

Chapter 36 Addendum – The United Kingdom of Israel to Alexander the Great

Israel was originally to be a Theocracy, governed by God. Yet the people complained that they had no human leader—no king (1 Samuel 8:4). The desire for a king was voiced to the leading prophet **Samuel**, whom God had appointed to guide what was left of the very weak theocracy during the latter years of the judges. Samuel offered daily sacrifices and worshiped at the shrine in Shiloh, where during the period of the judges the Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant resided (until the Ark was later captured by the Philistines).

Samuel agreed to anoint a king, according to God's instructions, but he also spelled out the consequences of a Monarchy. Specifically he indicated that kings take the best land and animals, would make soldiers or servants of the people and would tax the populace heavily making them little better than slaves—this time not to be delivered by God. However, the elders persisted in the request anyway.

The Lord revealed to Samuel that on the next day he would encounter a man from the tribe of Benjamin, who should be appointed king. **Saul**, a physically attractive yet shy and non-ambitious man appeared in search of his father's lost donkeys. He sought out Samuel for help in locating them. Realizing that Saul was the individual that God had intended to be king, Samuel anointed Saul and later confirmed the appointment by prophecy (1 Samuel 10:6-7).

Memorize This:

Prophecy is used to confirm that something is from God. Here, in the very important selection of the very first king of Israel, Saul, Samuel uses prophecy as the criteria. Likewise prophecy can be used to verify the deity of Jesus.

Saul's was king for 40 years (1050-1010 BC). His reign was bittersweet. Saul established himself as a capable military leader and succeeded in many important victories over surrounding threats on every side. His son Jonathan became best friends with David, who was destined to become Saul's successor.

However Saul soon fell out of God's favor by disregarding God's holy command to use priests in making sacrifices to him. Saul instead, when facing an imminent battle quickly offered the sacrifices himself, perhaps assuming the ritual was all that was needed. Samuel rebuked Saul and told him that his kingdom would not endure—that the Lord has sought out a man "after his own heart" and appointed him as Saul's eventual successor.

Samuel remained a close advisor to Saul based on his input from God. At one point he relayed God's instructions to Saul to completely destroy the pagan Amalekites, along with everything that belonged to them. Saul instead, disobeyed God and spared the king along with the choice livestock. Samuel rebuked Saul and again indicated that God had told him that the kingdom would be taken from Saul's hands. From that point on, Samuel ceased to see Saul who gradually deteriorated morally and mentally. The Lord departed from the king, and in place an evil spirit tormented him (1 Sam 16:14).

The Lord sent Samuel to Bethlehem, specifically to the family of Jesse, to find the new king he had in mind. Under God's direction, all of Jesse's sons were reviewed until Samuel finally was forced to ask for the last one—the youngest who was in the fields tending sheep. It was **David**. Samuel immediately anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that point on.

David achieved early notoriety amongst the people when he courageously defeated the Philistine giant, Goliath with only a slingshot—and God's presence. King Saul gave David a high rank in the army, where David excelled. He became close friends with Saul's son Jonathan however Saul quickly became jealous of David because of his many military successes and his popularity. Saul's jealousy led to attempts to murder David and eventually forced David to flee with Saul in pursuit.

During David's flight, he organized a small army, and although he had the opportunity to kill Saul, he refused on principle. Meanwhile, Saul's deteriorating moral and mental condition eventually caused him to seek a medium to contact the by then deceased Samuel, for advice, because God would no longer respond to him by any 'normal' means (1 Sam 28:6). When Saul

requested that the medium, the witch of Endor, bring up Samuel, the prophet Samuel appeared--causing the witch to shriek in surprise and question Saul as to why he 'deceived' her. The medium knew that Saul was only a mortal (implying he was not capable of bringing up the dead, 1 Sam 28:12). Samuel preceded to prophecy that Saul and his sons would be killed in battle the next day. This prophecy was fulfilled in about the year 1010 BC in the battle the next day with the Philistines.

Interesting Facts:

God forbids use of mediums (Lev 20:27, Deut 18:11) and perhaps Saul's disobedience was the last straw that led to the end of his life. However, it is obvious that the appearance of Samuel was produced by God, not the medium who was startled and assumed Saul was the one responsible (1 Sam 28:12). The witch was confused because Samuel was an "unfamiliar spirit." Samuel then correctly prophesied the events of Saul and his son's death the next day, confirming that the event was directed by God.

Upon the end of Saul's dynasty, after some discord between the families of Saul and David, the elders of the northern tribes met in Hebron and installed David as king (c. 1010 BC). God directed David to attack the Philistines, who at the time had captured the Ark of the Covenant. The Philistines were soundly defeated and the Ark was taken to Jerusalem. David continued to expand and strengthen the nation of Israel with conquests over surrounding nations that threatened them.

In a fateful event, David committed adultery with his general, Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. In an attempt to hide the affair, he had Uriah murdered in battle. As a result of these sins God allowed future upheaval in David's family, manifest in a bitter and lengthy attempt by David's son Absalom to become king. David eventually prevailed.

Considered one of the greatest kings of Israel, David played a major role in establishing the land through conquest, and was regarded as "a man after God's own heart." Even so, when David wanted to build a Temple, God would not permit him to do so because "he was a warrior who shed blood" (2 Chron 28:2, 3). David's reign lasted approximately 40 years (1010-970 BC), like Saul.

Solomon, a son of David and Bathsheba, was chosen to succeed David as king. In a dream on night, the Lord told Solomon to request whatever he desired. Solomon requested wisdom to govern his people. Because of this unselfish request, the Lord also granted Solomon riches, honor and success over his enemies.

Solomon's reign was amongst the most successful in the history of the Jews. The expansion of Israel was maximized, and the nation was generally at peace. People were ruled justly. There were many building projects, the most important of which, by far, was the Temple.

It was King David that originally wanted to build the Temple but was precluded from doing so by God, because David was a man of war. Nevertheless, David was permitted to organize the project and gather materials. Solomon faced the awesome task of carrying it out over a thirteen year period. The Temple was said to be unique in splendor and became the focal point of Jewish worship and life. The Ark of the Covenant, containing the Ten Commandments among other things, was placed in the "holy of holies"—the most sacred portion of the Temple.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Solomon wrote the books of wisdom in the Bible—Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (along with Song of Songs). However Solomon also did some very uncharacteristic things for someone who communicated directly with God. He tolerated pagan religions and even incorporated Canaanite towns into the kingdom. Ritualistic traditions were incorporated into the Temple from other cults. And there was increased inter-marriage with pagan women.

Solomon's eventual downfall at the end of his reign, and the subsequent division of Israel into the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom is attributed to Solomon's own pursuit of pagan women (1 Kings 11:1). The Lord became angry with Solomon because, as warned, the pagan women had turned his heart away from God (1 Kings 11:9) and he told Solomon that kingdom would be torn away and given to one of Solomon's subordinates (1 Kings 11:11-13), but that one tribe (the tribe of Judah—David's ancestors) would be allowed to remain with Solomon. This happened as prophesied with the northern kingdom of ten tribes (referred thereafter as

Israel) being given to Jeroboam an “official”, and the southern kingdom (Judah) remaining with Solomon. Solomon’s reign, like Saul and David, lasted about 40 years (970-930 BC).

Memorize This:

Three United Kingdom reigns, each about 40 years starting in 1050 BC—

Saul, 1050-1010 BC

David, 1010-970 BC

Solomon, 970-930 BC

Important Information:

- Most of the books of literature in the Bible were written during the period of the United Kingdom. David wrote most of the book of Psalms, and Solomon wrote the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs.

- Archaeological evidence has been found verifying the existence of David, and also supporting many events and descriptions in the Bible during this period.

Fascinating Facts:

Key events from the conquest of Palestine to United Kingdom era are –

1446 BC – Exodus from Egypt

1406 BC – Joshua leads the invasion of Canaan by the Israelites

1367 BC – Othniel

1367 BC – Ehud

1300 BC – Canaanites develop broad sea trade with shallow boats, rowers, sail

1209 BC – Deborah

1162 BC – Gideon

1105 BC – Samuel born

1075 BC - Sampson

1050 BC – Saul becomes king

1010 BC – David becomes king

970 BC – Solomon becomes king

The Divided Kingdom through Alexander the Great

Upon the death of Solomon, Rehoboam, his son, succeeded him as king of Judah. By levying greater burdens on his people, Rehoboam caused rebellion with his people. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained with him and the remainder became the northern kingdom. Shortly thereafter, a period of fighting between the northern kingdom and southern kingdom ensued which lasted for years. Enemies from the outside noticed the vulnerability of the now broken people and were quick to take advantage with attacks.

The period of kings after Solomon until the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom (930 BC – 722 BC) was filled with conflict and struggles for power within each of the two kingdoms. Violence and war was often the method used to gain control and overthrow the government. A wide variety of kings ruled during this period. They are described as being from “good” kings to “very evil.”

The tenor for the two kingdoms’ first century was essentially established during the first 25 years. Israel, under the initial leadership of Jeroboam quickly fell into a state of idolatry abhorred by God. None of the next seven kings brought any moral enlightenment to the northern nation which continued to be plagued by civil unrest. Judah, on the other hand, with the help of two good leaders—Asa (910 BC) and Jehoshaphat (872 BC)—remained largely faithful to God.

The history of the **Northern Kingdom** (Israel) and their leadership can be summarized as follows:

Jeroboam I (926-907) – The initial leader of the divided nation of Israel. Allowed nation to fall into idolatry.

Nadab (907-906) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord and caused Israel to commit sin.

Baasha (906-883) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord and caused Israel to commit sin.

Elah (883-882) – Little known about his kingship.

Zimri (882) – Reigned for only seven days.

Omri (882-871) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord—even more than those before him. He provoked the Lord to anger by worship of idols.

Ahab (871-853) – Never a worse king than Ahab, urged on by his wife, Jezebel, to do evil. Behaved in the vilest manner, going after idols. He set up an altar to the god Baal, in the temple of Baal. He made an Asherah pole. He did more than all the kings before him to provoke God.

Ahaziah (852-851) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord and caused Israel to sin by worshipping Baal.

Jehoram (851-843) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not as bad as those before him. He removed the sacred stone of Baal, but still did not turn away from sin.

Jehu (843-816) – Anointed king of Israel under Elisha's direction. Wanted to clean up all the "idolatry and witchcraft" of Jehoram's mother, Jezebel. Killed Jehoram. Later ordered Jezebel killed. Destroyed all Baal worship.

Jehoahaz (816-801) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord causing Israel to commit sin.

Joash (Jehoahaz) (801-785) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord and caused Israel to sin.

Jeroboam II (785-747) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn away from the sins of his predecessors.

The prophet Jonah was directed by God to prophecy to the city of Nineveh—a city deep in the heart of the Assyrian Empire. His message was that without repentance, it would be overturned.

The prophet **Amos** (760 BC) and **Hosea** (753 BC) also warn the people in the northern kingdom of Israel about the impending judgment of God, and call for repentance.

Zechariah (747-746) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord and caused Israel to commit sin.

Shallum (746) – Reigned only one month.

Menahem (746-737) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord and caused Israel to commit sin.

Attacked and sacked Tiphshah and "ripped open" pregnant women.

Pekahiah (737-735) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord. Did not turn away from the sin of his predecessors.

Pekah (735-732) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord. Did not turn away from the sin of his predecessors.

Hoshea (732-722) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not like the kings who preceded him.

722 BC – The Assyrians capture Samaria, capital of the northern kingdom, and the people of Israel are exiled.

In summary, all of the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord, except Jehu, who was anointed by Elisha. As a result of the enormous sin, prophets repeatedly warned Israel of the coming judgment of the Lord, and of a horrendous exile yet to come.

The history of the **Southern Kingdom** (Judah) can be summarized as follows:

Rehoboam (926-910) – The first king of Judah. There was general civil unrest, and Rehoboam did evil because he did not set his heart on seeking the Lord. Judah was allowed to fall into apostasy by setting up Asherah poles and male shrine prostitutes.

Abijah (910-908) – He committed the sins of his fathers and was not fully devoted to the Lord as David was.

Asa (908-868) – Good and right in the eyes of God. Foreign altars in high places, sacred stones and Asherah Poles and idols were removed. Judah was reformed. The altar of the Lord was repaired.

Jehoshaphat (868-847) – He did right in the eyes of the Lord and rid Judah of male shrine prostitutes. All "high places" were not removed, however, and the people had still not set their hearts on God.

The prophet **Elijah** (875 BC) ministers to the people of Judah. He is able to perform many miracles and warns the nation of the impending consequences of their sin. Elijah escaped the death of most prophets of the Lord caused by Ahab and Jezebel. However he is forced to run

until God commands him to face Ahab and demonstrate God's power over that of Baal. In dramatic fashion, Elijah convinced Ahab and Jezebel to call 450 prophets of Baal to light a fire through divine intervention. Elijah was the single prophet representing the Lord. When God set the water-drenched bed of wood ablaze after utter failure by the prophets of Baal, Elijah had the prophets slain.

Elisha, (848 BC) a protégé of Elijah, ministered in the region of Judah at about the same time. Like Elijah, Elisha performed many miracles.

Jehoram (847-844) – When he established his kingdom as the firstborn son, he put his brothers to death.

Ahaziah (844-843) – He did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

Queen Athaliah (843-837) – Widow of Jehoram. Destroyed the royal family of the house of Judah, except for Joash. Ruled for six years during the childhood of Joash.

Joash (837-800) – Accepts paganism, Asherah Poles. People abandoned the temple of the Lord.

Amaziah (800-770) – Did right in the eyes of the Lord.

Uzziah (770-742) – Followed in his father's footsteps and did right in the eyes of the Lord.

The prophet **Isaiah** (740 BC) ministered to Judah, calling for repentance and warning the nation of impending judgment and exile due to its sin. In addition to specifying condemnation of Judah's wrongful acts, he challenges people to come to their senses before it is too late. Isaiah foretells of a coming Messiah.

Jotham (742-734) – Like Uzziah, he did right in the eyes of the Lord.

The prophet **Micah** (742 BC) spreads the same message as Isaiah and others—that God's judgment will befall them without repentance. He predicts the fall of Samaria the exile in Babylon, the return from captivity to peace and even the future birthplace of the Messiah.

Ahaz (734-716) – Became unfaithful to the Lord and offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus.

Hezekiah (716-689) – Did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Removed high places and Asherah Poles, smashed sacred stones. The Assyrians, who captured the northern kingdom, attacked Judah yet were unsuccessful.

Manasseh (689-642) – He did evil in the eyes of the Lord. The nation of Judah returned to paganism. After nearly a quarter of a century of spiritual revival under Hezekiah, Manasseh turned people from God back to idolatry and other pagan practices.

Amon (642-640) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord and offered sacrifices to all the idols Manasseh had made.

Josiah (640-609) – Became king at age eight. Did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

The prophet **Zephaniah** (640 BC) prophesied about the coming "day of the Lord" when Judah would soon be judged for all its sin. Josiah then began bringing about sweeping reforms against idolatry and pagan practices.

The prophet **Jeremiah** (626 BC) was actively warning Judah about impending judgment and was prophesying the fall of Jerusalem. These prophesies were, however, very unpopular with the people who were very critical of Jeremiah rejecting his prophecy, in spite of a changing political atmosphere where Babylon was defeating Assyria and establishing a new empire.

Jehoiakim (609-598) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

Jehoiachin (598-597) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

Zedekiah (597-586) – Did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah who was speaking for the Lord.

586 BC – The final portions of the southern kingdom (Judah) and the northern kingdom (Israel) are **exiled to Babylon** by the Babylonians (the exile started in 606/7 BC). Both kingdoms were destined to fall once they deteriorated morally and became evil in the eyes of the Lord. The northern kingdom had virtually no good kings and fell first. The southern kingdom had a succession of good kings before it, like Israel, succumbed to a line of evil ones.

Memorize This:

- The Torah (first five books of the Bible) was officially canonized sometime soon after the first exile.

- Most of the books of the prophets were written during the period of the Divided Kingdom from 930 – 538 BC (14 books—all except Haggai, Malachi and Zechariah). In general they warned Judea to turn back to God, and of the judgment they faced if they did not repent.

Important Facts:

There is substantial archaeological evidence supporting the people, places and events mentioned during the period of the Divided Kingdom.

The exiles of both kingdoms were caused by failure to follow God. First the northern kingdom quickly falls into apostasy. Later Judah follows.

The Assyrian and Babylonian Exile

The Assyrian Empire comprised the region of Mesopotamia in the area known as the Fertile Crescent—between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and extending to the Mediterranean Sea. It was established about 1100 BC by Tiglath Pileser I and remained prominent until 626 BC. Although strong in its early years, the empire declined during the period of the United Kingdom allowing the expansion of Israel by King David and Solomon. During the period of the divided kingdom, however, Assyria was a constant threat and at times regained some of its original prominence eventually resulting in defeat of the northern kingdom.

With Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BC) a renewed period of oppression for the state of Israel occurred culminating with the subsequent leadership of his son, Shalmaneser V (727-722 BC). Under king Hoshea, Israel refused to pay tribute to Assyria which resulted in an attack and on the capital city of Samaria. After a long siege, the city fell and the inhabitants of the nation of Israel were deported to Assyrian territories. This event marked the end of the northern kingdom of Israel and most inhabitants never returned.

The Assyrians were known to be cruel and ruthless. Captured cities were razed, children were burned, people were impaled on stakes and heads, and appendages were often cut off. The renown cruelty was one reason Jonah resisted God's call to go and preach to the citizens of Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria (Jonah 1:3). Later Jonah was disappointed that God spared the Assyrian city for a time (Jonah 4:1-2). The prophet Nahum, who prophesied in Nineveh, indicated that the city would eventually be conquered and utterly destroyed. Some 40 years later this prophecy came true with the total destruction of Nineveh (612 BC), only to be found some 2500 years later by archaeologists. Nahum also prophesied that Judah would remain safe from the Assyrians (Nahum 2:1, 2).

Assyria attempted to conquer Judah as well and succeeded in capturing some cities at first. However in fulfillment of prophecy, attempts by Assyria to conquer Judah failed largely because Assyria had to withdraw troops from Judah to fight Merodach-baladan, the rebel king of Babylon.

In 612 BC the Babylonians joined forces with the Medes and Scythians and captured the Assyrian capital of Nineveh, after a two-month siege. This brought an end to the Assyrian Empire. In the ensuing years, Babylon quickly became the region's leading power, and by 606 BC the Babylonian Empire was entrenched in largely the same territory as the Assyrians. In 604 BC Nebuchadnezzar ascended to his deceased father's throne. Almost immediately he marched on Palestine and succeeded in reducing King Jehoiakim of Judah to vassal status. After a failed attempt in 601 BC to take over Egypt, Judah attempted to rebel against Babylon which resulted in a march against Jerusalem in 598 BC. Jerusalem was captured in 597 BC and 3023 leading Jews (including the prophet Daniel) were deported to Babylon—the beginning of the Babylonian exile.

The commonly accepted date of the completion of the exile to Babylon is 586 BC, although the final attack (and end) wasn't until 581 BC.¹ By then 4,600 prominent people had already been deported (Jer 52:28-30).

¹ Youngblood, Ronald F., General Editor; and F.F. Bruce, R.K Harrison Consulting Editors, Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), p. 361.

In exile, the prophet Daniel quickly became known as being able to interpret dreams, something he did for Nebuchadnezzar. Because of his ability, the king lavished Daniel with gifts and placed him in a position of importance, in charge of all wise men (Dan 2:48). Even so, later when it was decreed that a large statue of Nebuchadnezzar be worshiped, Daniel along with his Hebrew friends refused to do so and were sent into a fiery furnace. Yet God protected them, and as a result Nebuchadnezzar supported the God of Daniel and promoted his friends.

Later when the Babylonian Empire fell to the Medo-Persians, Daniel was criticized because of his worship to a god other than the King Darius (i.e. the God of Israel). Because of this he was thrown into a den of lions, where again he was protected from harm by God.

In exile Daniel made a number of striking prophecies, the most notable of which, was a prophecy of the actual day the Messiah would come and allow himself to be proclaimed 'king' (Dan 9:20-27).

The Jews returned to Israel from exile precisely when, and because of the person (Cyrus) prophesied years in advance. In 538 BC Cyrus decreed that the Jews could return to their homeland, a process that was considered complete when the construction of the Temple was finished in 516 BC, exactly 70 years after the exile—just as prophesied. The book of Esther in the Bible tells of God's love for his people and his provision during the time of the exile. Ezra reviews the time of the exile and the return. And the book of Nehemiah tells how Nehemiah was permitted to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city following exile.

Memorize This:

The exile of the northern kingdom to Assyria was in 722 BC when the capital city of Samaria fell. The exile of the southern kingdom to Babylon was complete in 586 BC when the capital city of Jerusalem was taken.

Important Information:

There is substantial archaeological confirmation of the period of the kings. Of particular interest is an Assyrian discovery (the "eponym lists"). *This allows accurate dating of all kings of Assyria from 893–666 BC (see p. 311).*

Fascinating Facts:

The most amazing author of the Bible is King Nebuchadnezzar who wrote the beginning of Daniel 4. This demonstrates how God can use anyone—in this case a great enemy of the Jewish nation. It also indicates that the Jews regarded scripture as holy and "unchangeable". Otherwise, they certainly would not want their hated enemy to have a place in scripture.

The Medo-Persian Empire and the Greeks

Cyrus II, a half-Mede (his mother was the daughter of the Median King Astyages), united the Persian tribes living in what is now southern Iran and went to war—defeating the Medes (559 BC) and Lydians (546 BC) and then the Babylonians (538 BC). Even after these defeats, the province of Media remained the most important in the region and as a consequence the newly controlling power became known as the Medes and Persians. This empire became the greatest of its time eventually extending from Greece to India and from the Caucasus Mountains to Egypt. Cyrus II became known as Cyrus the Great.

Cyrus was known for treating his conquered subjects humanely. When he overcame the Medes, he treated them with respect. And when Babylon was under his control, he proclaimed that the Jews were free to return to their homeland to rebuild the city and the Temple.

Memorize This:

The Persians ruled Palestine after the Babylonians starting in 538 BC. Cyrus was the ruler of Persia who after defeating the Medes controlled Babylon and allowed the Jews to return to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. This fulfilled prophecy by Isaiah made over

100 years in advance of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and about 160 years before Cyrus was even born (Is 44:28).

Important Information:

Archaeologists have located a monolith called the "Cyrus Cylinder" which contains the actual proclamation by Cyrus the Great allowing freedom of worship and return to restore cities and places of worship. This find provides historical evidence for Cyrus' important prophetic role in Jewish history.

The Persian Empire expanded into Egypt in 525 BC just before the Empire became immersed in a civil war (522-521 BC). Then, under Emperor Darius, the government was reorganized and an extensive system of roads was built. The Empire was extended beyond the Indus River into India and there was also an attempt to conquer the mainland of Greece in 490 BC. Under Emperor Xerxes (485-465 BC), there was a second attempt to conquer the mainland of Greece in 480 BC which failed. From 465 – 338 BC the Empire went into a state of imperial decline making it more vulnerable to Alexander the Great.

Fascinating Facts:

Key events from the Divided Kingdom through Alexander the Great are:

930 BC – The kingdom divides

875 BC – The prophet Elijah ministers to Judah

853 BC – King Ahab of the Northern Kingdom killed in battle

848 BC – The prophet Elisha ministers to Judah

843 BC – King Jehu anointed by Elisha in Judah

800 BC – Homer writes the *Iliad* and *The Odyssey*

776 BC – The first Olympics

753 BC – Rome is founded

742 BC – The prophet Micah ministers to the Northern Kingdom

740 BC – The prophet Isaiah ministers to Judah

722 BC – Samaria, capital of the Northern Kingdom falls to **Assyrians**

627 BC – The prophet Jeremiah ministers to Judah

586 BC – Jerusalem falls, Judah is exiled to **Babylon**

537 BC – Cyrus decrees that the Jews may return to Israel to rebuild Jerusalem

333 BC – Alexander the Great begins his conquests for **Greece**