



1 KINGS

DECEMBER 2018

Read on your own or with others,
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of this book. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to them than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

1 KINGS – INTRODUCTION

1 & 2 Kings tell us the history of the throne and Israel from David to the nation(s) being conquered. This took place between about 1000 years and 600 years before the birth of Jesus. The two books go together so there is a feeling at the end of 1 Kings that only half the story has been told.

There are two threads that run through these books. The first is the faithfulness of God. He keeps his promises. Those to do good and to bring judgement. The second thread is one of decline and disobedience. Led by those in leadership, the nation progressively turns away from God. Ultimately, the ending is a sad one and we are left looking for someone more, the Lord Jesus.

OUTLINE

WHICH SON? : 1 KINGS 1-2

At the beginning of the book we find David as an old man. In 2 Samuel 7 he has received a promise from God that his son would succeed him on the throne. God has chosen David's son Solomon (1 Chronicles 22:9-10), but Adonijah, David's oldest living son, has other ideas.

These chapters are full of political intrigue and questionable actions. At their heart, we see God keeping his word and bringing about his plan.

REACHING THE PINNACLE : 1 KINGS 3-11

Was Solomon's reign the highest point in Old Testament Israel's history. It's certainly an argument that can be made. The nation is at peace and united under a wise king. The temple is built and God is with his people (1 Kings 8:10). Yet, it isn't a perfect picture.

Solomon is not a perfect king. He is a picture of the Lord Jesus, but not the final answer to God's great promise to David. The temple, although grand and beautiful, wouldn't last and was torn down a few hundred years later. Again, it's main purpose here is as a picture of what God would do in the future, of Jesus (John 2:21) and of the church (Ephesians 2:19-22).

TORN APART : 1 KINGS 12-14

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, lacked the wisdom of his father and a servant heart towards the people. The result is a split in the nation. The ten northern tribes follow Jeroboam and form the kingdom of Israel. The southern two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) go with Rehoboam and form the kingdom of Judah.

It is important to notice two things about the split in the nation. First, this didn't take God by surprise. In 1 Kings 11 God sends Ahijah the prophet to Jeroboam to explain what will happen. The kingdom was torn away from Solomon's line because of his sin (1 Kings 11:31-33).

The other important thing to note is God's purpose in keeping Rehoboam on the throne and establishing the southern kingdom. He did this so that the line of David would be maintained as he had promised, eventually bringing us to Jesus (1 Kings 11:36).

WHAT A MESS : 1 KINGS 15-22

On first reading these chapters can seem confusing. The story keeps changing from Israel to Judah and back again. It can be helpful to have a piece of paper and list the kings for each kingdom to help you keep track of what is going on.

The direction from this point on is a drift away from God towards disobedience and God's judgement. For the Northern Kingdom this is a constant slide. Each king is described as doing evil in the eyes of the Lord.

For Judah, the decline is halted at points where we see a king who does what is right in God's eyes. Each of these is a glimpse of grace and a reminder of God's willingness to show mercy when people seek him.

A key character in these chapters is Elijah. He is a prophet of God bringing the challenge of God's word to the people in their disobedience.

ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK

What does this book teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What does this book teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of this book make in your life (Matthew 7:24-27)