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Dear Associates and Friends,

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This month's article is the second on the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.¹ As you read you will be surprised that King David is an observer of the events that propel him to be king of all the twelve tribes of Israel. He reacts but is not proactive. As always, the brutality and inhumanity of people in those ancient times is stunning. David himself wrote: **"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."** (Psalm 51:5). Read "[Israel and Judah: 2. David as King.](#)"

However, is it much different today? In reality people have the same sinful flesh as they had back when Jeremiah said the heart of man was deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). In fact, Jeremiah said people in his day were even worse than in older days, including the time of David.

"And you have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, you walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me:

• *Jeremiah 16:12*

Jesus did not give any praise to the people in his day either:

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

• *Mark 7:21–23*

No, we are not superior to anyone else, whether individually, in our families, towns, cities, or countries. We all can be like beasts. In my lineage of ancestors I probably have as many "horse thieves" as your family has (and maybe still have). No one can have moral superiority over anyone for the reasons the apostle Paul makes clear in the first three chapters of the epistle to the Romans. **"For there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Romans 3:22–23). We sometimes forget that there was no versification in Greek. The phrase, **"For there is no difference"** is attached to what follows, not what came before in verse 22. The **"no difference"** emphasizes the facts that (1) all are sinners, (2) all fall far short of God's glory.

We read about the sins and falling short in the lives of ancient Israelites, yet this period in history of David and Solomon was considered to be a "golden age" of the united monarchy of Israel by later generations of Israelites and Jews. All human beings are the same to God, but they vary in good and evil in human reckoning.

When you read about all the horrific and brutal things that were done in ancient times, look to modern times. As I write this a Middle East organization lately being called "IS" (for "Islamic State"),² referring to a radical organization of Islamic believers who are attempting to carve out a country for themselves from which they can conquer the former Islamic lands, and probably the world.

This organization is horrendously vicious and deadly if you disobey their rules, their edicts, or are not a member of their Islamic sect, or worse, not Islamic at all. They do things to people similar to what are

¹ The first article in the series was "[Israel and Judah: 1. Saul and David.](#)"

² Some news people and government officials call the organization ISIL for "Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant," and some call it ISIS for "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria." Perhaps a shorthand terminology will be "Islamic State" or IS.

described in ancient times in the Bible and I will not go into detail. Such things have gone on throughout history. Look up the history of the Mongols, the Nazis, the Communists, and more recently the killing fields of Cambodia. Man's inhumanity to man grew worse after Cain killed Abel and became so intolerable that God had to wipe out all but 8 human beings in the flood. Many things, including evil will be similar to the time of Noah just before Christ returns (Matthew 24:38; Luke 17:26).

Lessons from Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles

When we read the narrative of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, keep in mind that these are repeated demonstrations of human failure. King David is a prime example of evil and good. He is even an example of the Messiah when David does acts of righteous judgment. In spite of David's sinful actions, God noted that David's heart was properly attuned to God.³ God put these people into the times they lived, in their situations. They acted in sinful (or at best less-than-righteous) ways.

On one level the flow of the story of the kings of Israel and Judah is about the Davidic line of the kingdom of Judah and the non-Davidic line of the kingdom of Israel/Samaria. We learn about the lives of the kings in both realms, the bad of Judah and the worse in the northern kingdom of Israel. Both received prophets, so they had no excuse. In fact, both kingdoms killed the prophets. The killing was led by the religious leaders, as Christ tells us, calling them several times a **"generation of vipers"** (Matthew 3:7, 12:34, 23:33; Luke 3:7):

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall you scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: ...

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that killed the prophets, and stoned them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not!"

• **Matthew 23:34, 37**

Thank You

As the world worsens, we continue to be extremely grateful for your financial support. However, I must report that contributions have been less than our expenses for the past three months. I know many of you have experienced similar situations in your own finances.

Therefore, I ask you who regularly learn from the ASK website, who have never contributed to ASK, to please begin to support us at this time, and on a regular basis. Others have been contributing for your benefit. Some are no longer able to do so due to circumstances that come with the frailties of age. It is time for you to step up and help provide for others. Many are your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Others of you have bought books from the ASK website and never commented or told us you appreciate the material you read, listen to, or watch. Others have told us they appreciate ASK and that the website is amazing, yet we never hear from such people again. Many of you are, to use an old internet term, "lurkers." A lurker is a member of an online community who observes, but does not actively participate. Therefore, I ask you to participate — now — to help us serve others who no longer can contribute for various reasons. Thank you.

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³ Samuel spoke to Saul, announcing to him that God would rip away Saul's kingship. Samuel was referring to David to be anointed as future king. Samuel later went to anoint David as future king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:1–14). Samuel spoke to Saul in 1 Samuel 13:14 (KJV):

"But now your kingdom shall not continue: YHWH has sought him a man after his own heart, and YHWH has commanded him to be captain over his people, because you have not kept that which YHWH commanded you."