

*Three Kings*

*The coming of the Kingship was the great watershed in Biblical history. It came with many other changes, such as urbanization and the growth of law. The King had always had the support of the populace, and from here on, popular elements become increasingly visible in the Biblical texts.*

(44) Priest Samuel was the pivot man for the Coming of the Kingship. His corruption, following that of his predecessor Eli, is given as one reason for the fading of the priestly alternative to secular leadership.

(45) King Saul. He is at first grudgingly, and later enthusiastically, accepted by Samuel. His story is obscured by that of David, but much can be recovered. Saul was more successful than the David people would have us believe.

(46) Goliath. David's exploit in killing Goliath was the start of his career. But did David kill Goliath on his own initiative, or at the bidding of King Saul? The correct answer turns out to be: neither.

(47) David. The story of David has been repeatedly rewritten, each time taking him further from what seem to have been his beginnings as a local thug. Some details of his administration as King do seem to have been preserved.

(48) Solomon. He prospered as a client king under Egypt. His wealth was largely due to contact with the trading cities of the day. He was popular among the many, both for his wealth and for his wisdom. He built the Temple, as the text records (twice!) but his chief contribution to the Kingship was to lose it – not to the priests, but to a merely political rival in the north.

(49). The Psalms of David. To honor the completion of the Temple, forty Psalms were collected, and either associated with David in general, or referred to certain highlights in his career. Their actual origin is often different.

---

*Next comes the story of the divided kingdoms; a story of continual decline. The north, by far the richer prize, was conquered by Assyria in 0741. Judah held out until invaded by Babylon in 0597, leading to the Exile of 0586. Whether this was due to the sins of the kings, as the Yahweh partisans insist, or had some more worldly basis, might be argued. In the next section, we look at some merely literary highlights of the downfall, as narrated by an unknown priestly author in the Books of Kings*