

Old Testament History, Literature, and Theology

From Solomon to Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Ahab, Elijah, and Messianic Prophecies

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Abstract

This lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt examines the historical split of the Hebrew monarchy following Solomon's apostasy into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. It details the spiritual decay of the northern kingdom under rulers like Jeroboam I and Ahab, alongside the prophetic ministry of Elijah who challenged state-sanctioned Baal worship. Furthermore, the lecture highlights divine judgment, grace, and key historical dates, culminating in the intertestamental period and explicit fulfilled Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Ultimately, these narrative and prophetic threads demonstrate how earthly monarchical failures point toward Jesus Christ as the suffering and reigning King.

Outline

I. Review of Solomon's Apostasy and the Splitting of the Monarchy

- A. Contrast between Solomon's legendary wisdom and his foolish end
 - 1. Solomon turned his back on God through idolatry and foreign wives
 - 2. Folly and wisdom cross over when wise individuals ignore their counsel
- B. Divine judgment upon Solomon (1 Kings 11:11)
 - 1. God decrees the tearing away of the kingdom from Solomon's line
 - 2. Kingdom spared during Solomon's lifetime for the sake of his father David

II. Key Historical Dates and Chronological Framework

- A. 1000 B.C. – Reign of King David and establishment of the united monarchy
- B. 931 B.C. – Splitting of the kingdom into Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah) kingdoms
- C. 722 B.C. – Northern Kingdom (Israel) destroyed and exiled by Assyria (Nineveh)
 - 1. Scatters the ten northern tribes throughout the Assyrian empire
 - 2. Origin of Assyrian population swapping strategy to prevent rebellions
- D. 586 B.C. – Southern Kingdom (Judah) destroyed and exiled to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar
 - 1. Destruction of Solomon's Temple and 70-year Babylonian exile
 - 2. Preserved prophets like Jeremiah and exiles like Daniel and Ezekiel
- E. 400 B.C. – End of Old Testament prophecy with Malachi and onset of the 400 silent years

III. The Division of the Monarchy: Rehoboam vs. Jeroboam I

A. Rehoboam's foolish leadership choice in Judah (South)

1. Rejection of the elders' advice to practice servant leadership
2. Acceptance of young peers' advice to increase taxes and harshness ("scorpions")
3. Stoning of Adoniram the tax collector and the secession of the ten northern tribes

B. Jeroboam I's political and religious strategy in Israel (North)

1. Fear of losing political control if citizens worshiped in Jerusalem
2. Establishment of golden calves at Dan and Bethel ("teaching Israel to sin")
3. Archaeological discovery of the cultic high place at Dan

IV. Prophetic Rebukes of Jeroboam I

A. The Man of God out of Judah (1 Kings 13)

1. Long-term prophecy predicting King Josiah by name 300 years in advance
2. Refutation of critical theories regarding prophecy post-eventu
3. Short-term prophecy (splitting of the altar) confirming the long-term prediction

B. Prophetic announcement of death to Jeroboam's sick son upon his wife's return home

V. Dynastic Instability in the North vs. Davidic Continuity in the South

A. All northern kings evaluated as spiritually evil

B. Frequent assassinations and ending of northern dynasties (Nadab, Elah, Zimri)

C. Southern kingdom retains Davidic dynastic line, featuring select righteous kings (Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah)

VI. King Ahab, Jezebel, and the Rise of Baal Worship

A. Omri's geopolitical brilliance

1. Moving the northern capital to Samaria to control the Coastal Highway (Route 95)
2. External historical validation on the Mesha/Moabite Stone and Assyrian annals ("House of Omri")

B. Ahab's marriage to Jezebel of Phoenicia/Lebanon

1. Introduction of state-sponsored Baal worship
2. Nature of Baal worship: storm god ("rider of clouds"), temple prostitution, and moral corruption
3. Discovery of 12,000 Ugaritic tablets detailing Baal mythology

VII. Elijah's Confrontation on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18)

A. Ahab labels Elijah the "troubler of Israel" (projection of evil)

B. Showdown at Mount Carmel: 450 prophets of Baal vs. 1 prophet of Yahweh

1. Geography of Mount Carmel as prime ocean moisture/rain territory
2. Elijah's taunts and mockery of Baal at noon
3. Divine response: Fire from heaven consumes the drenched altar and sacrifice
4. Execution of the 450 false prophets of Baal

VIII. Elijah's Depressive Burnout and Restoration at Mount Sinai

- A.** Jezebel's death threat and Elijah's flight to Beersheba and Mount Sinai
- B.** Psychological dynamics of ministry burnout and "existential aloneness" following major victory
- C.** God's gentle restoration and Elijah's threefold final commission
 - 1.** Anoint Hazael as king over Syria
 - 2.** Anoint Jehu as king over Israel (to eliminate Ahab's dynasty)
 - 3.** Anoint Elisha as successor prophet (passing the prophetic baton)

IX. Naboth's Vineyard and the Concept of "Religious Evil" (1 Kings 21)

- A.** Ahab's sulking request and Naboth's righteous refusal to sell ancestral inheritance
- B.** Jezebel's orchestration of Naboth's execution using religious fasting and false witnesses (blasphemy law)
- C.** Elijah's proclamation of divine judgment on Ahab and Jezebel
- D.** Ahab's unexpected repentance and God's manifestation of Old Testament grace

X. Historical Transitions and Old Testament Messianic Prophecies

- A.** Intertestamental origins of the Samaritans through Assyrian intermarriage
- B.** Historical sequence of empires: Assyria -> Babylon -> Persia (Cyrus) -> Greece (Alexander) -> Rome
- C.** Cumulative Old Testament Messianic trajectory
 - 1.** Proto-evangelium (Genesis 3:15) – Seed of the woman crushing the serpent
 - 2.** Abrahamic Covenant – Global blessing through the seed
 - 3.** Davidic Covenant – Eternal throne of the Son of David (Ben David)
 - 4.** Malachi 4:5 – Prophesied return of Elijah before the Day of the Lord (fulfilled in John the Baptist)
 - 5.** Isaiah 7:14 & 9:6 – Virgin birth of Immanuel; Child called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God
 - 6.** Micah 5:2 & Zechariah 9:9 – Birth in Bethlehem; Triumphal entry riding on a donkey
 - 7.** Psalm 22 – "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
 - 8.** Isaiah 53 – The Suffering Servant (Messiah Ben Joseph)
 - a.** Substitutionary atonement and vicarious suffering
 - b.** Execution with the wicked (plural) and burial with the rich (singular, Joseph of Arimathea)
- D.** Conclusion: Old Testament trajectory culminates in the reign and salvation of Jesus Christ ("Joy to the World")