

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

History 121, 932 to 732 Divided Monarchy

We are back on the topic of History. In the last history lesson (#61), we discussed Solomon, who served the first two years as king in a coregent status until David's death in 969 BC. Solomon began his reign in 971 BC and died in 932 BC, serving as Israel's king for just over 40 years. In 2014, we covered the first 3000 years of human existence. This year, in a high-speed-flyover fashion, we will attempt to cover the *past* 3000 years. We will have to be very selective because most written histories cover this second half. I would like to finish history this year, so we will change up the format and try to cover about 300 years in each lesson. We will cover each segment in accordance with the following two principles: first, we will highlight things that are of historic significance to Christianity, and second, we will cover these things with regard to their roles in affirming the reliability of the biblical historical narrative. Of course, biblical history ends during the first century AD, so the remaining 2000 years will be covered in light of biblical truth.

The period of time from 932 BC to 732 BC is generally known as the time of the Divided Monarchy. Solomon's son Rehoboam was clearly not as wise as his father, and was unable to keep the kingdom united. The northern 10 tribes broke off, and for the period between 931 BC and 732 BC, the northern kingdom is referred to as Israel, and the southern Kingdom is referred to as Judah. During this period, both kingdoms had 20 kings. Scripture identifies all of Israel's kings as bad or evil, and it fell to the Assyrian empire in 732 BC. Judah, on the other hand, actually had 5 of their kings identified as good for at least some of their reign. They held out for 145 years longer before falling to the Assyrian empire in 587 BC.

There were also some other interesting things going on around the world at that time. The Greeks were settling the coast of Spain, the city of Rome was established around 753 BC, the Celts were beginning to move into England, and the first recorded Olympic Games took place in 776 BC (they may have started as early as 1350 BC, but the 776 BC games are the first on record). Iron utensils began to pop up in some regions, and the first recorded Solar Eclipse (written in Chinese histories) occurred on Sept 6th 775 BC. There are also some biblical events and individuals from this time mentioned in extra-biblical sources. For example, the 853 BC Battle of Qarqar is recorded on a monolith inscription, and King Ahab the Israelite is listed as a participant. Also, Jehu's 841 BC tribute to Shalmaneser III is recorded on a black obelisk. Some others include Azariah's 743 BC tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III, Hosea's 731 BC Tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III, Samaria's 723 BC fall under the rule of King Hoshea to Shalmaneser V, the Egyptian & Assyrian defeat at Haran in 609 BC, and Nebuchadnezzar's first and second capture of Jerusalem in 605 & 597 BC.

Outside sources and biblical information contained primarily in Kings and Chronicles, along with information found in a number of the prophets gives us a fairly accurate chronology of this otherwise tumultuous period. Some kings from this time took the throne while still very young (Joash at 7), and some were relatively old (Rehoboam at age 41). Some ruled for only months, while Uzziah ruled for 52 years. Also, the start and end dates of the reigns of the last 4 Judean kings can actually be translated from the ancient Jewish calendar to a modern Gregorian BC date!

Next month we will pick things up during the period known as the Assyrian Babylonian Exile starting in 587 BC, and we will see if we can get to the end of the Old Testament period in 430 BC. We may even begin to venture into the time between the testaments.

Till next month,
Pastor Portier