

GPS

God's Plan of Salvation

Bible Reading Plan June 2020

Like 1 and 2 Samuel, the two books of Kings were originally one. Last month we completed the reading we will do in Samuel, with David's kingdom somewhat in disarray. The kingdom is put back together, but the rest of 2 Samuel contains little else about David's reign after the rebellion of Absalom. The book concludes with some appendices about other matters, including a list of David's mighty men and the sin of David in numbering the people. So now we begin in Kings, reading books that are not always pleasant to read. Although there are occasional cases of restoration and faithfulness, mostly these books describe how Judah and Israel went further and further from God. Of course, when God's people involve themselves in sin, the Lord does something about it: prophets were sent to call the people back to God. Terrible punishments followed when they did not heed God's voice. Dark days for Israel ensue. That is what the books of Kings do: they explain how the "great nation" of Exodus became a feeble remnant by the time of Ezra. As always, we are keeping our eye on the big picture of the Bible. Frankly, as we read in Kings, the grand project God began with Abraham long ago in Genesis 12 seems to be in serious trouble. Will there even be a nation to bring forth a Messiah to bless all nations?

Week 1 - 1 Kings 1 2 3 6 8-9:1-9



1 Kings 1 prepares us for the transition to Solomon. Adonijah makes a run for the crown but is completely thwarted by Nathan and Bathsheba. **1 Kings 2** brings an end to David's life, and ties up the loose ends that need to be dealt with to establish Solomon as king. Note the emphasis on God's word coming to pass (2:27). **1 Kings 3** gives us Solomon's great prayer and God's gracious answer. Chapters 4-5 show how the promises of Genesis 12 were completely fulfilled, as Israel became a great nation in every sense (note 4:20). In **1 Kings 6** Solomon begins work on the temple. Verse 1 dates this as being in 960 BC. Note the conditional nature of God's promises in verse 12. Chapter 7 gives us the details of the temple's construction. **1 Kings 8** records the dedication of the Temple. Solomon's prayer is amazing and bears careful study. Take notice of Solomon's concern for all people (verse 41). Don't stop reading at the end of chapter 8 but continue **into 1 Kings 9** as we see the Lord repeat the promises of 2 Samuel 7 to Solomon.



Abishag appears twice in our reading, and there is a lot of concern over a woman who really doesn't seem that important. We must remember, however, that possessing the royal harem was tantamount to possessing the crown (remember Absalom, 2 Sam 16:21-23). Bathsheba didn't get that but Solomon most certainly did (1 Kings 2:21).



Two passages really stand out this week. First, in 2:1-4 David's prescription for success. We would all do well to examine those verses carefully and implement that charge in our own lives. Secondly, Solomon's prayer - showing an understanding that God is not contained in any temple (v. 27) - and pleading for God to "hear and forgive" reinforces the central theme of the Bible: forgiveness.



There are great lessons to learn about making mistakes (like Adonijah did in chapter 1) and then repeating them (as Adonijah did in 2:13ff). Talk about why Adonijah kept grasping for the throne when he obviously couldn't have it. Then use 1 Kings 3 to discuss what each child would do if God made the offer of 3:5 today. The temple gives opportunity (ch. 6 and 8) to talk about sacred places. Remind children that God's glory dwelt in the temple (6:12; 2 Chron 7:1) something quite different from our church buildings today!

Week 2 - 1 Kings ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 16:30-17 ☐ 18 ☐ 2 Kings 2



1 Kings 10 gives the record of the Queen of Sheba's visit and Solomon's amazing wealth. **1 Kings 11** disappoints us with the details of Solomon turning from the Lord. We are focused on the promises of 2 Sam 7 in 11:32 and 36. **1 Kings 12** shows us political folly isn't something new to our times. Rehoboam shows very poor judgment here. So the kingdom divides, with idolatry to follow in the Northern Kingdom immediately (chapters 13-14). Idolatry comes to the south as well (chapter 15) but note 15:4. We resume the story of evil kings in the north in **16:30-17**, the story of Ahab and the drought. **1 Kings 18**'s contest on Mount Carmel is one of the most stirring scenes in all of the Bible. Elijah is the prophet who really dominates the scene here, suddenly breaking onto the scene and announcing God's judgment. 1 Kings ends (chs. 19-22) with more of Ahab's miserable wickedness and more stories of Elijah (including Elijah courageously denouncing Ahab for the murder of Naboth). 2 Kings 1 keeps the spotlight on Elijah as he tries valiantly to turn Israel back to God. **2 Kings 2** records his trip home to be with the Lord.



The speed of Israel's apostasy is truly amazing. David and Solomon both led the nation to serve the true God, though Solomon faltered later in life. Yet with Solomon gone and the kingdom divided, idolatry runs rampant in Israel. Why is this? Think about how sin can break loose in people's lives today. What allows for that? How does that happen?



Solomon's bad end is something we don't like to think about but our children need to consider lifelong faithfulness. How could such a wise man fail God so terribly? That's worth talking about. Rehoboam's unwillingness to listen to older counselors is also an excellent talking point. Elijah is a major figure in the Old Testament. Don't miss the chance to talk about his courage. Serving God can be hard and unpopular but we can do it – just like Elijah did!

Week 3 - 2 Kings ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 17



2 Kings 3 makes the transition to Elisha complete. **2 Kings 4 and 5** tell us of some of Elisha's most famous exploits. Those stories are continued in chapter 6-8. **2 Kings 9** resumes the story of Israel's kings as Jehu is anointed king of Israel. Jezebel's reign of terror is brought to an end. Again, as judgment comes, there is an emphasis on fulfilling the word of the Lord (verses 7, 25, 36-37). God's word is designed to strengthen our faith in God! In **2 Kings 10** Ahab's house is obliterated (note verse 10) and the worship of Baal is stopped (at least temporarily). 2 Kings 11-16 takes the story back to Judah where Joash rules and leads the people to serve the Lord again. Other kings follow, some of them also faithful (Amaziah, 14:2; Uzziah, 15:3). In **2 Kings 17** the story of the Northern Kingdom resumes, where there have been a succession of kings with very short reigns, lots of assassinations, and chaos. The Northern Kingdom finally comes to an end in this chapter, with the text making it very clear exactly what happened to them and why. The date is 722 BC.



Jehu ends the worship of Baal (10:28) but continues in the sin of "Jeroboam the son of Nebat ... the golden calves." What is this sin? This is the mistake of worshiping God through an image. Jeroboam didn't proclaim a new god (like Baal). His sin was saying Jehovah could be worshiped through an image. He set up the golden calves as representative of Jehovah God (1 Kings 12:28), a violation of the Ten Commandments (Exo 20:1ff).



The idea that God will punish sin is very unpopular today. By the end of the Northern Kingdom we not only expect it, we positively demand it as their wickedness is so objectionable (17:7-8, 15-17). Again, the emphasis is on God doing as God said He would (17:23). Think about and pray about God's judgment. Why did God bring judgment on Israel? What does this judgment teach us about final judgment? Should a God who judges sin be objectionable to right thinking people?



The kindness of the Shunamite woman makes a good lesson in kindness today (chapter 4). Namaan's obedience even when he didn't understand or even agree with God's command is also worth exploring (chapter 5). Don't shy away from showing your children the bitter end of sin in chapters 9-10. We do not want our children growing up thinking God is indifferent to wickedness, or that defying Him is not a big deal that shouldn't concern us!

Week 4 - 2 Kings □ 18 □ 19 □ 20 □ 21 □ 22



Ready for a break from the wickedness of the Northern Kingdom? Meet Hezekiah! **2 Kings 18** begins the reign of one of Judah's best kings. Unfortunately, when the Assyrians invade the Northern Kingdom and carry them away they decide to swing south and get Hezekiah and the Southern Kingdom too. Hezekiah's response of faith and courage in **Kings 19** remains a highwater mark for the Southern Kingdom. **2 Kings 20** tells us Hezekiah got sick, but he prayed and was healed. However, he let his pride get the better of him in verses 12-21. As much as we enjoyed Hezekiah's good reign, Manasseh comes to the throne in **2 Kings 21**, and seals the fate of the Southern Kingdom (verses 12-17). Josiah's attempt to bring people back to God in **2 Kings 22** ends this week's reading with a ray of hope.



What makes Hezekiah such a good king? Watch carefully as you read the accounts of his reign for the kind of characteristics that make him spiritually successful. Keep a list. Then resolve to make those traits part of your life, and pray fervently for God's help to do so!



Children need to learn to trust in the power of God. Our reading this week brings together two Old Testament greats, Hezekiah and Isaiah. Use their stories to show how God can deliver, save and heal. Josiah's story gives us the opportunity to be creative. Ask your children "What would happen if the Bible were lost like it was in Josiah's day (22:8)?" Imagine the changes in our lives and in our culture and society. We should do this to help our kids (and us!) be more grateful for God's Word!