

THE SON OF
A SERIES
IN 1 KINGS
DAVID

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDIES



PREVIOUSLY, IN THE BIBLE...



God creates everything good and lives with his people.

"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed." Genesis 1:31



Humanity rebels against God and can't live with him any more.

"So the Lord God sent him away from the garden of Eden." Genesis 3:23



God promises that someone will come to defeat evil.

"He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." Genesis 3:15



God promises Abraham a great name and a great nation that will bless the whole earth.

"All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:3



Jacob (Abraham's grandson) tells his son Judah that there will always be a king in his genetic line.

"The sceptre will not depart from Judah." Genesis 49:10



God chooses the shepherd-boy David, from the tribe of Judah, to become his anointed king.

"David was the son of Jesse, from Bethlehem of Judah." 1 Samuel 17:12



God promises David that an eternal kingdom will come from his descendant.

"Your house and kingdom will endure before me forever." 2 Samuel 7:16

COMING UP, IN KINGS...

At Village, we've spent some time looking at the books of 1 and 2 Samuel at different points in the past few years. You'll be forgiven for not remembering much about it (but you can find all of the talks and studies at vc.org.au/blog if you'd like a refresher), but we're about to jump right back in where we left off from the end of 2 Samuel. For the next five weeks, we'll be seeing David's final days and final words to his son, Solomon, before we hear Solomon's story in 1 Kings 1-11, and how it ultimately points us to the true Son of David, Jesus Christ.

The book of Kings tells the sad story of Israel's fall, as Solomon rises to wealth and fame, then leads his nation to devastation, idolatry, and exile. The book of Kings is a history of the Kings of Israel, but it's doing so much more than just telling history: The book of Kings was written after the exile, to explain how Israel came to be so far from God—by step-by-step, king-by-king, turning from the word of God.

Focusing in on the story of Solomon over the next five weeks, we'll see that over and over again we're not quite sure what to make of this complex character. Over and over, we're led to think something positive about Solomon, to be drawn in to admire him, only to then turn round and see what was really going on in his heart. Everything that defined Solomon's life was grand: He received grand blessings, grand wisdom, he planned the construction of the grandest temple, and ultimately his kingdom was undone through his grand sin, in turning from God's word.

The book of Kings show that Israel suffers again and again because of its great sinfulness. Yet there's still hope for the nation, because God's chosen family of kings hasn't come to an end, and God is still at work to fulfil his promises. The book of Kings shows us God's enduring faithfulness, amid great opposition and against all appearances, through the temple, his word, through the great sin and faithlessness of his people and—when all other hope has faded—the coming King, the true Son of David.

MESSY

1 KINGS 1-2



BACKGROUND

2:1 As the time approached for David to die, he ordered his son Solomon, 2 "As for me, I am going the way of all of the earth. Be strong and be a man, 3 and keep your obligation to the Lord your God to walk in his ways and to keep his statutes, commands, ordinances, and decrees. This is written in the law of Moses, so that you will have success in everything you do and wherever you turn, 4 and so that the Lord will fulfill his promise that he made to me: 'If your sons take care to walk faithfully before me with all their heart and all their soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' 5 "You also know what Joab son of Zerui-ah did to me and what he did to the two commanders of Israel's army, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He murdered them in a time of peace to avenge blood shed in war. He spilled that blood on his own waistband and on the sandals of his feet. 6 Act according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray head descend to Sheol in peace. 7 "Show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite and let them be among those who eat at your table because they supported me when I fled from your brother Absalom. 8 "Keep an eye on Shimei son of Gera, the Benjaminite from Bahurim who is with you. He uttered malicious curses against me the day I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan River, and I swore to him by the Lord, 'I will never kill you with the sword.' 9 So don't let him go unpunished, for you are a wise man. You know how to deal with him to bring his gray head down to Sheol with blood." 10 Then David rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David. 11 The length of time David reigned over Israel was forty years: he reigned seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. 12 Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his kingship was firmly established.

STUDY QUESTIONS

If you were a part of Village Church (and you can remember) when we looked at 2 Samuel last year, what do you remember about David? What words would you use to sum up what kind of a man he was?

Read 1 Kings 1:1-10.

What words would you use to sum David up here?

How does David's son Adonijah take advantage of the situation in verses 5-10? What kind of a king do you think he'd be?

After conspiracies and counter-conspiracies to the throne, David calls his son Solomon to him, to give him his dying instructions.

Read 1 Kings 2:1-12.

These are the final words of the great king David to his son. David's final instructions relate to baggage from 2 Samuel. Joab murdered Abner (2 Samuel 3:26-30) and Amasa (2 Samuel 20:4-13) because they were rivals for his role.

What do you think is good advice in what he says? What isn't so good?

Good Advice	Not-So-Good Advice

This is how the Bible Project sums up this scene in one cartoon. Do you think they sum it up well?



Even though David's final words were pretty brutal, there was some kind of a wisdom to them: They were shrewd enough to know how to deal with their situation to get what they wanted. David (through Solomon) used and disposed of people to secure their power and influence.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-30.

Wisdom can mean knowing how to control your situation to get what you want (that was certainly the kind of wisdom that David and Solomon showed). So how can Jesus-like self-sacrifice be wise, when it means giving up your own interests and desires?

When are you most tempted toward the more selfish kind of wisdom?

How can you thank God for sending Christ for your sake?

SOLOMON'S

1 KINGS 3-4



RISE

3:4 The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there because it was the most famous high place. He offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said, "Ask. What should I give you?" 6 And Solomon replied, "You have shown great and faithful love to your servant, my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, righteousness, and integrity. You have continued this great and faithful love for him by giving him a son to sit on his throne, as it is today.

7 "Lord my God, you have now made your servant king in my father David's place. Yet I am just a youth with no experience in leadership. 8 Your servant is among your people you have chosen, a people too many to be numbered or counted. 9 So give your servant a receptive heart to judge your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of yours?"

10 Now it pleased the Lord that Solomon had requested this. 11 So God said to him, "Because you have requested this and did not ask for long life or riches for yourself, or the death of your enemies, but you asked discernment for yourself to administer justice, 12 I will therefore do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has never been anyone like you before and never will be again. 13 In addition, I will give you what you did not ask for: both riches and honor, so that no king will be your equal during your entire life. 14 If you walk in my ways and keep my statutes and commands just as your father David did, I will give you a long life." 15 Then Solomon woke up and realized it had been a dream. He went to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant, and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he held a feast for all his servants.

STUDY QUESTIONS

If you try to think of a "wise" person, who comes to mind? What makes them "wise"?

Read 3:1-15.

What kind of a king is Solomon, in verses 1-4?

What's Solomon's motivation, in verses 7-9?

God is pleased that Solomon asks for wisdom and not "riches" or "the death of your enemies". Why do you think that, in God's sight, wisdom is better than these things?

How does Solomon's behaviour change in response? (verse 15)

Read 3:16-28.

Solomon's wisdom is shown through this narrative of two prostitutes coming to him with a dispute. Why do you think the author included this story (out of many examples of wisdom that Solomon assumedly showed)?

How would you define wisdom, based on this chapter?

"Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs numbered 1,005... Emissaries of all peoples, sent by every king on earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to listen to Solomon's wisdom." 1 Kings 4:32-34

Solomon went on to write Proverbs and Song of Songs and probably Ecclesiastes (most of the "wisdom literature" in the Bible).

Read Proverbs 1:7 and James 1:5–8. How does this add to our understanding of wisdom in the Bible?

1 Kings 4:34 says that “the people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.” Wisdom is compelling, even to people who don’t trust in God. Have you ever met someone who draws people into conversations about faith, just through their wisdom?

If you’ve ever felt like you wish you had more wisdom, then Solomon should be a great comfort to you. He had a great blessing of wisdom from God, and still made poor decisions, and was inconsistent in his faith (as we’ll see in the coming weeks). He needed more than wisdom: He needed his heart changed.

“It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.” Philippians 1:9-10.

Paul sums it up well in his prayer for the Philippian church: Because of what Jesus has done for you, I pray that God would give you wisdom to know what is good, so as to live a pure life. Not to have plenty of wisdom, but consistently fall into sin (like Solomon). It’s a wisdom that’s taking you somewhere: into goodness and purity, because Christ has made you new through his death and resurrection.

Where do you need to ask God for this wisdom now in your life?

How can you pray for “knowledge, discernment, goodness and purity” this week?

THE

1 KINGS 5-7



TEMPLE

6:11 The word of the Lord came to Solomon: 12 "As for this temple you are building—if you walk in my statutes, observe my ordinances, and keep all my commands by walking in them, I will fulfill my promise to you, which I made to your father David. 13 I will dwell among the Israelites and not abandon my people Israel."

14 When Solomon finished building the temple, 15 he paneled the interior temple walls with cedar boards; from the temple floor to the surface of the ceiling he overlaid the interior with wood. He also overlaid the floor with cypress boards. 16 Then he lined thirty feet of the rear of the temple with cedar boards from the floor to the surface of the ceiling, and he built the interior as an inner sanctuary, the most holy place. 17 The temple, that is, the sanctuary in front of the most holy place, was sixty feet long. 18 The cedar paneling inside the temple was carved with ornamental gourds and flower blossoms. Everything was cedar; not a stone could be seen.

19 He prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple to put the ark of the Lord's covenant there. 20 The interior of the sanctuary was thirty feet long, thirty feet wide, and thirty feet high; he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid the cedar altar.

STUDY QUESTIONS

In this important section of 1 Kings, Solomon will oversee the construction of the temple, which is one of the most important images and monuments in the Bible, and in history.

Read 1 Kings 6:1-20.

Try your best to draw the temple, based on this passage (feel free to read on to the end of chapter 6 for more instructions, if you're feeling inspired).



Compare your drawings.

What did you learn about the temple doing that exercise?

What do you think is the significance of all the garden-like decorations in the temple?

Read 1 Kings 6:11-13.

What does God promise about the temple?

What do God's words here show you about the purpose of the temple?

Compare the last verse of chapter 6 and the first verse of chapter 7. What does this tell you about Solomon's priorities?

It's easy to start out doing something for God's glory, but then end up doing it more for your own glory instead. Have you ever done this yourself? When has it happened for you?

Read John 2:14-16.

Hundreds of years after 1 Kings was written, people are still using the temple for their own gain. What does this show us about the human heart?

Read Matthew 27:51 and Revelation 21:22.

What do these verses tell us about how Jesus has changed the way that we approach God?

HEAR IN

1 KINGS 8-9



HEAVEN

22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in front of the entire congregation of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. 23 He said:

Lord God of Israel,
there is no God like you
in heaven above or on earth below,
who keeps the gracious covenant
with your servants who walk before you
with all their heart.

24 You have kept what you promised
to your servant, my father David.
You spoke directly to him
and you fulfilled your promise by your power
as it is today.

25 Therefore, Lord God of Israel,
keep what you promised
to your servant, my father David:
You will never fail to have a man
to sit before me on the throne of Israel,
if only your sons take care to walk before me
as you have walked before me.

26 Now Lord God of Israel,
please confirm what you promised
to your servant, my father David.

27 But will God indeed live on earth?
Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain you,
much less this temple I have built.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Solomon has finished the construction of the temple, and now he's going to pray for the temple, before all of Israel. What would you expect him to ask for in this temple prayer?

Read 1 Kings 8:22-53.

What do you find surprising about this prayer?

Verse 27 is a key verse. If this is true of the temple, then what do you think the role of the temple actually is?

In verses 31-51, Solomon prays about seven specific scenarios. Here's a quick summary:

Verses 31-32: When anyone wrongs their neighbour and when they swear the oath before your altar in this temple...

Verses 33-34: When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you and when they turn back to you and give praise to your name...

Verses 35-36: When there is no rain because your people have sinned against you...

Verses 37-40: When famines or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew...

Verses 41-43: As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name when they come...

Verses 44-45: When your people go to war against their enemies...

Verses 46-51: When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to their enemies...

You might imagine that the dedication of the temple would be a time of great triumph and praise. Why do you think Solomon's prayer talks about so many terrible scenarios?

Quickly skim through verses 31-53. After each of these seven scenarios, Solomon asks God to "hear from heaven". What are a few of the things that Solomon asks God to "hear from heaven"?

What does this prayer teach us about the role of the temple for God's people?

Solomon's prayer shows the honest reality: The closer we get to God's holy presence, the more that we feel a keen awareness of the sin and brokenness in our lives. But this wasn't always going to be the case. The temple was just meant to be an image of the perfect temple, where we really met God, and where our sin and brokenness were dealt with: Jesus Christ.

Read Hebrews 9:1-15.

What does this tell us about the role of God's tabernacle (and temple)?

How can you be whole-heartedly drawing near to God now, because of what Jesus has done?

SOLOMON'S

1 KINGS 10-11



FALL

11:1 King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women 2 from the nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, and they must not intermarry with you, because they will turn your heart away to follow their gods." To these women Solomon was deeply attached in love. 3 He had seven hundred wives who were princesses and three hundred who were concubines, and they turned his heart away.

4 When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away to follow other gods. He was not wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord his God, as his father David had been. 5 Solomon followed Ash-toreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the abhorrent idol of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did what was evil in the Lord's sight, and unlike his father David, he did not remain loyal to the Lord.

7 At that time, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abhorrent idol of Moab, and for Milcom, the abhorrent idol of the Ammonites, on the hill across from Jerusalem. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who were burning incense and offering sacrifices to their gods. 9 The Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. 10 He had commanded him about this, so that he would not follow other gods, but Solomon did not do what the Lord had commanded.

11 Then the Lord said to Solomon, "Since you have done this and did not keep my covenant and my statutes, which I commanded you, I will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. 12 However, I will not do it during your lifetime for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of your son's hand. 13 Yet I will not tear the entire kingdom away from him. I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem that I chose."

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read 1 Kings 9:6-9.

This is God's response to Solomon's prayer that we looked at last week. What does God warn Solomon against?

What does God say will happen if Solomon disobeys?

Read 1 Kings 11:1-13.

How well has Solomon listened to God's warning from chapter 9?

What led Solomon's heart away from the Lord?

Why do you think that the narrator includes a comparison to David in verse 6?

This should be a warning for all of us. Often, it isn't ideas that lead us away from God, but loves. We often like to imagine that we're controlled by our thoughts, but if we're really honest, it's rarely true. Our loves are what really motivate us in life. In the book of Revelation, the letter to Ephesus rebukes the church because: "You have abandoned your first love." How do these words speak to you at the moment?

Compare 11:1-4 with 3:3. What's changed for Solomon?

What is God's verdict on Solomon's life (verses 9-13)?

Read 2 Samuel 7:10-15.

These are God's great promises to David, which at first glance seem to be speaking about Solomon. But with a bit more foresight, how do we see that these verses might not be speaking about Solomon at all. How do we see that these words might be speaking more about Jesus?

We all have things in our lives that lead us away from wholeheartedly seeking God, even though we would say that we are still following Jesus. It might be pleasure, money, power, leisure, achievements, our families or our bodies. These are all good gifts from God, but can easily become much more than that.

What's one thing in your life that's taking up too much space in your heart that you need to bring before God now?

What's been one take-away from studying 1 Kings 1-11 that you'd like to remember moving forward.



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