

Analysing the Policies of the First Three Kings of the Davidic Dynasty

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Abstract

This publication exposes in a simple and relevant way the policies of the first three kings of the Davidic dynasty. These kings had different perspectives but were able to change the future of their nation in their respective ways. David used power in order to make his people free from the pagan nations; Solomon ruled wisely to enrich and place Israel in the same level of the great nations around them; and Rehoboam wished to have more power and authority than his ancestors and tried to find another policy to govern Israel. But in any case, their ways of governing marked the story of Israel. This research will help us to understand the reason for the success and defeat of these kings, so that we can learn from them for a better future.

Keywords

strength, wisdom, negotiation, politics, change



I. Introduction

The Davidic dynasty marks the identity of the people of Israel, especially in the kingdom of Judah. However, all the kings who have succeeded each had their own ways of governing and their own policies that have marked the history of the people of Israel. The first three kings of this dynasty prove this point: David, Solomon and Rehoboam: three kings, three policies and three changes.

The aim of this article is to explain that the way in which authority is imposed in governance can lead to a change in people's story. Whether by force, wisdom, or negotiation; positive and negative impacts are to be expected depending on the political ethics of the leader. So, how do we govern well? In order to solve this problem, we have studied the history of the first three kings of the Davidic dynasty. Using the bibliographic data collected and by making a comparative analysis of their personal and political ethics, we obtained the following results:

- Political choice is important in the art of governing.
- The future of the people depends on the political ethics of the leader.
- Political fallibility manifests after the death of the leader.

Thus, the king must understand that the nation depends primarily on him and his actions.

II. Review of Literatures

According to the books written by the various publishers, David's politics can be summed up by his strength, Solomon's by his wisdom and finally, Rehoboam was judged as a king with no apparent policy.

2.1 The Policy of David

David was a warrior. His strength has a source and it is given by the Lord God who chose him since his youth. A force characterized by his anointing, his military exploits and the accomplishment of theocracy.

a. David's Anointing

David was anointed three times before being rightfully recognized by the twelve tribes of Israel.

Samuel did the first anointing in secret while Saul was still in power. Gibert (1983) said that this action done through Samuel's authority and according to the rite of anointing, marks the quasi-divine legitimacy of David's kingship (p. 21). But according to Caquot and Robert (1994), David's arrival on the scene constitutes the immediate counterpart of Saul's dismissal (p. 187). As if, God has already rejected Saul because this first anointing is God's commandment. In addition, the vocabulary used to designate anointing is not the same: מלך (king) for David and נגיד (chief) for Saul. During this anointing, the Spirit of the Lord fell upon David. This Spirit will guide him throughout his life. Caquot and Robert (1994) insist on the fact that David did not act on his own initiative but allowed himself to be led by God (p. 377).

The second anointing was done in the house of Judah after Saul's death. David had spent time gaining power. Was it because he had been afraid of Saul? Imagine a warrior who behaved like a coward, who run away and refused to fight even if he has already received the divine anointing. Westphal (1932) said that David at that time was a fugitive and became the leader of a band of outlaws (p. 271). However, this reaction can be explained as follows: because Saul is his father-in-law or because he recognized that he is anointed by God? On the other hand, we cannot dismiss that he had no qualms when he killed his opponents in wartime. Finally, he has no scruples about betraying Saul at the risk of having to fight against the soldiers of his own people, as Gibert (1983, p. 23) said, when he wanted to ally himself with the Philistines (I Sam 28; 29).

This interpretation is also merited because it is the recognition of all the good things that David had done to this tribe. It is after winning the Amalekites. Caquot and Robert (1994) said that it is the expression of his generosity with his compatriot and his capacity to apply democracy (p. 377). He had not forced the people to love him. He had a charisma to take power and used the power of love. So he is proclaimed king in Hebron and reigned in the Southern kingdom for seven years (1004-997). In the North, Ishbaal, the son of Saul was recognized as a successor of his father.

The third anointing was in the eyes of all the elders of Israel after the death of Ishbaal and his general Abner. David demonstrated an exemplary diplomatic skill in front of his rivals (the supporters of Saul's descendants). He was able to rally the twelve tribes of Israel. Soon after, he defeated the Jebusites and chose Jerusalem as his capital. Jerusalem is a neutral land; a strategic place that belonged neither to the North nor to the South but could unite the two lands. He reigned there for thirty-three years. This policy demonstrates his good faith and his desire to reign in righteousness and fairness. He could stay in his hometown or in the city where he accomplished many feats, but he chose not to.

These stories show us that it was not easy for him to accede to the throne. Authority is built and respect is earned. He had patience and gone through step by step before obtaining power. It was a series of merciless fights, multiple wars in which he proved his strength and his ability to save Israel from the hand of the pagan nations who oppressed the people during the period of the judges. Nevertheless, this force is not used to oppress his own people. David's behavior is justified by Weber (1971), who argued that authority is

not the power to coerce the individual and extort acts of submission, but a capacity recognized as legitimate by subordinates. It involves the order without confrontation of power. Concerning the authority, it is not enough for a leader to have a number of sanctions at his disposal and to be able to apply them when there is a refusal of obedience (pp. 10-11).

David's strength has become a charismatic authority. Unfortunately, Israel's allegiance to David will remain precarious as only one generation maintained this unity.

b. David's Military Exploits

According to Westphal (1932), through his military exploits and organizational skills, David had made a powerful and respected nation (p. 272). If David undertook war, it was to take possession of the Promised Land. The land that God had sworn to give to his people. Moreover, as David was God's servant, he was obligated to do everything to save his country. David's strength helped the Jewish people to be free and independent and to live in peace in the Promised Land. He was a king with many faces: a gentle, pious man, harp player, sentimental musician for some; but cruel, vengeful and merciless for others. He used force, not for malice and greed for power, but jealousy and the desire to protect his family and his people. The Lord was with David in the wars he faced. He won all the battles and his enemies were defeated before him (Deut 28:1, 7). The thirty-three years of David's reign in Jerusalem were marked by military campaigns against the Philistines, Ammonites, Moabites, and Arameans. But apart from wars, he had made alliances with Tyro and Sidon.

c. The Accomplishment of Theocracy

Theocracy literally means the power of God. In the Old Testament, Jacob (1968) insisted on the kingship of Yahweh (p. 47) and von Rad (1963) affirmed that no one should reign over Israel because that would be an encroachment on Yahweh's sovereign rights (p. 62). Yet, God chose David; he is even considered the Messiah of Israel. Why?

- David agreed to be subject to God's will because he recognized the kingship of God.
- Even though he was an ordinary man with his sins and weaknesses, he was still in relationship with God. His heart was pure and his repentance was sincere: without arrogance, without hypocrisy (II Sam 7, 12. 22. 24). He knew humility in front of God's chastisement and greatness. This is why all the kings of Israel had always been compared to David: his faith and his intimate relationship with God.

However, apart from the small consultations before each war, divine intervention is mentioned only four times in the books of Samuel:

- At his consecration by Samuel where God chose him as king over Israel (I Sam 16).
- After the dance in front of the ark where David showed his gratitude by telling to God that he wanted to build a temple in his honor but God refused his request (II Sam 7).
- After the death of Uriah through the prophet Nathan (II Sam 12).
- After the census that cost him the lives of several people (II Sam 24).

The last three interventions were negatives, and they were the signs of divine retribution for David's sins. David repented and accepted divine punishment.

The God of war intervened only a few times in David's life, and it was to prove him that He is superior. These interventions were therefore to remind David that God is the King of kings and the Warrior of warriors. That theocracy is still valid for Israel and that David should never forget it. Thus, God remains and will forever remain the true King.

The human king is just placed as a guide. He still has his own actions that should not necessarily be related to the divine will. God lets man make the free choice of his actions.

2.2 The Wisdom of Solomon

Westermann (1996) estimated that Solomon applied three forms of wisdom when he ruled over Israel (pp. 43-44): justice in judgment, spiritual conversation, and the composition of songs, fables, and sentences. Jacob (1968) also said that the activity of the sages is manifested in three aspects that characterized Solomon's work (p. 204): the literary and philosophy, pedagogy and the political field. They are both right, and it is with these aspects that we will analyze Solomon's wisdom.

a. Justice in Judgment

Solomon demonstrated it during the trial of the two women who claimed to be the mother of the living child (I Kings 3:16-28). He was impartial and wisdom helped him to apply justice. He was not intimidated by the words and pleas of the two women and did not judge them according to their mutual accusations. He didn't even listen to them but just followed his intuition in the face of this difficult situation of which he is forced to give a verdict. The first verdict was not to give the baby which is a source of conflict to anyone. A verdict that involved the death of the baby by dividing him, so that everyone had their share. But this decision has led to the manifestation of the truth. Who would have thought of such a statement? Only a wise man thinks in this way. A strange form of wisdom certainly, but the truth has come out. The spirit of discernment made him know the truth at a crucial moment (Randrialiva & Robijaona Rahelivololoniaina, 2023). But there were no other similar stories that evoked his judgment of Israel.

On the other hand, Solomon is described as a stern and merciless man. Westermann (1996) said that he has a dry, formal, and impersonal manner... no trace of human warmth, even towards a baby (p. 40). A man who is not afraid to kill to achieve his ends. Ready to do anything to find the truth. The wisdom of Solomon, can be classified as popular wisdom. He was able to make good decisions without resorting to DNA testing or other ways that are possible in our time.

It should be remembered that according to Lelièvre (1993), justice, respect for the law and loyalty are the foundation and legitimacy of the royal throne. For the king, exercising justice meant defending the small and the poor threatened by the rich and the great (p. 27). Solomon has proven his wisdom in the face of this difficult situation.

b. Literature and Philosophy

It was especially in the time of Solomon that writing began to spread in Israel. As a philosopher, he pronounced three thousand maxims and composed five thousand canticles (I Kings 5:12). Solomon's wisdom was inspired by meditation on what is happening in the lives of human beings, their relationship with themselves and with nature and draws conclusions from it. These conclusions are summed up in touching proverbs and poems, easily passed on to those around him and to future generations. It is said that from all peoples, there are someone who came to hear his wisdom (I Kings 5:14). Solomon managed to prove in writing his intellectual level and his inspired philosophy from above.

c. The Spiritual Conversation

Solomon's meeting with the Queen of Sheba was considered as a spiritual conversation. She wanted to test him with different questions in order to find out how good

he was. As Solomon's wisdom is based on the meditation of nature, it can be said that it is already a primitive form of theoretical science in relation to biology and physics. It is also an intellectual weapon that brings peace.

d. The Politics of Magnitudes

Despite Solomon's successes, Gibert (1983) accuses him of being a swindling and impious king who eliminates his relatives in order to have a place in the monarchy (pp. 35-38). He said that his story is only a history-list, written under his direction to show his greatness. Thus, Israel is a people like so many others who are governed by the law of the strongest and who have just the duty to accept what was imposed on them.

Wilhelm (1951, p. 317) supports Gibert's words and said that Solomon obtained everything without the slightest effort. He just organized and forced others to work for him. A cunning and optimistic man who never agreed to bend to others. Castel (1983, p. 93) compared Solomon to Louis XIV: two kings who had a great kingdom, full of glory, but the high tax that was demanded from the people led to rupture and discord. The beauty of the kingdom was the beginning of the end.

Charpentier (1997) disagrees with all of them and asserts that it was Solomon's wisdom that was the key to his success: his administration, his trade and international relations... (pp. 34-35) but his failure comes when he took the place of the lord and imitated Pharaoh.

2.3 Rehoboam's Policy

As soon as he rose to power, Rehoboam was immediately confronted with problems.

a. The Confrontation with the Elders

The enthronement of Rehoboam is expected to take place in Shechem, an old historic city of Ephraim, the most powerful tribe in the northern kingdom. The choice of this location had a political intention because Rehoboam did it in order to satisfy the tribes of the North. At that time, the installation and recognition of the king in his political office required the consent of the people. So he moved to this place.

However, everything turned into a worse one. Just before the royal anointing, the elders of Israel had requested about corvée and taxes. It is similar to what the elders did in the time of Samuel when the sons of the latter misjudged the people of Israel (I Sam 8). The demand of the elders was a sign of revolt because Rehoboam allowed the people to criticize him and to have dialogues about his way of governing. The revolt always begins with discontent and ends with civil war if the problem is not resolved. Here, the request was delicate, the future of the people depends on it and it deserves special attention. This is why Rehoboam did not answer immediately but asked for the opinions of his advisers before making a decision. This situation represents the desire to negotiate. Rendtorff (2011) stated that the old are in favor of flexible caution but the young are in favor of uncompromising rigidity (p. 53). Rehoboam had listened to the voice of the inexperienced youth. A decision which involved schism.

On the other hand, the request of the elders also represented the ingratitude of the people, as if they had forgotten the prosperity and peace they had enjoyed under the reign of Solomon. They were no longer at war, their nation was placed in the same level of the great powers, the lux was visible everywhere. But the people didn't care, they only cared about themselves.

b. Democracy

Before the monarchy in Israel, it was the elders who met and tried to find solutions to all the problems. The consent of the majority was therefore important. This form of power was already a kind of democracy. This demand was absent in the time of David and Solomon because in the monarchical system, which is rather autocratic, the king is primarily responsible for the life of the people and all depend on his act, decisions and conduct. And that's not all, because theocracy reigned in Israel, a policy that placed power in the hands of God but not in the hands of the people. Moreover, many times in the history of Israel, we have seen the bad decision made because of this democracy of the elders, such as what happened in the time of Samuel when the people wanted to have a king (I Sam 8) and the drama of Saul who listened to the voice of the people who had acclaimed him king rather than that of the Lord (I Sam 13; 15). Thus, in a theocratic state, the voice of God remained the sine qua non condition for success. The voice of the people is not necessarily the voice of God. The voice of the people turned into their benefit, their interest and led to deviation or rebellion against God. (Ramarolahy & Robijaona Rahelivololoniaina, 2024)

III. Research Methods

3.1 Socio-Historical Analysis

First, we have made a socio-historical analysis of these first three kings according to the history told in the Bible and other bibliographical data concerning them. The biblical texts will be studied in their respective contexts. We have focused on the impact of their policies in the people. It may be in positive or negative ways.

3.2 Benchmarking

We will opt for comparative analysis. According to Urmita (2024), this analysis is a way of looking at several similar things to see how they are different and what they have in common. Etudes et analyses (2021) tell us that it will allow to help in the choice and decision-making by collecting, analyzing and comparing the information obtained to achieve the goal concerned. In this study, after researching David, Solomon, and Rehoboam's policies, we will compare their history by examining their way of governing Israel from the time of their enthronement, from their personal and political ethics to the consequence of their policies on Israel after their death. So we can understand the behaviors to adopt in order to change the future of a people as well as possible.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Election of the King Marks a New Beginning for the People

Success in politics lies in the election. In the case of David, Solomon, and Rehoboam, their rise to power marked their history as well as the entire history of their people.

	DAVID	SALOMON	REHOBOAM
Filial Relationship	Eighth son	Tenth son	Firstborn
Election	By God	By David	By Solomon

Rise to power	Elimination of his brothers in the divine choice. Elimination of the son of Saul	Elimination of his brothers by his relatives	Jeroboam would like to eliminate him
	Kingdom obtained after several battles	Inherited Kingdom	Inherited Kingdom
Unction	In Bethlehem (I Sam 16) In Hebron (II Sam 2) In Hebron (II Sam 5)	In Gihon (I Roi 1)	In Sichem (I Roi 12)

- Neither David nor Solomon were the firstborn of their fathers. They did not possess the birthright. So their rise to power was a series of bloody battles. They eliminated their brothers who could be potential opponents. In David's case, according to what is recounted in I Sam 16:7b, God chose David over his three older brothers Eliab, Abinadab and Shamma because "man sees in the eyes but the Lord sees in the heart". Solomon's three brothers were also eliminated (Amnon, Absalom and Adonias) but in completely different circumstances. In the case of Rehoboam, Solomon designated him as his successor. The throne was handed to him on a silver platter. His power was obtained without effort, without trial because he had no rival brothers. But another man appeared out of nowhere: Jeroboam. Solomon had already pushed Jeroboam's path aside, but after his death, Jeroboam returned with the support of the majority of the people. As Rehoboam could not control this opponent, it resulted in the schism of his kingdom. It was only after his failure that he attempted to remedy his mistakes by trying to reconquer the ten tribes. But it was too late. So, even before taking power, we must make sure that no one can disrupt this. Otherwise, failure is inevitable.
- David was consecrated three times.

In the case of Solomon and Rehoboam, there was only one anointing. Solomon even had the audacity to replace the priest to legitimize the Sadocids. Solomon is not really God's direct choice, even though God appeared to him several times. He was designated by David to reign over a people who had no choice but to accept what was imposed on them by force and fear. But this fear and strength weakened in Rehoboam's time.

4.2 The Future of the People Depends on the Ethics of the Leader

a. Comparison of the Personal Ethics of David, Solomon, and Rehoboam

David is the king who has been given the title of servant of God. Ranked as the king most appreciated by the people (II Sam 7:8), he did not take advantage of this admiration. He always showed himself to be the servant of the Lord by his way of acting, his modesty and his humility towards Him. He was also a human, a person with his weaknesses and flaws, but throughout his history, his heart was always turned toward God. Despite his falls and deviations, his thoughts and desires were leaning toward praise and faith in God. Kayayan (1997) said that he was the king after God's heart and through his ardent piety he succeeded in raising the spiritual level of his people (p. 132). He showed himself to be a model in the fulfillment of God's word and His commandments. From the beginning to the end of his story, he was always in relationship with God. He was seen as a man who cared about the future of others rather than himself: a generous and loving man. Hence his consideration as the Messiah and from his descendants will come the True Messiah who will establish peace over Israel. Jesus Christ is even known as the "*son of David*". David feared God despite his weaknesses.

Surely, he had taught the fear of God to his son Solomon. This basic religious education certainly had an effect on Solomon's life. So that at the beginning of his reign, he was like a servant of God. However, he had his own personality that was completely different from David's. He cared about great demonstrations of power. He was the first king who managed to equal the kings of the East if we refer to his harem, his servants, the palaces, the temple and the buildings he had built. He highlighted brands, external figures, honor, the desire to be known and respected by all. The rest, he didn't really care. He wanted success and his surroundings paid a high price to satisfy him. Compared to David, his heart was a little colder and hardened. But it should not be overlooked that by his wisdom he avoided wars and did everything to be on good terms with the kings of other nations.

David and Solomon were both artists who composed songs and poems. But their sources of inspiration were not the same. Solomon based himself on the reality of nature, in which he inspired his wisdom. His songs were about life and the beauty of human love and how joy could be derived from it. David's writings, on the other hand, focused on God's power and His deeds toward Him. Thus, he sang praises, hymns of joy, and supplications, but never the pleasure of personal or carnal life. David was rather spiritual but Solomon was more naturalistic.

Rehoboam was the opposite of them; he was not inspired by art but thirsty for authority and power. He wanted to be free to choose. He was ambitious, hoping to be much more powerful than his father. But one wonders, why did he not ask the prophet for advice? Neither David nor Solomon dared to make such a delicate decision before consulting God's chosen one, especially at the time of the enthronement. Moreover, in the entire history of Israel, every time the elders meet the leader as in the time of Samuel (I Sam 8), it is the change of the institution and the history of the people that is at stake. But in any case, it is the prophet who is asked for advice. So why hadn't Rehoboam thought about it? Unless this behavior is the consequence of his father's education. His mother is Ammonite, Solomon in his old age no longer consulted the prophets and even dared to offer sacrifices as if he was a priest. So, perhaps Rehoboam did not realize the importance of the divine will in the face of a crisis situation. And it was for this reason that he allowed the building of high places, statues dedicated to foreign cults and sacred prostitution (I Kings 14:23-24).

On the other hand, we can also consider his desire to want to satisfy others and the desire to be loved. He wanted to listen but didn't know how to make the right decisions because of his youth and lack of experience. The support of young people is much more important for him than the opinion of the elders who lived long before him. "If youth knew, if old age could".

b. Comparison of the Political Ethics of David, Solomon and Rehoboam

- David's personnel are: the commanders of the army (II Sam 8:16a; 20:23), responsible for the security of the royal family (II Sam 8:18; 20:23), warriors and soldiers (I Chr 11:12; 27), responsible for chores (II Sam 20:24), chancellor (II Sam 8:16b), writer of chronicles (II Sam 20:24), secretary (II Sam 8:17b; 20:25), priests (II Sam 8:17a; 20, 25 ; I Chr 24), Levites (I Chr 23), singers and musicians (I Chr 25), doorkeepers (I Chr 26), personal adviser (II Sam 8:18; 20:26; I Chr 27:32), stewards (I Chr 27:31).

Solomon's personnel are mentioned in I King 4: the commander-in-chief (v. 4), responsible of forced labor (v. 6), writer of chronicles (v. 3), secretaries (v. 3), priest (v. 2, 4), personal adviser (v. 5), in charge of the district officers (v. 5), in charge of the palace (v. 6).

David is renowned for his strength and ability to wage wars to save Israel from their enemies. His policy was mainly based on conquests with the aim of expanding his territory and above all of owning all the Promised Land. Implicitly, David had many enemies, but they were overpowered. Kayayan (1997) said that the internal structure of the state created by David resembled a monarchy supported by a powerful feudalism (p. 130).

Unlike David, Solomon lived in tranquility. He no longer made conquests; he no longer enlarged his territory, for he considered it sufficient. However, if we didn't expand our territory, it was already a form of reluctance. His policy was based on diplomacy rather than militarism. Horses were only symbols to give good impressions, but he didn't use them.

In comparison with David's policy, it focused more on equipment, administration and management of property. David had already many officials, but Solomon's administration was much more organized, if we refer to the stewards of the palace who were in charge of providing for the maintenance of the king and his household. A charge that David did not impose during his reign. For David, his personal safety and his family were more important. According to Westphal (1932), he collaborated with bands of outlaws, he was surrounded by a host of valiant paladins, and he had bodyguards composed mainly of foreign elements: Kerethians and Pelethians (pp. 271-272). As a warrior, it is quite normal that he cared about his personal life and his family. Solomon didn't confront the same problem because he tried to have a good relationship with all. Solomon was a capitalist. The economy and the management of the assets were more important for him. But it should not be overlooked that David was very rich and the inheritance he bequeathed to Solomon was a considerable sum. His heart didn't really get attached to it. Solomon could not give the same to Rehoboam. What he obtained, he spent in pleasures.

- During the reign of David, Palestine was an agricultural country. Livestock and agriculture were the main resource of the people. Under Solomon, trade began to spread, and it played an important role in Israel's development. The copper and iron industry had also impacts. Solomon was not content with cultivating and producing, he intended to trade and export. He succeeded and obtained benefit because Palestine was located in a strategic area where international exchanges between the different countries of antiquity occurred (Noth, 1954, p. 26).
- Apart from the military and the officials, the priests have been mentioned, but in the story of David, they are mentioned three times. Whereas in Solomon's story, it was only at the time of his enthronement that these priests played an important role. It was always Solomon who participated directly in these religious acts. Why is that? Isn't this the problem that the Lord blamed Saul for (I Sam 13)?
- Rehoboam was the opposite of them. The story told in the Bible does not mention his way of administering or governing his kingdom. It only talks about his desire to bring his brothers back under his rule and the fortification of the ramparts in order to protect himself against enemies. Perhaps, he followed his father's form of governing but in a more complex way because the lack of personnel is obvious, since the ten tribes had broken away from him.

The first attempt was in vain when he sent Adoram, the person in charge of the forced labor, the most qualified to negotiate, but he was stoned by the people (I Kings 12, 18). The second was aborted, even though he had been able to gather one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men ready to fight (I Kings 12, 21). God had sent Shemaiah, the prophet, to defend him and declare war against his brother. In this difficult moment, he knew how to listen to God's voice. So why didn't he do it before?

4.3 Political Fallibility Manifests Itself After the Death of the Leader

The deaths of David, Solomon and Rehoboam had an impact on the history of Israel. What they left behind profoundly marked the future of the people: their success and failure.

	David	Salomon	Rehoboam
General policy	Autocracy	Sophocracy	Democracy
Political asset	Strength	Wisdom	Negotiation
Vision	Building a Temple for the Lord	Improving David's Plans	Ambition to Possess More Power
	Unification of the Twelve Tribes	Have relations with other nations	Bringing Israel back under its rule
	Capitalization of Jerusalem	Construction of the palace	Fortification of the ramparts
Sources of its wealth	Conquest	Inheritance	Inheritance
	Tribute from other nations	Tribute from other nations	
	Donations from the people	Endowed with its wives	
	Conquests	Forced labor and taxes	
	I Chr 29, 28	I King 11, 9-11	I King 14, 30-31
	Good old age	Deviation	
	Sated with days	Wrath of God	
	Wealth and Glory	Imminent destruction of the kingdom	War between Israel and Judah
Israel after his death	Peace, prosperity and wealth	Political schism	Tribal warfare
	Centralization of worship in Jerusalem	Religious schism Idolatry Deviation of the people	Idolatry
	Agreement with other nations	Attacks by other nations	Attacks by other nations
	Continuity of state	No more throne warfare	No more throne warfare

- David was a visionary; he planned to build a temple dedicated to God. Even though he could not fulfill this vision, he had already collected materials and money for the construction. After his death, Solomon inherited a large sum of money and a unified kingdom, free of all danger. Peace and prosperity reigned, not because Solomon knew how to handle situations but because David worked hard before giving the power to him.

Solomon, being ambitious, was not satisfied with what David left for the construction of the temple. He wanted to do a feat for populism and appearance by spending more than he intended. In addition to the temple, he built a beautiful palace.

Ambition multiplied the expenses compared to what he owned. Without an economy and without a development program, he was doomed to failure. Money can dry up, so it is the people who are obliged to provide for his needs. From this moment, the people were just waiting for the right moment to throw off their yoke.

- David's last days were marked by joy and peace. He was able to praise the Lord, testify to what the Lord did to Him throughout his life, and felt the pride of a person who was not afraid of dying because he was able to fulfill his mission on earth. The books of the Chronicles mention his old age, his wealth, his glory and his power. His death marked the disappearance of a great irreplaceable man with an inestimable value.

Solomon's story is told in a negative way: the mention of God's wrath caused by his deviation. The punishments were the destruction of the kingdom, the revolt of the oppressed people leading to political and religious schism and the attack of his enemies (Damascus in the north and an Edomite prince in the south). It is not happened during his reign because of the actions and faithfulness of his father. But the question remains: why did Solomon not defend himself in front of the Lord? He did not seek to justify himself because he recognized the True Judge of Israel. His silence expressed the recognition of being guilty, but why didn't he think to repent? In his last days, he did not even speak to the Lord. Rendtorff (2011) reported that by the end of his reign, there was a decline in his power (p. 52). He who wanted peace did not find it.

The religious schism is so strong that the northern state dared to build a golden calf and a place of worship for them, much like what Solomon did for his wives. The people learned quickly, especially the evil thing.

- Rehoboam is therefore forced to deal with these unpleasant situations. It was not only the people of Israel who were Rehoboam's problem after the death of his father. Other nations also began to attack and steal the temple in Jerusalem. By continuing relations with the pagans, Solomon opened a way for others to fight against the people. The fault does not lie with Rehoboam; the blame lies with Solomon, who is primarily responsible for it by caring for himself rather than his people. Is it wisdom? Or isn't he wise enough to think about his son's future as his father David did? According to Westermann (1996), Solomon's kingdom was an edifice that lacked a solid foundation. It only took a shock for all the magnificence of Solomon to collapse quickly (p. 46). He did not know how to foresee the future and lived only in the present moment.

The situation worsened after the death of Rehoboam: this king did not know how to maintain what he possessed. He thought like a spoiled rotten kid who always wanted to get more than he already had. Israel's elders wanted to negotiate with him, but he didn't know what to do. The bad decision was the influence of the thirst for power and the ambition. He sat up a form of democracy in a regime that was supposed to be autocratic. So, he lost his value and authority. Even the words he used were senseless, insolent and clumsy (I King 12, 13-14). But if only his democratic approach had been bent towards the voice of the elders who are in the majority, he would have preserved the unity of the kingdom. Rehoboam had the opportunity to listen to the voice of the people and thus keep power, but he did not do so. He had neither the diplomacy of his father, nor the warlike virtues of his grandfather. As Martin Luther King said, "*Power is like money in the bank, as you use it less, it increases more*". Why didn't he settle for what he already had, rather than demanding something unachievable? That's why the tribal wars and the attack of other nations multiplied after his death. Fortunately, he was fortifying the ramparts to reduce the damage.

However, he did something that neither his father nor his grandfather managed : he solved the crisis at the time of succession. He settled the problem about succession to the

throne by designating Abia : the son of his favorite wife. To avoid rivalries between his other 27 sons, he appointed them in various cities of Judah where they would have constituted as many small provincial courts. This was a proof of Rehoboam's political skill.

V. Conclusion

David, Solomon and Rehoboam shaped the history of the people of Israel : whether by force, by wisdom or by negotiation. The ideal is to have these three qualities. So, if the king wants to succeed, we have the following recommendations:

- He must make the right political choice

Only God knows how to make the right choice. Human choice is based only on what is seen from the outside: ephemeral beauty, deceptive appearance, and good words that can be a source of disappointment. We must still accept that we can use force like David's, Solomon's wisdom and Rehoboam's negotiation depending on the context.

David's strength has set the people free. But we must never forget that in a question of power, in the strategy of war, there are always conspiracies, revolt, betrayal, death and cunning. So, there are times when we do not need to use force but apply wisdom like Solomon. It is an intellectual weapon that brings peace. We can live in harmony and cohesion, we can join forces and we don't have to destroy each other or always be in competition. This peaceful wisdom implies the image of the universalism of salvation. On the other hand, it has a price: the desire to be like the nations that do not believe in God.

This wisdom is linked to negotiation because it is used to get along and find a compromise. But if the king is not a good negotiator, it can lead to the destruction of the kingdom causing schism and ruin. Negotiating is good, listening to others to satisfy them is better, but placing God's will above all is the best.

- He must have a model ethic

The kings' behaviors and their personal ethics have an influence on his people. As a human being, no one will be perfect, as Derousseaux (1970) said: the king is a man like any other, with his sins, his weaknesses, his sensitivity... (pp. 132-134). Sin and temptations are always present and the king can fall down but still get back up. This requires him to have a model ethic.

- He must take into consideration the continuity of the State

If the political leader tends to be exceptional and adopts a new policy without considering his predecessor and successor, he could never succeed. Development doesn't depend on one person. Carrying out the current project and passing on the vision to his successor is really important, because no one will stay in power forever. Vision must be passed.

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