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Dear Associates and Friends,

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“[Israel and Judah: 21. Good Kings, Bad Kings](#)” is the title of this month’s article. The texts “jump around,” but I arrange this article in a rough chronological order following the kingly line of Judah. Later texts of Kings discuss events that happen before earlier texts. The historical texts of Kings and Chronicles are not always chronological, and we should not impose our standards onto the text. But, texts can be moved around to clarify the narrative so Kings and Chronicles can inform each other.

### *Cast of Characters: Five Kings*

Off camera: Kings David, Solomon and Rehoboam of Judah have all died.

1. King Abijah begins this episode with his 3 year reign.
  2. King Asa begins his reign of 41 years, throughout the article time period.
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3. King Jeroboam of Israel is alive at the beginning of the article. His reign is ending.
  4. King Nadab of Israel inherits the throne from his father Jeroboam. He has a short reign, 2 years.
  5. King Baasha of Israel seizes the throne from Nadab, and rules for 24 years.

### *More Characters: One Seer, Three Prophets*

We encounter three “prophets” and one “seer” in this article. These terms and categories probably overlap, as we find in a passage about King Saul. There is a passage written later than the event, where the terms “prophet” and “seer” are equated:

“(Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of Elohim, he would speak thus, ‘Come and let us go to the seer’; for beforetime the prophet of today was called a seer.)”

• 1 Samuel 9:9

None of these prophets make any mistakes or lie (unlike in “[Israel and Judah: 20. Civil War and Division](#)”:

1. Ahijah the Shilonite (from Shiloh) prophesied to Baasha, King of Israel. Not much is known about Ahijah.
2. Hanani, a “seer,” rebuked King Asa of Judah and pointed out an error. The king was offended and imprisoned Hanani.
3. The prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani, pronounced doom on King Baasha of Israel, his dynasty and his entire family.
4. The prophet Azariah, son of Oded the prophet, encourages King Asa of Judah to continue his religious reforms against idolatry.

If you keep these people straight, your reading will be easier, the timeline on page 2 of the article will also help greatly. The texts of 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles are not as chronological as we might wish, not even in their own sequencing. In the topical storylines of Israel and Judah there are frequent overlaps and jumps from one storyline to another. It can be complex and it is easy to get lost in the weeds of the narrative. Work through the text and you will read a compelling story, and learn a great deal about God and His requirements.

God demands exclusivity of worship. That means only YHWH should be worshipped and not any other god. Other gods exist, but there is no allowance for anyone to worship them. Things like sacrifices and their proper procedure were (and are) less important than exclusivity of worship, and always has been with God. Here is a short list of passages that delineate what is important to YHWH:

**“To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to YHWH than sacrifice.”**

• *Proverbs 21:3*

**“YHWH is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and save such as be of a contrite spirit.”**

• *Psalms 34:18*

**“For you desire not sacrifice; else would I give it: you delight not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are**

**a broken spirit:**

**a broken and a contrite heart,**

**O God, you will not despise.**

**Do good in your good pleasure unto Zion: build you the walls of Jerusalem**

**Then shall you [God] be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon your altar.”**

• *Psalms 51:16–19*

These three verses describe King David’s attitude, even with his all imperfections. They describe his heart toward God, so that God called David to be King of a united Israel, as the apostle Paul tells us:

**“And when he had removed him [removed Saul as king], he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.’”**

• *Acts 13:22*

The attributes of David are not found in any other king, although some of the kings of Judah try hard and come close to his example. And, too, he was a flawed individual with serious sins that damaged his kingship, his kingdom, and the people he ruled suffered because of his mistakes.

The grand saga of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah is a tale of woe, suffering and destruction. It is an example to us of our frailty and inability to please God without His help. We have been blessed beyond our understanding by receiving God’s Holy Spirit, a seed, a *sperma*, within us that ensures God’s grace to clothe us with immortality upon Christ’s return. Until then ...

**“Everyone who is begotten of God is not doing sin, for His seed is remaining in him, and he can not be sinning, for he is begotten of God.”**

• *1 John 3:9*

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