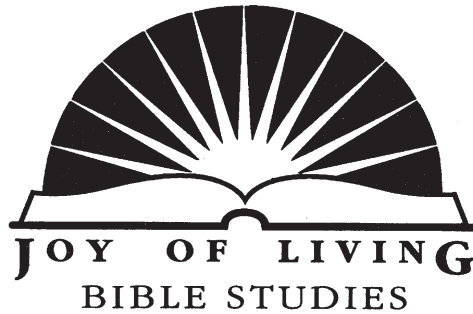


1 Kings

Lesson 2



1 Kings 1:1—2:11

Second Timothy 3:16-17 tells us, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The books of 1 and 2 Kings are not merely history books or narratives about sinful humanity. Within these pages—these stories—God has a message for you and for me. He wants to take these truths and equip us “for every good work.”

In looking at events in history, you gain a better understanding of what transpired when you know who the major characters were, what parts they played, and what incidents led up to a specific event. Considering this, let us see what we can discover about 1 and 2 Kings.

The Major Characters

- ☛ **David:** The youngest of eight sons, David had taken care of sheep as a youth. While David was in these humble circumstances, the prophet Samuel, at God's direction, anointed him to be the next king of Israel. During the years prior to actually taking the throne, David faced many challenges, not the least of which were the numerous attempts by the then-current king, Saul, to kill him. David spent many years fleeing from Saul. After becoming king, David united the kingdom, secured its borders, brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, and united the people in the worship of the living God. He had many wives, concubines, and sons. He was a great king; however, he was lax in sexual purity and in the discipline of his children. Although David made mistakes and committed sin, he was a man after God's own heart (see Acts 13:22).
 - ☛ **Adonijah:** Years before, Adonijah's half-brother Amnon, David's first-born son, had raped his half-sister, Tamar. As a result, Tamar's full brother Absalom killed Amnon. Absalom eventually tried to overthrow his father's throne, and was himself killed. This left Adonijah as David's oldest living son.¹ Used to doing as he pleased, and left unchecked by David, he decided he was going to be king.
 - ☛ **Solomon:** One of David's younger sons. Solomon's mother was Bathsheba—the woman with whom David had committed
- adultery. While still an infant, Solomon had been chosen by God to be the next king and to build God's temple.
 - ☛ **Joab:** The son of David's sister Zeruiah, Joab had joined David over 40 years before, during David's flight from King Saul. As head of David's army, Joab had subdued Absalom's attempted coup by killing Absalom. He fell into disfavor with David because of this. Although Joab had always been loyal to David, even when he did not agree with him, at the end of David's reign he chose to support Adonijah rather than Solomon as the new king.
 - ☛ **Benaiah:** One of David's “mighty warriors” (2 Samuel 23:1, see also 23:20), Benaiah was the son of the priest Jehoiada. He was in charge of David's private bodyguard, and at times seemed to be in a subtle power struggle with Joab. At David's instruction, he backed Solomon as the next king.
 - ☛ **Abiathar:** The only priest to escape Saul's slaughter of the priests at Nob, Abiathar had joined David over 40 years before, during David's flight from King Saul. He served as high priest while David was on the throne. However, during David's latter reign he shared that position with Zadok. Abiathar supported Adonijah rather than Solomon as the next king.
 - ☛ **Zadok:** Son of Ahitub, Zadok joined David's ranks after the death of Saul. He shared the position of high priest with Abiathar. During Adonijah's rebellion, Zadok supported Solomon.
 - ☛ **Nathan:** A prophet frequently used by God to encourage, direct, and rebuke David, Nathan supported Solomon as the next king.
 - ☛ **Bathsheba:** While still married to Uriah the Hittite, one of David's army officers, Bathsheba became pregnant with David's child. After arranging for Uriah to be killed in battle, David married Bathsheba. However, as part of God's judgment, their infant child died. After Nathan the prophet confronted David with his sin, he repented, and God gave them Solomon and three more sons.
 - ☛ **Abishag:** A beautiful young virgin, Abishag was brought in to minister to David in his old age. Although numbered with the concubines, she did not have sexual relations with the king.

1. See chart of David's family on page 8.

The End of David's Reign

God had forbidden David to build the temple. However, God had informed him that Solomon was to be the next king and that he had been chosen to build it. After gathering the necessary materials and making all the preparation for building the temple, David charged Solomon to “build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel” (1 Chronicles 22:6),¹ and prayed that God would give Solomon discretion and understanding when He put him in command over Israel. David also commanded all the leaders of Israel to help Solomon.

As 1 Kings begins, the once mighty king David had become an old man with poor health, confined to his bed, and unable to keep warm. A young virgin, Abishag, had been found to minister to him and to lie next to him in order for her body heat to help warm him. David was nearing the end of his reign, and Solomon had not yet officially been crowned king.

With great cunning, Adonijah enlisted the support of two powerful men, Joab son of Zeruiah and Abiathar the priest, in order to declare himself king of Israel. A great celebration complete with sacrifices was held just south of Jerusalem near En-Rogel. All the royal officials were invited except for Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, and David's special guard—those known to be loyal to David. Most notably, David's other sons were invited—all except Solomon. Adonijah had everything planned. He would declare himself king; all the most powerful people in the land, including the royal princes, would be unwitting pawns in this power play, and the aged King David and the crown prince, Solomon, would be left powerless—or so he thought.

Adonijah had forgotten the Lord and His plan. Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.” God will always accomplish His purpose!

Knowing the danger they were in, Nathan the prophet went to Bathsheba, informed her of what was happening, and told her what steps to take to save her life and the life of her son Solomon. She was to go to the king and remind him that he had promised that Solomon would be the next king. Then she was to tell him that Adonijah had been declared king, and that she and Solomon would be in danger once he, David, died. While she was speaking, Nathan would go in to the king and inform him of the events that were taking place and inquire if this was something David had planned.

These two accounts stirred the aged King David to action. He reaffirmed his promise that Solomon would be the next king. He commanded Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, along with David's private bodyguard, to place Solomon on David's own mule, and go to the spring at Gihon. There they were to anoint Solomon king over Israel, blow the trumpets, and declare, “Long live King

Solomon!” (1 Kings 1:34). From there, they were to go back to Jerusalem and place Solomon on David's throne.

They followed David's instructions, and all the people rejoiced so loudly that the ground shook. When Adonijah and his guests heard this sound of celebration, Joab questioned what was taking place in the city. They were informed that Solomon had been crowned king and was sitting on the throne at David's command, and that the people and the royal officials² were celebrating. At this, the guests quickly dispersed. Adonijah was now the one fearing for his life. He ran and grabbed hold of the horns of the altar,³ refusing to move until King Solomon swore not to kill him.

Solomon agreed not to harm Adonijah for the attempted coup, but to deal with him according to Adonijah's future actions. Even then, it was not until Solomon's men physically removed him that Adonijah came down from the altar. He immediately went and bowed before King Solomon, who sent him to his home. Adonijah's coup had been thwarted, but his attitude had not changed.

David's Death

When David was ready to die, he called Solomon to his side. He reminded Solomon of God's conditional promise—that if his descendants walked faithfully before the Lord with all their heart and soul, there would always be one of his descendants on the throne of Israel.⁴ For each generation the promise was based on their walk with the Lord.

And so David told Solomon:

- ☛ to be strong and show yourself a man, and
- ☛ to observe what the Lord your God requires, which meant:
- ☛ to walk in His ways
- ☛ to keep His decrees, commands, laws, and requirements.

Then David asked Solomon to deal with some matters that would help protect the throne.

He was to execute Joab for all the unrighteous deeds he had committed. Perhaps because Joab was his sister's son, David had never been able to deal fully with him. If left unchecked, Joab could cause problems for Solomon's reign. Another threat to Solomon's throne was Shimei son of Gera, who had cursed David when David fled from Absalom. Although David had sworn not to harm him, Shimei's hatred of the house of David could cause problems in the kingdom. Finally, David reminded Solomon to show special kindness to the sons of Barzillai, the man who had provided for and remained

1. “Chronicles is a summary of Hebrew history that duplicates much of the books of Samuel and of Kings, but it focuses more on the spiritual deeds and misdeeds of the kings and on the importance of worshipping the Lord properly through the ministry of the priests and the Temple.” (Henrietta C. Mears. *What the Bible Is All About Bible Handbook, Revised and Updated* (Ventura: Regal, 2011) p168.

2. Those who did not accept Adonijah's invitation.

3. The horns were projections on the four corners of the altar. By grabbing hold of these, Adonijah was symbolically seeking the protection of God—the very God whose will he went against when he declared himself king.

4. Because of the disobedience of future kings, there came a time when the people were carried into captivity and there was no king on the throne, but God's promise to David was fulfilled through David's descendant, Jesus Christ, who will rule and reign forever.

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faithful to David during Absalom's attempted coup. These men could strengthen the unity of the kingdom.

At last, after reigning for 40 years, David rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David, and Solomon's rule was established.

When looking at David's life and realizing that he had killed thousands of men in battle, had ordered thousands more killed, had committed adultery, and had arranged for the woman's husband to be murdered, you may wonder how the Bible can portray him as a godly man. Perhaps you compare your sin to David's and think, "I'm not so bad." But God does not look at things the way we do (see 1 Samuel 16:7). He looks at the heart, and according to God, David was a man after His own heart (see Acts 13:22).

In James 2:10 we learn that if we break any part of God's law, we are guilty of breaking all of it. In Matthew 5 we see that God looks deeper than a person's outer actions—He looks at the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. We are not better than David. Like him, we are sinners, under God's condemnation and in need of forgiveness.

David's heart was broken because of his sin, and he sought God's forgiveness (read Psalm 51). What is your attitude toward your sin? Are you sorry? Do you want God's forgiveness? He offers it to you freely because Jesus Christ died and paid the price for your sin on the cross (see Ephesians 1:7). Will you pray now:

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am sorry for my sins and turn from them now. I accept that Jesus Christ died on the cross and paid the price for my sin. Thank you."

Study Questions

Before you begin your study this week:

- ☛ Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- ☛ Use only the Bible for your answers.
- ☛ Write down your answers and the verses you used.
- ☛ Answer the “Challenge” questions if you have the time and want to do them.
- ☛ Share your answers to the “Personal” questions with the class only if you want to share them.

First Day: Read the Commentary on 1 Kings 1:1—2:11.

1. What meaningful or new thought did you find in the commentary on 1 Kings 1:1—2:11 or from your teacher's lecture?

2. Look for a verse in the lesson to memorize this week. Write it down and post it in a prominent place. Make a real effort to learn the verse and its “address” (reference of where it is found in the Bible).

Second Day: Read 1 Kings 2:12—5:18, concentrating on 2:12-35.

1. After Solomon was crowned, was there any question in Israel over who was the rightful king? (1 Kings 2:12)

2. a. What did Adonijah request of Bathsheba, and how did she respond? (1 Kings 2:13-21, summarize briefly)

- b. What was Solomon's answer? (1 Kings 2:22)

3. How did Solomon deal with Adonijah's continuing efforts to usurp the throne? (1 Kings 2:23-25)

4. a. Review 1 Kings 1:7. Who had supported Adonijah's attempt to usurp the throne?

- b. Although Abiathar deserved to die for opposing both David's will and God's will regarding the succession of the throne, why did Solomon allow him to live? What was his punishment? (1 Kings 2:26-27)

- c. When Joab heard of Adonijah's fate, what did he do? What was Joab's punishment and why was this necessary? (1 Kings 2:28-34, summarize briefly)
5. Personal: Again we see that every sin has consequences (see Romans 6:23), whether immediate or delayed. It is common in our culture today for people to think that their actions don't matter, as long as they don't hurt someone else. But every sin—no matter how private or hidden—is an offense against God, our maker. Have you realized the offense of your sin against God, and asked for His forgiveness?

Third Day: Review 1 Kings 2:12—5:18, concentrating on 2:36—3:14.

1. a. Review 1 Kings 2:1,8-9. What had David told Solomon regarding Shimei?
- b. David “no doubt realized the insincerity of Shimei's repentance and the very real probability of a return on Shimei's part to active hostility at the earliest sign of weakness.”¹ In view of his father's concern, what limitation did Solomon set for Shimei that would keep him isolated from his kinsmen of Benjamin and of Saul's family? (1 Kings 2:36-37)
2. a. Did Shimei take this restriction seriously? (1 Kings 2:38-40)
- b. Shimei had been graciously pardoned once, but now he “had taken grace lightly”² What fate did he suffer in accord with his agreement with Solomon? (1 Kings 2:41-46)
3. Personal: God had promised that David's kingdom would go to Solomon, and now the last opponent of Solomon's rule was gone—his kingdom was secure. God always keeps His word (see Numbers 23:19). What promise from God's Word do you depend on? How about Philippians 1:6? Write this verse and put your name in it, or write down another promise from God's Word.

1. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. From note on 1 Kings 2:36.

2. *Ibid.* From note on 1 Kings 2:41-43.

4. What did Solomon offer to the Lord in order to bring thanksgiving for establishing his kingdom and to seek God's blessing on his reign? (1 Kings 3:4)

5. a. What did God graciously offer Solomon, and how did Solomon reply? (1 Kings 3:5-9)

- b. What did God grant Solomon in response to his request? (1 Kings 3:10-14)

6. Personal: As followers of Jesus Christ, we are also invited to bring our requests to God (see Philippians 4:6-7). After reading today's Scriptures, will your requests to God have a different focus? Write a prayer to Him here.

Fourth Day: Review 1 Kings 2:12—5:18, concentrating on 3:15-28.

1. In 1 Kings 3:15-27, what illustration is given of Solomon's God-given ability to rule wisely and justly?

2. How did the news of this verdict affect all Israel? (1 Kings 3:28)

3. Challenge: Read Isaiah 11:1-5, which is a prophecy of the Messiah. How was Solomon's wisdom and discernment a type or picture of the Messiah who would come from the line of David, son of Jesse?

4. Personal: Human government is often corrupted by greed, selfishness, and injustice. Do you yearn for the day when Jesus Christ will return and rule with wisdom, understanding, and power? Write down your desires here in a prayer to the Lord.

Fifth Day: Review 1 Kings 2:12—5:18, concentrating on 4:1-28.

1. King David had established Israel as a great and powerful empire. His son Solomon's reign brought increased governmental organization and strengthening. How did Solomon organize the provision of supplies for the royal court? (1 Kings 4:7)
2. Challenge: Read 1 Samuel 8:11-17. When the people had asked the prophet Samuel for a king, what did he warn them? How does the description of Solomon's reign in 1 Kings 4:1-7 compare to this warning?

3. We all live under a government, and are subject to its taxes and laws. According to the following verses, how are we to respond to it? Summarize briefly.

Matthew 22:15-22

Romans 13:1-7

Titus 3:1

4. Personal: The Israelites were pleased with King Solomon's wisdom and justice, but perhaps not as pleased to pay taxes or to be conscripted to labor on his projects. How does your response to your own government compare to what you read in question 4?
5. Challenge: Solomon, in his wisdom and reign of peace, was a type or picture of the coming Messiah. How did the prophet Micah describe the Messiah's reign in Micah 4:1-4?

6. Personal: God's Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth as Messiah. He died for our sins and rose again, then ascended into heaven. Someday He will return and take up His reign of wisdom and peace forever. Have you accepted Him as your Lord and Savior, so that you can look forward to this with joy? Write down your thoughts and feelings about this hope.

Sixth Day: Review 1 Kings 2:12—5:18, concentrating on 4:29—5:18.

1. a. What was the source of Solomon's wisdom? (1 Kings 4:29)

b. What was Solomon's reputation among the surrounding nations? (1 Kings 4:34)
2. Personal: Because God is the Creator and Ruler over all life, a person can obtain true wisdom only from Him. By walking with the Lord day by day, spending time in His Word and in prayer, we learn to see things from His perspective. How have you grown in wisdom since you came to know the Lord?
3. What king sent envoys to Solomon, and why? (1 Kings 5:1) Find this king's city on the map on page 86.
4. What trade agreement did the two kings make? (1 Kings 5:6-11)
5. a. How was the work of the conscripted laborers from Israel organized? (1 Kings 5:13-14)

b. What building supplies did all of these laborers prepare for the temple project? (1 Kings 5:17-18)
6. Personal: What a huge and complicated job Solomon had taken on! Yet he must have felt that all that effort was worth it to honor the one true God of Israel. Read Colossians 3:23-24. Do you approach everything you do with this attitude?