

## Summary

In ‘Hebrew beginnings’ he takes a somewhat moderate approach as compared to Kitchen. He allows for an ‘oral tradition phase’ and allows for ‘generation’ to mean lifetime or something approximate. In ‘the age of Moses’ he writes like a social-critical advocate, that, Moses and the people could not break through the fortified southern Palestine (amalekites) so they went around to attack the Amorites (in the transjordan) on p21. It seems that Moses was a product of his time reacting against the abuses of Egyptian religions to bring about the release of the vagabonds (‘Apiru) and create a nation from them. In ‘the conquest of palestine’ he suggests that there was a conquest component, but that there was also a part of the invasion which was a result of the missionary faith (31). He’s suggesting that there was a real military campaign but yet not all of what was later called Israel was a part of the exodus and conquest. In ‘tribal rule and charismatic leaders’ he characterizes the judges as charismatic leaders who fulfilled a function for the people and were labeled with a Canaanite term *nagid*. Saul and David were eventually labeled *nagid*, but the Davidic dynasty condensed this into *melek*.

In ‘united monarchy’ he argues that David and Solomon were partly motivated by religious ideas and motivated by the desire to centralize power. Expanding territory meant that David had a direct stream of tribute to himself and his city dwellers who had sworn allegiance directly to him (as his slaves, p51). He argues that the northern kingdom was then plagued by Canaanite influence and social situations that culminated in the critique of Elijah (in ‘the revolt of jehu’). ‘From Jehu to the fall of Samaria’ details the events which happened in that period. He also suggests here that what happened was largely a part of the social process. Religious reform was attempted and even partly done, but it was also politically motivated. It is interesting that he points out that northern-Israelites were taken captive into Media – concluding that Tobit was written in the 5<sup>th</sup> century by this group. He also claims that the piety of these people, not the judahites, is why the essenes and others chose to be called “Israelites” instead of Jews. He follows the standard outline of Babylon/Persian history. The *golah* were ready to assert independence with a Davidic descendant. Yet, when the chance came few went. Haggai seems to encourage rebellion, Zechariah does not – reflecting the situation of Darius coming to power. In ‘from Nehemiah to the fall of the Persian empire’ he notes that the wall was not really built as fast as Nehemiah claims, but took longer as Josephus shows. He claims that Nehemiah was opposed by Yahwists in *yehud*, but that they were of a different, more syncretistic sort. Then he argues that Chronicles should be located at a later, more Greek-minded point.

## Critique

The book is surprisingly short. Albright does a good job of incorporating the archeological data into biblical studies, correcting critical scholarship at some places while agreeing with it in others. His approach is not as conservative as K.A. Kitchen – who gives less credence to critical scholarship where there is no hard data. Yet, it lays the groundwork for the approach of his student John Bright, who is widely heralded by conservatives.