



# WELCOME TO FIRST KINGS

The book of 1 Kings begins with extraordinary promise. Solomon, the son of David, ascends the throne with wisdom from God. Under his leadership Israel experiences peace, prosperity, and the construction of the temple—the central place of worship where God’s presence dwells among His people.

As he experiences success, Solomon’s heart becomes divided, the kingdom fractures, and a succession of kings lead the nation deeper into compromise and idolatry. Into this darkness God sends prophets like Elijah who call the people back to faithfulness.

As we read, we begin to sense a deeper theme emerging: even Israel’s greatest kings cannot fully lead God’s people into lasting faithfulness. The story ultimately prepares us to long for a better King—one who will rule with perfect wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God.

That King is Jesus.

## Key Themes

### **Wisdom and Leadership**

Solomon begins his reign by asking God for wisdom, showing that leadership rooted in humility and dependence on God can bring flourishing.

### **The Presence of God Among His People**

The construction and dedication of the temple highlight God's desire to dwell among His people and be the center of their worship.

### **The Danger of a Divided Heart**

Solomon's gradual compromise reveals how small spiritual compromises can eventually reshape a life and a nation.

### **Faithfulness vs. Idolatry**

The story repeatedly contrasts devotion to the Lord with the pull toward idols and false worship.

### **The Influence of Leadership**

The spiritual direction of Israel is deeply shaped by the faithfulness—or failure—of its kings.

### **God's Persistence in Calling People Back**

Even in seasons of rebellion, God continues to send prophets to call His people to repentance.

### **The Need for a Better King**

The rise and fall of Israel's kings ultimately prepares readers to long for a ruler who will lead God's people with perfect faithfulness.

## Key Characters

**Solomon** — David's son who becomes king, known for extraordinary wisdom but whose divided heart ultimately leads Israel toward decline.

**Rehoboam** — Solomon's son whose prideful leadership fractures the kingdom into Israel and Judah.

**Jeroboam** — The first king of the northern kingdom who leads Israel into idolatry by establishing alternative places of worship.

**Ahab** — One of the most corrupt kings of Israel, whose reign deepens the nation's spiritual rebellion.

**Elijah** — A prophet raised up by God to confront idolatry and call the nation back to the Lord.

**The Queen of Sheba** — A foreign ruler who recognizes Solomon's wisdom and the greatness of Israel's God.

What follows is a 21 reading guide that reaches its climax with the realization that our hearts greatest longings are for our great and true King, Jesus.

# Week 1 — The Glory of Solomon

1 Kings begins with the high point of Israel's kingdom. Solomon receives wisdom from God, builds the temple, and leads a nation flourishing under peace and prosperity. Yet even in the midst of glory, Scripture quietly introduces warnings about the danger of a divided heart.

## Day 1 — The Throne Secured

**Read:** 1 Kings 1As David's life comes to an end, God ensures that Solomon—not human ambition—receives the throne.

### Cross References

2 Samuel 7:12–13

Psalms 75:6–7

### Reflection Question

How does this chapter remind us that God ultimately establishes leaders according to His purposes?

## Day 2 — A Kingdom Established in Justice

**Read:** 1 Kings 2

Solomon secures the kingdom by establishing justice and fulfilling the responsibilities of leadership.

### Cross References

Deuteronomy 17:18–20

Psalms 89:14

### Reflection Question

Why must justice and righteousness be the foundation of godly leadership?

## Day 3 — The Gift of Wisdom

**Read:** 1 Kings 3

Solomon asks God for wisdom rather than power or wealth, and God honors his request.

### Cross References

James 1:5

Proverbs 9:10

### Reflection Question

What does Solomon's prayer teach us about the kind of heart God delights to bless?

## Day 4 — Wisdom and Peace in the Kingdom

**Read:** 1 Kings 4

Under Solomon's wise leadership the nation enjoys peace and flourishing.

### Cross References

Psalms 72:1–7

Proverbs 3:13–18

### Reflection Question

How can godly wisdom influence not only personal life but the well-being of an entire community?

## **Day 5 — Preparing to Build the Temple**

**Read:** 1 Kings 5

Solomon begins preparations for the temple, recognizing the importance of worship in the life of the nation.

### **Cross References**

1 Chronicles 22:7–10

Psalms 127:1

### **Reflection Question**

What does this chapter teach us about preparing carefully for the work God calls us to do?

## **Day 6 — Building the House of God**

**Read:** 1 Kings 6

The temple becomes a visible symbol that God desires to dwell among His people.

### **Cross References**

Exodus 25:8

Hebrews 8:5

### **Reflection Question**

What does the temple reveal about God's desire for relationship with His people?

## **Day 7 — Beauty in Worship**

**Read:** 1 Kings 7

The temple's craftsmanship reflects the beauty and holiness of the God who is worshiped there.

### **Cross References**

Psalms 96:6

Exodus 31:1–5

### **Reflection Question**

How can creativity and craftsmanship become expressions of worship to God?

# Week 2 — Warning and Division

The glory of Solomon's reign reaches its peak, but seeds of compromise begin to grow. Solomon's divided heart eventually leads to the division of the kingdom. Israel's history begins turning toward instability and spiritual drift.

## Day 8 — The Glory of God Fills the Temple

**Read:** 1 Kings 8

When the temple is dedicated, God's glory fills it, reminding Israel that His presence is their greatest blessing.

### **Cross References**

2 Chronicles 7:1–3

Psalms 132:13–14

### **Reflection Question**

Why is the presence of God more important than any structure built in His honor?

## Day 9 — Blessing and Warning

**Read:** 1 Kings 9

God blesses Solomon but warns that continued faithfulness is necessary for lasting blessing.

### **Cross References**

Deuteronomy 28:1–2

John 15:10

### **Reflection Question**

Why can seasons of prosperity become spiritual tests?

## Day 10 — Wisdom that Draws the Nations

**Read:** 1 Kings 10

The Queen of Sheba witnesses Solomon's wisdom, revealing God's intention to draw the nations toward Himself.

### **Cross References**

Isaiah 60:3

Matthew 12:42

### **Reflection Question**

How can a life shaped by God draw others to seek Him?

## Day 11 — A Divided Heart

**Read:** 1 Kings 11

Solomon's compromise begins to unravel the kingdom.

### **Cross References**

Deuteronomy 17:16–17

James 1:8

### **Reflection Question**

What are some subtle ways a heart can slowly become divided in its devotion to God?

## **Day 12 — The Kingdom Divides**

**Read:** 1 Kings 12

Rehoboam's pride fractures the kingdom into Israel and Judah.

### **Cross References**

Proverbs 16:18

James 3:16

### **Reflection Question**

How does pride often damage relationships, communities, and leadership?

## **Day 13 — Confronting False Worship**

**Read:** 1 Kings 13

God sends a prophet to warn against Jeroboam's corrupt worship.

### **Cross References**

Exodus 20:3–5

Matthew 7:15

### **Reflection Question**

Why is it dangerous to reshape worship around convenience rather than obedience?

## **Day 14 — The Cost of Idolatry**

**Read:** 1 Kings 14

Jeroboam's rebellion leads to judgment against his household.

### **Cross References**

Jeremiah 2:11–13

Romans 1:21–23

### **Reflection Question**

How do the spiritual decisions of leaders affect entire communities?

# Week 3 — Prophets in Dark Times

As Israel drifts further from God, the Lord raises up prophets who speak truth in a time of spiritual decline. Elijah's ministry demonstrates both God's power and His compassion toward weary servants.

## Day 15 — Faithful and Unfaithful Kings

**Read:** 1 Kings 15

The spiritual condition of the nation rises or falls with the devotion of its leaders.

### Cross References

Psalm 78:70–72

Proverbs 29:2

### Reflection Question

Why does leadership character matter so much in shaping communities?

## Day 16 — Ahab's Corrupt Leadership

**Read:** 1 Kings 16

Ahab leads Israel deeper into idolatry and rebellion against God.

### Cross References

Exodus 34:14

Romans 6:16

### Reflection Question

What happens when sin becomes normalized in leadership?

## Day 17 — God Provides in Crisis

**Read:** 1 Kings 17

God sustains Elijah and a widow during famine, revealing His care for those who trust Him.

### Cross References

Matthew 6:31–33

Psalm 34:10

### Reflection Question

How does this chapter strengthen your confidence in God's provision?

## Day 18 — The God Who Answers by Fire

**Read:** 1 Kings 18

Elijah confronts the prophets of Baal, and God reveals Himself as the true God.

### Cross References

Exodus 20:2–3

Hebrews 12:28–29

### Reflection Question

What does this story reveal about the difference between true worship and empty religion?

## Day 19 — God Meets the Weary

**Read:** 1 Kings 19

God gently restores Elijah when he becomes exhausted and discouraged.

### **Cross References**

Isaiah 40:29–31

Psalms 23:3

### **Reflection Question**

How does God often restore His servants when they feel overwhelmed?

## Day 20 — The Voice of Truth

**Read:** 1 Kings 20–22

Even as Israel resists God's warnings, He continues speaking through His prophets.

### **Cross References**

Micah 6:8

Luke 16:31

### **Reflection Question**

Why do people sometimes resist truth even when it is clearly spoken?

# Day 21 — Jesus, the True and Greater King

**Read:** Matthew 12:42

Luke 11:31

Jesus declares that **someone greater than Solomon has come**.

Solomon possessed extraordinary wisdom but eventually fell into compromise. Many of Israel's kings led the people away from God. But Jesus is the King who reigns with perfect wisdom, perfect righteousness, and perfect faithfulness.

### **Cross References**

Isaiah 9:6–7

Revelation 19:16

### **Reflection Question**

How does seeing Jesus as the true King reshape the way we understand the rise and fall of Israel's kings?

If you'd like, I can also create a **matching set for 2 Kings** so the two books become a **42-day journey through the entire era of Israel's kings**, which works extremely well for church reading plans.