Why Did Northern Israel Fall to the Assyrians? A Weberian Proposal

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Abstract: *This article is centered on possible causes for the fall of Israel and, secondarily, Judah. The topic is not new. The very destruction of these ancient kingdoms may be the cause for the production of much of the Biblical literature that drives our interpretive enterprise. My proposal is that Max Weber's socio-political theories of power and domination, sometimes called the tripartite classification of authority, may provide a fruitful lens by which to understand some of the reasons Judah persisted for more than a century after the fall of Israel. Specifically, I wish to investigate whether the lack of routinization of charismatic authority was a contributing factor in Israel's fall.[1]*

Max Weber, the economist and sociologist famously known for his study *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, delivered a lecture in the winter of 1918–1919 to the student club at Munich University entitled *Politics as a Vocation*.[2] In this lecture he provided succinct definitions of "politics," "state," and "legitimations of domination," terms I believe can provide valuable perspectives when studying ancient Israelite government. I'll review Weber's definitions of politics, state, and legitimations of domination, and his three categories in the tripartite classification of authority (traditional, charismatic, and legal). I'll then review Weber's theory of routinization of authority. We'll then be prepared to assess the Biblical evidence for the fall of Israel via

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1. My PhD mentor, Dr. Steven Weitzman, first suggested this idea to me, which prompted this article.

2. Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," (1921), quoted in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 77–128.

the lens of Weber's theories, to judge whether Weber's insights help us better understand why Judah persisted for more than a century longer than the Northern Kingdom.

Politics: Weber claims that politics "comprises any kind of *independent* leadership in action."[3] Specifically, politics is "the leadership, or the influencing of the leadership … of a *state*."[4]

State: Weber asserts "that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory"[5] and that the "state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate … violence."[6] That is, the state asserts and supports the legitimation of domination.

Legitimations of Domination: Legitimations of domination are the forms of authority by which societies regulate domination. Weber explains that there are three pure types, what he calls the "tripartite classification of authority": traditional, charismatic, and legal. But, he concedes, these pure forms rarely exist in reality. Instead, they commingle with each other.

Traditional Authority: Traditional leadership claims authority from appeal to established and accepted traditions, which are reinforced by a head of a family or clan.

Charismatic Authority: Charismatic authority or leadership bases its authority on the gifts (*charisma*), personality, power, and appeal of the leader, and on his ability to attract and retain a loyal following. In a later writing, *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, Weber further qualifies charisma as

> endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary.[7]

Legal Authority: Legal authority derives its power from laws and bureaucracy. Legal leadership, Weber claimed, is the most common among the three forms of leadership because charismatic and traditional leadership

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3. Ibid., 77.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., 78.

6. Ibid.

7. Max Weber, *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A. R. Anderson and Talcot Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 358–59.

become "routinized" over time. Legal authority tends to provide far more social and governmental stability than do the other forms of authority.

We'll return in a moment to the tripartite classification of authority and its relation to politics, the state, and the legitimation of domination. Before we do, I wish to elucidate Weber's socio-political theory of the routinization of authority, for it is this theory that binds together the other concepts I've just introduced.

Routinization of Authority[8]

Charisma is fickle, capricious, transitory; it is ethereal and non-permanent. Yet ironically, for charismatic authority to survive it must become institutionalized. Charismatic authority must find a way through legal, rational, bureaucratic means to perpetuate itself. Otherwise, when the charismatic leader dies (or retires) so too does the authority, power, and domination that such charisma commanded. *Routinization of authority* is the process whereby charismatic authority survives by evolving into stable structures of rational, legal, institutionalized authority. When authority has become invested legally and bureaucratically, it no longer is subjected to the passing, spontaneous, uncontrollable whims of charisma.

An example of the routinization of authority from American religious history will help to illustrate this concept.[9] Let's take the case of the prophet Joseph Smith and the religious movement he inspired. By all accounts, and in the technical sense, Joseph Smith was a charismatic, and he built the Latter-day Saint religion on charismatic authority. Relative to his time and place, Joseph Smith garnered a large and powerful following. Joseph's authority was not based on his learning or on existing institutions or by means of legal power. In fact, Joseph was largely shunned if not maltreated by the educational establishment, by the existing religious institutions, and by the legal structure of America from the small towns to the state and federal governments. However, by sheer personal gifts or charisma (from a Weberian perspective) he developed an impressive following of

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8. This theory of "progression" from charismatic leadership to entrenched, legalized, rational, and bureaucratic leadership connects to the larger notion of "rationalization" prevailing in the era of Weber. "Rationalization," in part connected to the idea of social evolution, proposes that societies advance and improve from primitive, to traditional, to legal/rationalistic societies. Each stage of society encourages and enhances a particular type of authority (e.g., rationalistic societies encourage and accept "legal leadership" far more readily than "charismatic leadership").

9. For additional examples, please see E. Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1989).

many thousands who were willing to give up family, home, possessions, and traditions to seek after his vision of Zion.

When Joseph Smith was killed in 1844, many thought that the religious movement of Mormonism would die with its charismatic prophet-leader. But this did not happen. Why not? Because Joseph Smith had spent many years routinizing his authority — developing institutions and "transferring" his charismatic power to others so that the movement would persist without him. Near the end of his life, Joseph Smith was quoted saying the following to the leaders he had appointed:

> [N]ow if [my enemies] kill me, you have got all the keys, and all the ordinances, and you can confer them upon others, and the hosts of Satan will not be able to tear down the kingdom as fast as you will be able to build it up; and … on your shoulders will rest the responsibility of leading this people, for the Lord is going to let me rest a while.[10]

Not surprisingly, upon Joseph Smith's death there were challenges as to who would hold the authority of leadership. But for a majority of Latter-day Saints, it was clear that Brigham Young held the appropriate authority to lead the movement, as established by Joseph Smith. Under the able and lengthy tenure of Brigham Young's leadership, the charismatic authority of Joseph Smith became institutionally finalized so that today the authority within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints travels primarily along bureaucratic, institutionalized lines and not via charismatic mediators.[11] The transfer of power in the hierarchy of the church is remarkably stable. When a church leader passes away or is replaced, there is no bargaining, no campaigning, no jockeying for

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10.   "Trial of Elder Rigdon," *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* 5, no. 7 (December 1844): 104, https://books.google.com/books?id=2sFNAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA104&lpg=PA104&dq#v=onepage&q&f=false.

11.   An interesting side note in the case study of charisma and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that the church continues to embrace and promote charisma. A compelling argument can be made that though Joseph Smith's original charismatic authority (in the sense that Weber defines it) has become institutionalized, there still is a lively amount of space in the church for charisma to flow along the lines of the establishment, even to the point of reshaping and restructuring the institution. Some would argue convincingly that this persistent spirit of charisma is an essential element to the continued vitality of the movement. Therefore, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints demonstrates that there is a certain symbiotic relationship between charisma and the rationalization of authority on the continuum of routinization of authority.

position. There is a long-standing policy about how power is transferred from one individual to the next, from one generation to the next. In this regard, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints truly has routinized the charismatic authority of Joseph Smith.

Biblical Textual Evidence for
Weber's Socio-Political Theories in Ancient Israel

We'll press forward at this point to consider the theory of the routinization of authority and its relation to the political fortunes of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

The primary textual evidence I employ in the investigation of ancient Israelite authority is the Deuteronomistic history with special emphasis on 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings. Given that the sources are not simple literary history, as we might expect, but more of a historical theologizing, we must work with what is at our disposal. By understanding the purposes for which these books were written, we can listen to our sources carefully and hear the evidences that may provide insight to our questions.

1 and 2 Samuel are composite creations of a variety of memories and traditions cobbled together. The primary purpose of 1 and 2 Samuel are to justify kingship in Israel. 1 and 2 Kings are "interpretive commentary" on the royal history of Israel; these books are a theology of history.[12] Indeed, the very facts of history — that Northern Israel was destroyed and that later Jerusalem was sacked and the people of Judah taken into captivity — are interpreted by the writers and editors of 1 and 2 Kings to be causally related to the levels of kingly fidelity to Deuteronomistic prescriptions plainly described in Deuteronomy 17.

Deuteronomistic Prescription for Kingship

Deuteronomy 17:14–20 has long been considered the Deuteronomistic prescription for kingship or leadership, the thesis statement by which all Israelite rulers after the time of the judges were to be judged.[13] In

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12.   Walter Brueggemann, *1 Kings* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1983), 1–3; see also Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2000).

13.   It seems that Book of Mormon writers also judged their leaders following the prescriptions set forth in Deuteronomy 17:14–20. See Taylor Halverson, "Deuteronomy 17:14–20 as Criteria for Book of Mormon Kingship," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 24 (2017): 1–10, https://www.mormoninterpreter.com/deuteronomy-1714–20-as-criteria-for-book-of-mormon-kingship/.

this passage — what I call the six commandments of Israelite kingship — the kings of Israel (and Judah) are commanded to do, or not do, the following things:

1. Do not acquire many horses
2. Do not return the people to Egypt (for horses)
3. Do not accumulate wealth (gold and silver)
4. Do not have many wives
5. Do write a copy of the book of the law for yourself
6. Do read the law (torah) every day

The positive commands (to write and read the law) are given so that the king will

1. Fear the Lord
2. Diligently keep the commandments
3. Practice equality in the kingdom

thereby securing that he and his descendants will reign long and prosperously on the throne of Israel.

In summary, then, this is the Deuteronomistic thesis of kingship. We see throughout the Books of Kings editorial comments that this Deuteronomistic passage clearly has inspired. For example, listen to the words of wisdom King David shares with his son and successor, Solomon.

> Be strong, be [a man], and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn. Then the LORD will establish his word that he spoke concerning me: "If your heirs take heed to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail you a successor on the throne of Israel." (1 Kings 2:2–4)[14]

The Deuteronomists' ventriloquistic use of David expresses in summary form the expectation that Israelite kings will keep God's commandments and thereby qualify for God's promises — perpetuity of their posterity as rulers in Israel. Kings of Israel and Judah were expected to exemplify religious fidelity. By so doing, they would guarantee the perpetuity of their house on the throne and by extension the prosperity and survival of their kingdom. We'll see presently that the editors of

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14. All scripture references in this paper are from the New Revised Standard Version.

Israel's theological history claim that Israel fell precisely because the kings failed to exemplify fidelity to God.

Deuteronomistic Judgment for Why Israel Fell

I'll turn now to the Deuteronomistic reasons for the fall of Israel. In what is a famous passage for shaping generations of interpretation as to why ancient Israel collapsed, we find in 2 Kings 17:7–23 the stinging Deuteronomistic judgment against Israel for infidelity. This passage includes two major themes of why Israel provoked God's anger: (1) they worshipped other gods, and (2) they walked in customs of other nations. According to this passage, ultimately the kings of Israel, specifically Jeroboam, are to blame for the fall of ancient Israel, or so says the editor of 1 and 2 Kings.

The editors of the Books of Kings assert that kingly infidelity to God was the root cause of political failure. In fact, the Books of Kings essentially serve as the compilation of evidence to demonstrate the validity of that theological thesis. In our Western world, which assumes the Cartesian dichotomy between the natural and supernatural worlds, such questions of God's intervention in the history of a nation, or broken covenants with God as a cause for a nation's demise, are difficult to investigate or validate according to modern norms of historical science. Therefore, my purpose is not to seek to validate or refute the Deuteronomistic thesis of Israel's fall. Instead, I wish to investigate if Weber's theory of the routinization of authority provides relevant insight as to why Israel collapsed.

We'll take this in stages. First, we'll look for Biblical examples of traditional authority and charismatic authority. Next, we'll discuss whether these examples demonstrate Weber's definitions of politics and state. We'll then study examples of two types of charismatic figures in the Bible (the prophet and the military judge), and we'll study how ancient Israel experienced a routinization of authority in at least one of these positions. As part of our investigation, we'll take a closer look at the covenants that served as the foundation for kingship in Israel and Judah. As a preview, we'll learn that Weber's socio-political theories provide an accounting for the influence conditional and unconditional covenants had upon Israelite politics.

Traditional Authority — Abraham

Let's begin with Weber's category of traditional authority. According to Weber, traditional authority is vested in a patriarchal figure. An obvious example from the Bible to consider is Abraham. Does Abraham fit into Weber's model?

Definitely. We have a story in Genesis 14 of Abraham gathering 318 of his trained servants to pursue in battle several kings who had abducted Abraham's nephew Lot. Abraham certainly exuded (1) politics — "independent leadership in action" — and (2) a state, because he claimed, by arming his own servants and successfully rescuing Lot, a monopoly of legitimate force in a given territory. Abraham's power and authority did not derive from special gifts or because of the structure and laws of a bureaucratic state. His was the authority of the father figure — the patriarch.

Charismatic Authority

When we search the Biblical record for examples of charismatic authority, two characters immediately come to mind: Israelite military leaders (i.e., redeemers or judges) and prophets.[15]

Gideon

One memorable charismatic military leader in early Israelite history is Gideon (see Judges 6–8).[16] Like we saw with Abraham, Gideon also illustrates Weber's model of politics, state, and legitimate domination. To confront the Midianites, Gideon gathered an army of Israelites under the charismatic inspiration of God. In so doing, he exercised politics or independent leadership in action. He also claimed a monopoly on legitimate domination in a specific territory or state as evidenced by his success at driving out the Midianites by force. Because Gideon's authority was charismatic in nature his successes were temporary and transitory, only persisting as long as his charisma remained, "As soon as Gideon died, the Israelites relapsed. … The Israelites did not remember the LORD their God … and they did not exhibit loyalty to the house of Gideon in return for all the good that he had done to Israel" (Judges 8:33–35).

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15. I recognize that there is a spectrum and nuance of underlying Biblical terms for prophets and prophetic figures. However, for the sake of brevity, I group all individuals who are working under the auspices of God's influence to promote his will in political or ethical realms as prophets. Prophets are authoritatively different than judges in that prophets do not directly wield political power, rather, they indirectly influence political power.

16. Another famous example of a charismatic redeemer is Samson, the striking figure who by virtue of his Nazarite vow would be overcome by the spirit of God to accomplish some great deed: "Then the spirit of the LORD rushed on him, and he went down to Ashkelon. He killed thirty men of the town, took their spoil, and gave the festal garments to those who had explained the riddle" (Judges 14:19). However, Samson doesn't fit into Weber's model as well as other examples because he acts independently and without the involvement of others to follow him.

The consequences of the charismatic model of leadership presented in the Book of Judges are well known. As soon as the charismatic military leader died, Israel wandered in political aimlessness until a new judge, having been charismatically imbued by God, arose. It might be significant to our conversation that the Deuteronomistic conclusion in the Book of Judges of the efficacy of charismatic authority is that "In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 21:25), a subtle hint that a bureaucratically faithful king, not a charismatic military leader, could provide social stability to keep the Israelites from wandering into apostasy.

Samuel

Not long after the purported era of Judges expired, charismatic authority was invested in the figure of Samuel, the kingmaker, who played the dual role of charismatic military leader and charismatic prophet.

Samuel — Charismatic Prophet

For a contextual reminder, Weber defined charisma as a

> A certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which [an individual] is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary.[17]

From a prophetic standpoint, Samuel had this rare charismatic leadership. When he would hear the voice of the Lord, he shared those divine disclosures with others. Those who heard Samuel often followed him.[18] Few other individuals in the Samuel narratives had this rare power.

But do Samuel's prophetic powers fit Weber's mold? I would argue yes. In 1 Samuel 15, Saul is the king. However, Samuel is the one who exercises political authority by virtue of his prophetic charisma commanding Saul (this is the politics) within a given territory (this is the state) to attack the Amalekites (the claim of the monopoly of force).

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17. Weber, *Theory of Social and Economic Organization,* 358–59.
18. A few examples of Samuel hearing the voice of the Lord include 1 Samuel 3; 1 Samuel 8:7–9, 22.

Samuel — Charismatic Military Leader

Not only was Samuel a charismatic prophet but he also was a charismatic military leader. In 1 Samuel 7, Samuel displayed politics, "independent leadership in action," by mustering the Israelite forces to battle against the Philistines. And he claimed through his military might the monopoly on legitimate violence within a given territory, the Israelite homeland that they fought to defend against Philistine incursions.

Routinization of Authority in the Bible

Now that we have seen several examples of Biblical individuals who fit Weber's mold of traditional or charismatic authority, we will turn our attention to how and when Israel transitioned from charismatic rule to legal, bureaucratic, rationalized rule, the third type of authority in Weber's tripartite classification.

1 and 2 Samuel narrates a transition from charismatic to bureaucratic authority in ancient Israel. Samuel began as a charismatic military, prophetic, and priestly ruler. He initiated the routinization of authority in Israelite society, responding to the insistent clamoring of Israelites seeking a king so that they could be like all other nations (1 Samuel 8:5), and at the prodding of God who had acquiesced to Israelite demands (1 Samuel 8:7–9).

In 1 Samuel 8, Samuel is old, and so he attempts to install his sons as judges. Previously, judges had arisen when the spirit of God rushed down upon them. Judges were not appointed by an existing leader. In this story, we see that Samuel was attempting to routinize charismatic authority into rationalized, bureaucratic authority. However, the people opposed Samuel, exclaiming that they preferred to have a king instead of Samuel's corrupt sons as judges.

Though Samuel's choice of how authority was to be routinized did not materialize, his actions did set in motion the social machinery of the routinization of authority, which eventuated in the installation of a king. And so it is with Samuel that the charismatic role of the military leader transitioned to the institutionalized authority represented by the king. Nevertheless, prophetic charismatic authority did not also become institutionalized. Instead, Samuel retained the charismatic authority of a prophet: through prophetic appointment, Samuel designated Saul as king (1 Samuel 10:1), and then with the same charismatic authority, he rescinded the appointment (1 Samuel 15:26) only to then charismatically transfer kingship to David (1 Samuel 16:12–13).

We must pay close attention to this interesting twist concerning the creation of kingship in Israel. The political institution of kingship was

based on charismatic prophetic appointment. In other words, when the routinization of authority changed the focus from charismatic judgeship to institutionalized kingship, other existing forms of charismatic authority did not also make the transition to institutionalized authority. Prophetic charisma retained its independence. In fact, it was prophetic charismatic authority that legitimated Israelite kingship. Hence, legalized kingship was based on charismatic prophets, and thus even kingship was not fully rationalized. The charismatic origin of Israelite kingship would prove to play a pivotal role in the level of how thoroughly and firmly rational authority became institutionalized in Israel.

Kingship in Ancient Israel — Reasons for the Fall

Clearly, forms of charismatic authority existed in early Israelite society in the person of the prophet and the military leader. When the routinization of authority occurred, the process was incomplete, leaving a situation in which one segment of society (the prophetic segment) retained a significant hold on charismatic power sufficient to determine and influence the political fortunes of the kingdom. Where charismatic authority persisted, social and governmental stability faltered. Where charismatic authority was more fully routinized, social and governmental stability became cemented.

To provide further evidence of these claims, we'll now focus on the role covenantal promises played in Israelite politics and the influence covenantal promises had upon the routinization of authority. As examples of covenantal promises to kings, we'll look at the founders of the two separate kingdoms of ancient Israel: Jeroboam and David. I will argue that the unconditional covenant for David and his descendants led to a more stable society because authority was more fully routinized, transitioning away from the less stable, more capricious nature of charisma. On the other hand, the conditional covenant prophetically delivered to Jeroboam at the founding of the kingdom of Israel set a precedent that led to political instability because charismatic authority restrained the full routinization of kingship to legal and stable bureaucratic authority.

Davidic Unconditional Covenant Leads to Routinization

Though Samuel had anointed David as king by prophetic charismatic authority, when Samuel died it was as though David needed legitimation from another charismatic prophet to confirm (or disavow) the kingly anointing. David received this legitimacy from the prophet Nathan via

one of the most historically and theologically pivotal covenants in the Old Testament — God's *unconditional* covenant to David in 2 Samuel 7.[19]

> I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth … and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever. (2 Samuel 7:9, 11–14, 16)

The fact that this covenant to David and his posterity was *unconditional* should invite us to look closely at how covenants influenced the political realm, particularly in relation to the need for prophetic confirmation of legal, bureaucratic authority.

The kingdom of David was thus founded on an unconditional covenant. There was to be no question of who was to hold power (though in practice there were several bumps in the road). The unconditional covenant required that charismatic authority be institutionalized, routinized, and rationalized. Significantly, the prophetic pronouncement of this unconditional promise — that David's posterity would constitute a perpetual reigning dynasty in Judah — effectively excluded future prophetic voices from having a vote in who would rule.

Yet, prophets did intervene in affairs of the state, outside of the usual oracular roles. However, at no point in the Biblical record does any prophetic voice in the kingdom of Judah rise up to call the king's political authority into serious question with the threat that the unconditional covenant was being revoked and that the dynasty was going to fail.[20] What does this mean? Prophetic charismatic authority still persisted, but as a force it became greatly circumscribed as a king-maker or king-breaker. Essentially, the unconditional covenant for David helped

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19.   For an excellent treatment of this unconditional covenant, see William M. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1–17* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

20.   Jeremiah and Lehi might be exceptions but would require additional study to verify.

routinize the charismatic model of authority in Judah, contributing to the establishment of the conditions for a strong and stable government.

Conditional Covenant to Jeroboam Leads to Instability

On the other hand, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was established on *conditional covenants* and the charismatic double barrel of prophetic pronouncement (in the person of Ahijah) and judge-like military leadership (Jeroboam).[21] When Ahijah delivered to Jeroboam the promise of the kingdom and a dynasty, there was a significant difference from the promise that David received: David's promise was unconditional; Jeroboam's promise was conditional.

> I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires; you shall be king over Israel. If you will listen to all that I command you, walk in my ways, and do what is right in my sight by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you, and will build you an enduring house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. (1 Kings 11:37–38)

The fact that the Northern Kingdom of Israel was founded on a *conditional* covenant directly stunted the forward progress of the routinization of charismatic authority towards legal, rational kingship, which the kingdom of Judah so greatly enjoyed over the course of its four centuries of existence. Instead, in the north, there was always a question about who was to be king. Charismatic authority created a great deal of insecurity. In fact, charismatic prophetic authority amplified the insecurity. In the past, when a charismatic military leader arose to protect the people, it was clear who was in power. However, the kingdom of Israel was founded on prophetic confirmation, which had *not* made the transition from charismatic foundations. Therefore, since the covenant was *conditional*, at any moment a prophet could revoke the authority of

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21. Jeroboam was certainly a popular, capable leader among the Northern tribes, rising from the ranks of the dust to high station in Solomon's construction projects. On his personal abilities alone Jeroboam may have been able to steer the northern 10 tribes away from the Davidic dynasty. However, with the prophetic intervention of Ahijah, Jeroboam's leadership destiny was cemented. Just as the Biblical record demonstrates with the founding of the United Monarchy under Saul and David, the charismatic military authority became routinized in the person of the king and reinforced by the establishment of a state. The king claimed a monopoly on the exercise of domination within given boundaries.

leadership from the king. Compounding this problem were the regular episodes of sedition and conspiracy against the king. Contrast this scene with that of Judah in the south, where there was a clear, *unconditional* prophetic mandate for one of David's posterity to sit on the throne of Israel. Certainly there were challenges to the Davidic throne, but those usually came from within the family, not from without.

During the time of the divided monarchy, there were nineteen kings in Northern Israel. Five of those kings had negative prophecies uttered against them, that they would be overthrown and their household destroyed. No kings of Judah had negative prophecies uttered against them that their dynasty would be overthrown. Two kings in Israel received positive prophecies, but these were conditional promises that were contingent on faithfulness to the laws of God. These are further signs of instability and the lack of the routinization of authority in the Kingdom of Israel. Additional evidence for the instability of the north is that of the nineteen kings that ruled, eight were murdered in military coups, one committed suicide, one died from injuries sustained in a fall, one was killed in battle, and one was taken into captivity. Only seven died from natural causes.

Contrast this with the kings of Judah. During the period of Northern Israel's existence, twelve kings of Judah ruled. Eight died from natural causes and four others died at the hands of would-be usurpers. No kings had negative judgments leveled against them, in terms of curses against their posterity. Rather, all the kings appear to partake of the unconditional covenant to David that, regardless of their actions, a Davidic descendant would rule Judah.

All of this is to say that the Kingdom of Judah was far more stable than the kingship of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the stability of the Southern Kingdom of Judah was derived, in part, because of routinized authority. Instead of having charismatic leaders run the show on the latest whims of the day, as appeared to be the case in the north, Judah had successfully transitioned. However, the north never did fully escape from the insecurity and instability of the charismatic model of authority. The conditional promise to Jeroboam may have cemented the charismatic, unstable approach to government and authority in the north. On the other hand, the unconditional promise to David may have cemented the transition from unstable charisma to the greater security of rationalized, legal authority.

Had charismatic authority been institutionalized and routinized fully in the north, then there likely would have been no question about

who held the monopoly of the legitimate use of force. When invading armies came to fight, the state could adequately defend itself because there was internal stability, because the state owned the right to the legitimate use of force. Instead, in the north, the authority of the king was called into question time and again. Indeed, the utter political chaos that engulfed Northern Israel in the years before the Assyrians invaded was one of the factors in their fall. Had there been no question about who held the right to authority, the king could have marshaled the people to support battle or submission. Unfortunately, the north was in such a chaotic mess, they could not muster the type of unity required to survive the Assyrian empire, which routinized authority normalizes.

Conclusion

We see in the Biblical record a clear case of political instability in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Kingly authority appears to be perpetually in flux or in question. This was due in part, I believe, to conditional covenants and the failure to routinize charismatic authority into legal authority. In contrast, the Kingdom of Judah enjoyed, from an internal standpoint, a relative sense of political calm. The transfer of authority from one individual or generation to the next had become routinized in Judah and was not open to serious debate. Perhaps had Israel been founded on an unconditional covenant *and* had also routinized charismatic authority into legal kingship, the Kingdom of Israel may not have experienced such great instability at the very moment Assyria invaded. And perhaps then the kingdom could have endured several more generations of existence.

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