

LESSON 16: THE DAVIDIC KINGDOM (COVENANT WITH ONE KINGDOM)

Instruction for Faith Educators

For Basic Level / Age 7	:	Cover points 1 to 15
For Intermediate Level / Age 10	:	Cover points 1 to 15
For Advanced Level / Age 13	:	Cover points 1 to 18

Revision from previous lesson:

In the previous lesson, we learned about how God brought the people of Israel into the Promised Land that was flowing with milk and honey. In this lesson, we will learn about what happened after they had entered into the Promised Land and settled down there. You will see that even though God had been faithful in leading and providing for the Israelites, they were constantly unfaithful to Him.

Current lesson:

1. After Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, Joshua led them into the promised land. When Joshua and his generation died, so did the Israelites' knowledge of God (Judges 2:10). They began worshipping other gods. So the Lord handed them over to their enemies and used the surrounding nations to test them, seeing whether they would walk in His ways as their ancestors did (Judges 2:22).
2. Because Joshua and his generation of leaders were gone, and Israel was leading a sinful life, God appointed judges (who were like "tribal leaders") to lead the nation. These judges were used by God to save the Israelites from their enemies and to lead them back to Him (Judges 2:16). The twelve judges were Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson. The problem was, every time a judge died, Israel went astray again, returning to sinful practices and idolatry. It was a constant cycle of sin and deliverance. Israel rebels, then God disciplines them, and then Israel repents, and then God delivers them from their suffering. But the cycle repeats after that.
3. Towards the end of the period of the judges, a young boy called Samuel (son of Hannah and Elkanah) was born. He was dedicated to the Lord by the priest Eli in Shiloh, where he stayed with Eli and helped him serve God. When Samuel was still very young, God had already chosen him, and so he grew up to be a prophet as well as a priest (1 Samuel 3, 7:9-10). Samuel served as a leader in Israel throughout his life. He is sometimes known as the last of Israel's judges, although he never really became a judge because the Israelites did not want another judge after Samson. They wanted a human king.
4. Under the covenant God had established with Israel, having a human king was not God's ideal for Israel. However, Israel rejected Samuel as judge and demanded a king. Instead of appreciating how God had been protecting and providing for them as their Divine King, they wanted to be like all the other nations. They demanded that God should give them a human king instead. The Lord told Samuel to concede to the demands of the people, but

also to warn them of what a human king would do to them (1 Samuel 8:6-22). This marked the beginning of further downfalls for Israel.

5. Since then, ancient Israel was ruled by human kings from the time of Saul (1030 to 1010 BC) to the reign of Zedekiah (597 to 587 BC). Some of the kings were strong rulers who remained faithful to God. But other kings actually led the people away from worshipping God, made bad agreements with Israel's enemies, and treated the people cruelly and unfairly.
6. Samuel anointed Saul as God's choice for Israel's first king (1 Samuel 11:15). Saul ruled for about twenty years and did much to bring the tribes together and to defeat some of Israel's enemies. But Saul was also a troubled man who was unfaithful to God. Despite military victories, Saul showed himself to be repeatedly disobedient to God.
7. Samuel, as the prophet of God, turned against Saul in favour of a young shepherd boy named David, the youngest son of Jesse (1 Samuel 15:10-35, 16:1-13). David soon entered Saul's court as a special servant who played the harp to console the troubled king (1 Samuel 16:14-23).
8. Saul became suspicious of David and jealous of his military successes. Saul tried several times to have David killed, but was never successful. Samuel secretly anointed David as future king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:12-13), and as soon as Saul died, David succeeded him. Saul committed suicide after being injured in battle against the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:1-13).
9. David became the next king. He was a model king who had a close relationship with God. In many ways, he became a symbol of new life for God's people and of God's rule in the world (2 Samuel 23:5; Psalm 89:3-4; Isaiah 9:1-7; Jeremiah 33:14-26; Micah 5:2-5). However, David also had serious faults. He was guilty of committing adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of one of his best military officers, Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel 23:24-39). In addition to that, to cover up his offences, David manipulated for Uriah to be stationed on the frontlines unprotected during battle so that he would be killed. So David was guilty of adultery and murder.
10. David wanted to build a grand temple for God, grander than his own palace. But God forbade David to do so because he had shed much blood. Instead, God promised David that his son Solomon would be the one to build the temple. God also established a covenant with David, promising that his descendants would be the royal heirs to the throne of the nation of Israel. In other words, David's throne would last forever (2 Samuel 7:1-17).
11. Subsequently, David's son, Solomon, succeeded David as the king of Israel. Solomon was the son of Bathsheba, the very woman whom David took as his wife after committing adultery with her and plotting for her husband Uriah to be killed in battle.
12. Solomon spent seven years building the great temple in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah (1 Kings 6). God blessed him with immeasurable wisdom. However, like his father, he had a great weakness for women, and his lusts far surpassed his father's. He took for himself 700 wives and 300 concubines, many of whom were foreign women who worshipped other

gods. He allowed them to bring their idolatrous practices into his nation by setting up their shrines and monuments to other gods as well. Eventually, Solomon himself got involved in their pagan rituals.

13. Upon the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam succeeded him. Rehoboam refused to listen to the appeals of the tribes of Israel to lighten their burden of taxation. As a result, a great revolt took place. Ten of the twelve tribes, led by Jeroboam, separated themselves from the nation and established the Northern Kingdom. Rehoboam was left with two tiny tribes in the South, Judah and Benjamin.
14. The schism of the Northern Kingdom meant that Israel had severed themselves from God's covenant with David, under which David's heirs were to be the kings of Israel forever. Israel had now gone into apostasy. In fact, by now, pagan rituals were rife throughout Israel.
15. God began to raise up prophets to speak to His people, to speak against their violations of the covenant and to persuade them to repent. The prophets were also responsible for strengthening the hope of the faithful remnant.
16. One of Israel's constant sin was idolatry. Idolatry means placing someone or something above the place of God in our lives, considering the person or the thing more important than the Creator Himself.
17. In our day and age, we may not be guilty of worshipping other gods. However, we are surrounded by other dangers that present the possibility of taking a higher position or priority than God in our lives. When these other things take over God's place in our lives, they consume our attention and adoration.

CCC 2113: "Idolatry not only refers to false pagan worship. It remains a constant temptation to faith. Idolatry consists in divinising what is not God. Man commits idolatry whenever he honours and reveres a creature in place of God, whether this be gods or demons (for example, satanism), power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc... Idolatry rejects the unique Lordship of God; it is therefore incompatible with communion with God."

18. Even ideologies can become idols in our modern times. These are worldviews or philosophies that contradict God's moral principles and the principles of nature. We all need to consider if we might have unknowingly been influenced by some of these idols of our time. Some examples of ideologies that are very popular today are:

Materialism: The mindset that material possessions are worth chasing because they have the power to make us happy. It deceives people into thinking that they can be happy only when they have everything they want materially. And yet, many people who enjoy material abundance continue to be miserable.

Sexual liberation: The philosophy that we have the power and right to determine our own sexual and gender expression. It deceives people into thinking that it is championing gender "equality" and rights, but yet, God the Creator has no right to determine the gender and sexuality of those He creates.

Religious equality: The belief that all religions are equally true. Jesus is just one among many gods, and just as He can be worshipped, it is also all right to worship other gods, because all religions are just different paths to heaven. The problem is, all these religions that are supposedly different paths to the same destination seem to have contradicting beliefs and teachings.

Modernism: An infatuation or extreme love for modern ideas to the extent that one feels the Catholic Church should adapt itself to suit the changing mindset of each generation of people.

Relativism: The philosophy that there is no absolute truth, and that we can choose to believe what is true based on our subject or personal experience. It holds that what is true for someone may not be true for someone else, because there is no such thing as an objective measurement for truth.



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