

## 11 - 1 Kings

1:1 - 22:53

Key Verse:

### INTRODUCTION TO 1 & 2 KINGS

1 and 2 Kings describe the history of Israel's monarchy from the closing days of King David until the Babylonian Exile. King Saul died in defeat and disgrace, and after seven years, David became king of the united kingdom. His son Solomon presided over the golden age of Israel (1 Kings 1-11), and sowed seeds that produced the fruit of destruction. The kingdom was divided during the reign of Rehoboam, son of Solomon (1Ki 12; 930 BC), and Israel's history separates to flow in two streams: Israel (north) and Judah (south). The writer contrasts and compares Israel and Judah by intertwining their histories. The monarchy in Israel is characterized by frequent violent dynastic changes. Twenty rulers representing nine dynasties ruled for about 210 years--until the fall of Samaria (722 BC). In Judah there were about 20 kings, but they retained the dynastic continuity of David's line until the Exile (586 BC). The kings of Israel were, without exception, wicked. They followed the policies of Jeroboam, the king who caused Israel to sin (14:16;15:26; 16:2; 13,19, etc.). The kings of Judah were measured against King David. Some were godly men, but most of them fell short of David's standard.

Both nations failed because of idolatry--spiritual adultery. When God's hand of protection was removed, the Assyrians conquered Northern Israel (722 BC), and the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem 200 years later (586BC). The spiritual giants of the kingdom period were the prophets. Elijah and Elisha prophesied in Northern Israel during one of its darkest times. The prophets fit into the framework of the history of Israel and Judah. They called the nation to repent and turn back to God.

### SOLOMON BECOMES KING

1 Kings 1:1-53

Key Verse: 1:48

#### 1. Adonijah sets himself up as king (1-27)

King David was old and seemingly impotent. Everyone thought that he was too old to know what was going on. His handsome son, Prince Adonijah, decided to make himself king. His father had never disciplined him nor questioned what he did, so he anticipated no difficulty. Furthermore, he had the support of powerful men like General Joab.

#### 2. Bathsheba's faith and courage (28-53)

In Jesus' genealogy (Mt 1) Bathsheba is identified as one who "had been Uriah's wife." She reminds us of God's mercy and forgiveness. She had four sons by David. He had promised her that her son Solomon would be his successor. She had not been close to David for a long time.

But when Nathan the prophet told her about the political intrigue, and what she must do, she overcame her fear and pride and went to David. David appointed Solomon as his successor. Solomon rode into Jerusalem on David's mule and was crowned king.

Prayer: Lord, help me to overcome pride and act with courage and in faith. Raise up men and women who can change history.

One Word: One woman's faith and courage

## SOLOMON'S THRONE ESTABLISHED

1 Kings 2:1-46

Key Verse: 2:2b

### 1. Be strong and show yourself a man (1-4)

David charged his son to be strong and courageous and to obey God's word. He reminded him of God's promise to him and his descendants. David knew that God's promises, not human cleverness, must be the foundation of the kingdom. To believe God's promises and obey his word requires courage.

### 2. Deal wisely with enemies of God (5-46)

David knew that there were several men who were waiting for an opportunity to depose Solomon and snatch the kingdom; there were also loyal men who should be rewarded. Before he died, David gave Solomon general direction in dealing with these people, and told him to act "according to your wisdom" (5-9). Solomon waited for the proper time, then he dealt with each-- Joab, Shimei, Adonijah. He firmly established his throne. Good-mindedness and compromise could not produce peace in God's kingdom.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be strong and courageous to obey your word. Give me wisdom and patience in dealing with your enemies.

One Word: Show yourself a man

## SOLOMON'S WISDOM--AND FOOLISHNESS

1 Kings 3:1-28

Key Verse: 3:7-9

### 1. Solomon's foolishness (1-3)

Solomon did two things which planted seeds of destruction in the kingdom: He married many foreign women, including Pharaoh's daughter, and he continued to use the pagan altars as places of worship.

## 2. Solomon's good prayer topic (4-15)

When God gave Solomon the chance to ask for whatever he wanted, he asked for a discerning heart so that he could be a good shepherd for God's people. This prayer pleased God, and he promised him not only wisdom, but also riches and honor.

## 3. Solomon's discerning heart (16-28)

God answered Solomon's prayer. These verses contain an example of Solomon's wisdom. When two women claimed the same baby, he found a way to discover the baby's real mother. All Israel was awed by the wisdom God had given their king.

Prayer: Lord, give me insight to understand your word and courage to obey it. Raise up wise and discerning leaders for our land.

One Word: Find the right prayer topic

WISE KING, HAPPY PEOPLE

1 Kings 4:1-34

(Read 4:20-34)

Key Verse: 4:25,34

## 1. Each under his own vine and fig tree (1-28)

King Solomon ruled over all Israel. He was an excellent administrator. His chief officials are listed 4:1-19. During Solomon's lifetime the people of Israel and Judah were happy. They were free from fear, for their country was secure. They were free from poverty. Each man had his own property. The surrounding nations were Solomon's vassals, but they too lived in peace and happiness. Solomon was personally wealthy. His life-style, however, reflected an ignorance of God's word (Dt 17:14-20). He accumulated horses, wives and gold, and sowed seeds of corruption.

## 2. A wise and just shepherd (29-34)

Solomon had asked for wisdom to govern God's people, and God gave him great wisdom. Also, he wrote many proverbs; he studied the flora and fauna of his country until he became an expert. God's best gift to his people is a wise and just shepherd.

Prayer: Lord, raise up leaders who can rule with wisdom and justice. Grant us spiritual leaders who can shepherd your flock.

One Word: Good shepherds = happy people

## A WISE SON

1 Kings 5:1-18

Key Verse: 5:5

### 1. Solomon's declaration (1-5)

King Solomon did not forget his father David's great desire to build a temple for the Lord. Solomon made this task his own. He would build a temple for the Name of the Lord. This would not only fulfill his father's desire, but would also fulfill God's word of promise. This was his mission from God.

### 2. Hiram of Tyre (6-18)

Solomon sought the best materials and the most skilled craftsmen he could get. He wrote to his father's friend Hiram of Tyre and asked his help. Hiram praised God for giving David such a wise son. Solomon paid a fair price for the timber and stone, and for the labor provided by Hiram. He thus maintained peaceful relations. However, he pressed his own people into forced labor. It was an emergency measure, but later it caused trouble.

Prayer: Lord, help us to fulfill the vision of our forefathers who worked and prayed for America to be like a "city on a hill." Bless our children to become second generation missionaries and shepherds.

One Word: For the glory of God

## SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

1 Kings 6:1-38

Key Verses: 6:12-13

### 1. I will live among the Israelites (1-18)

God wanted to dwell among his people. If God's people would obey his word he would come and live among them. When God dwells among his people, they become a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. The temple was built to be God's dwelling. It was patterned after the tabernacle in the wilderness which is described in Exodus. Solomon built a magnificent temple. He built it with a reverent heart. All the stone blocks were cut and dressed at another site, so that there was no sound of hammers or chisels at the temple site.

## 2. The inner heart of the temple (19-38)

The ark of the Lord was placed in the Most Holy Place. The ark contained the word of God. Two golden cherubim stood on the atonement cover of the ark. The walls and the altar of incense, and even the floors, were covered with gold. The beauty and value of this sanctuary were beyond imagination. It took Solomon seven years to complete the temple.

Prayer: Lord, help me to make a precious and holy sanctuary in my heart so that you may come and dwell with me.

One Word: God dwells with his people

### THE PALACE AND THE TEMPLE

1 Kings 7:1-51

Key Verse: 7:21

#### 1. Solomon's Palace (1-14)

The temple took 7 years to build, but the palace took 13 years. The buildings in his palace complex included the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon, Solomon's living quarters and throne room, and a palace for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married. His marriages and his luxurious lifestyle planted seeds of national corruption which people of later generations would reap.

#### 2. The temple's furnishings (13-51)

Huram of Tyre was an expert in bronze work, and he used his skill to glorify God. He made 2 bronze pillars named Jakin (he establishes) and Boaz (in him is strength); a great bronze Sea which stood on 12 bronze bulls; 10 basins on ornate movable stands. The furnishings inside the temple were gold: The altar, the table, the lampstand and various pieces of equipment used in worshiping God. These things followed the pattern God gave Moses on Mount Sinai for the wilderness tabernacle.

Prayer: Lord, help me to honor you in my heart and give you first place.

One Word: Glorify God with your skills

### THE ARK BROUGHT INTO THE TEMPLE

1 Kings 8:1-21

Key Verse: 8:20

#### 1. The ark (1-13)

All the tribal chiefs of all the families of Israel came to Jerusalem to participate with Solomon in bringing the ark of the covenant of the Lord into the Most Holy Place in the Temple. God's people are a people of the Book. Only the Bible--the law of the Lord--was in the ark. The ark was brought to its place by the priests, and placed beneath the wings of the cherubim. The cherubim adorned the atonement cover or the mercy seat. When the ark was in place, the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

## 2. Solomon's blessing (14-21)

Solomon blessed the people. He announced that the temple was completed. Its completion was a fulfillment of God's promise to his people. God had promised David that his son would succeed him on the throne and build a temple for God's name's sake. He did not know that another descendant of David would fulfill this promise in a much greater way. Jesus would come and build a spiritual house (Jn 2:19-22; 1Pe 2:4,5).

Prayer: Lord, let your word and your promises be the foundation of my life. Fill me with your Spirit.

One Word: God keeps his promises

## SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

1 Kings 8:22-53

Key Verses: 8:27,30

### 1. Will God really dwell on earth? (22-27)

Solomon built a magnificent temple, but he realized that God is far bigger than any temple. God's Presence dwells in the temple, but God himself is so great that even the universe cannot contain him. The Creator is greater than all his created works.

### 2. When you hear, forgive (28-53)

The temple was the place where blood sacrifices were made for the forgiveness of sins. God is always ready to hear the prayers of repentant sinners--and all have sinned (46). He forgives those who seek his mercy and forgiveness. He allows hardship so that people will repent of sin and seek his face. God's Name is in his temple (29). God's name, "I AM" (Ex 3:14) means that he is the living, loving, Almighty God who is present to save those who confess his name. The temple points to Jesus. Anyone who comes to God through Jesus' blood and calls on his name will be forgiven.

Prayer: Lord, forgive my sins and the sins of my people. Turn our hearts to you and heal our land.

One Word: God forgives repentant sinners

## SO THAT ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH MAY KNOW

1 Kings 8:54-66

Key Verse: 8:60,61

### 1. Hearts fully committed to the Lord (54-61)

King Solomon rose from his knees and blessed the people. He praised God who keeps his promises. He asked that God might be with his people, and that he might turn their hearts to him so that they might walk according to his word. He reminded the people that God had world mission purpose for them (60). To walk in his blessing and fulfill his purpose, God's people must commit their hearts fully to him. He still wants his people to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex 19:6; 1Pe 2:9).

### 2. The dedication of the temple (62-66)

Forgiveness of sin is God's best blessing. Solomon and all Israel offered fellowship offerings--blood sacrifices to atone for sin and restore a right relationship between the holy God and sinful man. The grain offerings were for thanksgiving. After celebrating before the Lord, the people went home full of joy and thanksgiving. We should live with his blessing in our hearts and his praise on our lips.

Prayer: Lord, help me to commit my heart to you and to your world mission task and joyfully live under your blessing.

One Word: Leave God's house with a glad heart

## WALK BEFORE ME WITH INTEGRITY OF HEART

1 Kings 9:1-28

Key Verse: 9:4a

### 1. The Lord's promise renewed (1-9)

After the temple was consecrated, the Lord appeared to Solomon again. He accepted Solomon's prayer and promised to put his Name, his eyes and his heart in the temple, and to establish Solomon's throne forever. To claim these promises, Solomon and his descendants must walk before God with integrity of heart. They must obey God's laws--not follow their own sinful desires or the gods of the nations.

### 2. Solomon's activities (10-28)

Solomon was very busy. He formally fulfilled the temple obligations (25). But he lost the integrity of his heart. He shortchanged his father's friend Hiram. He made a profitable alliance

with the king of Egypt, married his daughter and built a palace for her. He engaged in an ambitious building program utilizing slave labor. He employed the Israelites as soldiers and supervisors of his building projects.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to lose the integrity of my heart when I become busy.

One Word: Walk before God

## SOLOMON'S WEALTH AND WISDOM

1 Kings 10:1-29

Key Verse: 10:9

### 1. The queen of Sheba's visit (1-13)

The queen of Sheba arrived in Jerusalem with many gifts for Solomon. She had heard about his wisdom and his relation to the name of the Lord, so she came to test him. She asked all the hard questions she could think of, and Solomon satisfied her abundantly. She praised God who loved Israel and put Solomon on the throne to use his wealth and wisdom to maintain justice and righteousness (9).

### 2. Solomon's splendor (14-29)

Solomon's wealth and power were symbolized by the 500 gold shields which he put in his palace, and by his magnificent throne. The whole world sought audience with Solomon, to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. But Solomon became proud. He did not follow God's word: He imported horses from Egypt and accumulated gold and had many wives (Dt 17:16-17). He sowed the seeds of corruption which later bore bitter fruit.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live by your word and be a channel of your blessings.

One Word: Use God's blessings for his glory

## LOVE GOD WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART

1 Kings 11:1-13

Key Verse: 11:9

### 1. Solomon loved many foreign women (1-8)

Solomon's marriages to many foreign women were probably made for political reasons. He was powerful and wise, and he probably thought that he could handle women with no problem. He ignored God's word, which warns God's people not to intermarry with godless people. Solomon



found that he was not as strong as he had thought he was. His wives turned his heart away from God. He built high places and altars for his wives so that they could worship their gods.

## 2. The Lord was angry with Solomon (9-13)

God wants our hearts. When Solomon lost his heart to his wives, he began to live a compromised life. He had much human wisdom, but he forgot that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that obedience to God's word is real wisdom. So God punished Israel for Solomon's sins.

Prayer: Lord, help me to have the true wisdom that comes from loving and fearing you with my whole heart. Help me to live according to your word.

One Word: Follow God with your whole heart

## THE LORD RAISED ADVERSARIES

1 Kings 11:14-43

Key Verse: 11:38

### 1. Hadad and Rezon (14-25)

Solomon's heart had turned from God to his wives and their idols. So the Lord raised up adversaries. One was Hadad the Edomite. When Joab struck down the men of Edom, Prince Hadad escaped to Egypt. After David's death, he returned to Edom, on Israel's southern border. His strong connection with Egypt made him a dangerous adversary. Another adversary was Rezon, a former officer of Hadadezer. When David had conquered Zobar, Rezon had escaped to Damascus and taken control of Aram (Syria) to the north of Israel.

### 2. Jeroboam son of Nebat (26-43)

The real enemy was within. It was spiritual adultery. God would punish Israel because Solomon had led them into sin. Jeroboam was an able young man and a natural leader. One day Ahijah the prophet met Jeroboam and promised him that if he obeyed God and kept his law, God would establish his dynasty over the 10 tribes of Israel as he had established David's kingdom.

Prayer: Lord, keep my heart from idols. Protect me from enemies within and without.

One Word: We need God's protection

## REHOBOAM AND JEROBOAM

1 Kings 12:1-33

Key Verse: 12:15

## 1. Lighten our load and we will serve you (1-24)

Rehoboam followed Solomon to the throne. Solomon had been an extensive builder. He had taxed the people heavily, and required them to do hard labor. So the whole assembly led by Jeroboam came and asked Rehoboam to lighten their load. Rehoboam consulted the elders and also his young contemporaries, and followed the advice of the latter. He was proud and wanted to show off his new power. God used this event to fulfill Ahijah's prophecy and make Jeroboam king of 10 tribes.

## 2. The man who made Israel to sin (25-33)

Jeroboam was a pragmatist. He didn't pray; he thought and calculated (26). He invented his own religion and used it as a political tool to keep the people from going to Jerusalem to worship. He made religion convenient; he made the priesthood democratic; he didn't forget to include the festivals, the "fun" part of religion. He told the people that they were worshiping the Lord God, but they all forgot that God must be worshiped in God's way.

Prayer: Lord, save us from easy-going pragmatism that corrupts the heart.

One Word: Worship God in God's way

A MAN OF GOD WARNS JEROBOAM

1 Kings 13:1-34

Key Verse: 13:8

## 1. A courageous young prophet (1-10)

Jeroboam was the king who made Israel sin. One day as he stood by the altar of his "invented" religion, a young prophet came and cried out against the altar. He prophesied about King Josiah (2Ki 23:15-20) of Judah who would defile and demolish that altar. Jeroboam stretched out his hand in anger and ordered the prophet seized, but the hand he had extended shriveled. The king changed his attitude; he asked for mercy. He invited the young prophet to dinner, but the young prophet obeyed God's word and refused.

## 2. The cost of compromise (11-34)

An old prophet was jealous of the young prophet. So he went after him, lied to him, and persuaded him to disobey God's word. The young man was tempted and he failed, but the truthfulness of God's word did not fail. The young prophet's death confirmed God's word. A Bible teacher should not compromise God's word--even with an angel. Regrets could not undo the mistake. Jeroboam's stubborn and unrepentant heart would eventually lead to the destruction of Israel.

Prayer: Lord, help me to teach your word without compromise. Purge from me a take-it-easy spirit.

One Word: Obey God's word; don't compromise

## BECAUSE OF JEROBOAM'S SIN

1 Kings 14:1-31

Key Verse: 14:16

### 1. Jeroboam's time of need (1-20)

Jeroboam could have been a king like David, but he turned his back on God. He set up idols and used religion for political purposes. But when his son got sick, he needed God. He disguised his wife and sent her to Ahijah the prophet. The prophet's eyes were blind, but his spiritual sight was sharp. He told Jeroboam's wife that their son would die--and that he was fortunate, for the rest of the family would die in poverty, pain and disgrace. Because of the sins of Jeroboam, God would give up Israel.

### 2. Rehoboam's bronze shields (21-31)

Rehoboam, whose mother was an Ammonite, led Judah to live like the Canaanites. So God sent Egypt to punish them. When Sishak carried off the temple treasures, including Solomon's gold shields, Rehoboam made bronze shields and his guards carried them, as though nothing had happened. They symbolized Rehoboam's falseness and pretense.

Prayer: Lord, help me to worship and serve you with my whole heart.

One Word: Don't take sin lightly

## A LAMP FOR DAVID'S SAKE

1 Kings 15:1-34

Key Verse: 15:4

### 1. Abijah and Asa, kings of Judah (15-24)

Abijah son of Rehoboam reigned only 3 years. In his own right he was not qualified to be king, but for David's sake, God put him on the throne of Judah, and raised up a son to follow him. Asa his son reigned 41 years. Asa tried to walk in the footsteps of David. He made mistakes, but his heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life--he did not compromise with idolatry. The lamp of David still burned in Jerusalem.

### 2. Nadab and Baasha of Israel (25-34)

Jeroboam's sin was planted in Israel. Nadab walked in the ways of his father, in the sin which he had caused Israel to commit. He continued to promote the worship of the idols at Bethel and Dan. Baasha assassinated him and wiped out his family, as Ahijah had prophesied (1Ki 14:9,10). But Baasha continued to walk in the sin of Jeroboam. Jeroboam's evil influence continued until it brought God's irrevocable judgment on Israel.

Prayer: Lord, help me to leave behind me seed of good influence, not evil seed.

One Word: Follow David, not Jeroboam

## THE SIN OF THE NORTHERN KINGS

1 Kings 16:1-34

Key Verse: 16:26

### 1. Idolatry, the seed of violence (1-14)

Jeroboam had set up two golden calves in convenient locations and had deliberately led Israel into idolatry. After him, there were frequent violent dynastic changes in Northern Israel, but each succeeding king continued this offensive policy. God sent Jehu to pronounce God's judgment on the house of Baasha. Zimri, a high ranking army officer, assassinated Elah son of Baasha when he was drunk in another man's house. Zimri became king, killed all of Baasha's family, and fulfilled Jehu's prophecy.

### 2. Provoking God's anger (15-34)

The Israelites did not want a murderer for a king, so they proclaimed Omri, commander of the army, king. Zimri committed suicide. Omri built Samaria and made it Israel's capital. He sinned more than all the kings before him, but his sins were minor compared to those of his son Ahab. Ahab married a woman who worshiped Baal. She hated truth and did her best to turn Israel from the worship of God.

Prayer: Lord, purge idols from my heart and from the heart of this nation.

One Word: An unfaithful heart provokes God's anger

## ELIJAH, A SERVANT OF GOD'S WORD

1 Kings 17:1-24

Key Verse: 17:14,24

### 1. Fed by the ravens (1-6)

In addition to following Jeroboam's sin, Ahab and Jezebel led Israel into Baal worship. In this darkest time of Israel's history, God raised up one man to teach his word. Elijah delivered God's message to Ahab: God would withhold rain from the land. God--not Baal--is the source of life and blessing. God's people must repent. Elijah's life was in danger, so God sent him to a secret place to hide. The ravens fed him, and he drank from a small brook.

## 2. The widow of Zarephath (7-24)

The brook dried up, so God sent Elijah to a Gentile widow. She and her son were living on the edge of survival. Elijah asked her to share her bread with him and gave her God's promise. She believed God's word and obeyed God's servant. Her flour jar and jug of oil did not fail until the famine ended. Later, when her son became ill and died, Elijah prayed for the boy, and his life returned to him. The widow confessed, "The word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."

Prayer: Lord, use us to teach your word. Help me to trust your almighty power in dark times.

One Word: A woman who believed God's word

## OBADIAH, A FAITHFUL MAN

1 Kings 18:1-15

Key Verse: 18:4

### 1. God's promise to send rain (1-2a)

For three years, according to the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah, no rain had fallen. Now, God sent Elijah to tell Ahab that he would send rain. During that time, Ahab had looked everywhere for Elijah, for he blamed him for the famine. He and Jezebel had continued their efforts to eradicate the worship of God from Israel.

### 2. One man of God (2b-15)

Obadiah was in charge of the king's palace. He was a devout believer, and a layman. He had risked his life to save the Lord's prophets from Jezebel. One day he was out scouting for grazing land, when he met Elijah. He couldn't believe his eyes. The king had looked everywhere for Elijah. Elijah told Obadiah to go and announce to Ahab, "Elijah is here." Obadiah was afraid that if he reported having met Elijah, Elijah would disappear and the king would kill Obadiah. But Obadiah obeyed.

Prayer: Lord, raise up faithful men like Obadiah who will risk their lives to serve you even in the worst of times.

One Word: There is a faithful remnant

## ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL

1 Kings 18:16-46

Key Verse: 18:21a

1. The troubler of Israel (16-19)

Ahab called Elijah the troubler of Israel. But Ahab was the real troubler of Israel. He had abandoned the Lord's commands to follow Baal. He had planted seeds of moral corruption and led Israel down the road of destruction.

2. If the Lord is God, follow him (20-21)

Elijah challenged the people to follow truth. If the God of the Bible is true, then we should worship and obey him. We have to choose between living in our own way or living God's way-- following his word. The man who wavers between 2 opinions is miserable, for his life has no direction.

3. The contest (22-46)

One man of God, Elijah, challenged the 400 prophets of Baal. When the prophets of Baal prayed, nothing happened. But when Elijah prayed to God, fire came down from heaven. The people believed; the prophets of Baal were executed; rain came and the famine ended.

Prayer: Lord, I want to choose the way of truth and follow you. Help me to obey your word.

One Word: If the Lord is God, follow him

## ELIJAH'S DEPRESSION AND GOD'S TREATMENT

1 Kings 19:1-18

Key Verse: 19:10-11a

1. I've had enough; take my life (1-5a)

Elijah had won the contest on Mount Carmel. He was so full of spirit that he out-ran Ahab's chariot to Jezreel. But Queen Jezebel was furious. She vowed to kill Elijah. He ran for his life-- all the way to Beersheba. He was exhausted and depressed. He prayed that he might die, then he fell asleep under a tree in desert.

2. God's gentle voice (5b-18)

God sent an angel to feed him. After resting and eating, he travelled to Mount Horeb, where God had made the covenant with Israel. Elijah told the Lord that he had zealously served him, but the Israelites had rejected the covenant and killed the prophets. Only he, Elijah, was left. God displayed his power, but spoke to Elijah in a gentle whisper. He said, "Go back." Elijah was to

anoint two men to be God's instruments of judgment, and his own successor, Elisha. Elijah was not alone; there were 7000 men who had not bowed to Baal.

Prayer: Lord, help me to hear your gentle voice as I study your word.

One Word: There is a faithful remnant

## THE CALL OF ELISHA

1 Kings 19:19-21

Key Verse: 19:20

### 1. Elisha, plowing for his father (19-20)

After returning from Mount Sinai, Elijah went first to find the man who was to be his successor, Elisha. Elisha was evidently from a wealthy family. When Elijah found him, he was plowing with 12 yoke of oxen, personally driving the 12th pair. Perhaps he was supervising the work of several servants. When Elijah threw his cloak around him, Elisha knew that God was calling him. The first thing that came to his mind was his parents.

### 2. Elisha's clear decision (21)

Elisha left his oxen and ran after Elijah. But one thing held him back. He asked if he might kiss his parents good-bye. Elijah did not compromise. He said, "Go on back. Just forget about it." So Elisha went back, but not to kiss his parents good-bye. He burned the plow and cooked the oxen and gave the meat to the people. He was no longer a family man. He was God's servant. He followed Elijah.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your calling, and for the reminder that I belong to you.

One Word: God's calling is costly

## GOD HELPS ISRAEL

1 Kings 20:1-43

Key Verse: 20:28

### 1. Ben-Hadad's first attack (1-22)

Ben-Hadad allied himself with 32 kings and attacked Samaria. Ahab was terrified, and prepared to surrender. But the terms of surrender were intolerable. Ben-Hadad bragged that he would turn Samaria into dust. God sent his prophet to encourage the Israelites and teach them battle strategy. The young officers led the attack and won a great victory.

## 2. Like 2 small flocks of goats (23-30)

Ben-Hadad mustered a huge army and attacked again, confident of victory because he believed that though God ruled the hills, he did not rule the valleys. The Israelites looked like 2 small flocks of goats, but God helped Israel, and they won.

## 3. Ahab's foolish pride (31-43)

Ahab was proud and calculating, so he spared Ben-Hadad. A prophet came and told him a story that made it clear that letting God's enemy go was a big mistake. Ahab was sullen, angry and unrepentant.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be humble, obedient and quick to repent after receiving your help.

One Word: If God is for us, who can be against us?

## NABOTH'S VINEYARD

1 Kings 21:1-29

Key Verse: 21:20,29

### 1. Jezebel has Naboth murdered (1-16)

One event epitomized the life of King Ahab. He wanted Naboth's vineyard because it was near his palace. But this land had been given to Naboth's forefathers by the Lord, so he would not sell it. Even kings in Israel were under God's law, but Jezebel was a lawless woman. When she saw Ahab sulking like a child, she ordered Naboth falsely accused and murdered. Then Ahab took possession of the vineyard.

### 2. Elijah finds Ahab (17-29)

God sent Elijah to Ahab to rebuke him and warn him about the consequences of his evil act. Because he sold himself to do evil, his whole family was cursed. Dogs would devour Queen Jezebel. Ahab regarded Elijah as an enemy, but he feared God's judgment and humbly repented in sackcloth, so God granted him a reprieve. God forgives even the worst sinner if he repents.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your justice and for your mercy. Help me to walk before you with a humble and repentant heart.

One Word: God wants sinners to repent

## THE KING WHO DID NOT LIKE THE TRUTH

1 Kings 22:1-28



Key Verse: 22:14

1. First seek the council of the Lord (1-7)

When Jehoshaphat king of Judah visited Ahab, Ahab invited him to become his ally and go to war with him against Aram. Jehoshaphat agreed to join him but he suggested that they first seek God's will and guidance. Ahab called in 400 prophets of Baal and asked their opinion. They all told him what he wanted to hear.

2. I must say what the Lord says (8-28)

Jehoshaphat wasn't satisfied. He asked Ahab to find a prophet of the Lord. Ahab didn't want to ask Micaiah because Micaiah always spoke the truth. Micaiah was bullied and threatened, so he tried to say what Ahab wanted him to say. But he was God's servant, and he could only deliver God's message: Israel would win the war, but Ahab would be killed. All the other prophets were full of a lying spirit. Because of his truthfulness, Micaiah was put on bread and water in jail.

Prayer: Lord, I want to know and follow the truth, even if it hurts.

One Word: A truthful prophet

## THE LAST DAYS OF TWO KINGS

1 Kings 22:29-53

Key Verse: 22:43

1. The dogs lick Ahab's blood (29-39)

Ahab tried to cheat death. He ignored the words of Micaiah and went to battle in disguise, so the enemy would not recognize him. He asked Jehoshaphat to wear his royal robes, and he did so. Jehoshaphat was not afraid because he trusted God. Ahab's plan seemed to work, but then a stray arrow found its way to a vital spot, and Ahab bled to death as he stood in his chariot. The blood was washed from his chariot at the pool where prostitutes bathed. No one can cheat death.

2. Jehoshaphat walked in God's ways (40-53)

Jehoshaphat was not perfect, but he tried to obey God's word, following the good example set by his father, Asa. God protected and blessed him. He rid the land of male shrine prostitutes. He should have gotten rid of the high places, but he didn't. By God's grace, he died with honor.

Prayer: Lord, help me to follow truth and live without fear all my days, for you are the one who gives life and takes it away.

One Word: Live according to God's truth

