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Bible Review

Kings‑Esther

Instructions: This is an open Bible, open note exam. Complete what you can from memory, and do the rest with your Bible and notes. Essays should be substantive and Include biblical references. The objective of this review is to create a learning experience.

Agree/Disagree

1.\_A\_\_1 Kings 1‑11 records the history of the United Monarchy under Solomon.

2.\_D\_\_It was in 966 B.C. that Solomon died and the United Monarchy divided into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

3.\_D\_\_The division of the monarchy was God’s judgment on Rehoboam for refusing to lift the heavy tax burden he had imposed on the people.

4.\_A\_\_The border between Israel and Judah was eventually established between Mizpah and Bethel.

5.\_D\_\_ Ahab, founder of a new Israelite dynasty, established a new capital in Samaria.

6.\_D\_\_When the Northern Kingdom fell to the Babylonians in 722 B.C., most of the citizens were exiled to Mesopotamia.

7.\_D\_. The writer of 2nd Kings makes it clear that the Northern Kingdom went into captivity because the people failed to keep the stipulations of the Abrahamic Covenant.

8.\_D\_. The people who occupied Israel after the fall of the Northern Kingdom became faithful worshipers of the God of Israel.

9.\_D\_. Elijah and Elisha ministered throughout the Southern Kingdom assisting the poor and the needy.

10.\_A\_\_In 701 B.C. the Assyrian army of Sennacherib surrounded and besieged Jerusalem.

11.\_A\_\_After a lengthy siege, Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians and the temple was destroyed in 586 B.C.

12.\_A\_The theological purpose of Kings is to show how each ruler functioned in relationship to God and his covenant responsibilities.

13.\_A\_\_The writer of Chronicles is concerned with Judah as a religious community and focuses on matters of the Temple, priesthood, and worship.

14.\_D\_\_The theme of Ezra is the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the renewing of the covenant.

15.\_A\_\_The book of Esther fits chronologically between the lst and 2nd returns of the exiles to Judah.

16.\_A\_\_Ahasuerus is the biblical name for Persian king Xerxes I.

17.\_A\_\_Nehemiah was the cupbearer of Artaxerxes, the king who decreed the return of Ezra and later the return of Nehemiah.

18.\_A\_\_The purpose of Ezra is to record the events of the 1st and 2nd returns to Judah in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer. 25:11, 29:10).

19.\_A\_\_The book of Esther is the only book in the Bible named after a Jewish woman.

20.\_D\_\_Since no religious service is prescribed in Esther, the feast of Purim is a non-religious celebration for the Jews.

The Restoration Period:

Prepare a chart identifying the date, leader(s), purpose and Scripture references for each of the three returns from exile.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Return from exile | Date | Leader(s) | Authorized by whom | Purpose | Scriptures |
| first | 537 B.C. | Sheshbazzar  Zerubbabel | Cyrus | Rebuild the temple | Ezra 1-6 |
| second | 458 B.C. | Ezra | Artaxerxes | Establish worship | Ezra 7-10 |
| third | 444 B.C. | Nehemiah | Artexerxes | Rebuild Jerusalem’s walls | Nehemiah |

Essays

1. Describe the primary role of Elijah and Elisha, and explain what their miracles accomplished in this regard.

The primary role of Elijah and Elisha was prosecuting attorneys in behalf of Yahweh, pointing out to the Israelites that Yahweh, not Baal, was God and they should have worshipped Yahweh alone. Elijah’s confronting the Israelites and the false prophets on Mount Carmel did exactly that (1 Kings 18) and Elisha also accused the Israelite King and his parents of worshipping Baal and following the false prophets (2 Kings 3:13).

According to the Ugaritic sources, Baal was worshipped by the Canaanites as a god who had control over fire, lightning, rain/water, fertility of soil (hence food), the gift of pregnancy, power of resurrection, healing and river. Through the miracles they performed by the power of Yahweh, Elijah and Elisha successfully demonstrated that Yahweh, not Baal, was the true Lord over all these precious gifts.

The chariots of fire (2 Kings 2:11 and 6:17) and the coming of fire from heavens on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:38) showed that Yahweh had control over fire. The restraining of rain for over three years (1 Kings 17:1) and Elisha’s healing the water at Jericho (2 Kings 2:19-22) proved that Yahweh had absolute control over the availability and quality of water.

The way how Elijah was fed at brook Cherith (1 Kings 17:6) and Elisha’s providing oil for the woman to pay her debts (2 Kings 4:1-6) made it clear that Yahweh was able to provide food. The healing of leprosy (2 Kings 5:13-27) and the parting of the river’s water (2 Kings 2:8-14) showed clearly that Yahweh, not Baal, had the power to heal and control the river.

Most importantly, the fact that an older Shunamite woman was blessed by Elisha with a son (2 Kings 4:16-17) demonstrated that the gift of progeny belonged to Yahweh. Furthermore, Elijah’s (1 Kings 17: 17-23) and Elisha’s (2 Kings 4:32-37) raising the dead, plus the resurrection of the dead bodies when they touched Elisha’s bones strongly revealed to Israelites that only Yahweh had the authentic power of resurrection.

The role of Elijah and Elisha in “pointing out to Israelites that Yahweh, not Baal, was God” was substantively fulfilled through all their miracles. That’s why Elijah continued to be highly respected by the Jews as a mighty prophet even until today.

2. Sketch or outline the history of the monarchy, the exile and the return, noting key dates and significant developments. (K. = kingdom; D.=Domination)

1050

1010

970

931

875

874

835

740

733-2

722

712

701

609

605

597

586

539

537

536

458

444

331

323

Saul United the K.

David Strengthened the K.

Solomon Enjoyed peace

Rehoboam

Jehoshaphat

Athaliah killed/ Ahaziah killed by Jehu

52 years’ reign of Uzziah/ Isaiah

Asked help from Assyrian, became vessal

Joined a revolt but failed

Hezekiel delivered by God from Sennacherib

55 years’ reign of bad King Manasseh causing God’s wrath

Josiah’s son as vessal

First exile

Second exile

Third exile

Jeroboam

Chaos with 5 kings

Ahab

Jehu

All evil kings

Invaded by Tiglad/some exiled

Samaria Fell

Assyrian Domination

Eygpt D.

Babylonian D.

Persian Domination

UNITED K.

DIVIDED KINGDOM

SOLITARY KINGDOM

CONFLICT

COOPERATION: Ahab’s daughter married Jehoshaphat’s son

First return: Sheshebazzar

build temple

second return: Ezra

third return: Nehemiah

South kingdom

North kingdom

Independence

70 years’ prophecy

Took members of royal family/ Daniel

Conquered Jerusalem, took Jehoiakin and 10000 Judeans/Ezekiel

2 ½ years’ siege, destroyed temple, exiled remaining Jews

Worship Gold Calf at Bethel and Dan

Omri: Founded capital Samaria

Married Jezebel / worship

Baal/ killed Yahweh’s prophets/ challenged by Elijah

3. Discuss several principles of leadership from the book of Nehemiah which are having an impact on you. Explain each principle and how it applies to you.

The first principle is “when facing a challenge, pray to God as the first reaction”. When Nehemiah heard that the wall of Jerusalem was broken (1:4-11), his first reaction was to pray to God. Similarly, when the so called prophets and prophetesses tried to frighten him, his first reaction was to pray to God for strength and judgment (6:12-14). This principle has been very important for me lately because I have been trying to introduce some positive changes to our church. There were members trying to warn me that I was not authorized to do those things and others trying to put me down. My first reaction was not arguing with them or doing anything to remove their annoyances, but to lift it to the Lord in prayer.

The second principle is “when we know a certain risky action is the right thing to do, we should pray for God’s blessing and then go ahead doing it”. When the King asked Nehemiah why he looked sad, he was afraid. He knew he was in a dangerous situation. He knew should take this risk to ask for the King’s authorization to send him back to Jerusalem. He prayed to God and then did it. (2:1-8) I have recently applied this principle when I was faced with a conflict between the church schedule and my work schedule. I knew I needed to ask a favor of my boss to allow me to change my work schedule but it would be risky because of the current economic downturn. He might use this opportunity to cut my hours or lay me off. I prayed to God for the right word and attitude and then made the request. God is great and my boss granted me the request.

The third principle is “we need to work with others to secure the best result for God because no single leader has all the gifts needed for the task”. When it came to teaching the Israelites on the law of Moses, Nehemiah let Ezra play the dominant role (8:1-7) because he knew Ezra was gifted in this area. I applied this principle when taking care of different needs of the church. I knew I was not the best person to reach the restaurant workers for evangelical work, so I partnered with a well-respected restaurant owner who happened to be a devoted Christian. I provided him with suitable materials and he enjoyed doing the outreach among restaurant workers and he did it very well.

The fourth principle is “for the sake of the work of God, sometimes it is necessary to give up certain privileges in order to avoid attacks from the enemies or share the members’ burdens”. Nehemiah had given up his right to take governor’s food allowance for 12 years because the former governors had laid burdens on the people. (5:14, 18-19) This principle is especially applicable for me now because my church has a very small membership and our finance is constantly in the red. I have given up my right to ask for reimbursements for some of the materials I used in preparing sermons or Sunday school lessons because I don’t want to add to the burdens of the church members.

4. State the significance of the following dates: 966, 931, 722, 605, 597, 586, 537, 458, 444.

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| date | significance |
| 966 | Solomon’s Temple was constructed: fulfilling the promise of Yahweh to King David; and demonstrating an extremely visible covenantal relationship between Israel and the Lord. When the Israelites were faced with deportations and other hardships, they would remember how they solemnly established their relationship with God in the temple and remember their obligations. They would also remember that God would listen to their prayers of repentance when they faced the temple and prayed to God. |
| 931 | Division into North and South Kingdoms: showing the curses from disobedience, i.e. their worshipping other gods. Solomon would fee sorry for that because he set a bad example of disobeying God’s word by marrying non-Jewish women and even allowing idol worshipping |
| 722 | The fall of Samaria: demonstrating the judgment on the evil deeds of all the Northern kings. The fall happened well before the fall of the Southern Kingdom. It clearly pointed out to them that the 8 pious Kings did contribute to delaying the judgments of the Lord. |
| 605 | First deportation of Judean royal family members : showing the judgment on Judah, especially the evil acts of King Manasseh. Though the king after Manasseh tried to fix the errors but the wrath of God was so great that the judgment could not be avoided. It taught people of God to fear God and hate evil. We reap what we sow. Daniel was among the deported Judeans and stories of him and his pious peers displayed the glory and sovereignty of God in Babylon. |
| 597 | Second deportation: continuous execution of God’s judgment; treasures, 10000 Judeans and other valuables taken. Ezekiel was among the deported people and his messages gave hope to the exile. |
| 586 | Third deportation: The consummation of God’s judgment; temple and Jerusalem destroyed; leaving behind the poor people. |
| 537 | The first return of the exile under Sheshebazzar: showing the faithfulness of God in keeping His promise to Abraham; rebuilding the temple to bring attention to the covenantal relationship with the Lord. |
| 458 | The second return of the exile under Ezra: implementing substantive religious reform to align themselves with the covenantal relationship with God. |
| 444 | The third return of the exile under Nehemiah; rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem; fighting against physical resistance that opposed the “resurrection” of the Jewish community. |