

## ***King and Cultus: The Image of David in the Book of Kings***

GREG GOSWELL

Christ College, Sydney  
ggoswell@christcollege.edu.au

*The image of David in the book of Kings is of a cultically-observant king, who does not commit the sin of idolatry, and, as a result, David becomes the model of proper royal behaviour for all kings that follow. In the theology of Kings there is an essential link between kingship and the temple cultus, and the kings who were like David reformed the cult and suppressed deviant cultic expression. The author of Kings measures and assesses the performance of every king by the rule of whether he supported the primacy of the YHWH and his temple in Jerusalem (of which piety David is the exemplar). It is argued that the image of David found in Kings is not without connection to the memory of David preserved in the preceding book of Samuel. In terms of the fate of the Davidic house in exile and beyond, various features in Kings suggest that the book is at best ambivalent as to the long term future of kingship as an Israelite institution.*

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Antony F. Campbell sees the book of Samuel as being about David and orientated toward David (and his dynasty) from the beginning, and, despite the traditional name assigned to the canonical book, it is true that Samuel is less visible after he has anointed David, so that Campbell asserts that “Samuel’s life-work is finished by 1 Sam 16:13.”<sup>1</sup> From this point onwards the focus is the rise of David and the corresponding fall of Saul and his house, and 2 Samuel is largely occupied with the successes and failures of the reign of David. The figure of David also has a long afterlife in the book of Kings, in which the image of David is the standard by which all subsequent kings are measured and mostly found wanting. In this article I explore what that image is, from where it is

1. Anthony F. Campbell, *1 Samuel* (FOTL 7; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 25.

derived, and what it may suggest about the possibilities and shape of kingship in the post-exilic period.

#### DAVID AT DEATH'S DOOR

The opening verses of the book of Kings depict a decrepit David (1:1–4) and anticipate that the focus of the book will be the post-Davidic era, and the death of David is reported as early as 1 Kgs 2:10.<sup>2</sup> The four Hebrew book titles “Joshua,” “Judges,” “Samuel” and “Kings” give the Former Prophets (of which the book of Kings is a key component) a distinct focus on leadership that is not at all inappropriate.<sup>3</sup> In line with this, Mark O’Brien sees the books of Joshua onwards as composed “principally as a story of Israel’s leaders,” with the leaders portrayed as exercising various aspects of Mosaic authority, “albeit of course in a way that was appropriate to the particular period of Israel’s life in the land.”<sup>4</sup> The placement of the divisions between the books at the point of significant deaths (those of Moses, Joshua, Saul, and Ahab) has the same effect of drawing attention to leadership (and transitions in leadership) as a prominent feature of this literary corpus (Josh 1:1; Judg 1:1; 2 Sam 1:1; 2 Kgs 1:1; using the formula “after the death of X” in each case).<sup>5</sup> The formula is modified in the case of 1 Kgs 1:1 (“Now King David was old

2. The division of the Greek books of 1–4 Kingdoms between books 2 and 3 in the Antiochene (proto-Lucianic) text and *kaige* revision takes place at this point, with 1 Kgs 2:11 commencing 3 Kingdoms, in line with what triggers the book divisions between 1–2 Kingdoms (2 Sam 1:1: “After the death of Saul”) and between 3–4 Kingdoms (2 Kgs 1:1: “After the death of Ahab”); see Natalio Fernández Marcos, “Translating the Historical Books,” in *XIV Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Helsinki, 2010* (ed. Melvin K. H. Peters; SBLSCS 59; Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 222–23, 226–27; John W. Olley, “Re-Versing Tradition: The Influence of Sense-Divisions in Reading the Bible Then and Now,” *ABR* 62 (2014): 37–38.

3. See Mark A. O’Brien, “The ‘Deuteronomistic History’ as a Story of Israel’s Leaders,” *ABR* 37 (1989): 14–34; idem, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment* (OBO 92; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 288.

4. O’Brien, “A Story of Israel’s Leaders,” 17, 19; cf. idem, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis*, 288.

5. The latter two divisions are in the Greek tradition that subdivides the books of Samuel and Kings (= 1–4 Kingdoms).

and advanced in years”; cf. Josh 13:1; 23:1),<sup>6</sup> but it is plain that a change of monarch must soon take place, and the likelihood of David’s imminent death fuels the competition between Adonijah and Solomon over who will succeed him as king (1:5). The focus of 1 Kgs 1 on kingship is underlined by the repeated use of the title “King David” (9x) or “the king” (39x) in the chapter, and 2:1 is the first instance of an unadorned use of “David” in the narrative,<sup>7</sup> but this only occurs after the contested succession has been resolved in Solomon’s favour at the close of the first chapter (1:53: “And he [Adonijah] came and did obeisance to King Solomon”).

The book opens with an uncomplimentary picture of David’s physical infirmity due to advanced age (1:1–4), and Peter Leithart raises the possibility that this scene is placed in premier position to foreshadow the eventual demise of Davidic monarchy as an Israelite institution.<sup>8</sup> Despite the beauty of his female attendant, Abishag, David is sexually impotent (1:4: “but the king *knew* [root ידע] her not”), and, as pointed out by Leithart, David’s physical state is matched by (and becomes a symbol of) his political feebleness, in that David also fails to “know” (using the same Hebrew root) about the plotting going on around him (“and David our lord does not know it” [1:11]; “although you, my lord the king, do not know it” [1:18]). Nathan and Bathsheba labour to make sure that the royal ambition of Adonijah comes to David’s knowledge, and Bathsheba’s question to the king again touches on this motif (1:27: “Has this thing been brought about by the king and you have not *made it known* [*Hiphil* of root ידע] to your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?” [RSV modified]).

In certain ways the opening paragraph of Kings is echoed by the final paragraph of the book, which depicts the scene of the release of Jehoiachin from prison by order of Evil-merodach of Babylon (2 Kgs 25:27–30). It is noted that subsequently “every day of his life . . . as long

6. In regard to the ancient books titles assigned to Kings, Origen (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25) transliterates the incipit that was a Hebrew title Οὐαμμέλχ Δαβίδ, i.e., the first two words of 1 Kgs 1:1 “and King David . . .” (והמלך דוד), but then translates it: “that is, the kingdom of David” (ὅπερ ἐστὶ βασιλεία Δαβίδ) (*Patrologia Graecae* [ed. Migne] 20.581). Jerome has *malachim* (*Prologus Galeatus*) (*Patrologia Latina* [ed. Migne] 28.598) and Epiphanius δμαλαχεῖ (construct plural), which both reflect the MT title (מלכים); see H. B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, Appendix Containing the Letter of Aristeas*, ed. H. St. J. Thackeray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 198.

7. For these statistics, see Olley, “Re-Versing Tradition,” 38.

8. Peter J. Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings* (SCM Theological Commentary on the Bible; London: SCM, 2006), 30.

as he lived” (his death being presupposed),<sup>9</sup> Jehoiachin king of Judah dined at the Babylonian king’s table. At the very least, this scenic ending serves to bring this history to a close on a cheery note, especially given the contrast between this episode and the preceding string of calamities precipitated by the death of Josiah (23:29), but the question is whether it is no more than just a “happy ending.”<sup>10</sup> I agree with those who argue that the closing verses of the book of Kings are too weak a foundation on which to build high hopes for the Davidic house. The passage does not say that the rehabilitation of Jehoiachin is divinely ordered (in contrast to 2 Kgs 24:2–3). There is no verbal link to God’s promise of 2 Sam 7,<sup>11</sup> nor does it use one of the writer’s fulfilment notices (cf. 2 Kgs 23:16). Nothing is said about his release being preceded by an act of repentance or an appeal to God by Jehoiachin, such as we might expect given the paradigm set out in the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kgs 8:46–53.<sup>12</sup> It must be said, therefore, that these considerations favour Martin Noth’s minimalizing view of the manumission of Jehoiachin in the final paragraph of Kings, with Noth viewing this turn of events as simply the last historical datum available to the Historian to record.<sup>13</sup>

Kings is not entirely pessimistic about the future, as the closing section of Solomon’s prayer shows (1 Kgs 8:46–53), but it does not contemplate a return to the land (unlike is the case in Deut 30:3–5) nor

9. As explicit in the version of this passage found in Jer 52:34 (“until the day of his death as long as he lived”).

10. Recent scholarship is divided between minimalizing and maximalizing viewpoints of what is described in the final paragraph of the book, namely whether the release of Jehoiachin means little (just the last information available to the author) or much (presaging a revival of Davidic rule over Judah); see the summary provided by C. T. Begg, “The Significance of Jehoiachin’s Release: A New Proposal,” *JSOT* 36 (1986): 49–56; for the argument that the ending of Kings does not foreclose possibilities but is deliberately ambiguous as to the future of the Davidic house, see David Jansen, “An Ambiguous Ending: Dynastic Punishment in Kings and the Fate of the Davidides in 2 Kings 25:27–30,” *JSOT* 33 (2008): 39–58.

11. As commented on by Michael Avioz, *Nathan’s Oracle (2 Samuel 7) and Its Interpreters* (Bible in History; Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 111–13.

12. For this paragraph I acknowledge my dependence on Begg, “The Significance of Jehoiachin’s Release,” 50–51.

13. Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 98. This is the English translation of part of *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1957).

does it speak of a postexilic restoration of Davidic kingship.<sup>14</sup> Read in the light of these verses, what happens to Jehoiachin at most reflects the hope that God would “grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive” (8:50).<sup>15</sup> On this reading, the improvement in the lot of Jehoiachin does not presage a messianic hope, but it does suggest that there is a future for God’s people in the good purposes of God.<sup>16</sup> Jehoiachin prospers under Babylonian rule, and so, therefore, can God’s people generally (cf. Jer 29). The implied application for readers is that serving the king of Babylon is the way ahead in the exilic situation.<sup>17</sup>

With these last four verses we have come full circle, for they recall the beginning of *Kings* that opens with four poignant verses portraying an enfeebled King David (1 Kgs 1:1–4). Jehoiachin as depicted in the closing verses of *Kings* is “a similarly enfeebled monarch,” though his impotence is political, not sexual.<sup>18</sup> This helps to give the ending of the book a sense of closure. On this reading, the house of David meets the same fate as the house of Saul, for Jehoiachin is a Mephibosheth-like figure, namely a humbled royal personage who cannot himself exercise rule and is condemned to eat at another king’s table (2 Sam 9:11b, 13a; cf. 1 Kgs 2:7; 4:27). *Kings* ends in hope, but the unflattering portraits of the first and last Davidic kings with which the book opens and closes suggest that it entertains a *democratized* hope and not one that features the prospect of a return of Davidic kingship.

14. J. G. McConville, “1 Kings VIII 46–53 and the Deuteronomic Hope,” *VT* 42 (1992): 67–79; idem, “The Restoration in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic Literature,” in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (ed. James M. Scott; JSJSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 11–40.

15. Donald F. Murray, “Of All the Years the Hopes—or Fears? Jehoiachin in Babylon (2 Kings 25:27–30),” *JBL* 120 (2001): 263–65.

16. See also Jon D. Levenson, “The Last Four Verses in *Kings*,” *JBL* 103 (1984): 360; Bob Becking, *From David to Gedaliah: The Book of Kings as Story and History* (OBO 228; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 187.

17. As argued by Begg, “The Significance of Jehoiachin’s Release,” 53–54; cf. Iain W. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings* (NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 280.

18. Jan Jaynes Granowski, “Jehoiachin at the King’s Table: A Reading of the Ending of the Second Book of *Kings*,” in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Danna Nolan Fewell; Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 178.

In line with the opening of Kings, the type-scene of a mortally ill king who seeks prophetic advice recurs in the narrative of Kings,<sup>19</sup> and the delicate health of the monarch becomes a symptom of the precarious state of the nation over which he rules. Examples of such a scene are those involving Ahaziah (2 Kgs 1), Ben-hadad (2 Kgs 8), and Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20). A deviation from this stereotypical scene is the story of Jeroboam's inquiry (via his wife) of the prophet Ahijah on behalf of his sick son, Abijah (1 Kgs 14), but this gives the prophet the opportunity to announce the demise of the house of Jeroboam *in toto* (14:12–16).<sup>20</sup> In each case the king dies—as the prophet foretold (1 Kgs 14:18; 2 Kgs 1:17; 8:10), though, in a variation on the theme, godly Hezekiah is granted an extension of fifteen years to his life (20:6). This suggests that God's long-term plan for his people in the book of Kings may not include rule under human kings.

#### DAVID'S ADVICE TO SOLOMON

In 1 Kgs 2 both good and bad advice is offered by David to Solomon as his successor. The striking difference between the advice given in 2:2–4 (to obey God) and in 2:5–9 (to take vengeance on enemies) need not be resolved by positing different sources or redactional layers,<sup>21</sup> but shows that David is the same flawed character he was in 2 Sam 11–20, and the cast of characters in those earlier chapters reappears, namely Adonijah (as a second Absalom; cf. 1 Kgs 1:5–7),<sup>22</sup> Joab, the sons of Barzillai and Shimei. David's speech urging conformity to God's commandments in 1 Kgs 2:3 is heavily Deuteronomic, and 2:4 provides a rendering of the Dynastic Oracle of 2 Sam 7 that stresses that the continuance of the

19. As pointed out by T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC 13; Waco: Word, 1985), xxxvi; and this type-scene is explored by Robert L. Cohn, "Convention and Creativity in the Book of Kings: The Case of the Dying Monarch," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 603–16.

20. Cf. Cohn, "Convention and Creativity," 614: "Abijah's death was symbolic of the coming destruction of Jeroboam's house and the ultimate fall of Israel."

21. Walter Brueggemann, "Heir and Land: The Royal 'Envelope' of the Books of Kings," in *The Fate of King David: The Past and Present of a Biblical Icon* (ed. Tod Linafelt et al.; LHBOTS 500; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 88; *pace e.g.*, Antony F. Campbell and Mark A. O'Brien, *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History: Origins, Upgrades, Present Text* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 332–33.

22. Eric A. Seibert, *Subversive Scribes and the Solomonic Narrative: A Rereading of 1 Kings 1–11* (LHBOTS 436; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 118.

dynasty is contingent on the obedience of the Davidides (“If your sons take heed to their way, . . .”) (the same interpretive move as Ps 132:11–12). This must be viewed as sound advice from the lips of David given that the identical sentiment is voiced in later passages in Kings (1 Kgs 6:12; 8:24–26; 9:4–5; 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19). Later, Solomon acknowledges that David’s faithfulness led to him, David’s son, gaining the throne (3:6), and in a dream God urges Solomon to emulate David’s obedience (“as your father David walked,” 3:14). In line with David’s sage advice to Solomon, in the book of Kings the Davidic kings will be measured against David as the standard of faithfulness, for the enjoyment of the benefits of the dynastic promise hinges on that.

The same positive evaluation cannot be made of the second part of David’s charge to Solomon (2:5: “Moreover [וְגַם] . . .”), wherein David urges him to take vengeance on Joab and Shimei but to do so with ruthless cunning, finding a suitable occasion for that purpose (“according to your wisdom . . . for you are a wise man” [2:6, 9]).<sup>23</sup> Is this really how God intended that Solomon should establish his authority? Is this the way to ensure that the kingdom is established in the hands of Solomon? The theme of the remaining part of 2 Kgs 2 is the *establishment* of Solomon’s rule, as indicated by the strategic use of the verb “to establish” (כִּוֵּן) at the beginning, middle and end of the unit (2:12, 24, 45–46).<sup>24</sup> This vocabulary alludes to what God promised to do for David’s son in 2 Sam 7 (with the same Hebrew root found in vv. 12, 13, 16, and 26 of that chapter), as is explicitly stated in 2:24.<sup>25</sup> There is more than a touch of irony in its reuse in 1 Kgs 2, where David (and Solomon) seem to think he needs to take matters into his own hands. However, in accordance with the divine promise, before Solomon takes any action, the kingdom of Solomon is already “firmly established” (2:12 [with the root כִּוֵּן reinforced by the adverbial use of מֵאֵד]), and after Solomon has

23. This negative appraisal fits with the presence of dubious wise figures in the Succession Narrative (e.g., Jonadab, the wise woman of Tekoa, and Ahithophel); see Iain W. Provan, “On ‘Seeing’ the Trees While Missing the Forest: The Wisdom of Characters and Readers in 2 Samuel and 1 Kings,” in *In Search of True Wisdom: Essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements* (ed. Edward Ball; JSOTSup 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 153–73. In the light of the “dissonant chord” sounded in vv. 5–9, Seibert seeks to relieve the tension in David’s portrait by arguing that these five verses are Solomonic propaganda placed on his lips (*Subversive Scribes*, 133–35). There is no need, however, to defend David’s character to make sense of the text.

24. For this paragraph I acknowledge my substantial dependence on Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, 37.

25. Avioz, *Nathan’s Oracle*, 73.

disposed of Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei, the irony is that the kingdom is, if anything, a little *less* secure, for the narrator only states that “the kingdom was established (נכונה) in the hand of Solomon” (2:46 [without an intensifier]). I argue that the difference in wording (though slight) between 2:12 and 2:46 is highly significant, indicating that, despite what Solomon may have thought, these acts of vengeance have *not* contributed in any way to the establishment of his kingdom; rather, the welfare and stability of the royal house is dependent on the godly obedience of its head (2:3–4). This close analysis of 1 Kgs 2 has been necessary to show the programmatic nature of the first piece of advice given by David to Solomon (2:3–4), for it provides the criterion of judgment that will be used by the author in evaluating the performance of subsequent kings.

#### THE MODEL PROVIDED BY DAVID

The thesis of Alison Joseph is that “[t]he Deuteronomistic Historian devises a prototype of a covenantally adherent king in the portrait of David, who provides the cultic model for subsequent kings to follow.”<sup>26</sup> She makes use of the historiographical methodology of Hayden White, especially what he calls “emplotment,” whereby a story is told and its key characters depicted according to a typical pattern (or typology),<sup>27</sup> in this case, the prototype of a good king provided by David with subsequent kings portrayed and evaluated (positively or negatively) “through the lens of the prototype.”<sup>28</sup> In his compositional strategy, the author of Kings “uses David as the royal comparative to construct the portrait of

26. Alison L. Joseph, *Portrait of the Kings: The Davidic Prototype in Deuteronomistic Poetics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 5.

27. Hayden White, *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 172–73; see also the discussion of the “grammar of literary archetypes” provided by Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 135. For an evaluation of Frye’s theory, including a comparison with the dream psychology of Jung, see Thomas Willard, “Archetypes of the Imagination,” in *The Legacy of Northrop Frye* (ed. Alvin A. Lee and Robert D. Denham; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 15–27.

28. Joseph, *Portrait of the Kings*, 55; cf. Gerhard von Rad, “The Deuteronomistic Theology of History in the Books of Kings,” in *Studies in Deuteronomy*, tr. David Stalker, SBT 9 (London: SCM, 1953), 88: “[David] is the king after the heart of the Deuteronomist. He is the prototype of the perfectly obedient anointed, and therefore the model for all succeeding kings in Jerusalem.”

both good and bad kings. The good kings are those who are like David, while the bad kings are those who are not.”<sup>29</sup>

The first example is Solomon, whose foreign wives lead him astray, such that he goes after “other gods” (1 Kgs 11:1–8). He is condemned in these terms: “So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done” (11:6; cf. 11:33b: “[not] keeping my statutes and ordinances, as David his father did”). The crucial action for which he is condemned is his worship of other gods (11:33a), which is opposed to the true Yahwistic worship associated with the Jerusalem temple. The inverse of Davidic style obedience (9:4: “if you will walk before me, as David your father walked”) is specified to Solomon in these terms: “but if you . . . go and serve other gods and worship them” (9:6). On this basis it can be said that in Kings obedience to God is narrowly defined as the avoidance of the worship of “other gods” (cf. 11:4–6, 9–10, 33), and in these citations involvement in idolatrous worship is repeatedly contrasted with the obedience rendered by David.

The cultic focus of the evaluation of kings is not at all surprising given the importance of the temple in the book.<sup>30</sup> In attempting to determine the view of the status and role of kingship in Kings, it is assumed that its canonical shape is a unified literary and theological whole (whatever redactional layers may lie buried beneath). It is significant that the narrative moves from temple *erection* to temple *destruction*. The account of the reign of Solomon (1 Kgs 1–11) has at its heart the account of temple building (1 Kgs 6–7) and Solomon’s prayer at its dedication (1 Kgs 8). At the climax of the book is the account of temple destruction (2 Kgs 25:13–17), which takes up the details of 1 Kgs 7 (mentioning the pillars, the bronze sea, pots, and shovels) and binds Kings into a tight conceptual unity, for what is constructed at the start of the book is dismantled at the end. In this way the book of Kings is clearly separated off from the book of Samuel, and the cultic *inclusio* shows the special interest of the author of Kings in the temple.

#### THE REGNAL FORMULAE

In the regnal formulae, the good (only Southern) kings are those who do

29. Joseph, *Portrait of the Kings*, 58.

30. For the relation of the kings and the cultus in Kings, see e.g. R. H. Lowery, *The Reforming Kings: Cults and Society in First Temple Judah* (JSOTSup 120; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

what is “right in the eyes of YHWH,”<sup>31</sup> of whom there are only eight (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Hezekiah, Josiah) (1 Kgs 15:11; 22:34; 2 Kgs 12:3; 14:3; 15:3, 34; 18:3; 22:2), and they are also said to be like their own father if their father acted in the right way. However, only three kings reach such a level that they are likened to David the prototypical good king (Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah). One king, Amaziah, is said to do what was “right in the eyes of YHWH, yet not like David his father” (14:3), and two bad kings are said not to be like David (Abijam, Ahaz) (1 Kgs 15:3; 2 Kgs 16:2). Both Hezekiah and Josiah are praised by being said to be incomparable (2 Kgs 18:5; 23:25), and in line with this high commendation, Hezekiah is not merely said to be like David (as stated of Asa), but that he did “all that David did” (2 Kgs 18:3). The description of Josiah is even more impressive for “[he] walked in all the ways of David his father and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left” (2 Kgs 22:2).

Asa is something of an anomaly, for he is said to have acted “as David his father had done” (1 Kgs 15:11), but he is also a member of the group of basically good kings who allowed the people to continue the worship of YHWH at the provincial “high places” (במות) (1 Kgs 15:14; 22:43 [Heb. 44]; 2 Kgs 12:3 [Heb. 4]; 14:4; 15:4, 35),<sup>32</sup> though Asa himself only worshipped in the temple (1 Kgs 15:15: “and he brought . . . his own votive gifts into the house of YHWH” [following the *Ketiv*, which is supported by 1 Chr 15:18]).<sup>33</sup> Asa has the honour of being the first Judean cult-reformer,<sup>34</sup> and the three most lauded kings (Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah) each undertake some kind of cultic reform (1 Kgs 15:12–13; 2 Kgs 18:4; 23:4–20),<sup>35</sup> and concerning each there is also a positive

31. The evaluative phrase goes back to Deut 6:18. For this and what follows in the next two paragraphs, I acknowledge my dependence on Joseph, *Portrait of the Kings*, 77–93.

32. Iain W. Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings: A Contribution to the Debate about the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (BZAW 172; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 61–65; cf. W. Boyd Barrick, “On the Removal of the High-Places in 1–2 Kings,” *Bib* 55 (1974): 257–59.

33. Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings*, 66–67.

34. Hans-Detlef Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen: Untersuchungen zu einem Grundthema der deuteronomistischen Geschichtsschreibung* (AThANT 66; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1980), 87–93.

35. Cf. Steven L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (VTSup 42; Leiden: Brill, 1991), 119: “Asa,

statement about the state of his “heart” (1 Kgs 15:14; 2 Kgs 20:3; 23:25), which again links each of them to David, as is made plain by the negative comments about other kings whose hearts are said *not* to be like David’s (1 Kgs 14:8; 15:3; cf. 2 Kgs 10:31).

That the criterion of judgment for the kings is cultic in nature is confirmed by the basis on which Jeroboam and all subsequent northern kings are condemned by the Historian. In the regnal formulae, the northern kings are said to do what is “evil in the eyes of YHWH” and are compared to either Jeroboam or Ahab (e.g., 1 Kgs 22:52; 2 Kgs 8:18, 27; 10:31) (for the latter archvillain, see below).<sup>36</sup> The crucial event in the history of the northern kingdom is the action of Jeroboam in founding a counter-cultus in Bethel and Dan (1 Kgs 12:25–33; 2 Kgs 17:16). This is prophetically condemned and the cultic reform of Josiah is anticipated which will expunge this evil (1 Kgs 13:2–5; cf. 2 Kgs 23:15–18).<sup>37</sup> Each succeeding northern king (except for short-lived Elah and Shallum) is condemned in similar terms, namely that “he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way Jeroboam, and in his sin which he made Israel to sin” (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:26, 34; 16:26), and the north perishes because of the sin of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:26–32; 14:10–11; 2 Kgs 10:28–31; 17:16, 20–22).<sup>38</sup> It is plain that the issue is the sin of idolatry (e.g., 1 Kgs 16:26: “provoking the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger by their idols”). The promises that God made to Jeroboam through Ahijah depended on him adhering to the Davidic standard (1 Kgs 11:38: “as David my servant did”), but Jeroboam, the potential second David,

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Hezekiah, and Josiah are the only kings favourably compared to David because they are the only reforming kings”; likewise Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings*, 40: “While it is true that only Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah are compared positively to David, it is equally true that only these three kings attempted reformation.” The action of Jehoshaphat recorded in the postscript (*Kultmotiz*) to his reign in 1 Kgs 22:46 (Heb. 47) (completing what his father Asa began to do, removing the remnant of the male cult prostitutes [הקדש]) in the eyes of the author may not have qualified as a reformation.

36. The condemnation of Ahab in superlative terms is probably due to his promotion of Baal worship (1 Kgs 16:30, 33). The LXX book division (e.g., in Codex Vaticanus and that of the Vulgate following it) is at 2 Kgs 1:1 (“After the death of Ahab”). Given how Ahab is described, after the death of the worst northern king there is possibly hope for the nation. On that basis, his death may be viewed as a favourable turning point. On this, see T. R. Hobbs, “2 Kings 1 and 2: Their Unity and Purpose,” *Sciences Religieuses/ Studies in Religion* 13 (1984): 334.

37. Robert L. Cohn, “Literary Technique in the Jeroboam Narrative,” *ZAW* 97 (1985): 32, 35.

38. E. Theodore Mullen Jr., “The Sins of Jeroboam: A Redactional Assessment,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 212–32.

failed to live up to this standard (14:8–9)<sup>39</sup> and instead became a kind of “anti-David,”<sup>40</sup> and so the negative benchmark for future northern kings. In this way the Davidic prototype is the key to the judgment of both kingdoms.

The corresponding culprit to Jeroboam in the South was Manasseh, who did as Ahab had done (2 Kgs 21:3, 13) and by so doing ensured the exile of the southern kingdom (2 Kgs 21:20; 23:26; 24:3).<sup>41</sup> Ahab was like Jeroboam, but worse (1 Kgs 16:31),<sup>42</sup> but he was mimicked by Manasseh, and by this means Jeroboam’s defection from the Jerusalem-centred cultus led to the destruction of both kingdoms.<sup>43</sup> In line with the compositional method in which each king is measured by some other king, toward the end of the book of Kings there is found an alternating pattern of the best and worst Judean kings, namely the contrasting pairs of kings Ahaz/Hezekiah and Manasseh/Josiah.<sup>44</sup> Just as the piety of Hezekiah and Josiah found cultic expression (2 Kgs 18:4; 23:4–20), the crimes of Ahaz and Manasseh were primarily cultic (2 Kgs 16:3–4, 10–18; 21:2–9). In summary, the individuality of the kings is

39. Paul S. Ash, “Jeroboam I and the Deuteronomistic Historian’s Ideology of the Founder,” *CBQ* 60 (1998): 18–19.

40. Ash, “Ideology of the Founder,” 19: “The Deuteronomist condemns Jeroboam for one primary reason: failure to be like David (1 Kgs 14:8).”

41. The disappearance of the cultic theme from the evaluative formulae concerning the last four (post-Josianic) kings (2 Kgs 23:32, 37; 24:9, 19) is used to support the theory of the double redaction of the Deuteronomistic History; cf. e.g., Gottfried Vanoni, “Beobachtungen zur deuteronomistischen Terminologie in 2 Kön 23,25–25,30,” in *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft* (ed. Norbert Lohfink; BETL 68; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985), 357–62.

42. Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen*, 78–82.

43. William M. Schniedewind, “History and Interpretation: The Religion of Ahab and Manasseh in the Book of Kings,” *CBQ* 55 (1993): 649–61.

44. Ehud Ben Zvi, “The Account of the Reign of Manasseh in II Reg 21,1–18 and the Redactional History of the Book of Kings,” *ZAW* 103 (1991): 359–60. He sees the intervening account of the reign of Amon, who did “as Manasseh his father had done . . . and walked in all the way in which his father walked, and served the idols that his father served” (2 Kgs 21:19–26) as an appendix to that of Manasseh and so it does not seriously disturb this pattern (361). Hoffmann designates Hezekiah, Manasseh and Josiah “die drei ‘großen’ Kultreformer” and sees them forming a triad (*Reform und Reformen*, 146).

largely suppressed,<sup>45</sup> and they are typed as being like, or unlike, another king. The writer condemns northern kings for mimicking Jeroboam and his crime of refusing the primacy of the Jerusalemite cult. Likewise, southern kings are the target of criticism when they do not follow the pious ways of David.

#### AN UNREALISTIC (INAUTHENTIC) PORTRAIT OF DAVID?

A markedly different (often said to be pre-Deuteronomistic) and richer portrait of David is provided by the book of Samuel.<sup>46</sup> However, despite what some scholars assert, the David of Kings is not without connection to what is found in Samuel,<sup>47</sup> for also in the preceding canonical book at significant junctures David's piety finds cultic expression.<sup>48</sup> The link between piety and devotion to the cult of YHWH is made in the book of Samuel in a number of ways. For instance, the book closes with the account of David's purchase of "the threshing floor of Araunah (אֲרֻנָה) the Jebusite" and his offering of sacrifices (2 Sam 24), this being the site of the future temple (cf. 1 Chr 21:28–22:1; 2 Chr 3:1 ["the threshing

45. Cf. Robert L. Cohn, "Characterization in Kings," in *The Book of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception* (ed. André Lemaire and Baruch Halpern; VTSup 129; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 91: "the narrator's moral judgment of each king closes his file, flattening whatever individuality may have emerged from the account of the king's reign."

46. Cf. von Rad, "Deuteronomistic Theology of History," 86: "The actual history of David is noticeably free from Deuteronomistic additions." See also Jürg Hutzli, "The Distinctiveness of the Samuel Narrative Tradition," in *Is Samuel among the Deuteronomists? Current Views on the Place of Samuel in a Deuteronomistic History* (ed. Cynthia Edenburg and Juhu Pakkala; SBLAIL 16; Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 171–205. I do not as such subscribe to Noth's theory of a Deuteronomistic History (Dtr) (on this issue, see the references provided in note 49 below). When using the adjective "Deuteronomic," I am referring strictly to themes and motifs found in the canonical book of Deuteronomy.

47. E.g., the regnal formulae in the David narrative are not all that different to what is supplied for David in Kings (2 Sam 5:4–5; 8:15–18; cf. 1 Kgs 2:10–11).

48. *Pace* Alison L. Joseph, "Who Is like David? Was David like David? Good Kings in the Book of Kings," *CBQ* 77 (2015): 33–36, who explores "whether David [in Samuel] is like his literary alter ego [in Kings]" (21). She says: "David [in Samuel] is praised for his zeal for YHWH but not for his cultic activity . . . even though Samuel chronicles the reign of David, the portrait of the cultically adherent king is missing" (35, 39). Cf. *idem*, *Portrait of the Kings*, 226: "In all these depictions, it is clear that he is not a cultic hero . . . Dtr transforms the character of David, so well known from Samuel (or Samuel's sources), into a figure who is programmatically useful to him in his goal of writing a theologically based, cultically focused history."

floor of Ornan (אֹרְנַן) the Jebusite”]). The climactic placement of this incident in the book of Samuel reinforces its role as a thematic connector to Kings that immediately follows in the ordering of the books in the Hebrew and Greek OT canons.

Despite the extremity of being driven to Philistia by the persecution of Saul (1 Sam 27:1), in that foreign land where other gods are worshiped, David does not succumb to the temptation to “serve [= worship] other gods” (26:19). True enough, in accordance with the different thematic emphases of the book of Samuel, David’s piety more often takes the form of his refusal to advance his career by harming Saul, the LORD’s anointed (1 Sam 24, 26; cf. 2 Sam 1:14), or by killing off his Saulide rivals (2 Sam 3:31–39; 4:9–12), but that only reflects the fact that Samuel and Kings are different books with their own thematic concerns and priorities,<sup>49</sup> but there is enough overlap to refute the suggestion that their nuanced portraits of David are incompatible or unconnected.

The highpoint of David’s piety in the book of Samuel is certain commendable actions in the cultic realm, namely his transfer of the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6) and his desire to provide the ark with more adequate housing (2 Sam 7).<sup>50</sup> YHWH’s kingship over Israel was acknowledged by David in 2 Samuel 6 by bringing the ark (= YHWH’s throne or footstool [cf. 6:2]) to his newly conquered capital, with David’s motivation being that Jerusalem might become God’s capital and not just his capital—all with the aim of affirming God’s supreme rule over the sacred nation. Indeed, on that occasion David’s exuberant devotion to YHWH (6:14, 16, 21 [x2]: “[It was] before the LORD”) and lack of concern for his own royal dignity earned him the disapproval of “Michal the daughter of Saul” (6:16, 20–23), who is designated in this fashion to

49. For the view that the various historical books were individually edited and have a certain integrity of their own (*selbständig entstandene Bücher*), see Claus Westermann, *Die Geschichtsbücher des Alten Testaments: Gab es ein deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk?* (TBü 87; Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser, 1994), 78; with whom Erik Eynikel expresses agreement, see *The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (OTS 33; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 14, 363: “the unique character of each book prevents seeing the books of the dtr history as parts of one historical work . . . The individual books of the dtr history are clearly unified units that do not reflect a comprehensive ‘Geschichtswerk.’” Cf. J. G. McConville, “Faces of Exile in Old Testament Historiography,” in *After the Exile: Essays in Honour of Rex Mason* (ed. John Barton and David J. Reimer; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996), 27–44.

50. As noted in passing by Ash, “Ideology of the Founder,” 19 n. 16: “David’s piety is closely associated with his treatment of the ark.”

suggest that how she reacted and what she said to her husband reflects her awareness of her high social status as a king's daughter. In turn, the naming used in 6:16 ("King David") reflects the viewpoint of his wife, implying that she viewed David as not maintaining proper kingly dignity, a point Michal made by way of her sarcastic comment: "How the king of Israel has honoured himself today . . . !" (6:20)

Likewise, David's reason for wanting to build a *temple* to house the ark is that there be a *palace* for the heavenly king (the word in Hebrew [היכל] having both senses), on analogy with David's own palace. Note the comment made in 7:1 ("the king dwelt in his house"), namely kings dwell in *palaces*, such that it was when Hiram built him a house that "David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel" (5:11–12). That an oblique argument is being mounted by David in 7:2 is indicated by use of an argumentative imperative ("look" [ראה]),<sup>51</sup> though any hint of impertinence before a prophet as God's representative is softened by the Particle of Entreaty (נא) ("please") (though the particle is not always rendered in English translation). David only states the premise of what is an *a fortiori* argument ("Look, I dwell in a house of cedar . . ."). The unexpressed logic is that it is even more appropriate for YHWH to have a house for he is the supreme King.<sup>52</sup> The completed argument of David (supplying the elided conclusion) is that since David (the lesser king) has a house (= palace), then surely God should have a house (= temple). David is commended in 1 Kgs 8:18 for his desire to build a temple, and O'Brien views this as an expression of David's commitment to the policy of centralized worship in line with Deuteronomic orthodoxy.<sup>53</sup>

On the other hand, the writer of Kings in idealizing David does not fail to allude to the notable exception to David's godliness (1 Kgs 15:5: "except [רק] in the matter of Uriah the Hittite"), so that David is not whitewashed in the book of Kings. In both books David's most significant failing is the Bathsheba episode (2 Sam 11), and right near the end of the book of Samuel, in the verse that immediately precedes the account of a second major failing by David (the census), the reader is

51. Here ראה introduces a fact upon which a following statement is based ("Since . . .") (though in this case that statement is suppressed), and it has the same logical force as הנה in 1 Chr 17:1 (cf. Exod 33:12–13; 2 Sam 15:27–28); see *BHRG* §44.3; *IBHS* §40.2.1.

52. J. Schelhaas, "II Samuel 7:1–5," in *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies Prepared in Honor of Oswald Thompson Allis* (ed. John H. Skilton; Philadelphia: P & R, 1974), 289.

53. O'Brien, "A Story of Israel's Leaders," 28.

reminded of David's earlier misdemeanor, with the last of David's mighty men to be listed being "Uriah the Hittite" (2 Sam 23:39).

On the basis of what has been noted, the use of David as the prototype of the ideal king in Kings does not need to be viewed as tendentious or without foundation in the "life of David" as depicted in the book of Samuel, though of course Kings has its own concerns, and its nuanced portrait of David reflects this fact. There are enough links between the depiction of David in each book to render unnecessary the theory that the Historian's use of David as a prototype of the godly king cannot have its origins in the revered figure of David but must be a retrojection of the image of Josiah and an imposition of an alien image on David.<sup>54</sup> As well, though Josiah is likened to David (2 Kgs 22:2), it is not plain that David is all that similar to Josiah, for what is said of Josiah in 22:2 is not said of David ("and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left").<sup>55</sup> The similar phrasing found in Deut 17:20 would suggest that the Historian views Josiah as approximating the ideal king of Deut 17:14–20. The intertextual connection is supported by the multiple mentions of the "book of the law/covenant" in the Josiah narrative (2 Kgs 22:8, 11; 23:2, 21; cf. Deut 17:18).<sup>56</sup> The author of Kings has modeled Josiah on that Deuteronomistic royal portrait but then moves beyond its severely circumscribed role for the king, given the proactive reformist stance that Josiah adopts in an attempt to meet the challenge faced by the nation.<sup>57</sup>

54. E.g., Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 125–26, who views the Historian's portrait of David as "an image of Josiah projected back into history" (125). Alison Joseph concurs with Nelson ("Who Is like David?" 33–36; idem, *Portrait of the Kings*, 95, 103, 154, 185, 232). For an argument against the similar approach taken by Nelson with regard to the portrayal of the figure of Joshua in the book named after him, see Gregory Goswell, "Joshua and Kingship," *BBR* 23 (2013): 29–42.

55. It is found elsewhere only in Deut 2:27; 5:32; 17:11, 20; 28:14; Josh 1:7; 23:26; 1 Sam 6:12; 2 Chr 34:2 (references provided by Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings*, 115 n. 61).

56. For this observation and what follows in the next paragraph I am dependent on Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings*, 116–17.

57. Gary N. Knoppers, "The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomistic Law of the King: A Re-examination of a Relationship," *ZAW* 108 (1996): 333–34; J. Gordon McConville, "Law and Monarchy in the Old Testament," in *A Royal Priesthood? The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically: A Dialogue with Oliver O'Donovan* (ed. Craig Bartholomew et al.; Scripture and Hermeneutics Series 3; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 75–78.

In some ways Hezekiah is more like David than is Josiah, for only of David and Hezekiah among the Davidic kings is it said that “YHWH was with him” (1 Sam 16:18; 18:12, 14; 2 Sam 5:10; 1 Kgs 18:7) and that they “prospered” (root שָׁכַל) in military exploits (1 Sam 18:5, 14, 15, 30; 2 Kgs 18:7). As well, both David and Hezekiah enjoyed success against the Philistines (1 Sam 18:30; 2 Kgs 18:8). Furthermore, in contrast to only one mention of David in relation to Josiah (22:2), there are several explicit allusions to David in the account of Hezekiah’s reign (18:3; 19:34; 20:5, 6). The noted similarities between Hezekiah and David (as depicted in Samuel) confirm the argument made above that the author of Kings does not ignore how David is portrayed in the preceding book. I am not arguing for any particular theory of the compositional history of Kings but simply making the point that if the figure of David in Kings were modeled on Josiah it might have been expected that their portraits would be more closely aligned than they are. A better summation of the evidence would be that Josiah embodies the Davidic prototype of cultic orthodoxy but then goes beyond the model provided by David in various ways.<sup>58</sup>

#### THE FUTURE OF DAVIDIC KINGSHIP IN ISRAEL?

Due to Solomon’s sin, YHWH took the northern tribes out from under the rule of the Davidic kings, but “for the sake of David” he delayed the division of the kingdom until after the death of Solomon (1 Kgs 11:12–13, 32, 34). God left the Davidic house with Judah (and Benjamin) “that my servant David may always have a *lamp* (נֵר) before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name” (11:36).<sup>59</sup> Behind such concessions by God lie his promises to David in 2 Sam 7.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, the

58. Cf. Joseph, *Portrait of the Kings*, 232: “The description of Josiah depicts him as exceeding the expectations of the good Davidic king.”

59. For the disputed meaning of this rare term, see Paul D. Hanson, “The Song of Heshbon and David’s *Nir*,” *HTR* 61 (1968): 297–320 (who opts for “yoke” as a metaphor for “dominion”); Manfred Görg, “Ein ‘Machtzeichen’ Davids 1 Könige XI:36,” *VT* 35 (1985): 363–68; Ehud Ben Zvi, “Once the Lamp Has Been Kindled . . . : A Reconsideration of the MT *Nir* in 1 Kgs 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19 and 2 Chr 21:7,” *ABR* 39 (1991): 19–30 (who favours “field” metaphorically understood as “territorial dominion”); David B. Schreiner, “Why נֵר in Kings?,” *JSOT* 39 (2014): 15–30 (who sees uses in Kings as wordplay on 2 Sam 21:17 [that has נֵר which does mean “lamp”]); and for a recent argument in favour of the meaning “lamp,” see Deuk-il Shin, “The Translation of the Hebrew term *nir*: ‘David’s Yoke?’” *TynBul* 67 (2016): 7–21.

60. As indicated by the mode of reference used by God of David, which picks up 2 Sam 7:5 and 8 (“my servant David”).

deliverance of the city in Hezekiah's day is "for my sake and the sake of David my servant" (2 Kgs 19:34), and Isaiah tells Hezekiah that it is "the LORD, the God of David your father" who responds to his prayer for a lengthening of his days (2 Kgs 20:6). Even in the reigns of wicked kings, Jerusalem is spared for the same reason (1 Kgs 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19). In sum, God's promise to David of a sure house is the reason that Judah and Jerusalem lasted so long according to the writer of Kings.<sup>61</sup>

Divine statements of purpose like those in 1 Kgs 11:36 ("that David my servant may always [כל־הַיָּמִים] have a domain before me") and 11:39 ("I will for this afflict the descendants of David, but not for ever [כל־הַיָּמִים]") appear to be unconditional, and there is no explicit abrogation of the Davidic promise in Kings. This raises the possibility of the continued validity of the Davidic promise into the exilic period and beyond. There is an ongoing commitment to David's city as YHWH's chosen habitation, in some cases *forever* (1 Kgs 8:13; 9:3; 2 Kgs 21:7), but it was not without conditions (2 Kgs 21:8), and it is apparent that the kings failed to meet these requirements. No hope is expressed of a future for the dynasty.<sup>62</sup> For readers of the book of Kings, David becomes a pious model not for postexilic kings (of whom there proved to be none) but for the people of God generally who must avoid idolatry and, if there is opportunity, participate in the Jerusalemite cult.

In line with a democratizing interpretation of the royal expectations of the book of Kings, in Deut 17:14–20 the king sets an example for all Israelites in the habitual reading of the law, doing what all Israelites should be doing (cf. Deut 6:7–9; 11:18–21; 31:9–13).<sup>63</sup> He habitually studies the law "that he may learn to fear the LORD his God," which is a key Deuteronomistic ethic applicable to all God's people (4:10;

61. Steven L. McKenzie, *Covenant* (Understanding Biblical Themes; St Louis: Chalice, 2000), 67–68; Troy D. Cudworth, "Yahweh's Promise to David in the Books of Kings," *VT* 66 (2016): 194–216.

62. The summation of Kåre Berge, "Is There Hope in the Deuteronomistic History?" in *New Perspectives on Old Testament Prophecy and History: Essays in Honour of Hans M. Barstad* (ed. Rannfrid I. Thelle et al.; VTSup 168; Leiden: Brill, 2015), 268, 272. For the provisional nature of the institution of kingship in Israel, see J. Gordon McConville, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology, Genesis–Kings* (LHBOTS 454; London: T & T Clark, 2008), 155–56; cf. James Richard Linville, *Israel in the Book of Kings: The Past as a Project of Social Identity* (JSOTSup 272; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 162–63.

63. Dennis T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 82–83.

5:29 [Heb. 26]; 6:2; 14:23; 31:12). In this way the Deuteronomic ethic of obedience is to be modeled by the king. The king, as the first citizen, is the first among equals (*primus inter pares*), and he is to view his subjects as “his brothers” (17:20; cf. 17:15).<sup>64</sup> The egalitarian teaching of Deuteronomy, rather than being undermined by the appointment of a king (a distinct danger, as shown by later Israelite history), is in fact exhibited by this (optional) Israelite officer.<sup>65</sup> Moses in Deuteronomy repeatedly warns of the danger of idolatry (e.g. 12:2–3, 29–31; 17:2–5), and the limiting of worship to the place which God would choose was one way of reducing that danger (12:4–28; 16:16), and it is presumed in Deut 17 (given the context) that any future king who earned God’s approval would be exemplary in demonstrating these two key virtues: avoiding idolatry and only worshipping YHWH at the divinely chosen sanctuary. That, anyway, is how the author of Kings reads and applies this Deuteronomic passage.<sup>66</sup> In Kings, of course, that chosen place is Jerusalem, and David embodies this ethic of Yahwistic cultic orthodoxy.

## CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of the kings according to a Davidic prototype in the book of Kings is closely linked to cultic orthodoxy and the kings primarily have a cultic vocation.<sup>67</sup> The role of the king is closely tied to the temple. Various features of the book of Kings (e.g., the opening portrayal of an infirm David, the physical and moral vulnerability of kings generally, and the explicitly conditional nature of the dynastic promise) would seem to call into question whether the institution of kingship has a future in the post-exilic period. If kings do come back after the exile—though Kings is silent on that point—kingship will need to take on a radically different

64. Knoppers, “Deuteronomic Law of the King,” 330.

65. The institution of kingship is a divinely permitted option rather than obligatory according to the polity of Deuteronomy (see 17:14–15).

66. In the prophecy of Jeremiah, on the other hand, the same Deuteronomic royal model is applied in a different way, namely the future king exemplifies the social justice ethic of Deuteronomy, which includes the care of vulnerable social groups (e.g. Jer 23:5; 33:15; cf. 21:12; 22:3, 13, 15–16). For this theme in Deuteronomy, see Moshe Weinfeld, “The Origin of the Humanism in Deuteronomy,” *JBL* 80 (1961): 241–47.

67. See e.g., William Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (JSOTSup 160; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

shape than was the experience in the monarchic period.<sup>68</sup> The implication of the compositional use in Kings of a Davidic prototype is that the role of any future king will be to act the part of a model Israelite in line with the programmatic passage in Deut 17.

68. See Nathan Lovell, "The Shape of Hope in the Book of Kings: The Resolution of Davidic Blessing and Mosaic Curse," *JESOT* 3.1 (2014): 18–21, for an attempt to map what future kingship might (should) look like.