

Dr. Donald Fowler, Old Testament Backgrounds,

Lecture 16, Theology of Kingship

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This is Dr. Don Fowler in his teaching on Old Testament Backgrounds. This is session 16, Theology of Kingship.

Well, welcome back.

We are ready to start, I think, one of the most, at least for me, important parts of the course that I'm presenting to you. I say that because we desire to show how understanding the world of the Old Testament can help us understand the Biblical text, and we think that's honoring to God, and of course it also helps avoid confusing people. So, in our lecture this hour, and it may bleed over into the next video as well, we're going to be dealing with what I think is one of the most important of all background concepts, and that concept is kingship.

So, we pointed out to you last class period or last video, I should say, we pointed out to you that we err when we try to turn the book of Judges, that time period of Judges, into an ideal theocracy. And so, we're going to be sort of doing a little bit of a herky-jerky presentation. I'm hoping that you can comprehend this, but the presentation is designed to show you that as the narrative of the Biblical story unfolds in the historical books, that would be, of course, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and then 1st and 2nd Samuel.

The text has been moving us toward the concept of kingship as divine fulfillment. And so, yesterday, or in the previous video, I was pointing out to you how crucial it is to understand Judges correctly because while it isn't the only theology of Judges, I think one of the most important parts of Judges is teaching us this is what happens when two negatives occur. When there is no king, then everyone does what's right, and I mentioned to you that that was anarchy that resulted in anarchy.

The second problem, however, that Judges is presenting to us is the problem that the Israelites, or to use the terminology of the Old Testament itself, are truly a stiff-necked people. And when we read the Biblical text carefully, it becomes clear that not only is there a problem when you don't have a judge, a king, but secondly, there's a real problem when you don't follow the king that you have. And then I guess I could add a third one to it since it comes to my mind, and that's the problem that you have when the king that you do have is a bad king when he is someone who does not promote law and follow it and obey it and serve God.

This whole thing, at least in my judgment, has a lot of confusing things being said in our circles today, so I will see if I can put out in front of you a different paradigm for

how we think about this. My paradigm goes something like this: Kingship is an essential part of God's plan, going right back to the Garden.

The kingship phenomenon, when properly understood in the theology of the ancient world, is that the king is the unique servant of God. And that he is to rule on behalf of the God, or in the case of the ancient Near Eastern people, the gods, and he is to be a sacral being because he's serving the deities. So, what we see is that the model seems to replicate itself in the Old Testament because God is concerned with instituting kingship; it's part of a divine promise.

And so, as we get ready to look at that, I would like to point out to you a work that I have organized that goes like this. The whole law is ethical, this is a chart that was created by a colleague and friend of mine named Dick Averbeck, and then, of course, I have worked with it over the years and explained it as I see things fit. It reminds us of some simple principles that unite the Old Testament record and, I think, also unite the New Testament record.

So, what would that simple principle be? Well, one of the most important, by no means the only unifying factor of the Old Testament is covenant. Walther Eichrodt in his magnificent *Theology of the Old Testament*, taught that covenant was the center of the Old Testament. Most people think that Eich overstated that, but what we would say is that in the Old Testament narrative, there is a divine plan and that the narrative is recording the movement inexorably toward the fulfillment of that plan.

So, one of the characteristics of the divine plan is that God makes covenants and multiple covenants, and what we would propose is that the most important of those covenants was the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant is a covenant whose promises, in my opinion, the promises of the Abrahamic covenant give great cohesion to the rest of the entire Bible. And if we look at those promises, you can see that in the covenant, which is made and introduced in chapter 12, and then explicated in chapter 15, and then revisited in chapter 17, you can see that God promised in the covenant with Abraham four things that would accompany the covenant and its promises to Abraham and all of his descendants for the rest of history.

Those four promises are crucial in making sense of the Old Testament narrative story. So, what are those four? Well, in a sense, the promises that God made to Abraham concerning progeny go right back to Genesis 1 and 2 with things that God said to Adam. In Genesis 1 and 2, God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful, multiply, and fill up the earth.

When we go to Exodus chapter 1, the text tells us that the Israelites were fruitful, and they had multiplied, and they had filled up the land, all of which goes back to the statements that God made to Adam and Eve. But when they had filled up the land, it

tells us, of course, it's not the land that God had promised Abraham. So, what we see initially, therefore, is the connection between the promise of many children to Abraham, countless children, look up at the stars and count them, look at the sands of the sea, count the sand.

If you can do so, then you can count the number of descendants that God will bless Abraham with. So, he promised him children beyond count. Secondly, he promised Abraham land.

As a matter of fact, the land that God promised Abraham is a land that stretches all the way from up here in the north. I can come over here and show it to you on the screen. It stretched all the way from up here at the tip top of the Euphrates River, and it then went all the way down to the Brook of Egypt, which is right here.

So, God promised Abraham all that land. That promise about the land has led to a somewhat divisive interpretive conundrum for the church because, in antiquity, that never was literally fulfilled. Abraham never really inhabited that land, and his descendants inhabited it all the way up to the Euphrates only briefly.

So that has led to one of the interpretive challenges. Is God going to continue to fulfill that promise to the descendants of Abraham today? So, my point is that God did promise Abraham land, and those are the contours of the land, and so that's the second of his promises. The third promise, which I think is spectacular in its importance, because it reminds us that God did not promise Abraham a covenant as if the people of Abraham were the end of the story.

God promised Abraham a covenant so that Abraham and his descendants would be the proponents of the story. This is a very important point. Israel easily forgets this.

It was not chosen to be God's static covenant people. It was chosen to be God's dynamic covenant people. It was chosen to be a blessing to the nations.

As Isaiah said repeatedly in his book, Israel was to be a light to the nations. So this covenant that God made with Abraham that focused on the blessing to the nations, I believe, makes its way right into the New Testament because there is a very powerful sense in which the Israel we read about in Acts is indeed a light to the nations and that the gospel is being taken to the entire world. So, this third point is epochal in its importance, and the last of the four, and the one that God made in chapter 17, if my memory serves me correctly, is that God promised to Abraham that kings would come forth from him.

Now my understanding, therefore, is that as early as the Abrahamic covenant, kingship was a promise that God made to Abraham and a promise that would be fulfilled to Abraham's descendants, in particular to the nation of Israel. So, what I

suggest to my students is that these promises are at the core of subsequent covenants that God makes with the descendants of Abraham. Thus, for example, in the Sinaitic covenant, God is dealing in that covenant with land and progeny.

The way Exodus 1 begins is such that it's insinuating that God has kept his promise to Abraham. The land was fruitful; they were multiplied, and they filled up the land. But, of course, Exodus is reminding us it's the wrong land.

So, the accounts of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are chronicling the movement toward the land that God promised. So, the matrix of the Sinaitic covenant is the promises that God made to Abraham. And in particular, the promises of land and progeny.

And this is a complicated one, and I'm afraid I'm going to have to avoid this or we won't get our course done in the time we've allotted for it. But it's my thesis that Moses is the first king. And there's a lot of confusion about this, and it's complex.

So, all I can do is really just introduce the thought to you and then let the thought be. But I think Moses was the first king. I think there was a dynastic succession from Moses to Joshua.

But then I think because of Israelite disobedience, and then there was divine punishment when Israel was left to function without any leadership. So, the Sinaitic covenant, the famous Mosaic covenant, deals at its core with the promises that God made to Abraham. Then, of course, following that Sinaitic covenant, we have the Davidic covenant.

And, of course, in this covenant, God institutionalized dynastic succession through the line of David. So do be reminded that there was already a king before David, and he was a king whom God had chosen. But God never promised Saul, he never promised him dynastic succession.

So, it's not as if David was the first king. David is the king through whom God promised dynastic succession. Of course, that becomes a major factor in the New Testament since the gospel writers, especially Matthew and Luke, but also John, focus somewhat heavily on presenting Jesus as the son of David.

So, what my proposal to you is, then, that these three covenants, the Abrahamic, the Sinaitic, and the Davidic covenant, are three promises that embody the promises that God made to Abraham. And then they all find their fulfillment in the New Covenant. That is to say, they find their continuation and their fulfillment in the New Covenant.

In other words, the promise of progeny now is extended not just to the immediate region of Israel, such as taking the gospel to Nineveh in the person of Jonah, but now

it is embodied in the statement of Jesus that your descendants will be found in all the world. Jesus expanded the concept of progeny to reach the whole world. We read, therefore, about a land promise that can be understood to be both global and what Jesus promised us in the Gospel of John, that Jesus himself, in leaving the earth and going to the presence of his father, that Jesus himself is preparing a place for us.

So, I think that the land concept continues in the New Testament as a promise but is expanded to include the whole world, indeed, the next world as well. So, the third of those promises that he made to Abraham, progeny, land, and a blessing to the nations, therefore, finds its ultimate fulfillment in the New Testament because, indeed, the descendants of Israel in the person of all of those so-called Christian Jews, they take the gospel to the whole world. The book of Acts finds its fulfillment when Luke closes it by telling us, and thus we came to Rome.

It's as if Luke is telling us that by going to Rome, the gospel is now positioned to go to the entire world. So, the last of those promises, the kingship promise, is fulfilled in the sense that Jesus is presented in all the gospels, and indeed, Jesus is identified throughout the epistles as well in royal terms. And even in a sense, the apostles can be understood to be individuals who are doing the will of the king.

And when you read a book like Acts, it reminds us that the 12 disciples were preoccupied with the promise of Jesus that each of them would rule over a tribal area. So, Acts presents Jesus in some strong colors as the king of Israel. So that is a very quick walk through the entire Bible, but it's a walk that is designed to show you that I think these four promises provide important direction and structure for the narrative section of the rest of the Bible.

And what I would propose to you is that kingship is one of those four. And it's important to me, therefore, to make the point to you that kingship is not a second choice or an inferior choice that is made in 1 Samuel 8. Kingship is actually the fulfillment, the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, and will find its ultimate fulfillment in the person of Christ himself. So, with that in mind, we will go back to our notes in 1 Samuel 8. Well, actually, we'll go back in our notes.

In my class notes, Judges comes to an end. I should tell you, just as a matter of fact, I'm not teaching OT survey, so I'm trying to fight myself from teaching you Old Testament survey while I'm trying to teach you backgrounds. The two stories at the end of the book of Judges, there are strong indicators that these two stories on a chronological line occurred at the beginning of Judges.

But they're tagged on at the end of Judges to prepare you in part for the theological apostasy that we will read about in 1 Samuel 1-5, as well as the choice of the first king of Israel from the tribe of Benjamin. So you might remember in the gruesome

story—probably the most gruesome story of the entire Old Testament—that the Levite has a concubine, and she flees him. She goes to Bethlehem.

He goes to get her. They're traveling back to his home in Benjamin. They stop at Gibeah, Jerusalem.

They're going to stop at Jerusalem. They stop at Gibeah, and there, the Levite's concubine is murdered and sexually abused. The Levite cuts her into 12 pieces.

He sends a section of her body to every tribe so that each tribe has a gruesome reminder that a terrible crime has been committed. They need to come together to punish the tribe of Benjamin. Well, you might remember that Benjamin, in that great civil war, was wiped out so that only a few hundred men were left, a few hundred women were left, and men.

As a matter of fact, wives had to be procured from them from the other tribes. Having said all of that, it's probably not an accident that the tribe of Benjamin is wiped out, or virtually wiped out. When we get to the book of 1 Samuel and the first king is chosen, then Saul is from the tribe of Benjamin.

It seems as if the prominence of the site of Gibeah, which is Saul's hometown, and the fact that Saul is a Benjamite, that those factors are being arranged to prepare us for the record of the monarchy. If you're with me up to that point, I'd like to start, if I may, with the beginning of 1 Samuel. As we get to the choice of the first king in 1 Samuel 8, the elders of Israel come to Samuel and announce to Samuel that they want a king.

And Samuel understands their request as sinful. God agrees that their request is sinful, and so, nonetheless, God agrees that they will have a king. And so, the average understanding of this passage, at least in many circles, is that kingship is bad, but God agreed to it only because God knew, ultimately, that the king of Israel, named Jesus, would come from that line.

So, what I'm going to do is take 20 minutes or so and walk you back through the contents of 1 Samuel 1 to show you that 1 Samuel 1 and the following chapters, before you get to chapter 8, are important material before we start trying to interpret chapter 8 and the request for a king. So, what we have in 1 Samuel 1 is the record telling us how Samuel came to be a leader in Israel, how God chose him, and how he was raised in the Tabernacle. And so, one of the things that's so interesting about 1 Samuel is that we just went through the entire... well, we didn't go through the book, but if we had gone through the entire book of Judges, you would have seen the tabernacle isn't mentioned even once.

Now, 1 Samuel starts out not only with the tabernacle, but the tabernacle is being showcased. We find out in the Tabernacle that there is a high priest, and we find out that that high priest's two sons, Eli, I mean Hophni and Phinehas, are utterly corrupt. While Eli himself seems to be a decent man, Hophni and Phinehas are utterly corrupt.

You see, this is telling us, friends, that the answer to Israel's problems is not the priesthood because what we're reading about is the priesthood is corrupt. His sons are corrupt, and Eli does nothing about it. So, we come to find out, if you remember our discussions on the sacred marriage and how that sexual act was designed magically to create fertility, well, Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are engaged in sexual activities with women who would come to worship at the tabernacle.

Well, that's clearly Canaanite fertility practices being conducted by two important priests who are appointed or stationed at the tabernacle. This is outrageous, and yet Eli does nothing about it. Well, the text is telling us, therefore, that things in 1 Samuel—let me make the point.

If I move, I might be able to catch your attention. I think the effect of what it's pointing out to us is, if possible, that things in 1 Samuel 1:1-3 are even worse than judges. Because what we read about in 1 Samuel 1:1-3, that is, chapters 1-3, what we read is that the very tabernacle, the tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, has been turned into a Canaanite religious sanctuary.

This is not acceptable, and it cannot be tolerated. So, we also read that the Philistines are pressing in upon the tribe of Benjamin.

Perhaps I would need to show you in our map area where the tribe of Benjamin is at. So, the tribe of Benjamin, if you find the top of the Dead Sea, and then you just draw an east-west line, here's Jerusalem. Well, the tribe of Benjamin is a small tribe that makes up that area.

That's where Benjamin is. What we read is that in the central hill country where Benjamin is, and not only Benjamin but Judah and Ephraim, the Philistines are pressing in to the absolute core of Israel, and the Israelites are, in fashion like judges, sort of crying out. So, the Israelites are crying out, and Hophni and Phinehas conceive of a plan to deliver them from their enemies.

In the Book of Judges, when they cry out, God delivers them. Here, Hophni and Phinehas take things into their own hands. They take the Holy Ark of God and, in a Canaanite religious fashion, turn it into a magical totem. So, it's nice to know that if you're going to laugh at my art, I won't have to hear it.

I'm going to put the Israelite military formation into three military units because that's oftentimes the way they formed their military units. So, I'm going to put it into three military units like this. What we know from both Canaanite and Egyptian sources is that when they went into battle, the religious functionaries and priests would be out here, and they would be out front carrying a religious statue of their deity.

If I had time, I would show you an example of this from Egyptian art. We know this was done, and when you go to the prophet Amos, Amos reminds us in the 5th chapter. Amazingly, in the 5th chapter, he reminds us that this is what the Israelites did when they were marching through the wilderness. In their gross idolatry, the Israelites were doing the same thing.

Well, Eli and Hophni copy this pagan model, except instead of a statue of God, they carry the ark in front of them. But the ark serves the purpose of being the image of a god, and so they go into battle. This is so horrendous that I just feel compelled to pause and say this again for effect. First of all, they were practicing Canaanite sexual fertility things in the Tabernacle.

Secondly, they're practicing Canaanite religious activities for warfare. This is worse than judges. And so, they go into battle, and not surprisingly, God does not assist them.

The battle is lost. The Israelites are routed. Hophni and Phinehas are killed in battle.

And when Eli hears the news back at the tabernacle, he falls over backward, breaking his neck, and dies. It is in this unbelievably horrific situation that Israel asks for a king. Now, in the imagery, it is the ark that goes into captivity, but God is making the theological point to Israel that he is the king, and so the biblical text makes a big point out of the fact that God sends disease among the Philistines, and they become so afflicted with disease that they recognize that Israel's God is present in their midst through the ark, and they send the ark back to its own home.

So, ironically, God has gotten himself out of exile without any human help, and he returns to the tabernacle. Alright, that's a gruesome set of stories right there. And in those circumstances that I just described for you, what we have is the background for why the Israelites asked for a king.

My experience has been virtually universal. People come to 1 Samuel chapter 8 when the Israelites ask for a king, and they make a caricature of the request as if these people are wicked. Well, their request is sinful.

But it's not because kingship is bad. It's because they ask specifically. In our last tape, we talk with you about Deuteronomy 17, and how the Israelite king, Moses, wrote,

when you come into the land, and you ask like a king for all the other nations, like all the other nations, God warns them against that.

Well, when you read the exact words from 1 Samuel 8, the Israelites say to Samuel, give us a king like all the other nations. What made their request sinful was less asking for a king and more asking for a king like all the other nations. Now, to be sure, they're desperate.

The Philistines are knocking on their doors. They're totally disunited. They're at the absolute bottom of the barrel.

And rather than doing what we suggested in the previous video, simply repenting and then receiving God's blessing to assist them, instead, they take things into their own hands. Well, that is paganism. By taking things into their own hands, what they're really doing is just creating problems.

But the problem I'm submitting to you is not kingship. Kingship itself is the divine plan. So, one of the things that I promote to everybody I can get to listen to me is this simple statement.

If kingship is inherently evil, why did God agree to it? God not only agreed, but God went to great lengths to choose the first king. So, what I'm proposing to us is that when we understand kingship in the ancient Near East, it helps us be situated properly to interpret all of these things that revolve around kingship correctly. So, kingship was universally thought of in positive terms.

Now, the reason why that was the case was because kings in the ancient Near East were seen to be men whom the gods had chosen. And so, as long as the king chose to be a faithful king to the deity, then it was a good thing. Kingship was dangerous, however, if you're going to do it like all the nations around you.

And so, therein is the core of the problem. So, that's one set of comments. Let me take you to a second set of comments before we return to our notes in my class notebook for you.

What would that be? The people come to Samuel, and they say to Samuel, give us a king. Let me turn to the passage exactly. So, they come to Samuel, and they say in chapter 8, verse 1 that Samuel was old.

It came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. Now, that little verse can easily escape our attention because Samuel can be accused of creating kingship for himself by appointing his sons to be leaders who automatically followed him. So, he appointed his sons judges over Israel.

In verse 2, the firstborn's name was Joel, and the second one's was Abiyah, and they were judging in Beersheba. His sons, however, did not walk in his ways but turned after dishonest gains, took bribes, and perverted justice. All right.

Once again, I marvel at how these verses, at least in all the times I've ever heard this discussed or presented, not so much in print, but presented in sermonically fashion, we just ignore verses 1 through 3 as if they weren't put first for the sake of emphasis. So, they're put there first because they identify three problems. One, Samuel is old and is going to die soon.

Two, Samuel has appointed his sons. Technically, he has no right to do that. And three, his sons are corrupt.

Those are important thoughts as we look at what follows. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, You have grown old. Your sons did not walk in your ways, now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations. Well, you'll notice that the specific reason that is stated is that Samuel is about to die, and they don't want to be stuck with his corrupt sons.

Those are two perfectly good reasons to want a change in leadership. So, they ask for him to appoint a king, and the text tells us that the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel. Walton in his wonderful textbook, *A Survey of Israel's History*, suggests that maybe Samuel's displeasure is because he saw himself as the next king.

After all, Samuel did appoint his sons to follow him. Whatever the case, lost in all of this discussion is the important but simple point that God makes in verse 7. Japheth said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you. So, at this point, God is saying to them, Give them a king.

Well, why would that be? I can't say with absolute certainty, but I can say to you that I think it's because kingship is essential for God to keep his promises to Abraham and the descendants of Abraham. Alright, that was a long walk through the information, but let me tell you now what's wrong with kingship like all the other nations. When we read the following verses in Samuel, Samuel warns them straightforwardly about what kingship, like all the other nations, will mean.

And he gives them four warnings. There would be a standing army consisting of draftees and professional warriors and aristocrats. Let's just have me read verses 11 through 12.

This will be the procedure, the manner of the king who will reign over you. He will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen, and they will run before his chariots, and he will appoint for himself commanders of

thousands and fifties. In other words, what he's warning them about is that there will be a standing army that your sons will have to become a part of.

Secondly, he warned them in verse 14 that a king would confiscate the people's land and give it to his king's servants. For eight or ten tapes here, I've been mentioning to you that the common practice in Mesopotamia was that the king owned all the land. Well, who's the king of Israel? It's God.

In Israelite tradition, God is the king; God owns all the land, and the land is only loaned out and can't be sold. Well, Samuel warns them that the ancient Near Eastern tradition of kingship is that the king will steal their land and use it to buy loyalty from servants. See the story of Ahab and Naboth as Ahab steals his vineyard.

Third, Samuel warns them in verses 15 and 17a that the king will impose heavy taxes on them. Standing armies are expensive, royal palaces are expensive, and building an administrative infrastructure is expensive. The last thing he warns them about is here in 1 Samuel 8 that he will force them to perform corvée labor.

So, here's what this means: we don't have a lot to go on this tape, so we'll start winding it down slowly. Corvée labor is something that can happen in a farm economy. So, here's what corvée labor is.

In ancient Israel, you remember now that Israel can be farmland that's 3,000 feet high, and it can be farmland that's actually below sea level. But normally, in Israel, farming begins in late February or early March when the ground is plowed. And then after being plowed, they would try to get the seed in as quickly as they could so that they could still catch on to the latter rains.

The latter rains is the term to describe the rainfall that occurs in what we call spring. To them, that's the latter rain because the early rains are the rains that occur in late October and November. So getting the seed in the ground in time to become wet with the latter rains is crucial because then that helps the seed germinate.

If you put your seed in the ground and it's not wet, your seed won't germinate. Or it won't germinate very well. So, they would put their seed in the ground.

Then the crops would come up. They would till their crops. And then sometime in May, they would harvest their crops.

Well then, in that scenario, you can plainly see that in what we call the summer months of June, July, August, September, they're done. So corvée labor was a phenomenon when once their crops were done, the king could then force them into working for him all summer. And for four months a year, they would become slave laborers, so to speak.

Well, these are the four things that God warned them about because all four of these are the things that kings, like all the nations around them, do. God warned them about these four things. When you read the biblical text, Solomon violated all four of these things repeatedly.

So what God was doing was trying to warn the Israelites, now that you're finally ready to receive a king, now that you're finally ready to follow a king, let me warn you about what kind of a king you might get. And so, God warns them because God does not want a king like all the other nations. For one thing, theologically in the tradition of Israel, a king is really only a substitute for God.

God is literally the only king of Israel, and Israel's king is just a vassal or a substitute. So, with this having been said, I hope to have given you a plausible unfolding of the point explaining the choice of a king; however imperfect that choice came about, is actually part of the narrative's way of showing us that God is unfolding the divine plan that he promised to Abraham, and God is going to give them great kings. So, with that in mind, we have been given a defense of the monarchy.

So, with that in mind, I can tell you that we are ready to begin what is called the United Monarchy, a short period stretching from 1050 to 931, which consisted of three subsequent reigns.

The reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon are presented in the biblical text almost as if they fulfill God's promises to Abraham. So, whether God's promises to Abraham are actually being fulfilled or not, it is the golden period in Israelite history.

This is the time when Israel ruled at its only and greatest extent. So, as we look at kingship, and we look at the reign of Solomon in particular, I have listed for you a number of qualities of Solomon's rule that characterized the violation of kingship. Solomon is pictured, and it doesn't start out that way, but he is pictured as the quintessential king like all the other nations.

Look at the list that I have given us here. One is political alliance with foreign nations by marriage. We all know that at least 300 of Solomon's thousand wives were diplomatic marriages.

This may have been a functional, maybe even brilliant, way of webbing treaty alliances with surrounding nations, but from a biblical perspective, it came at a very high cost because when you entered into a treaty with another nation, there was a mutual acceptance of each other's gods. Secondly, there are tendencies toward religious syncretism in an effort to appease both the Canaanite and Hebrew populations in Palestine. Syncretism is a fancy word that merges completely different things like this into one entity.

What Solomon had was a political problem, namely, since the Israelites did not exterminate the Canaanites, then there was a large population of Canaanites, not just Hebrews. That meant, in order to follow the middle road, Solomon needed to create practices that were acceptable to both the Canaanites, or he thought he needed, and the Hebrew population. So, participation in both the Hebrew religion and the Canaanite cults of Baal and other deities became the order of the day.

The quality of Solomon's kingship was not the purity of the worship of the Lord but the admixture and intermixing of these two religions under the flag of the state. Third, the geographical realignment of Israel into 12 administrative districts in an attempt to ease old tribal boundaries and loyalties. What we mean by this third point is this.

Solomon was nothing if not brilliant. Sometimes, however, brilliant people think they're smarter than what they are. Solomon recognized that the terrible problem for three centuries in judges, the terrible political problem was tribalism.

So, Solomon took the old 12-tribe format and changed it so that there are 12 administrative districts, but when you look at the borders of the districts, you see that the districts are not along tribal lines. As a matter of fact, the districts that Solomon created seem to be chosen in order to obliterate the tribal lines. So, his 12 districts are not tribal but are actually gerrymandering in modern politics designed to dismantle power structures.

Fourth, there was the proliferation of state bureaucracy. Oh, my goodness. Let me explain the text to you.

Solomon's palace took twice as long to build as the temple. Solomon fed thousands of people every day. In fact, the bureaucracy and wealth were such that if you count up the number of times the word gold appears in the reign of Solomon, the word gold appears more in the chapters about Solomon's rule than it does in all of the 1st and 2nd Kings combined.

So, bureaucracy has to be paid for, and there it comes gold. Fifth, lavish building projects that required slave labor among both the non-Hebrew and Hebrew residences. Now, what we know is when we read the text carefully, Solomon literally enslaved the Canaanites, whereas he just forced the Hebrews to perform corvée labor as I described to you.

But nonetheless, Solomon forced all of his subjects to serve the state. Sixth, there was an influx of pagan political and religious ideology in Jerusalem as a result of international trade and commerce. Solomon was an internationalist, and

internationalism meant that one must be sophisticated and embrace other ideologies.

Solomon was all too quick to do that. Lastly, the revolt of satellite states of Solomon's military power waned with the ensuing loss of foreign tribute as revenue compensated for by increased taxation of the Israelites. So, what this point is being made is to say that Solomon's kingdom would collapse almost identically to the way the other over-centralized kingdoms all did.

All of these kingdoms of antiquity were over-centralized because that's the danger that kingship has. Solomon's was a top-heavy bureaucracy. And so when Solomon dies, and people can see that he's going to die because he becomes like Samuel, old, then his empire falls apart quickly.

So, as we finish this tape today, we're making the point it became exactly what God said that he did not want and would not accept. It became not kingship but kingship like all the other nations. Therein was simply the transfer of tribalism as a bureaucratic phenomenon that doesn't work to kingship as a bureaucratic phenomenon that doesn't work.

So, with that, we'll say a few words. On the next tape, I'm going to show you some biblical evidence showing how God made predictions throughout Genesis and so on about kingship. And then, we'll turn our attention to the divided monarchy.

Thank you for your attention.

This is Dr. Don Fowler in his teaching on Old Testament Backgrounds. This is session 16, Theology of Kingship.