Reading and Writing Assignment for Wed. Feb. 2:
Israelite Kingship and the Davidic Covenant continued

Reading (note – there are changes here from what the syllabus lists):
Bible: See reading at each question below.
Harris: pp. 179-197. Again, this is full of good stuff but not all of it applies. Especially important: pp. 187-189 (box 5.5).

Writing:

New system!! You are expected to come to class able to answer most of these questions; on the next test, you will be expected to know some of the more important items of information. But you do not have to submit written answers. What you do have to submit are two discussion questions based on today’s reading. The difference between your question and the questions below is that your questions should not be pegged to just one place in the day’s reading. It should step back and point the reader towards some recurring theme or idea worth noting. It should approximate the kind of question you might ask someone if you were making up essay questions for a test on this reading. Try it. All I’ll be picking up are your two questions.

1. 2 Samuel 1.1 to 2.8
   (a) In 1.1-16, we hear David express a firm principle we have heard him express before. What is this principle?
   (b) Might David have a personal interest in spreading this principle?
   (c) In 2.4, David is anointed king over __________________?
   (d) Why does David woo the people of Jabesh-Gilead? (See footnote here.)

   [Optional reading: 2 Samuel 2.9-4.12. We don’t have time for this, and it’s not particularly relevant to the course theme, but it is a fascinating look at the personalities involved in the troubled relation between Judah and Israel. It gives excellent examples of David’s terrific sense of public relations. Often, he is able to play the “good cop” thanks to having a loyal “bad cop,” Joab, his military commander, to do the dirty work for him.]

2. 2 Samuel 5.1-10
   (a) In this reading, David is anointed king over __________________?
   (b) As king of Judah, he reigns in the city of Hebron. As king over both Judah and Israel, he reigns where? (Both cities still exist and are in the news today.)
   (c) In 2.6-10, what is another name for Jerusalem, the city of David?
   (d) So David is growing in might. How do the writers account for this?

3. 2 Samuel 7.1-29
   (a) Note the footnote to 7.1-29.
(b) What seems to be the prophet Nathan’s relation to David? Is he like a staff adviser? Or a priestly supervisor? YHWH’s manager on the scene? Lower or higher? (As you’ll see, prophets’ relations to the power structure cover a range.)

(c) David wants to build YHWH “a house” – a temple. Instead, YHWH has Nathan tell David that YHWH will “make [David] a house” (7.11). What does he mean? Who will build the actual temple? (Footnote helps here.)

(d) What is the key promise YHWH makes to David here about David’s offspring? What will be YHWH’s relation to this offspring who will sit on David’s throne?

(e) This is the all-important Davidic Covenant. If you haven’t yet, read Harris, pp. 187-189 (Box 5.5). What is the key difference between the Mosaic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant? (I guess we haven’t talked about what a “covenant” is, anyway. Is it a voluntary agreement between two equals?)

(f) Harris tells us that, when Israel’s fortune were at a low ebb, the Davidic Covenant would be interpreted by some as promising a future leader who would come as a conquering warrior, “reinstitute Davidic sovereignty as a political reality” and “revitalize Yahweh’s people and lead them to triumph over their enemies.” The Davidic leader who will do this will the Anointed One. What is the Hebrew word for “Anointed One”?

(g) So we learn in 7.13-14 that the house of David “will hold the throne forever.” What did David or his offspring commit iniquity? Do you think this holds even if they were to go off worshipping Baal and Astarte??? Do you find this surprising? Perplexing?

4. 2 Samuel 11.1 to 12.24.

(a) Yes, this is the same wonderful David who, as a boy, defeated Goliath. Are you surprised by this story? Disappointed? Reminded of any other supremely gifted political leader?

(b) The worst thing, of course, is David’s treatment of Uriah. You want to get rid of someone, send him into battle: where did David learn this? (Uriah was so faithful that David could just have asked him to get David 100 Ammonite foreskins from Rabbah!)

(c) What specific punishment does Nathan pronounce on David?

(d) What quality of David seems illustrated in 12.20-22.

(e) So David and Bathsheba lose a son. How does a sensitive man console a grieving wife?

[Optional reading: 13.1-19.1. Again, we don’t have time and don’t “need” it, but it’s marvelous! In these chapters you see how the punishment Nathan predicted for David plays out. The magnificent story culminates in the David’s heart-rending cry upon hearing of the death of his son Absalom (who had led a rebellion trying to overthrow his father and very publicly slept with his father’s concubines on the roof of his palace!): “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!” 18.33. I hope one day you read William Faulkner’s great novel, Absalom, Absalom.)

5. 1 Kings 1.1-4

The story continues. Davis is old and dying. The biblical writers loved ironies, large and small – things turning out in surprising ways. Enjoy the picture of picture of David, husband of many wives, father of many sons, lover of many concubines, lying with Abishag the beautiful young
6. **1 Kings 1.32-40**

Solomon is anointed. How many frequencies would the rejoicing have had to be to make the earth quake?

7. **1 Kings 2.1-4**

David charges his son Solomon to walk in the ways of God. (You’ve seen this kind of advice before.) In the following verses, which are not assigned, he goes on to tell Solomon whom to be sure to kill off! This is another instance of the theme we followed in the Saul readings. What is that theme?

8. **1 Kings 3.1-28 (Start with the half-verse just before 3.1)**

“So the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.” This chapter ends with the famous story of Solomon’s wisdom in dealing with the two women who claim the same child. But it begins with some warning signs of un-wisdom in Solomon. What are these? (The footnotes help.)

9. **1 Kings 11.1-2**

(a) Whose sins are worse – David’s or Solomon’s?
(b) What are the precise terms of the punishment YHWH proclaims on Solomon? We will be seeing more of this important idea of a surviving remnant, though the word is not used here.

10. **1 Kings 14.1-30**

It’s less than a hundred years since David reigned over Israel and Judah together. What have things come to? Why? What is predicted in the immediate future?