

## **Epic: United Kingdom**

1 Sam 3; We're in the middle of a series that's intended to refresh your memory about all that's *happened* in God's work of redemption, and your love for the One who did it  
Thus far covering Creation, Fall, Flood, Patriarchs, Egyptian Sojourn, Desert Wandering, and the time of Conquest & Judges; Which brings us to the . . .

### **United Kingdom**

And I'm not talking about Great Britain; I'm talking about the *glory* days of Israel; The part where Bruce Springsteen plays his song and we all have an '80s party  
These were the glory days; From . . .

#### **Time Period – 1050-931BC**

**(Key People – Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon)**

**(Key Places – Land of Israel (Canaan))**

**(Main Events – Saul's Rejection, David's Anointing, Goliath's Defeat, David's Sin, Solomon's Temple)**

And it didn't start well; The time of the Conquest & Judges ended with no judge, no king, and no order; Everyone did what was right in their own eyes (Jg 21:25)

In fact, it says in 1 Sam 3:1, that – *the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision*. IOW God was largely silent

But it didn't stop him from calling a young man named Samuel to lead the Israelites as prophet, priest, and judge all in one; And he did; And led well

And eventually appointed a man named *Saul* as Israel's first king

Not that it was a *good* thing – it wasn't

But the people wanted it; They wanted an earthly king like all the other nations

So God relented, and let them suffer the consequences of getting exactly what they wanted; And sure enough, Saul began to disobey and lead the people astray

➤ So God made plans to remove him by secretly anointing a boy named David to take his place; The same David who defeated Goliath in that famous duel

The result of which, was praise and admiration from the *people*, and *hate* from Saul; So much so, that he began pursuing him to kill him

So David ran, until he finally became king when Saul was killed in battle

And under David's leadership, the nation was *united*; Hence the United Kingdom

It flourished, expanded its borders, and enjoyed much security for 33 years

And then flourished for 40 more under Solomon's leadership, his son

But that doesn't mean it was a walk in the park; David sinned greatly during this time, and so did Solomon; But God used them nonetheless

And therein lies the first of his purposes (**God's Purposes**)

**To show that his ways are not our ways**

That's purpose #1; Just like God said through Isaiah, 300 years later; *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD*. (Is 55:8)

And he shows it during this time period, in 4 main ways

**1. By rejecting Saul, despite his prowess**

1 Sam 15:24-26; The Bible says that Saul was more *handsome* than anyone else, and *taller* than everyone else

And it showed; He was powerful in battle, and people followed him

But that didn't stop God from rejecting him when he went astray

*[24] Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.*

*[25] Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me [to the rightful place of worship that is] that I may bow before the LORD."* *[26] And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."*

Despite his prowess and religious posturing, God rejected Saul; B/c God doesn't care what you *do*, if you don't do what he says

Obedience is better than sacrifice the Bible says, and certainly better than prowess

So God rejected him; It's the first way we see that God's ways are not our ways

2<sup>nd</sup>, he shows us the same . . .

**2. By looking on David's heart, not his appearance**

1 Sam 16:6-7; After rejecting Saul, God tells Samuel to get over to Jesse's place and find *another* king; So he did, by reviewing his sons; And it says in 1 Sam 16:6-7 . . .

*When they came, he looked on Eliab [Jesse's oldest son] and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him."* *[7] But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."*

Man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart

And sure enough, after scrutinizing 6 more of Jesse's sons, they finally brought in David, the runt; And as soon as Samuel saw him, the Lord told him he was the one

B/c in God's eyes, the heart matters more than the height; Or the looks; Or the talent; Or anything else we can measure and tend to value

Third, God showed that his ways are not our ways . . .

**3. By using David's weakness, to overcome opposition**

Referring to his victory over the giant Goliath, with nothing but a slingshot and stone

He couldn't even wear *armor* he was so small and weak (1 Sam 17)

And yet God used him to not only conquer Goliath, but the Philistines as a whole

B/c the battle is the Lord's; And he saves not by might, nor by power, but by his Spirit (Zech 4:6); Just like he does now; Just like he does with you

*For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. [27] But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; [28] God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, [29] so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. (1 Cor 1:26-29)*

God uses the weak to overcome the strong, so that we won't boast in ourselves, and steal his glory

And then 4<sup>th</sup>, God showed that his ways are not our ways . . .

#### 4. By blessing David's efforts, despite his sin

David committed adultery with a woman whose husband was at war, and then had him murdered by intentionally placing him in harm's way (2 Sam 11)

And then, later on in his life, after suffering the *consequences* of his sin in the death of his child and the strife of his family . . .

He took a census in 2 Sam 24, to selfishly measure the expanse of his kingdom and offset his lack of trust in God; And was punished again

But in spite of all that, God continued to bless him

We would have written him off at adultery; And murder, for sure

But not God; He looks on the heart

And David was a man after *God's* own heart the Bible says (Acts 13:22)

➤ Did he sin? Yes; But he also repented, and wanted what God wanted  
So instead of casting him aside, God refined him; And continued to use him; And bless him; And he'll do the same with you, if *you* repent; And hunger and thirst after him  
And burn with a passion for the Lord; And strive for holiness; He'll use you/bless you

You see, God's not looking for *perfect* people – he well knows he'd come up short

Rather, he's looking for repentant people; People who want what *he* wants, despite their failures from time to time

People after his *own* heart, and whose hearts are completely his (**Summary**)

His ways are not our ways; That's the first of God's purposes here

The 2<sup>nd</sup>, was . . .

#### To establish the Davidic Covenant

Part of the framework of covenants God used to accomplish his work of redemption – the

Davidic Covenant was God's promise to David, that someone from his lineage . . .

Would rule and reign over his people, forever; And it's found in 2 Sam 7:11-16

God is speaking to David here, through the prophet Nathan; And after saying that he would make for him a great name (9b), he says in v11b . . .

[11b] *Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house* [a dynasty, a kingdom].

And notice, as we continue on – there's both a near-term perspective, and a long-term

As with so many biblical prophecies

[12] *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.*  
That's a near-term perspective

And now a long-term – [13] *He* [this offspring of David's] *shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

Whoa! That's long-term; And far beyond what a normal son or offspring could do

[14] *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.*

Another indicator that something's up here; And according to Heb 1:5, it refers explicitly to *Jesus*; Something David couldn't have imagined

And now back to the near-term perspective

[14b] *When he commits iniquity* [as Solomon did, David's immediate offspring], *I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men* [just like Jesus received when he took on iniquity], [15] *but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you* [that's both near/long term].

[16] *And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.*'''

➤ When you see words like *forever* in the Bible, with no conditions or qualifications, something's up; And here, it's an everlasting kingdom, called the Davidic Covenant  
God's promise to David, that someone from his lineage would rule and reign over God's people, forever and ever (2 Sam 23:5)

Which is why Matthew and Luke in the NT, go to such great lengths in their genealogies, to connect Jesus to David

Because if he's not from his lineage, he's not the true Messiah; He's not the one to rule and reign over all

But in fact, they show that he *is* from the line of David, with all the right connections . . .

And therefore the legitimate heir to the everlasting throne, promised right here in 2 Sam

A throne from which he rules as we speak; A throne in our *hearts* as Lord of our lives;

And a throne to come, over the whole world

All the result, of God's purpose 3000 years ago, to establish a covenant, and accomplish his epic work of redemption

That's the 2<sup>nd</sup> purpose of this time period; The 3<sup>rd</sup>, was . . .

#### To build a house of worship

Referring of course, to the temple; The brainchild of David, and the legacy of Solomon – he built a **temple**; 7 years in the making, and ornate beyond belief

It had carvings of angels, palm trees, flowers; And gold upon gold

Leaving no doubt that it was intended to be . . .

#### 1. A place of permanence

Up to this point, their place of worship was a tabernacle – a tent; Literally

Something they took down and set up every time they moved

No more; Not with the temple; It was bigger, better, stronger – and more permanent

Second, it was . . .

#### 2. A place of fame

A means to make God and his “awesomeness” known to the world

In 1 Kings 5:5, Solomon says – *I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God*; That is, a place to bring him fame; A place to carry his label

Like the “Iwireless Center”; Or Wrigley Field; Or Kinnick Stadium

Those places bring fame to a person or company; And so too, did the temple in

Solomon's day; It brought fame to God

Third, it was . . .

#### 3. A place for God to dwell

After the temple was finished, Solomon said to God in **1 Kings 8:13** – *I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.*

Not that a temple made by human hands could *contain* God; It couldn't

Solomon said as much later on— *Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!* (1 Kings 8:27)\*\*\*\*\*

But it was a place where God dwelt, and *manifested* his presence nonetheless

Fourth, the temple was . . .

#### **4. A place of grace**

A place that God's people could offer sacrifices, and receive the grace of forgiveness

A place where they could get *right* with God, and receive the grace of reconciliation

A place where they could go, and experience the grace of his presence

A place that they could leave — *joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had shown* them (1 Kings 8:66)

It was a place of grace; A place to experience the unmerited favor of “God with us”

Fifth, the temple was . . .

#### **5. A place of praise**

A place to *exalt* the Lord; That's why the Psalms were originally written — to help the people give expression to their praise; Much like songs in our day do

Solomon built a house; Intended to be a place of permanence, fame, dwelling, grace, and praise (**Summary**)

➤ But God also *warned* Solomon, and those who came after him, that he would withdraw his presence and blessing, and *destroy* the temple . . .

If they didn't keep his commandments and worship him *alone* (1 Kings 9:1-9)

And they didn't; So he did; God destroyed the whole thing; Using the Babylonians in 586BC

(**2 Chron 36:19**) — *They burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its palaces with fire and destroyed all its precious vessels.*

He destroyed it

➤ But he didn't destroy his promise to dwell with his *people*\*\*\*\*\*

He just moved in; To our hearts

So that now, we are his temple; *We* are the dwelling place of God; Individually *and* corporately

That's what **1 Cor 3:16** says; Speaking to the church, the Apostle Paul said . . .

*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*

And later on (1 Cor 6:19), *do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?*

It is; *We* are his temple now; *We* are his dwelling place — as a church, *and* as individuals; *We* are the place of God's grace; And fame; And permanence

So God didn't *abandon* his promise, he just changed the location\*\*\*\*\*

And he continues to build more — *more* people, more temples in whom to dwell; And more churches, as houses of worship

All of which begs for a response of . . .

#### **Our Response — Reverence and awe**

Just like in their day; God's presence within us ought to evoke feelings and expressions of reverence and awe, every single day

Awe of God's way — using the weak to defeat the strong, and the foolish to confound the wise

Awe of his *insight* into our hearts and souls; Awe of his *forgiveness* despite our sin

Awe of his *mercy* to withhold what we deserve; Awe of his *grace* to use us anyway

And awe of his *fulfillment* to raise up a king from David's lineage, who rules and reigns both there (heaven) and here

Our response should be one of awe, and reverence

Reverence for the One who dwells *within* us, and reverence for the One who dwells *among* us; *For where 2 or 3 are gathered in my name, there am I also* (Mt 18:20)

That's *our* response to all this — awe and reverence for all that God *is*, and all that he's *done*; *For from him and through him and to him are all things.* (Rom 11:36)

Refresh your memory, and renew your love

Pray — Do exactly that — refresh us with your presence; Revive our hearts with an outpouring of your Spirit; Renew our awe; And receive our worship Including our tithes and offerings