and she pronounces her faith in the Lord: “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.” (1 Kings 17:24) Even in the height of Israel’s rebellion against the Lord, we see this Gentile widow coming to faith. The Lord’s purpose to bless the nations is relentless and will come to fulfillment!

The Lord miraculously demonstrated his sovereignty over all things in the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The Lord sent fire to consume “the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.” (1 Kings 18:38) while the cries of the prophets of Baal were fruitless as “there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.” (1 Kings 18:29) This demonstration of the Lord’s supremacy and power over all things at this point of the story of the Old Testament is a breath of fresh air. For it provides a ray of hope and light in the midst of a dark story of rebellion and judgment. For the people confess that: “The Lord, he is God; the Lord; he is God.” (1 Kings 18:39)

The Lord’s purpose to bless the nations is also seen through the ministry of Elisha. In 2 Kings 4 Elisha performs several miracles on behalf of a Shunammite woman. In return for her generosity in providing food and lodging for Elisha, she is given a son and her son later in his life is brought back from the dead. (2 Kings 4:8-37) In 2 Kings 5, Elisha heals Namaan, a commander in the army of Syria, of leprosy. Once Namaan is healed he proclaims: “Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel . . . .” (2 Samuel 5:15) A Schreiner rightly notes: “We see in the ministry of Elisha that Yahweh’s lordship is acknowledged outside of Israel.”[[43]](#footnote-43)

The extensive accounts of Elisha’s miracles, in addition to showing the Lord’s plan for the nations, is seen also in the account of the king of Syria pursuing Elisha because of his counsel to the king of Israel. It was told to the king of Syria that Elisha was telling the king of Israel Syria’s military plans before they were implemented. The king of Syria, naturally, wanted to stamp out this source of supernatural intelligence. So, he sent a great army to capture Elisha. (2 Kings 6:8-14) Elisha’s servant saw the army and cried out to Elisha. Elisha comforted his servant by saying: “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” (2 Kings 6:16) Then he prayed that the Lord would open his servant’s eyes so that he could see the Lord’s presence with them. The Lord answered his prayer, and opened the eyes of the servant: “and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” (2 Kings 6:17)

Through this story, we see that the Lord is with his people even when things look bad and it seems like only defeat is in the horizon. The Lord is greater than any opposition that may rise up against him and will fulfill his redemptive promises and accomplish his grand purpose of restoration of everything that was lost in the Fall.

As we noted above, this theme is picked up and expanded upon in the ministry of the prophets that come after Elijah and Elisha. Through the prophets that rise up after Elijah and Elisha “hints are given that Israel’s experience of the exodus and the possession of the Promised Land is only a shadow of the reality of salvation. . . . As the nation of Israel disintegrates after the death of Solomon, the faithful might wonder what has gone wrong in God’s saving purposes. From our vantage point we can see that nothing has gone wrong with God’s plan. The problem is human sin, and it becomes ever clearer that this problem cannot be dealt with by those things that God has done for Israel in her history. Why, then, did God embark on the whole ‘redemptive process’ process from the exodus on? Because, in his wisdom he leads his people in a series of distinct stages of revelation towards the fullness of time when salvation will come in power. The prophets serve to show that what has happened up to now is but a passing stage in revelation. None of this diminishes the importance of Israel’s past history. All God’s dealings with his people, from Abraham to Solomon, are expressions of real grace while being shadows of a more solid reality to come. In accommodating himself and his revelation to where his elect people are themselves. God leads them through their spiritual infancy by means of tangible realities of captivity by a earthy king in a foreign land, of release from bondage, of conquest of a promised land, and so on. These things show the nature of their plight in bondage to sin and death, the structure of salvation and the kingdom of God. But the shadow must fade so that the full light of the solid reality may be revealed in its place.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

* 1. *Where Are We As We Leave 1***-***2 Kings?*

As we leave the book of 1-2 Kings (one book in the Hebrew bible), were are we in the progressive fulfillment of God’s redemptive promises to Abraham? We see:

* *Land* – the unified kingdom of Solomon has been divided into 10 tribes in the north, called Israel, and two tribes in the south, called Judah. Both Israel and Judah have been sent into exile and are no longer in the Land of promise. We have taken a huge step back in the progressive fulfillment of the Lord’s promises – from *possession* of the Promised Land to *exile* from the Promised Land.
* *Numerous offspring* – the people of Israel and Judah have experienced great defeat and their numbers have dwindled. They have been disbursed among the nations and no longer can be seen as one numerous and blessed people. We have taken a huge step back in the progressive fulfillment of the Lord’s promises – from a *numerous and blessed* people to a *disbursed and cursed* people.
* *Worldwide blessing* – the partial fulfillment of the promise of worldwide blessing through the mediation of the Lord’s presence by Israel being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation that was seemingly completely evaporated in the book of Judges and somewhat revived through the ray of light and hope provided by the book of Ruth and then brought into greater fulfillment through the glorious reign of David and Solomon has, once again, been seemingly completely evaporated as the divided kingdom has been sent into exile. We are left with a whisper of hope, a whisper that the writing prophets will continue to bring into focus as we progress further through the Old Testament canon.
1. **1-2 Chronicles** (takes about 4 1/2 hours to read for the average person)
	1. *The Role of the Book in the Old Testament and Placement in the Storyline*

The books of 1-2 Chronicles, one book in the Hebrew canon, cover roughly the same period as 1-2 Kings.[[45]](#footnote-45) Some of the passages of 1-2 Chronicles are identical to the passages that have come before in 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings.[[46]](#footnote-46) In fact, half of 1-2 Chronicles is the same material found in 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings.[[47]](#footnote-47) One striking omission is any reference to Elisha and only one reference to Elijah.[[48]](#footnote-48) This has been explained by the Chronicler’s focus on the southern kingdom and Elijah and Elisha’s different focus and ministry to the northern kingdom.[[49]](#footnote-49) Most scholars place the writing of 1-2 Chronicles during Ezra’s lifetime, which means that the book was written to the people of Israel who had returned to the Promised Land after exile and who were seeking the promised restoration to be brought about by the fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive purposes.[[50]](#footnote-50)

With that setting in mind, the book of 1-2 Chronicles functions for the generation who returned to the Promised Land after exile, like the book of Deuteronomy functioned for the generation who were raised up during the wilderness wanderings and who were to take possession of the Promised Land. As Moses set forth the Law to the wilderness generation, so the author of 1-2 Chronicles “was attempting to interpret to the restored community in Jerusalem the history of Israel as an eternal covenant between God and David which demanded an obedient response to the divine law. One the basis of past history he sought repeatedly to draw the lesson that Israel prospered when obedient but courted God’s wrath and destruction of the nation through disobedience. In spite of continual warnings from the prophets, Israel abandoned God’s law and suffered the consequences. . . However, after the judgment, God once again restored his people who continue to stand under the same divine imperatives.’”

As we begin the book of 1-2 Chronicles (one book in the Hebrew bible), were are we in the progressive fulfillment of God’s redemptive promises to Abraham? We see:

* *Land* – as noted above, the book of 1-2 Chronicles is written to those who have returned to the Promised Land after the exile, so we are once again in the Promised Land. We have erased some of the regression of the fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises.
* *Numerous offspring* – the people of Israel were greatly reduced during the time of exile so that when they return from exile there is but only a remnant that remains. We have regressed here in the progressive fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises.
* *Worldwide blessing* – the notion of worldwide blessing was all but obliterated through the exile, but the return to the Promised Land signals the potential for a future time of worldwide blessing. Overall, the fulfillment of Lord’s promises to Abraham seems quite distant but once again within reach.
	1. *A Great Genealogy (1 Chronicles 1-9)*

The first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles contain a genealogy! This is quite remarkable. Schreiner rightly notes that “[t]he genealogy that opens the book (1 Chron. 1-9) is quite off-putting to modern readers . . . .”[[51]](#footnote-51) The breadth of the genealogy is extensive, starting back to the very beginning of humanity – Adam. (1 Chronicles 1:1) We find ourselves back in Genesis 1-2 with the creation of all things and the chief of his creation – Adam and Eve.

We move quickly from Adam (recalling the Adamic Covenant #1) to Noah (recalling to Noahic Covenant) to Abraham (recalling the Abrahamic Covenant #3) to Isaac, to Jacob/Israel, the twelve tribes (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin), then we skip over Moses (comes later in 1 Chronicles 6) and focus on David and his sons (recalling the Davidic Covenant #5), we return to Moses in 1 Chronicles 6 (recalling the Mosaic Covenant #4), then move to the genealogy of Saul, and finally the genealogy of those who had returned from exile to the Promised Land.

It is significant to note that the author of Chronicles “does not emphasize the division of Israel and Judah but instead emphasizes that the true people of God are united around the Davidic king and the temple in Jerusalem . . . . There is a future for “all Israel,” both south and north, if they give themselves to the Lord.”[[52]](#footnote-52) The experience of the covenant curses, and particularly that of exile, had been brutal. But, the Lord was not done with this people! He would still fulfill his covenant promises in and through them!

* 1. *A Retelling of the Reigns of Saul and David (1 Chronicles 10-29)*

The second major section of the book of 1 Chronicles briefly recounts the reign of Saul in 1 Chronicles 10 and then recounts the reign of David in the remainder of the book, 1 Chronicles 11-29. Clearly, the promise that he Lord made to David is central to the Chronicler’s understanding of how the Lord is going to bring about his promised restoration of all things!

The Chronicler summarizes the tragic end to Saul’s life as follows: “So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. He did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.” (1 Chronicles 10:13-14)

After recalling the tragedy of Saul’s end, the Chronicler turns to, and recalls in great detail, the reign of David. In 1 Chronicles 11-16, we see David anointed and recognized by Israel as king, taking Jerusalem, bringing the ark to Jerusalem (and the troubles that accompanied the ark’s journey to Jerusalem), David’s victories over the Philistines, and the worship that flowed from the arrival of the ark in Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 17 is of great importance in the flow of the book as it recounts the covenant between the Lord and David, the Davidic Covenant (#5), that we first encountered in 2 Samuel 7. Again, we are told that David will not build a house for the Lord but that the Lord will build David a house: “When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.” (1 Chronicles 17:11-14)

The difference in this encounter with the Davidic Covenant in 1 Chronicles is that we have already seen, in graphic detail, the repeated failure of David’s sons and the promise of an eternal king over an eternal king seems quite out of reach. That is the very reason that the Chronicler restates the promise once again. He knows his audience. He is encouraging his readers to hope once again in the Lord’s promise to bring about a son of David who would be an eternal king over an eternal kingdom in which the Lord’s redemptive promises would find their ultimate and complete fulfillment!

As we noted in our overview of the entire Old Testament, the people of the Old Testament were a people left waiting, hoping, and searching. Peter clearly describes this reality in 1 Peter 1:10-12: “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”

The wait ended upon the coming of Jesus Christ. As Matthew 1:1 provides: “The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Jesus Christ is the offspring promised in Genesis 3:15, the promised offspring of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. Jesus Christ is the new David who will reign forever and ever over the new heavens and new earth where the restoration promises will be completely brought about and experienced for all eternity!

1 Chronicles 18-20 “recount Davidic victories over his enemies along the same lines that we see in 2 Samuel. The obedient king who trusts in the Lord is blessed with triumph over all his enemies.”[[53]](#footnote-53)

A noticeable omission in the Chronicler’s account of David’s reign at this point of the book is his sin with Bathsheba and the slaughter of her husband, Uriah.[[54]](#footnote-54) But, interestingly, David’s sin of taking a census at the end of his reign *is* included in the Chronicler’s retelling of the events. Even more interesting is the description of the story behind the census: “Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.” (1 Chronicles 21:1) The complete sovereignty of the Lord and the working of the great adversary, Satan, are presented together without further explanation. Such things are beyond our ability to fully comprehend and we are best suited to join Paul’s proclamation in Romans 11: “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

In 1 Chronicles 22, the story focuses on the Temple. We see David preparing for the construction of the Temple (1 Chronicles 22:1-5), charging Solomon with the Temple’s construction (1 Chronicles 22:6-19), and organizing the Levites in preparation for Temple life and worship (1 Chronicles 23-26). The Temple was the place where the Lord’s presence was to be uniquely manifested and a physical representation of the Lord’s presence among them. It was the unique place of worship that the Lord had established. It was where the people were to offer their sacrifices to the Lord and seek his forgiveness when they rebelled against him. Thus, it is fitting that it is a significant focus of the book.

1 Chronicles ends with David’s last words and Solomon being anointed as king. David instructs the people to “observe and seek out all the commandments of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever.” (1 Chronicles 28:8) David then instructs his son Solomon to “know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever. Be careful now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it.” (1 Chronicles 28:9-10)

David worships the Lord and prays for Israel: “O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you. Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes, performing all, and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision.” (2 Chronicles 29:18-19) 1 Chronicles ends with Solomon being anointed king and David’s death.

* 1. *A Retelling of the Reign of Solomon (2 Chronicles 1-9)*

2 Chronicles continues the story by focusing on the construction of the Temple (2 Chronicles 2-5:1), the ark being brought to the Temple (2 Chronicles 5:2-14). The scene is powerfully recounted. The musical instruments played with full gusto and the people proclaimed in song: “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.” (2 Chronicles 5:13) The glory of the Lord filled the Temple such that the priests could not stand to minister! (2 Chronicles 5:14) Solomon’s powerful prayer of dedication is recounted in 2 Chronicles 6 and the Temple was dedicated in 2 Chronicles 7. As Schreiner notes: “The temple reflected the glory of God and the presence of God with his people, for the Lord had chosen specially to put his name in Jerusalem and in the temple (6:5-6; 7:16). The temple represents Yahweh’s presence and his rule over his people, and it points forward to Jesus as the true temple and the presence of God in the new creation, for in the world to come, as we will see in Rev. 21-22, the whole word will be God’s temple.”[[55]](#footnote-55)

Solomon’s great wealth and accomplishments are recounted in 2 Chronicles 8-9. Noticeably, Solomon’s “turn toward idolatry at the end of his life, which is set forth in 1 Kings, is excluded from the narrative.”[[56]](#footnote-56) 2 Chronicles 9 ends with Solomon’s death.

* 1. *A Retelling of the Division of the Kingdom and Exile (2 Chronicles 10-36)*

2 Chronicles 10 serves as a significant transition in the book of Chronicles as the transition between 1 Kings 11 served as a significant transition in the book of 1-2 Kings. The implications of this significant transition have already been discussed in some detail above in our discussion of 1-2 Kings and will not be recounted again here.

The remainder of 2 Chronicles, Chapters 10-36 recounts division of the kingdom into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. The legitimacy of the southern kingdom of Judah is highlighted in 2 Chronicles 11:16: “And those who had set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came after them from all the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord, the God of their fathers.” Schreiner rightly notes: “Those who truly belonged to the Lord in the north realized that the only legitimate place to offer sacrifices was in Jerusalem.”[[57]](#footnote-57)

Despite the initial positive characterization of the people drawn to the southern kingdom of Judah, the remainder of 2 Chronicles (chapters 12-36) restates, once again, the downward trajectory and exile of the southern kingdom of Judah that we have previously examined. A noticeable exclusion from the narrative in these chapters is any mention of the northern kingdom of Israel. In focusing on the southern kingdom of Judah, to the exclusion of the northern kingdom of Israel, the Chronicler is focusing on the portion of the kingdom from which the promised Davidic would come.

As we saw, 1-2 Kings ended with a whisper of hope with Jehoiachin, a previous king of Judah, being freed from prison and having a seat of honor at the royal table in Babylon. 1-2 Chronicles also ends with hope – but much more than a whisper! For, the end of the exile is proclaimed! Cyrus king of Persia, in the fulfillment of the word of the Lord through the prophet Jeremiah, declared that the exiles could return home and build a house for the Lord! (2 Chronicles 36:22-24) As Schreiner notes, “The Lord is not finished with Israel or the temple. His covenant promises were still trustworthy. There was a future for the people of Israel despite their persistent unfaithfulness.”[[58]](#footnote-58)

* 1. *Where Are We As We Leave the Book of 1***-***2 Chronicles?*

As we leave the book of 1-2 Chronicles (one book in the Hebrew bible), we are in the same point of the narrative as when we began. Again, we see:

* *Land* – as noted above, the book of 1-2 Chronicles is written to those who have returned to the Promised Land after the exile, so we are once again in the Promised Land. We have erased some of the regression of the fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises.
* *Numerous offspring* – the people of Israel were greatly reduced during the time of exile so that when they return from exile there is but only a remnant that remains. We have regressed here in the progressive fulfillment of the Lord’s redemptive promises.
* *Worldwide blessing* – the notion of worldwide blessing was all but obliterated through the exile, but the return to the Promised Land signals the potential for a future time of worldwide blessing. Overall, the fulfillment of Lord’s promises to Abraham seems quite distant but once again within reach.
1. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 136-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 146. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The victory of David, and the line of restoration, was also announced, as we have said, through Hannah’s hymn. The proud Saul will be brought low, the humble David will be raised up. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Again, 1 and 2 Samuel are one book in the Hebrew bible and should be read and understood as one book. Thus, we will treat them as such here. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 156-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 139-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The concept of “high places” was related to idol worship in the pervious narratives. See, e.g., Leviticus 26:30; Numbers 33:52; Deuteronomy 12:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Recall that the role of the priests in Leviticus was “to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean . . . .” (Leviticus 10:10) [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 168-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. See, e.g., Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 4, 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Graeme Goldsworthy’s work “According to Plan” has played a central role in my thinking and the preparation of this material. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Graeme Goldsworthy, Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Schreiner, the King in His Beauty, 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 190-191. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Goldsworthy, According to Plan, 184-186. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Thomas L. Constable, Dr. Constable’s Notes on 1 Chronicles, <http://www.soniclight.com> (quoting David M Howard, Jr., An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books, p. 231). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Thomas L. Constable, Dr. Constable’s Notes on 1 Chronicles, <http://www.soniclight.com> (quoting David M Howard, Jr., An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books, p. 231). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 194-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Schreiner, The King in His Beauty, 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)