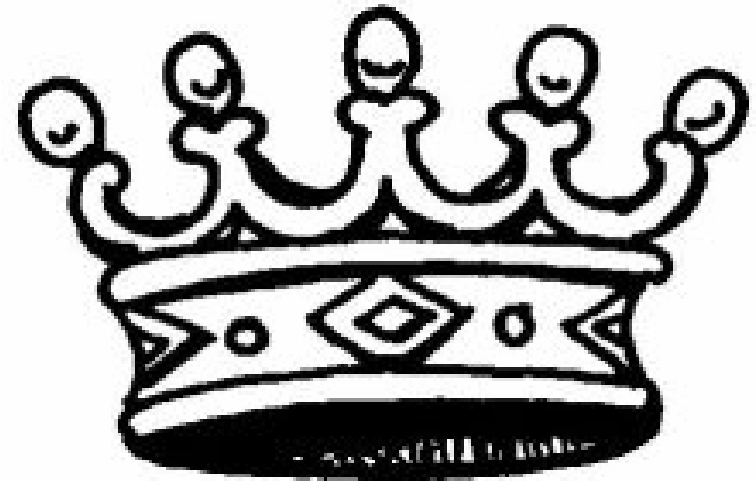
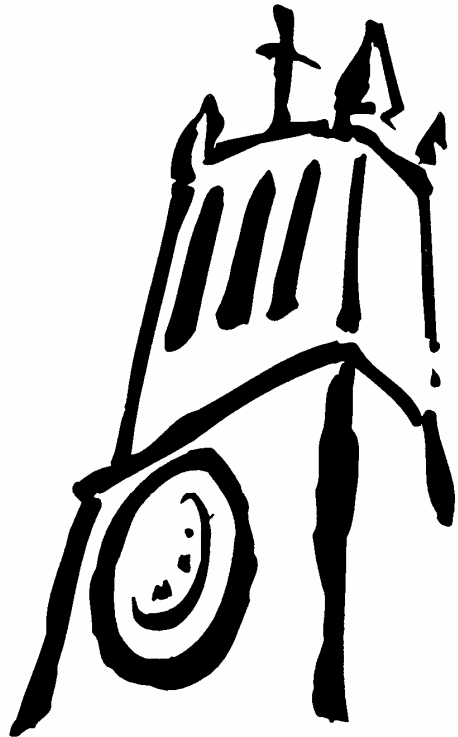


1 Kings



Holy Trinity Adelaide
87 North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000
t: 8213 7300
f: 8212 3611
office@trinity.asn.au
www.trinityadelaide.org.au

INTEGRATED BIBLE STUDY

How to the get best value out of these studies...

Welcome to a new series of Old Testament studies focused on the book of 1 Kings.

If you're using these Guides in a Small Group, it is vital that you have done preparatory work *before* you get to your meeting. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but to the other members of your group.

If you're doing these studies individually, make sure you let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

If you're after good commentaries or resources to complement your looking into the bible, speak to your Small Group Leader or one of the staff, and we'll try to be as helpful as possible. Most people aren't going to spend lots of dollars on theological works, so we're constantly on the look out for good quality titles that will result in money well spent.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with **prayer**, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

B) vv29-40

- i. How is God's word upheld? (cf. v38, 21:19)
- ii. What glimpse do we have of God's kingdom in Jehosaphat's reign?
- iii. What sort of ending are we given? (22:51-53) What hope do we have for the monarchy in Israel?

4. God's people were lead by an evil King, evil Queen, deceived by evil spirits, attacked by enemies both external and internal. And yet God still brought about his plans.
What does it mean to pray, 'Deliver us from evil?'

Solomon in his glory, Elijah on Mt Carmel - its all here in the first book of Kings. The books of 1 and 2 Kings follow straight on chronologically from the end of the books of Samuel. Just to recap, the books of Samuel described how Israel came to be ruled by Kings in the first place. At the start of 1 Samuel, Israel was still in the period of the Judges, and was a loose confederation of neighboring tribes. By the end of 2 Samuel, the monarchy was firmly established, ruled over by the elderly King David, chosen by God. By the time we come to 1 Kings, the borders of Israel are secured, and its enemies are defeated, and the kingdom is vast (cf. 1 Kings 4:21, Gen 15:18). Yet one thing remains outstanding God does not yet dwell with his people - the golden age is still yet to arrive. Furthermore, Samuel's words of prophesy about Israel's venture into kingship were ominous (1 Samuel 8) - Israel's desire to have a king was a blatant rejection of God and would result in hardship and oppression. What would the future hold for God's people? And what do we learn about true leadership? About ourselves? And about the ultimate King who came to reign - and who still reigns - from this line of Kings?

Whilst the two books of Kings belong together, the first book describes the kingdom of God on earth in its most glorious state under Solomon, and then the tussle for loyalty in a divided kingdom, as God fights for the hearts of a nation committed to sin through his prophets. From this we learn much about God's ultimate plan for his people, and of God's unyielding commitment in the face of faithlessness. It is a gripping, and sobering read. The second book of Kings - which we hope (God willing!) to cover next year - brings us to the inevitable crash from the trajectory that the first book launches us on.

Each of these studies will require you to read several chapters of the bible - but don't be put off - the reading is gripping, intriguing, and your reading will reap rewards. I have limited the number of questions per chapter to take account of the time required to read. May the holy and awesome God of 1 Kings teach us all to walk humbly in fear of, and reverence for him.

Chris Jolliffe - July 2006

1 Kings 1-4

1. Think for a moment. If God was to establish heaven on earth, what would he need to do?

Jesus Christ taught us to pray, 'Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done'. The image of God's kingdom which his disciples would have had in their minds is the image of Solomon's kingdom, which comes into being in 1 Kings 1-4. In terms of the physical realisation of God's plans for his people, this was the high point in all of the Old Testament. Here was the Kingdom of God (foreshadowed in the physical terms of the Son of David ruling God's people from God's promised land) coming into being. But, as you can imagine, for this to happen according to God's will, several obstacles needed to be first overcome for starters there had been no precedent in Israel's history of a succession in the monarchy, creating room for a power struggle between David's sons.

2. Read 1 Kings 1.

- A) A failed attempt. The opening scenes here recall ominous moments from the past, which lead to the fall of David and of his house*. David's son, Adonijah is positioning himself for the throne. How much of this is David's own fault? (v6, 2Sam 12:10).
- B) For Bathsheba and Solomon, Adonijah's coup attempt - if successful - was most likely fatal for them (v12). What differences are there in the way the news of Solomon's intended reign is conveyed? (v13,17, 30)

- C) What is the real problem?

- D) Who rules Israel with justice?

3. Read 1 Kings 22: *hunger for lies*

- A) vv1-28: *the word of the true prophet*

- i. Someone in the group, summarise the setting (vv1-12)

- ii. What pressure would Micaiah have been under?

- iii. What perspective do we get of the heavenly court, and of God's sovereign hand over even false prophets?

* 1 Kings 1:1-2 - David's weakness for beautiful women - cf. 2 Samuel 11 (David and Bathsheba); 1 Kings 1:5-6 - Adonijah, David's son, is behaving like his older brother Absalom had done, who led a conspiracy and coup against David and had his father ejected from Jerusalem before meeting a bloody end - 2 Samuel 15:1.

ii. What do you make of Ahab's sudden change of heart towards Ben-Hadad?

C) vv35-43

i. Who rules Israel?

ii. Why this policy? (cf. Gen 12:3)

2. Read 1 Kings 21: *murder and greed*

A) How are Ahab, Jezebel and Naboth characterized?

B) What did Ahab know about Jezebel's evil design? (v15, 19).

C) Who has made Solomon King? How is Solomon's reign first described?

3. Read 1 Kings 2: Solomon's rule and kingdom established.

A) From verses 1-12, what must Solomon do to establish his rule?

B) What could account for Solomon's treatment of Adonijah, after the mercy showed at the end of chapter 1? (cf. 1:1-4, 1 Samuel 12:11,16:21-22).

C) How does Solomon establish his kingdom? (2:5-6, 28-35; 2:8-9, 36-46)

4. Read 1 Kings 3: Wisdom from God

A) What strengths and chinks begin to appear in Solomon's reign? vv1-3 (cf. Exodus 34:15-16, Deut 17:14-20)

- B) What does Solomon's request tell us about his understanding of himself? of God? What does God's answer tell us about Solomon, and about God?
- C) What is wise about Solomon's response to the 'prostitutes-dead-baby-dilemma'?

5. Read 1 Kings 4: Applied wisdom

- A) What seems the point of verses 1-19? (cf. 1 Samuel 8:11-18).
- B) What is the assessment of life in Solomon's kingdom for your average Israelite?
- C) Get out an atlas! How does Solomon's reign fulfill God's promise to Abraham? (1 Kings 4:21, Gen 15:18).

1 Kings 20-22

The first book of Kings began with the Lord God making Solomon the wise and wealthy king over Israel in Israel's 'golden age'. How things have changed! The kingdom quickly divided. Israel and Judah quickly turned from God to the worship of idols. Yet God's steadfast commitment to his people was seen in the ministry of Elijah, whom God sent to turn the hearts of his people back to him. But still, all is not well. The country is only just recovering from a crippling famine. Evil king Ahab still rules Israel, and Elijah (and now Elisha) are odious to Jezebel, Ahab's wife. Moreover, there is now external threat, from the King of Aram.

1. Read 1 Kings 20: *external threat, internal compromise*

A) vv1-25

i. What does Ahab truly value? (v1-7)

ii. What does God truly value? (v13)

iii. Where is the power?

B) vv26-34

i. How is this situation similar to what happened on Mt Carmel? (18:24, 20:28)

- B) Read Exodus 33:19-23. How does God reveal himself?*
- C) How is God's answer an answer for Elijah?

- D) Chapter 4 ends with a summary statement of Solomon's wisdom, and its effects. What impresses you here, and what does it teach you about the wisdom of God's anointed King?

Think for a moment - what here have you learnt about God and his word?

5. From this picture of the Kingdom of God (foreshadowed in the Old Testament), what do you now think Jesus meant when he instructed us to pray 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done'?

PRAY!

Divide into two's or three's, and share what truth God has impressed upon you. How does this challenge you personally? Pray for one another, and tell one another again what is so great about God.

*note: the 'gentle whisper' that God reveals himself to Elijah in is literally translated a 'silence', or a 'nothing', followed by a clear word - v13

Kings 5-8

In chapters 1-4 we saw how the Lord God established the throne and the rule of Solomon. Chapters 5-8 are now crucially important for telling us what made the Kingdom of Solomon different to all the other surrounding kingdoms, and what made the Kingdom of Solomon a working model of the Kingdom of God on earth. In Jesus Christ, we are part of the Kingdom of God which transcends physical geography and earthly rule - yet, which has impact on our world - 'This then is how you should pray.... May your Kingdom come, May your will be done *on earth as it is in heaven.*' Here, in 1 Kings 5-8 is an earthly picture of the kingdom that would come. These chapters tell us what makes the Kingdom of God different to any other kingdom the world can offer.

So ... Think for a moment, and briefly share your thoughts. What do you imagine heaven will be like? (Will it be physical? What will you do there? What will you see there? How will it be the same / different to kingdoms/nations on earth?)

1. Read 1 Kings 5

- A) How is what happens here a fulfillment of God's earlier promise? (2 Samuel 7:1-13)
- B) Theologically, Solomon's wisdom is linked with the building of the temple (vv. 7,12). How is Hiram's help in building the temple an anticipation of nations coming to God (cf. 4:34, Matt 2:1-12)?

2. Read 1 Kings 18

- A) How do verses 1-15 prepare us for a showdown? What is at stake?
- B) What is the contest for? (v21, 30-32, 36-37)
- C) Is Elijah's taunting of Baal appropriate for a prophet?
- D) What, exactly, does God demonstrate? how?
- E) What are the inevitable outcomes? (for the people of Israel? for the prophets of Baal? for Ahab?)

3. Read 1 Kings 19

- A) What parallels do you see between Elijah (the prophet of God's word), Moses (the greatest prophet - Deut 34:10, Ex 3:1, 17:6), and Jesus (the word became flesh)? cf. Matt 4:1-11? What is the point of this?

1 Kings 17-19

The previous chapters witnessed an unprecedented escalation in evil during the reign of Ahab. ("Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him." 1 Kings 16:33). But with chapter 17 comes a change in narration, and a new beginning.

Think back ... what new beginnings can you recall God bringing? What has been at stake?

1. Read 1 Kings 17

- A) Baal was the Canaanite fertility god, worshipped because it was thought Baal was in control of the weather (the lightning and the rain). What does God accomplish through Elijah's short pronouncement? How does God show himself to be the true God of Israel?
- B) Elijah brings God's powerful word to bear in Israel once again. In his absence, he causes two famines. Of what?
- C) If there is a famine of God's word in Israel, what is happening in Zarepath?

2. Read 1 Kings 6, noting the space given to the interior vs. exterior of the temple.

- A) v1 marks out a new era in God's dealing with his people (paralleled with the Exodus from Egypt). This is a highly significant event. The average Israelite would never see the inside of the temple, but its description is lavish. Why are such details given (vv14-28), and what is their impact?
- B) Verses 11-13 seem an intrusion in the description of the temple. What is their contribution to our understanding of the role the King and that of the temple?

3. Read 1 Kings 7

- A) Although the palace took longer to build than the temple, what building receives the most attention? What point is being made about the ruler of Israel? What point is being made about government and worship?
- B) What important points do the names of the temple pillars tell us? (cf. NIV footnote, v21).

- C) Why the delight in detail? (Is God just tedious? Or is there something else to be appreciated?)

4. By the end of chapter 7, the temple has been completed and fitted out, ready for use. But what is the theological importance of all this work, and of the place of the temple in Solomon's kingdom? Chapter 8 is the most important chapter of this section, for it answers this crucial question. Read 1 Kings 8

- A) What importance does Solomon and the LORD God himself attach to the temple (vv1-13)?
- B) For the second time in this section (cf. 5:3-5), we are reminded through Solomon of God's promise to David (in 2 Samuel 7). What is the point of this second reminder? (v14-21)
- C) Now, for a third time in vv22-53, Solomon speaks of this promise - although this time to the LORD God himself, not to Hiram, or to the assembly of Israel! (Don't be put off by the length of this prayer - take the time to read it carefully). What are the chief things that Solomon asks God for in relation to the temple? List them out:

v25-26

v27-30

- C) Read verses 21-31. How the mighty have fallen! What - aside from treaties with Egypt - has also been overturned? (cf. v27, 30).

4. Read 1 Kings 15-16

- A) These chapters summarise the respective reigns of Israelite and Judean kings, of the once united 12 tribes of Israel. Most - like Abijah, Nabad, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord, walking in the ways of their fathers, some meeting grizzly ends. Why? (15:29-30, 15:34-16:4,7, 11-12, 19; cf. 2 Sam 12:10).

- B) Who stands out as righteous? (15:5, 11-14)

- C) In what ways do we see an escalation of sin? (16:25-26, 30-33). Who prevails? (16:34).

5. A) What has God told us about why human kingdoms fail?

- B) What must be present for God's eternal kingdom to reign?

- C) Pray the Lord's Prayer, and mean it!

2. Read 1 Kings 13
- v33-34
- A) In view of what happened the last time when Israel made golden calves and worshipped them, and of God's endorsement of the temple in Jerusalem, Jeroboam's sin in chapter 12 is astounding (Exodus 32). How does God respond this time? What does it teach you about him?
- v35-36
- v37-40
- v41-43
- B) Next to Jeroboam's sin, the sin of the prophet seems so insignificant, and the judgment so high. Why do you think the judgment was so harsh? What point is being made about the office of prophet over king? Read chapter 14 to see this point!
- v44-45
- v46-51
- v52-53
3. Read 1 Kings 14
- What is to be the main significance of the temple?
- A) Who rules Israel?
- B) Why this judgment on Jeroboam?
- D) What does Solomon's concluding blessing teach us?

5. How was Solomon's Kingdom here made the Kingdom of God on earth? Who ruled it, and how? What might this teach us about the Kingdom of God fulfilled for us in the Lord Jesus Christ, and opened for us by him? (cf. Rev 21:22-27).

What does it mean to pray for God's kingdom to come, and his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven?

Pray this prayer!

1 Kings 12-16

The picture of the Kingdom of God we saw under Solomon had indeed been glorious - the high point of Old Testament hopes thus far. But alas! ... it would be so short lived!

Think back over what you know of history. What have been some of the reasons for kingdoms and empires falling?

1. Read 1 Kings 12

We recall from 1 Kings 11:26-40 that Jeroboam had been one of Solomon's officials in charge of the conscripted labour, but that God had given word that Solomon's kingdom would be divided, and ten of the twelve tribes given to Jeroboam. Jeroboam had fled to Egypt when Solomon had tried to kill him (anticipating Herod's attempted assassination of Jesus in Matt 2:13f!).

- A) How is Rehoboam's lack of wisdom strangely fitting? (12:15)
- B) 'A kingdom divided against itself will not stand' (Lk 11:17). Where is God's mercy in all of this?

- D) Despite his sin with Bathsheba (like father, like son!), what was David's abiding legacy? (vv. 12, 32, 34)

4. What does this chapter say about the power and glory of God's Kingdom? Where does God point us?

1 Kings 9-11

Where do you see power and glory that attracts you?

One later addition to the Lord's prayer made in the early church was a conclusion to the prayer Jesus taught his disciples:
'For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.'

Jesus had not said these words, but Christians say them because they are a fitting conclusion to his prayer, reminding us that ultimate glory and power lies with the Kingdom of God, and not of man. Sometimes this can be hard to believe. That's where these chapters are helpful! For here is a physical, historical illustration of God's kingdom in Jesus Christ, foreshadowed here under King Solomon.

1. Read chapter 9

- A) In God's first appearing to Solomon, he gave Solomon the gift of unprecedented wisdom to rule. Now - after the temple has finally been completed and dedicated and has been filled with the glory of the LORD such that God is now dwelling with his people - the LORD God appears to Solomon again. What is surprising about what the LORD says? How important is the temple?

B) What is at stake in abandoning the LORD? (cf. Hebrews 2:1-3, 3:12-13, 6:1-8, 10:26-31, 12:25-29)

C) What other picture of Solomon do we gain here? Does the biblical writer present Solomon favorably?

2. Read chapter 10

A) The descriptions of Solomon's wealth and wisdom through the testimony of the Queen of Sheba (vv. 6-9), and the narrator (vv23-25) are lavish. How are we to view the Kingdom of God under King Solomon?

B) How does this story anticipate God's plan for the Gentile nations? (Psalm 72:8-11,15; Isaiah 60:5-6; Matt 2:1-12)

C) What warning does Jesus give from this story of the Queen of Sheba? (Matthew 12:42)

D) What picture does this story give us of the new Jerusalem? (Revelation 21:18-27)

3. Read chapter 11

A wise minister's wife once said to me to be aware of 3 things which derail men: Gold, Glory and Girls. She said, 'Which will it be for you?' I have not forgotten her words! The height of Solomon's splendor in chapter 10 quickly dissolves against Solomon's glaring weakness in chapter 11, and the implications for his kingdom.

A) How has this been anticipated already? (9:6; 11:2, 2 Samuel 11)

B) What really was Solomon's sin? (vv1-10) Is this your own?

C) Who is responsible for Solomon's demise? (vv11-40)