



undivided the book of kings

Don't keep up with the neighbours

It's tempting to keep up with the neighbours, to do the things they do. And once upon a time God's people wanted to be just like those around them...

1 Samuel 8:1-22

The elders of Israel gathered together and said to Samuel, "Appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

Even though Israel had God as their king they desired a human king, just like all the rest. Being the gentleman that he is, God gave them what they asked for.

And it went swimmingly well. For about two years. What followed was a line of about 40 kings. And Kings details who these men were, how they ruled and how the country fared. Some were good, others were terrible.

Though his people had rejected him, God remained faithful. Even more so, God promised to send a king who would rule justly and forever. Surprisingly, this king would not just be another royal official but God's own son...

2 Samuel 7:13-14

"I will establish his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he will be my son."

No surprise God's people longed for this king. And then one night some strange men appeared. And the reason why we celebrate Christmas is because the king is here...

Matthew 2:1-2

Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

The Magi knew that God's promised king had arrived. And as this child grew to be a man, by his remarkable deeds, many others agreed.

But then he died. Perhaps he wasn't the king?

Three days later God raised Jesus from the dead. He is God's promised forever king. And unlike the kings of old he was undivided to God.

As you go through these studies I hope you may be more like him. And know that he will remain undivided towards you.

Don't roll your eyes

Kings is a history book. I know that may cause you to roll your eyes and drag you back to boring lessons in high school. But history is vital.

When you delve into the past you discover that people haven't changed. The dumb things they did in the past we still do. The good they did we can aspire to do. History shows that human nature hasn't changed.

History demonstrates God hasn't changed either. Whilst the faithfulness of God's people can be patchy, the past shows God's undivided love for us. And that's a great reason to read and study history.

A king like no other 1 Kings 1-2

I will follow

Who do people follow today?

In what ways are kings, leaders, authority figures a good and bad thing?

Why do people say, "Go your own way...?"

Read 1 Samuel 8

How does God feel?

Why do the people still want a king even though Saul lists how bad an idea it is?

Why did God give his people what they want?

Read 2 Samuel 7

List all the things God tells Nathan about this king.

How would the people have responded hearing about this? How does David respond?

Read 1 Kings 1:1-27

Eye opening stuff from the first verse. Describe the power struggles taking place as David nears death.

How is this typical of power struggles we see in politics, businesses and families today?

Compare 1:28-35 with 1:37, 47

What have David's assistants added to what he said about Solomon's reign. Why is David measured and his assistants ambitious? Is this a bad thing?

Read 1 Kings 1:38-53

How popular is David's choice of Solomon to succeed him? What is Adonijah afraid of?

Have you ever known someone to backtrack like this?

Read 1 Kings 2:1-12

Describe David's charge to Solomon. What is important to him?

Why does the author choose David's last words to be "blood"? Do they have an unfavourable view of David's reign and/or kingship in general?

Skim through 1 Kings 2:13-46

How is Solomon's kingdom firmly established? How is this typical of politics today?

How would you describe kingship thus far in Kings?

Read Matthew 2

Why is Herod disturbed? How is his response unsurprising?

Read John 6:1-15

Why didn't Jesus go with the crowds? What does this say about his view of kingship?

Skim through Mark 15:1-32

What title is used of Jesus throughout his trial and crucifixion? How is it used by...

Pilate 15:1-15

The soldiers 15:16-20

The people passing by 15:25-30

The religious rulers 15:31-32

Read Philippians 2:1-11

Describe Jesus in terms of...

What he did

Where he is

What he will do

How shall we live with Jesus as our king?

Read Colossians 3:1-16

Where have we been raised to? What should we be focusing our hearts on? What areas of our life should Jesus' reign over?

Read Hebrews 1:1-14

Why does the author make the point that Jesus is *seated*?

What sort of king is Jesus?

Revelation 5:1-10

What is on the throne? What does this say about God's idea of kingship?

True riches 1 Kings 3-10

Wisdom is more valuable than jewels

What is the most valuable thing you own?

Name some things that are highly valued in our world today? Have these things changed over the years?

Google, "lottery winning losers". Why do some lose all that they've won?

A study once found that people would rather work for success than take a pill that would bring it to them instantly. Why do you think that is?

Skim through Job 28

What is more valuable than jewels and why?

How does this help Job in his dire situation?

Skim through 1 Kings 3

Name the dumb things Solomon does. List the good things he does.

Is this as good as it gets with our leaders?

Read 1 Kings 4:20-25

How good is life under Solomon?

Read 1 Kings 5:13-18

How does this fulfil Samuel's warnings about kingship?

Skim through 1 Kings 6 noting how magnificent the Temple is. Now read 1 Kings 7:1

What is the author saying about Solomon's reign?

How is this typical of empire building companies and politicians today?

Read 1 Kings 8:22-51

How central will the Temple become in the life of God's people?

Can you imagine the heartbreak when it is burnt to the ground when God's people are carted off to exile?

Read 1 Kings 9:6-9

What threatens the Temple?

Skim through 1 Kings 10

Is Solomon living in excess or is he just successful? Is he sowing the seeds of his downfall?

Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

Solomon is believed to be the author of this book or someone is writing as a critique of his kingship. Either way, how do they feel about all their achievements?

Is his answer surprising? What does this say about wealth and stuff?

Read Matthew 6:28-34

What is Jesus saying about Solomon's reign? What should we be seeking?

Read Matthew 6:38-42

Nineveh listened to Jonah. The Queen of the South listened to Solomon. Why should the people of Jesus' day listen to him?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Why is the cross seen as foolish and wise?

What does it mean that Jesus has become for us wisdom from God? How does one put that into practice?

Read Ephesians 1:8

What does it mean that we have been lavished with all wisdom?

Read James 1:5 and 3:13-18

In what ways are we meant to be like Solomon?

What does the wise life look like?

Faithful 1 Kings 11

God wants your heart

What damage does infidelity do to relationships?

When is "Follow your heart not your head" a good thing?

Discuss, "Judgment is not God's final word. Mercy is."

What do some people treasure?

Search the Bible for the word, "heart". Note how many times it occurs. What does this say about how important our hearts are to God?

Read 1 Kings 11:1-13

How does the author describe what Solomon was doing? How does God feel?

What part of the body is mentioned again and again? How important is that we guard it?

How will God punish Solomon? How will God show mercy?

Read 1 Kings 11:14 and 23

Who is fighting against God's people?

What does this say about God's sovereignty and how he punishes?

Read 1 Kings 11:26-40

Why does Solomon want Jeroboam dead? Does he foolishly think he can avert God's will?

Read 1 Kings 11:41-43

Solomon's reign is summed up in three short sentences. What is the author saying about his kingship?

How can this help us view those who rule today?

Read Matthew 6:19-21

What should we be treasuring?

Read Matthew 22:34-40

How full on does Jesus call us to love God?

Why such incredible fidelity?

Read John 6:14-15

Why does Jesus withdraw? What does this show about his faithfulness to God's plan?

Read John 18:33-19:30

What sort of king is Jesus?

How would you describe Jesus' faithfulness to God?

Read 2 Corinthians 1:18-22 and Hebrews 10:19-25

How faithful is God to us? What has God done to our hearts?

How should we live in response?

Read Ephesians 1:19

How can a heart have eyes? What awaits us?

Read Colossians 3:1

Where should we set our hearts? What does this look like day to day?

Read Hebrews 3:12

How do we avoid having a heart that turns away from God?

Read 1 John 3:16-21

Like Solomon, our hearts often fail us. But how can our hearts find rest?

Unity 1 Kings 12-14

Nothing makes God happier than seeing his people united

What causes divisions within a business, family, neighbourhood or church?

Is division inevitable?

How does one foster unity? How do we overcome division?

Read 1 Kings 12

What sort of a king is Rehoboam?

What chain of events did he set in motion?

What does God compel his people to do? Do they really obey what he ordered?

What sin does Jeroboam institute?

How many generations has it taken for God's people to turn away from him?

How important is it to have godly people at the helm of God's people?

Read 1 Kings 13

Why did God heal Jeroboam and not strike him down?

Why didn't the man of God go home with Jeroboam?

Why did the "certain old prophet" lie to the man of God? Aren't they supposed to be on the same team?

Look back over the chapter. Note the miracle that happened and the dire promises that came true. Given all that happened why didn't Jeroboam change his ways?

Read 1 Kings 14:1-21

Why do people try to fool God?

How would you describe what God will do to Jeroboam and his house?

This is not the first time a current king is compared to David. Why is he set up as the ideal? Wasn't David just as bad?

Compare Leviticus 20:22-28 with 1 Kings 14:21-30

How did God's people become like all the rest? How does God feel?

Once upon a time, Solomon's treasures were described at length. Here they're carried off in one short sentence. What does this say about Solomon's work and how God feels about the Temple?

What is happening between the two "kings" (v30)?

Why is Rehoboam's mum's nationality mentioned twice (v21, 31)? What does this say about how our hearts can be influenced?

Read Psalm 133

David wrote this Psalm. Would he be turning in grave knowing how his brothers were living?

John 17:20-23

Jesus prays for us. What *doesn't* he pray for?

What should motivate us to be united?

Read Romans 12:3-16

List all the things we ought to be doing to ensure that we stay as one?

Ephesians 4:1-6

The words "make every effort" is the one Greek word which means "speed". So a better translation is "Eagerly keep the unity..." or more bluntly, "Use speed to keep the unity..."

Why the urgency to be unified?

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11

How should we be living in light of the end of all things?

Read 1 John 4:7-12

What should be our motivator to love one another?

Choose 1 Kings 15-18

Choose this day to follow God

Where are the hardest places for you to follow Jesus?

How do you go about making right decisions for God?

Read Deuteronomy 31:19-20

What does it mean for God's people to choose life?

Read 1 Kings 15:1-6

How does David's adultery hang over his people like a dark cloud?

Who's in charge?

Read 1 Kings 15:7-15

What good does Asa do? What didn't he do? And why does the author state that he was fully committed to the Lord?

Read 1 Kings 15:25-32

What does it mean that he "walked in the ways of his father"? How is he different to Asa?

How long does it sometimes take for God's word come true (v29)?

Read 1 Kings 16:1-7

What does the word of the Lord do? How seriously should God's people take his word?

This is the not first time the phrase "are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings?" has occurred. What warning is the author trying to convey to his readers?

Skim through 1 Kings 16:8-28

How would you describe God's people? Is it any surprise Samuel was heartbroken when they asked him for a king?

Read 1 Kings 16:29-34

It's really saying something that Ahab worse than all the rest. What did he do that provoked the Lord?

Read 1 Kings 17

How would you describe Elijah?

Why does God single out a foreign widow with food and water during the drought?

Read Luke 4:24-30

How does the story of Elijah and the widow relate to Jesus'?

Read 1 Kings 18:1-15

Describe Obadiah.

What happened to the prophets? What does this say about what God promises his people?

Read 1 Kings 18:16-40

How would you describe Elijah?

Why do the people say nothing?

How long do the prophets of Baal keep up their routine? Is it sad or funny?

Why does Elijah overdo the water on the altar?

Do you think God accepts his people's one sentence repentance? Is that all it takes to turn back to God?

God could've ended the drought as quick as he sent fire to burn up the altar. Why does he make Elijah wait?

Is Elijah downcast? If so, why is he confident given what God has just demonstrated?

Read Romans 7:15-25

How hard is it to choose what is good?

Read Romans 8:1-11

Who should we live according to?

Read Colossians 3:5-11

Describe these phrases...

Put to death

Rid yourself

Put on the new self

How serious ought we to be in choosing what God wants?

Trust 1 Kings 19-2 Kings 3

When the going gets tough the tough trust God

Read 1 Kings 19:1-9

Why does Elijah run? Has he lost his confidence in the Lord?

How does Elijah echo Jonah (see Jonah 4)?

Read 1 Kings 19:9-18

What does Elijah say that is right? What does he get wrong?

Why does God speak to Elijah in a gentle whisper?

Imagine you are one of the 7 000 in Israel. What pressure would there be "kiss Baal"?

Read 1 Kings 19:19-21

What does Elisha give up to follow Elijah?

Read 1 Kings 20:1-12

How would you describe King Ahab?

Read 1 Kings 20:13-43

There are battles and lots of death in this section. All of it is designed for Ahab to "know the Lord" (v13, 28). But by the end of it all do you think he's learnt anything?

Read 1 Kings 21:1-14

This is one of the saddest stories in the Bible. Why are these brutal stories in scripture?

Read 1 Kings 21:15-28

Why does Ahab tear his clothes? Is he sorry for what he's done or just sad about what will happen to him?

Has God forgiven Ahab?

Read 1 Kings 22:1-28

How does the king of Israel feel about Micaiah?

What does this say about the role of prophets and prophecy? How long can a prophecy take to be fulfilled?

Read 1 Kings 22:41-44

What does the author mean when he writes "So and so did right in the eyes of the Lord, however..."? Why don't these "good" kings totally commit to the ways of the Lord?

Sometimes in our faith we get things right, sometimes we don't. Some sins we don't do, some we entertain. In what ways are we similar to these kings?

Read 1 Kings 22:51-53

Compare this to the beginning of 1 Kings. Fill in the following table.

	David	Solomon	Ahaziah
How did they walk?			
Who did they serve?			
How did God feel about them?			

How would you describe the downfall of God's people? What has caused this to happen?

Read Matthew 4:1-11

How does Jesus echo Elijah's experience in the wilderness?

What does Jesus rely on? How does his example help us keep trusting God?

Read John 14:1-4

Why should we trust in him?

Read Matthew 26:36-44

How determined is Jesus to do God's will?

Read Luke 23:44-46

Who does Jesus trust? How can his example help us to keep trusting God?

Read Revelation 21:5

Why are these words trustworthy and true?

The nations 2 Kings 4-6

God's plans are for the world

If you could go anywhere in the world where would it be? Are there any countries that scare you? Places you wouldn't visit?

How do Aussies go at welcoming and befriending people from other parts of the world?

Discuss, "Churches shouldn't send missos because they ruin the cultures of other countries..."

Skim through 2 Kings 4

What is the purpose of these miracles? Who do they remind you of?

Elijah is shown great hospitality by a foreign woman, the Shunammite. Why do you think he is shown such favour?

Read 2 Kings 5

Namaan is a Syrian king. Why does Elisha help this foreigner?

Why is Naaman infuriated? Have you ever felt the same when God seems to be taking his time? Or not doing things your way?

How did Naaman respond once he was healed?

How can the church have a positive impact on the nations?

Read 2 Kings 6:1-7

Why the young man's distress? What does this show about Elisha's concern for him?

Read 2 Kings 6:8-23

Why didn't Elisha ask God to smite their enemies with say, death?

Why does Elisha march the soldiers into enemy territory (Samaria)?

Why doesn't Elisha let the king of Samaria kill these soldiers, that is, their enemies?

Read Luke 6:26-36

In what ways does Jesus echo Elisha?

Read Luke 23:32-43

How did Jesus show love for his enemies?

See if you can remember the foreigners Jesus interacted with

How do you think Jesus' countrymen would've responded to how he related with these people?

How should we respond to people who are not like us?

Read Matthew 28:20

In what ways do we continue Elisha's and Jesus' ministry?

How can we reach the world without wrecking it?

Seek and ye shall find 2 Kings 7-22

The God who is there

Someone once said, "If you feel that God is far from you, guess who moved?" What do you think they meant?

How can Christians go off the rails? How do you stay on track?

Discuss, "A Bible that is falling apart is a sign that its owner isn't."

Summary

These chapters are a roll call of Israel and Judah's kings. There are over 20 of them. Of these, only a handful are good. The vast majority of them "do evil in the eyes of the Lord."

If most of these kings are awful what does this say about the people's request for a king?

God knew how this would pan out. So why did God give his people what they wanted?

Read 2 Kings 8:16-19

Why is God faithful?

Read 2 Kings 8:20-22

Why did Edom set up its own king?

With an Edomite king this means that there are three kings over God's people. How on earth did it come to this?

What causes divisions in a church? How can they be avoided? When cracks appear how should they be dealt with?

Read 9:1-13

God compels Jehu to kill his enemies. What does this say about how God feels about evil?

Should we feel uncomfortable with this portrayal of God?

Discover

What did these kings do that was evil in the eyes of the Lord...

Jehoram do 2 Kings 8:18

Jehoahaz do 2 Kings 13:1-2

Ahaz 2 Kings 16:1-4

Manasseh 2 Kings 21:1-9

How does God feel about what these kings did? Why should we shun evil?

What did these kings do that were good and bad...

Amaziah 2 Kings 14:3-4

Azariah 2 Kings 15:3-4

Jotham 2 Kings 15:34-35

Why is compromise such a dangerous thing for your faith?

What did these kings do that was right...

Joash 2 Kings 12:1-3

Hezekiah 2 Kings 18:1-6

Josiah 2 Kings 22:1-2

What pressures would these kings have faced as they sought to do what was right?

What pressures do you face as you strive to do what is right in God's eyes?

Skim through 2 Kings 17:7-23 and 21:10-15

Why did God send his people into exile?

Is God harsher on his own people than on others?

Read 2 Kings 13:14-20

Amidst all these good and bad kings, Elisha dies. His death is told quickly. Why the brevity?

Read John 6:14-15

Why didn't Jesus give the people what they want? What does this say about his idea of kingship?

Read John 12:12-15

Why are the crowds shouting for joy? How is their mood shattered a few days later?

Read John 19:1-6

What sort of king is Jesus? What makes him a good king?

Read 1 Peter 4:17-18

Who does God's judgment begin with and why?

What does this say about how we should live out our faith? Unbelievers?

Sovereign 2 Kings 23-25

History = Sovereignty

What does the phrase "All good things must come to an end..." mean? Why can't good things last forever?

What do Christians mean when they say, "God is in control"?

Someone once said, "Trust means taking God at his word." What did they mean by this?

What things cause Christians to trust God's sovereignty? What causes them to doubt?

Skim through 2 Kings 23

How would you describe Josiah?

Why is he so thorough and determined?

Read 2 Kings 24:1-4

Who sent the army to invade God's people?

What does this say about who is sovereign over the nations?

Read 2 Kings 24:18-20

How does God feel?

How can God thrust his people from his presence yet also be faithful to them?

Skim through 2 Kings 25:1-26

The fall of Jerusalem is described at great length with horrific detail. Why is that?

How central was the Temple in the life of God's people? Can you imagine the heartbreak when it is burnt to the ground?

God does not speak or is not mentioned in this final chapter. What does this say about how God feels about his people and their request for a king?

Read 2 Kings 25:24

How did Daniel and his friends serve the king of Babylon?

Read 2 Kings 25:27-30

Is the king compromising his faith by eating at his enemies' table?

Read Mathew 28:18-20

What do these phrases mean...

"All authority in heaven and earth..."

"Has been given to me..."

"And surely..."

"I am with you..."

"Always, to the very end of the age."

Rewrite Matthew 28:18-20 in your own words

Which verses and ideas were the hardest to rewrite?

Read Acts 2:22-24

How does Jesus' death and resurrection demonstrate God's sovereignty?

Read Revelation 22:21

Jesus says, "I am coming soon." John replies, "Amen."

How does John's one word reply demonstrate his trust in God's sovereignty?

How can we keep trusting the same day to day?

Pray