



# The Big Picture

## Lesson 4: The Story Of The Bible (Part 2)

The first three major periods of the Bible story have brought us to a time when everyone in the nation of Israel did what was right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25). During this time there was no king in Israel. Instead, God had delivered His people from their oppression through the judges. Once again, we have seen two of God's promises to Abraham be fulfilled. He had made a great nation out of Abraham's descendants and given them the land of Canaan. But, there is still one more promise that must be fulfilled. This was God's promise to bless all nations of the earth through Abraham's Seed. Before that happens, though, we learn more about God's dealings with His people during the Old Testament times.

**The united kingdom.** Samuel was the last of Israel's judges. During this time, when Samuel was old, the older men in Israel gathered together and came to Samuel, demanding that Israel have a king. They said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5). This thing did not please Samuel or God. Yet, God told Samuel to listen to their request. God did this because He said that they had rejected Him as King over them. During this time, God would now appoint one man as king over all the nation of Israel. There were three kings during this time. The first king was Saul. He was from the tribe of Benjamin and was a very tall man. The early part of his reign as king saw some success, but he eventually let his own pride get in the way. And, God removed him as king. Next, God chose a man after His own heart to replace Saul. This was David. Even as a young man, David demonstrated great faith in God so as to go against a giant warrior of the Philistine army named Goliath and won the battle with the help of God. During this time, the kingdom thrived – especially before David committed sin with a woman named Bathsheba. After David's death, his son, Solomon, became king over Israel. Solomon was, perhaps, best known for his great wisdom and wealth. There was no one on earth wiser or wealthier. Then, the most important accomplishment of Solomon's reign was his work to build a temple for God's people to worship God and offer their sacrifices (prior to this time, the tabernacle was used).

**The divided kingdom.** Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was next in the line of kings over Israel. And, for a time, he reigned over a united kingdom. However, Rehoboam listened to the advice of some young men instead of the older men when there was a question about taxes. The people of Israel wanted relief from the burden, but Rehoboam chose to put an even greater burden on them. This caused a split in the kingdom. The ten northern tribes of

Israel rebelled against King Rehoboam, while the two tribes in the south remained. The northern kingdom would be called “Israel,” and the southern two tribes would be called “Judah.” Rehoboam continued as king over Judah, while Jeroboam became king over Israel. Over time, there were 20 kings over Israel and 20 kings over Judah. During this time, every king that Israel had was evil in the sight of God and did not keep God’s commandments. And, most of Judah’s kings were also evil in God’s sight. There were few exceptions.

**Captivity and return.** The story of God’s dealings with His people in the Old Testament teach us that whenever people do not obey God, He punishes them. Once again, we see this whenever God used two nations to punish Israel and Judah for their wickedness. Because there were no good kings in Israel, the nation of Israel went into captivity first. They failed to please God throughout the time they were divided from Judah. As a result, the kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians. For a short time, Judah was alone after Israel fell. But, they also fell. God used the Babylonians to punish them and take them into captivity. During this time of captivity is when you learn the story of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. After being in captivity for 70 years, a small part of Judah returned to their land after it had been destroyed by the Babylonians. There were three groups of Jewish people who returned. One group was led by Zerubbabel. One group was led by Ezra. And, one group was led by Nehemiah.

With this time of return, the Jews were scattered throughout the world, with only a few having returned to their homeland. The Old Testament closes with this period of time, promising that God would be silent (Amos 8:11). This period of silence lasted about 400 years until the time of the New Testament.

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# Study Questions:

1. What did God's people demand to have rule over them?
2. Who were the three kings over the united kingdom?
3. Who was king whenever the kingdom divided?
4. What were the two kingdoms called?
5. How many kings reigned over each one?
6. Why did God send these kingdoms into captivity?
7. What kingdom defeated Israel? What kingdom defeated Judah?
8. How long was Judah in captivity? Who led them out of captivity?

## Memory Verse:

“[A]ccording to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord”  
(Ephesians 3:11).

**Draw a picture of the lesson you learned about:**