

**THE FOUNDERS AND RULERS OF  
UNITED ISRAEL FROM THE DEATH  
OF MOSES TO THE DIVISION OF  
THE HEBREW KINGDOM**

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The founders and rulers of united Israel from the death of Moses to the division of the Hebrew kingdom by Charles Foster Kent

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**The Historical Bible**

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OF

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## THE HISTORICAL BIBLE

By CHARLES FOSTER KENT, Ph.D.  
Professor of Biblical Literature in Yale University

### ARRANGEMENT OF VOLUMES:

- I. **The Heroes and Crises of Early Hebrew History.** From the Creation to the Death of Moses. (*Ready.*)
- II. **The Founders and Rulers of United Israel.** From the Death of Moses to the Division of the Hebrew Kingdom. (*Ready.*)
- III. **The Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah.** From the Division of the Kingdom to the Babylonian Exile. (*Ready.*)
- IV. **The Leaders and Teachers of Post-Exilic Judaism.** From the Fall of Jerusalem to the Beginning of the Christian Era.
- V. **The Life and Teachings of Jesus.** In the Light of the Earliest Records.
- VI. **The Work and Teachings of the Apostles.** From the Death of Jesus to the End of the First Century.

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WITH MAPS AND PLANS

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## PREFACE

Israel's history is divided into four distinct periods. The first, which ends with the crossing of the Jordan, represents the childhood of the race. It was then that the memory of the nation was weak; but its imagination was strong, as the character of the earliest traditions testifies. The second, which extended to the division of the kingdom at the death of Solomon, was Israel's adolescent period. The third, to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., brought to the nation grave social, political and religious problems, which rapidly developed the ethical and spiritual consciousness of the race. During the fourth period, from the beginning of the exile to the first Christian century, Judaism, in the trying school of affliction, attained its full maturity and crystallized into a closely knit racial and religious unit.

The second period of Hebrew history, with which this volume deals, was Israel's heroic age, when physical strength, courage and patriotism were the prominent virtues, and the deeper spiritual and ethical qualities were only partially developed. It was during this period that the Hebrews most resembled their neighbors in character and faith. Their dominant ambitions were to acquire territory and to extend their authority; and these ambitions were fully realized. Within two short centuries, the tribes from the wilderness became a strong nation, and then grew into a powerful empire.

Written records now for the first time began to take the place of popular tradition. As a result, the miraculous element, so prominent in the early tradition, almost completely disappears. The greater part of the material in Samuel and Kings is evidently taken from two early, independent histories. The one told of the call of Saul by Samuel, and of the reign of Israel's first king; the other, which begins with the latter part of the sixteenth chapter of I Samuel, tells of the rise of David and of the glories and sins of the Judean shepherd who made Israel one of the powerful nations of southwestern Asia. These quotations from the Saul and David histories are remarkably picturesque and full of detail.



## PREFACE

Although probably not written until after the division of the Hebrew kingdom, the stories which they contain were doubtless told in the days of Saul and David, and therefore shed almost contemporary light upon the chief characters and events of the period.

Their language, point of view and ideas are those of the golden era, when Israel was rapidly attaining its full material growth and splendor. They are full of dramatic action and simple, strong emotion. The reader is made to behold with his own eyes the more important scenes in this stirring epoch of Israel's history. Through the vivid dialogues he is admitted to the councils of kings, prophets and warriors. His attention is constantly fixed on the fortunes and deeds of certain heroes, and through their personal experiences the significant facts and forces of the history are clearly revealed. In these oldest records there is no attempt to idealize the history or to conceal the faults of its heroes. Life and human nature are presented with a simple realism which makes these narratives invaluable guides to all who would know the soul of man and the eternal laws which govern human life.

The selection of material and the prominence given to the personal element also reveal the noble religious and ethical purpose which actuated the later prophetic authors of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. They aim not merely to write a history of their nation, but also through its most significant characters to interpret that history, so that the vital spiritual truths which it illustrates shall stand out in clear relief.

Fortunately, the Greek translation has preserved many clauses and even verses, which have been lost in the Hebrew text. Restoring these, the result is a remarkably complete and well-rounded narrative. The language in these stories, which come from the lips of the ancient storytellers, is often exceedingly idiomatic and even colloquial; and an attempt has been made in the present translation to reproduce these picturesque qualities. The evidence which has determined the analysis of the sources, and detailed textual notes, will be found in the corresponding volumes of the author's *Student's Old Testament*, to which references are made in the table of contents.

C. F. K.

YALE UNIVERSITY,  
May, 1908.

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