

# *From the Garden to Glory*

## **Kings**

**Author:** Unknown

**Timeline:** c. 971 - 853 B.C.

**Location:** Jerusalem and Samaria

**Category:** Historical

**Theme:** Divided Heart = Divided Kingdom

### **Overview:**

The first half of 1 Kings is the history of Solomon's life and reign as king. Solomon had a divided heart which left behind a divided kingdom. The other half of the book gives the history of the kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. 1 Kings also gives an account of a few prophets, including Elijah and Elisha, whose ministry focused on calling the wandering nation back to God.

### **Introduction:**

Before beginning your study of 1 Kings, consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. Look up the following words in a dictionary and write the definitions: disobedience, idolatry, ungodliness. List at least two ways each of these is manifested in our world today.
2. Read Matthew 19:23-24. What are some "spiritual dangers" one might experience in the midst of wealth and comfort?

3. Solomon had great power and influence in Israel. Lord Acton said, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." What are some negative aspects of power? Think of the areas in your life where you have great power and influence. How do you avoid the corruption that can come with this power?
4. Israel becomes a divided nation in 1 Kings. Make a list of things which can divide the people of God. How can these be avoided? Make a list of the things which unify God's people. How can these be encouraged?

### **Establishment of Solomon as King**

Read 1 Kings 1 and 2

1. Summarize chapter one of 1 Kings.
2. Look at 1:29. How did King David describe the Lord? Write out your own description of Him, encapsulating what He means in your life.
3. Look at 2:1-4. What was David's charge to Solomon? Put yourself in David's place. What is the most important counsel you would give to those whom you love?

### **The Rise of Solomon as King**

Read 1 Kings 3 and 4

1. Look at 3:1. What did Solomon do? According to Walvoord and Zuck, "The motivation for this marriage was obviously political. Solomon was not as careful about marrying non-Israelites as he should have been. But this union did result in peace with Israel's neighbor to the southwest during Solomon's reign." What is the danger of "peace at any price"? List one area of your life where you are tempted to succumb to this philosophy. How do you resist the temptation?

2. Write out 3:3 and circle the word *except*. The "high places" were worship centers which the Israelites had inherited from the Canaanites. Offering sacrifices there was forbidden in the Law (see Leviticus 17:3-4). Solomon failed to follow the Lord completely. Ask the Lord to search your heart. Are there any areas where you are not completely obedient? If so, confess them to Him, repent and receive His forgiveness.
  
3. Look at 3:5-14. What did the Lord say to Solomon, and what was Solomon's response? If the Lord were to make this offer to you, how would you respond? Look at 1 John 5:14-15. The Lord does make this offer to you, but there is a condition. What is the condition? What does this mean?

## **Building and Dedicating the Temple**

Read 1 Kings 6:1-38, 8:22-61, 2 Chronicles 7:1-11

1. Look at 1 Kings 6:1. Henrietta Mears said of Solomon, "His lifework was building the Temple. Several million dollars was expended in erecting it." What are you building as your "lifework"? What is the cost?
  
2. Look at 1 Kings 8:10. According to John MacArthur, "The cloud was the 'glory of the LORD', the visible symbol of God's presence. It signaled the Lord's approval of this new temple." What symbolizes God's presence in your life? How does He signal His approval of what you have dedicated to Him?
  
3. Look at 1 Kings 8:61. What were the people directed to do? How do you do this in your own life? Be specific.

## **The Decline of Solomon as King**

Read 1 Kings 9, 10 and 11

1. What did the Lord tell Solomon in 9:1-9?
2. Look at 10:26 and 11:1-2. What did Solomon multiply for himself? Read Deuteronomy 17:16-17. What were the three restrictions placed on kings? Why do you believe ignoring these prohibitions posed a danger for a king?
3. Look at 11:3-8. What did Solomon's wives do? What has the potential to turn your heart away from the Lord? How do you protect yourself from this threat?

## **The Kingdom Divided**

Read 1 Kings 12

1. Who was Rehoboam (see 1 Kings 11:42)? Look at verses 3-8. What did the congregation request of Rehoboam? What did the elders suggest? Why do you think Rehoboam rejected the elders' counsel? Describe a time when you rejected wise counsel. What were the consequences?
2. Summarize verses 8-24. Israel was divided at this point. Walvoord and Zuck said, "Jeroboam could have been an instrument of blessing for Israel. He was divinely chosen and given promises that his dynasty would continue and prosper if he obeyed the Lord; he committed many serious sins that resulted in the Israelites turning *from* God rather than *to* Him." To whom has the Lord given you the opportunity to be an "instrument of blessing"? List one thing you do/have done to fulfill this role. How has this resulted in turning that person *to* the Lord?

3. Look at verse 28. What did the two calves represent? What would be modern equivalents for calves of gold? How do you keep these out of your life? Be specific.

## **The Prophet Elijah**

Read 1 Kings 17 and 18

1. According to John MacArthur, "(Elijah's) name means 'The LORD is God.' The prophet Elijah's ministry corresponded to his name; he was sent by God to confront Baalism and to declare to Israel that the Lord was God and that there was no other." Who has God sent *you* to confront or what has He sent *you* to declare? How are you doing this?
2. List the supernatural occurrences found in chapter 17. According to Beth Moore, "God's most profound miracles will always be those within our hearts and souls. Moving a mountain is nothing compared to changing a selfish, destructive heart." Share one miracle, whether physical, emotional or spiritual, that you have witnessed or experienced. How has this changed the way you relate to the Lord?
3. Look at 18:21. The phrase "falter between two opinions" literally means "limp along on or between two twigs." What is one example of this in our world today? Why is this such a dangerous position?

## **Summary**

As you conclude your study of the book of 1 Kings consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. What is the most important lesson you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?

**2.** What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?

**3.** List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord: