

Lesson 40

- We studied the full meaning of the Law, identifying ten reasons why it was given. We discussed how there was a lot of confusion in teaching at that time, even within the churches. Understanding this period well makes it easier to understand the entire Bible and how the law operates in our lives today.
- We also observed God's revealed will for that period in relation to the Word and Worship. How did Israel receive God's revealed will in this area, and what did they do? God instructed them to pass on all that He had done for them, teaching His Word from generation to generation, day and night, whether sitting or walking. What did Israel do? When Joshua died, the subsequent generation knew nothing of the wonders that the Lord had performed for Israel.
- What happens when we deviate from God's Word? *'Everything goes wrong!'* Then comes idolatry and the teachings of men. We turn away from God and accept everything they offer us. You turn away from God's plan for your life. Immediately after Israel turned away from the Word, whom did they begin to serve? The Baalim, the idols of the peoples who lived around Israel.
- In the area of Worship, what happened? What was God's plan for Israel in this respect? They were to be a priestly nation! Israel was to be a nation of priests. When God created Israel, his plan was for every Israelite to be a priest. What happened? They failed. The Bible tells the story of infidelity, even among the families of the high priests. This was the result of moving away from God's Word.
- The idolatry of neighboring peoples entered the nation of Israel with such force that almost everything in the Area of Worship was corrupted; the commandments were replaced by traditions. When Jesus came to Earth, these traditions had become so prevalent that the scribes and Pharisees, the leading religious figures of that time, questioned Jesus: *'Why don't your disciples keep the tradition of the elders?'* They didn't say, *'They don't keep the commandments'*. Jesus replied: *'Why do you break the law because of your traditions, keeping a word that is not from God, but from men?'*
- God fully revealed his will to Israel in terms of the Word and Worship, providing all the necessary details. However, we saw that Israel failed. When God reveals His will to us and we don't follow it, we're effectively saying 'NO' to God, we are saying: *'I don't want to; I'll go my own way. I don't want to follow Your way'*.

8.8 The Area of Government

- In the beginning, who ruled Israel? God himself, through the men He chose. The first of these was Moses. God called Moses, trained him for 80 years, and then sent him to lead the people out of Egypt. Moses walked with the people for 40 years in the desert and died at the gates of the Promised Land. God then appointed Joshua to lead the people into the land of Canaan. Joshua led the people to various conquests and ruled for a time. After his death, God appointed judges to rule over the people.

⇒ Judges 2:8~23

- Throughout the period of the Judges, the Israelites turned away from the Lord, began to worship other gods, and rejected the protection of the one true God. As a result, the people were plagued by enemies. Whenever the people of Israel were under pressure from their enemies, they would ask God for help. God would look on, have compassion, and remember the covenant. God then raised up a judge to lead the people, who defeated the enemies and returned the people to God. However, when the judge died, the people turned away from God and worshipped other gods, allowing the enemies to rule again. The Book of Judges shows that this happened several times. Among the judges appointed by God were Gideon, Deborah, Samson and, finally, Samuel.
- Samuel was the last judge; the last person to rule Israel in this way. When Samuel had grown old, the people asked for a king to rule over them. Samuel is the link between the judges and the establishment of the Kingdom of Israel.

⇒ I Samuel 8:1~7

- What was the biggest mistake in Israel's request for a king? 'As all the nations have' — that was Israel's biggest mistake. Remember that God was forming a nation to set an example to the other nations. The difference was that God was the King of Israel and ruled through men whom he himself appointed. However, now Israel wants to be like all the other nations. Israel's mistake should serve as an example to us of what not to do. We must set an example for those who are far from God's path, and to do so we cannot practice the same things as the rest of the world.
 - **V.7:** Samuel was offended, but God made it clear that the people were rejecting God, not Samuel. God's mercy for humanity is so great that he blesses even when they make mistakes. God then asked Samuel to fulfil the people's request.

⇒ I Samuel 12:12~14

- **V.14:** '*It is well*'. God was still blessing them (*although this blessing was conditional*), saying: '*Do you want a king? I will give you a king but be careful! Seek me, you and your king, so that all may go well*'. Of course, fearing the Lord means following his ways, regardless of whether a king is ruling. God's mercy upon Israel! '*I bless the king*'.

⇒ **I Samuel 12:20~22;** The love and mercy of God are revealed here.

- Saul is anointed as the first king of Israel.

⇒ **I Samuel 9:1~2;** Saul, *from his shoulders upward, he was taller than any of the people.*

⇒ **I Samuel 10:1;** Samuel anoints Saul as the king of Israel.

⇒ **I Samuel 10:17~24;** The people acclaim Saul as their king.

So, Saul – the tallest and most handsome man in Israel – was made king.

⇒ I Samuel 15:17~31

- Saul took pride in his position, disobeying God and walking in ways that God never called him to. In **V. 22**, Samuel rebukes Saul, and in **V. 26**, Saul is rejected as king by God.

- When David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he did not question the prophet, Nathan. David immediately recognized that he had sinned (⇒ **II Samuel 12:13**). That's why God also immediately forgave him. What did Saul do when the prophet Samuel questioned him? *'God told you to fight the Amalekites, leaving no one alive and taking no spoils'*. Saul replied: *'No, Samuel. I only brought the king alive. I killed the rest and brought the animals to sacrifice to God.'* Samuel then says something that we must record and follow very carefully: *'Saul, do you think God prefers animal sacrifices to obedience?'*
- For God, obedience is far more important than sacrifices; God wants obedience. Obedience brings us happiness and is the only way to find solutions, achieve liberation and find healing. **V. 22**, which we read, is pivotal in God's word. God rejected Saul because he did not recognize his mistake. So, God sent Samuel to anoint David.

⇒ **I Samuel 16:1~13**; Samuel anoints David.

- **V.1**: Samuel was trying to work something out when the Lord caught his eye.
- **V.6 and 7**; Jesse had eight sons, and when Samuel saw the first one, who was good-looking, he said, *'That's the one I'm going to anoint'*. However, the Spirit of the Lord rebuked him.
- **V.12 and 13**; David is anointed.
- David is one of the most impressive figures in the Bible when it comes to obedience. He was given the title *'a man after God's own heart'*.

⇒ **Acts 13:22**

After being anointed by Samuel, it took David some time to become king. He didn't take a step without being directed by God. Saul was still alive and remained king. A king remained in power until his death, even though Saul had already been rejected by God. David approached Saul, played the harp for him and then killed the giant Goliath.

⇒ **I Samuel 17:12~58**; David defeated Goliath.

- After that, David became admired by all Israelites, and Saul became jealous and tried to kill him several times. However, David never raised his hand against Saul. Although David had the opportunity to kill Saul, he refused, saying: *'I will never lay a hand on one of the Lord's anointed'*, he said, because Saul was king. When Saul and his son Jonathan died, David honored Saul with all the honors due to a king, calling on Israel to do the same. David wept and called Saul, his beloved. He wasn't a liar or a *'politician'* out to make an impression; he spoke the truth.
- Even so, David does not immediately become king, as Ishbosheth, Saul's son, rules Israel for two years. After Ishbosheth is killed, all Israel acclaims David as king. It was during David's reign that Israel possessed the largest territory and made the greatest conquests. However, David was a warrior, which is why he didn't build the Temple of God during his reign. The temple was built by Solomon, his son.

The Davidic Covenant

- David conquered Jerusalem and established it as the capital of Israel. However, when he looked at the Ark, which was still in the Tent of the Tabernacle, he said: *'Am I to live in a house while the Ark of the Lord remains in a Tent?'* However, God told him that Solomon would build the Temple and make a covenant with David.

⇒ **II Samuel 7:1~16**; The Davidic Covenant.

- What did God promise David? A throne and a kingdom that would last forever. God also promised that one of David's descendants would sit on his throne forever. Hallelujah! Has this promise been fulfilled? Who is the king of Israel today? Doesn't God keep his word? There must be a king of Israel forever; otherwise, God is a liar. What we read is no joke. This prophecy will be fulfilled when Jesus establishes his millennial kingdom on earth at his 2nd coming.
- At the time of David, Israel was a powerful nation that was respected by all. Do you know what their secret was? Obedience! David never did anything without consulting the Lord; he exposed himself to the glory of the Lord. ⇒ **I Kings 15:5**
- David only went astray once, when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. However, he repented and confessed his sin. ⇒ **Psalms 32 and 51** reflect David's state of mind when he committed this sin. It was only then that David turned away from the Lord. Needless to say, it had to be a prosperous kingdom! He led the people to worship God and re-established the law in Israel. Reading David's story is the best way to understand what it means to walk in the fear of the Lord.
- David's successor, Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, began to reign in Israel at the age of 20. At the beginning of his reign, he was frightened because he was inexperienced, but the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said: '*Solomon, ask for whatever you want!*' Solomon asked God for wisdom and understanding in order to govern such a large and numerous people. God replied: '*Because you have asked me for wisdom, I will give you wisdom and great wealth. No one before or after you will have a kingdom as glorious as yours*'.
 ⇒ **I Kings 3:7~14;** Solomon asked God for wisdom.
 ⇒ **I Kings 3:16~28;** Solomon judges a dispute between two women.
- But since God had appeared to Solomon twice, he knew that the continuation of the kingdom depended on his obedience. When God made the Davidic Covenant, promising a descendant who would sit on David's throne forever, he was referring to a double-reference prophecy involving Solomon and Jesus Christ. There was one condition: Solomon had to obey David in order for the throne to be passed on. So, what happened?
- Solomon became so famous that other kings were bothered by what was said about his wisdom and wealth. Suspicious of what she had heard about Solomon, the Queen of Sheba went to check it out. ⇒ **I Kings 10:1~13**
 ⇒ **I Kings 10:23~24**
- But Solomon broke the law of the Lord, which stated that no one in Israel could marry a foreign woman. ⇒ **I Kings 11:1~13**
 The man who built the Lord's Temple now builds altars to other gods – what a sad thing! However, the Lord had promised David that the kingdom would be divided after Solomon's reign.
- Solomon was succeeded by his son, Rehoboam, who turned away from God. The people did not want to remain under his reign. As a result, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the southern kingdom, comprising the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with Rehoboam as king and Jerusalem as the capital; and the northern kingdom, comprising the other ten tribes, with Jeroboam as king and Samaria as the capital. The southern kingdom was called Judah, and the northern kingdom was called Israel.

- Jeroboam was afraid that the people of Israel would worship God in Jerusalem, so he designated two alternative places of worship: Bethel and Dan. He also set up golden calves for people to worship as gods.
- We have seen how Israel went astray in the Area of Government. Few subsequent kings promoted a revival in Israel to draw the people closer to God. Whenever one king succeeded in bringing the people closer to God, his successor would lead them astray again. Eventually, the sin and deviation became so great that God scattered the Kingdom of Israel among all the nations, and the people of Judah were taken captive to Babylon for 70 years.
- After 70 years, the people of Judah returned to Jerusalem, but they continued to turn away from God despite the prophets' warnings to repent. When the time came for King Jehoiakim (*also known as Jeconiah*), God called the prophet Jeremiah, and a curse was placed on the royal lineage. God decreed that no descendant of Jeconiah would ever sit on David's throne again. Today, Israel has returned to its land, yet there is still no king, throne, priesthood or temple.
- From the beginning of the period of the Law until the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Israel gradually declined, rebelling against and turning away from God's laws. In parables, Jesus explains that, because of this, God would establish a new phase in His plan: the formation of the Church.

⇒ **Matthew 21:33~46**

This passage doesn't mean that God passed on all the promises of Israel to the Church. God was looking for the fruit. Specifically, the fruits of the earth.

- The establishment of the Church did not mean the extinction of Israel; rather, it signaled a period of discipline for Israel, with the singular objective of bringing them back to God. Israel is a disciplined nation, and there will be a time when God deals with them again, thus completing his plan for Israel. Once the Church has left the earth, God will complete Israel's program, which has seven years remaining.
- God's discipline always has this objective: to restore and bring back. During the tribulation period, God will put Israel in a position where their eyes will be opened, and they will recognize their God and the Messiah. This is what the Tribulation will do to Israel as a nation. Individual Israelites, like all Gentiles, have grace extended to them. Any Israelite who recognizes Jesus as the promised Messiah is saved; however, as a nation, Israel is under discipline.

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| ⇒ Romans 11:1~2; | Paul, as a Jew, says that God has not rejected his people. |
| ⇒ Romans 11:11~12; | It was through Israel's stumbling that salvation came to the Gentiles. |
| ⇒ Romans 11:25~32; | All Israel will be saved. |