

## THE GLORY OF ISRAEL

The united-kingdom portion of Israel's history opens with a dramatic shift. The people come before Samuel, the last judge, and demand that he replace the system of judges, which has governed God's people for hundreds of years, with a king. The consequences of this, both good and bad, will reverberate until the time of the Babylonian captivity.

For the good, we need only consider the life of David, the man after God's own heart. This multitalented psalmist, general, and statesman led Israel to triumph over enemies that had bedeviled it for centuries. He led his people to spiritual renewal as well, bringing the ark back to Jerusalem and revitalizing the worship of God. His son Solomon continued in this tradition, building the temple that would be known by God's name and guiding Israel to undreamt-of prosperity. A good king could have more power and influence for good than any other man.

Of course, the bad is on display in the lives of the early kings as well. David's predecessor Saul failed in his kingship because of envy and lack of faith. David committed adultery and murder, which led to betrayal and civil war. Solomon married foreign wives who turned him and his people aside to the worship of idols. Just as the influence of kings for good was unparalleled, so was their influence for bad.

None of us are kings today, but we can still learn from them about the effects of righteousness and unrighteousness in our lives. In our families, our friendships, and our workplaces, a single godly or ungodly decision can have consequences beyond what we ever dreamed. Even if we have the wisdom of Solomon, we aren't capable of navigating this spiritual minefield on our own. Ultimately, what we really need is God, as the people of Israel learned when they asked for a king to judge them.

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# A KING TO JUDGE THEM

## A Study of David and the United Kingdom

