

STUDIES IN 1 KINGS 12-22

OF KINGS AND PROPHETS



PREVIOUSLY, IN KINGS...



David comes to the end of his life, and passes his kingdom on to his son, Solomon. His final request is for Solomon to kill all of his enemies.

"Solomon sat on the throne of his father David." 1 Kings 2:12



When Solomon is worshipping foreign gods, God appears to him in a dream. Solomon asks God for wisdom, and God promises him wisdom, riches and a great kingdom.

"I will give you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has never been anyone like you before and never will be again." 1 Kings 3:12



Solomon builds God the temple, in fulfilment of God's promises to David. Solomon also builds himself a luxurious palace, that takes even longer to build.

"So all the work King Solomon did in the Lord's temple was completed." 1 Kings 7:51



Solomon prays over the temple, acknowledging that God doesn't really live in it, and that Israel needs continual forgiveness to live with God.

"May you hear and forgive." 1 Kings 8:30



Solomon is unfaithful in every way imaginable: marrying many foreign wives, worshipping other gods, and disobeying the word of God. God tells Solomon that because of his divided heart, his kingdom will be divided.

"He was not wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord his God, as his father David had been." 1 Kings 11:4

COMING UP, IN KINGS...

In our series on the first half of 1 Kings, we watched Solomon's time as king of Israel. We saw his great rise to power, fame, and fortune, and we saw his almighty fall. And while we saw God speak to Solomon personally multiple times when he was king, things have changed since then.

In the second half of 1 Kings, we see the kingdom split into north and south, as a judgement on Solomon's divided heart, and from this point we will only hear God's voice spoken through his prophets. From this point, we will watch kings fall, we will see prophets call them out on their sin, and call them back to God's word. We will watch constant battles between kings and prophets, between God's word and God's ruler. In this, it shows us the need for a king who would live by the word of God--more than that, a king who is the Word of God, Jesus Christ, to whom all of these battles point.

Throughout the studies, we will be seeing many kings and prophets. You will be seeing these two graphics a lot. The lives of the kings are summarised with a few criteria, to assess their time as king:



Did they worship the God of Israel alone?

Did they deal with idolatry among the people?

Did they remain faithful like David, or were they corrupt and unjust?

And the prophets, time-and-time again, speak against the ungodly leadership of the kings with the word of God:



What does the prophet have to say to the king?

CHAPTER 12

A DIVIDED KINGDOM



12:1 Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. 2 When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard about it, he stayed in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon's presence. Jeroboam stayed in Egypt. 3 But they summoned him, and Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam: 4 "Your father made our yoke harsh. You, therefore, lighten your father's harsh service and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you."

5 Rehoboam replied, "Go away for three days and then return to me." So the people left. 6 Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon when he was alive, asking, "How do you advise me to respond to this people?"

7 They replied, "Today if you will be a servant to this people and serve them, and if you respond to them by speaking kind words to them, they will be your servants forever."

8 But he rejected the advice of the elders who had advised him and consulted with the young men who had grown up with him and attended him. 9 He asked them, "What message do you advise that we send back to this people who said to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?"

10 The young men who had grown up with him told him, "This is what you should say to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you, make it lighter on us!' This is what you should tell them: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist! 11 Although my father burdened you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with barbed whips.'"

STUDY QUESTIONS

In 25 words or less, try to each sum up what's happened in 1 Kings so far (from chapters 1-11).

One of the key moments of the Old Testament happens here: the splitting of Israel into the northern kingdom (Israel), and the southern kingdom (Judah). For the rest of the Old Testament, God's kingdom will be divided. And for the rest of the books of Kings, we will alternate between hearing about the kings of the north and south.

Read 11:29-39, where a prophet enacts this divided kingdom.



What does the prophet
have to say to the king?

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Read 12:1-24.

How is Rehoboam the same / different to his father Solomon?

In verse 4, it sounds like Israel felt like they were back in Egypt (back in slavery) and not freed from it. What does this say about Solomon's kingdom?

How do we see Rehoboam's foolishness here? How do we see God's power at work, even through human foolishness?

Look at verses 22-24.



What does the prophet
have to say to the king?

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How do the words of the Shemaiah trump the plans of the king?

Read 12:25-33.

Jeroboam feels like his kingdom and life are threatened. So what's his solution?

Jeroboam institutes idolatry in the northern kingdom of Israel. What parallels do you see between this story and Aaron's sin by Mount Sinai? (Exodus 32:1-8)

Look through 12:25-33. How many times can you count the passage talking about Jeroboam "making" or "building"? Throughout the Bible, when humanity gets obsessed with "making", it almost always ends in idolatry.

Read Romans 1:21-23.

How does this passage show us how this tendency plays out?

Read Romans 3:21-26.

How does this passage give us an answer to the problems of human foolishness and idolatry?

CHAPTER 13

LIONS, DONKEYS AND PROPHETS



13:1 A man of God came, however, from Judah to Bethel by the word of the Lord while Jeroboam was standing beside the altar to burn incense. 2 The man of God cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord: "Altar, altar, this is what the Lord says, 'A son will be born to the house of David, named Josiah, and he will sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who are burning incense on you. Human bones will be burned on you.'" 3 He gave a sign that day. He said, "This is the sign that the Lord has spoken: 'The altar will now be ripped apart, and the ashes that are on it will be poured out.'"

4 When the king heard the message that the man of God had cried out against the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Arrest him!" But the hand he stretched out against him withered, and he could not pull it back to himself. 5 The altar was ripped apart, and the ashes poured from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word of the Lord.

6 Then the king responded to the man of God, "Plead for the favor of the Lord your God and pray for me so that my hand may be restored to me." So the man of God pleaded for the favor of the Lord, and the king's hand was restored to him and became as it had been at first.

7 Then the king declared to the man of God, "Come home with me, refresh yourself, and I'll give you a reward."

8 But the man of God replied, "If you were to give me half your house, I still wouldn't go with you, and I wouldn't eat food or drink water in this place, 9 for this is what I was commanded by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat food or drink water or go back the way you came.'" 10 So he went another way; he did not go back by the way he had come to Bethel.

STUDY QUESTIONS

This is one of the strangest chapters in the Old Testament (which can make it seem either really interesting, or really off-putting). But amidst any strangeness in the Bible, there's always gold to be mined.

Read 1 Kings 13. As your group is reading it out, try to each write down every question that this chapter raises for you.

Go through some of those questions (don't feel like you need to have all the answers for them). Try to say at least one question from each person. What are the most pressing questions for each of you?

Having read through it, try and think of a way that this passage might be taught in a really unhelpful way (feel free to be creative).

In verse 2, the man of God gives a prophecy about Josiah, a king in the line of David, who would be one of Judah's most faithful kings. But Josiah won't appear until 2 Kings 22. Why do you think we get such an early foreshadowing here?

One of the most repeated phrases in the chapter is "the word of God". Go through and find every mention of it, and see what the "word of God" tells each individual to do, or not do?

Verse numbers	What is God telling them to do / not do?

What do you think the chapter is trying to teach us about the word of God?

In verse 18, we see a clash of prophets, and a clash of prophetic messages. When you experience a difference between God's word as you've understood it, and God's word as someone speaks it to you, how do you decide what to follow?

It's still the middle of Jeroboam's reign, but he gets a bit of a summary here, in verses 33-34. How does his assessment go?



Did they worship the God of Israel alone?

.....

Did they deal with idolatry among the people?

.....

Did they remain faithful like David, or were they corrupt and unjust?

.....

After all that we've seen about the seriousness of listening to the word of God, and obeying it, Jeroboam still betrays God's Word.

Read John 1:1-4, 14-18, 29.

How does this change how we understand the word of God?

In 1 Kings 13:21-24, rebelling against the word of God caused immediate, shocking judgement to fall on the man of God. But for us today, the one who was called the Word of God was also called the Lamb of God, and he took on the punishment that we all deserve for our disobedience, by dying on the cross for our sake.

How do you need to take God's word more seriously this week?

How can you be resting your heart on the Word of God and the lamb of God, Jesus Christ, now?

CHAPTERS 14-16

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL



15:1 In the eighteenth year of Israel's King Jeroboam son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah, 2 and he reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah daughter of Abishalom.

3 Abijam walked in all the sins his father before him had committed, and he was not wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord his God as his ancestor David had been. 4 But for the sake of David, the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up his son after him and by preserving Jerusalem. 5 For David did what was right in the Lord's sight, and he did not turn aside from anything he had commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hethite.

6 There had been war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of Rehoboam's life. 7 The rest of the events of Abijam's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. There was also war between Abijam and Jeroboam. 8 Abijam rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David. His son Asa became king in his place.

9 In the twentieth year of Israel's King Jeroboam, Asa became king of Judah, 10 and he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother's name was Maacah daughter of Abishalom.

11 Asa did what was right in the Lord's sight, as his ancestor David had done. 12 He banished the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed all of the idols that his ancestors had made. 13 He also removed his grandmother Maacah from being queen mother because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. Asa chopped down her obscene image and burned it in the Kidron Valley. 14 The high places were not taken away, but Asa was wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord his entire life. 15 He brought his father's consecrated gifts and his own consecrated gifts into the Lord's temple: silver, gold, and utensils.

STUDY QUESTIONS

In chapters 15-16, we get a no-frills survey of a bunch of kings of Israel—with a constant refrain telling us that if we want to find out more about this king, they have to head to their local library and look up the Historical Records.

These chapters cover the lives of many kings, but just choosing a few. Read through three of them and fill out their king report:

Zimri (16:11-13):



Did they worship the God of Israel alone?

Did they deal with idolatry among the people?

Did they remain faithful like David, or were they corrupt and unjust?

Omri (16:23-28):



Did they worship the God of Israel alone?

Did they deal with idolatry among the people?

Did they remain faithful like David, or were they corrupt and unjust?

Ahab: (16:29-33):



Did they worship the God of Israel alone?

Did they deal with idolatry among the people?

Did they remain faithful like David, or were they corrupt and unjust?

What patterns can you see in this quick survey of the lives of these three kings?

What do you think the writer is trying to show us by giving us such a plain and sweeping survey of the lives (and wickedness) of so many kings?

From Nadab to Baasha to Omri, who does more evil than all who come before him, to Ahab, who does even more evil. As you read this tragic decline, what effect does it have on you?

“You can sin with flair but not with freshness. Goodness has an originality which evil does not. Evil can ruin and corrupt and do re-runs, but it can’t be original or scintillating. It comes with a built-in yawn. If these chapters are boring, then blame Nadab, and Ahab and the others.” Dale Ralph Davis.

What do you think about this quote?

These chapters are a terrifying picture of humanity’s ability to spiral in our rebellion against God. But amidst all of this, the Word of God is still in control. Go through each of the following verses and write out what the word of God is doing:

15:29

16:12

16:1

16:34

16:7

As hopelessly dark as these chapters look, we still hear that God isn’t passive here—he’s both judging evil, and using the evil to work for his good purposes (ie. Genesis 50:20: “You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people.”). This is the pattern throughout the Bible, ultimately to show us how God will use the most evil moment in history—the death of his son, Jesus Christ—to fulfil his good purposes in the world.

Read Acts 2:22-24 and 4:27-28.

How can you see both human evil and God’s good purposes at work in Jesus’ death here?

How does Jesus’ death change the downward spiral of sin that we see in 1 Kings 15-16?

CHAPTERS 17-18

THE FIRE OF GOD



18:19 Now summon all Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table."

20 So Ahab summoned all the Israelites and gathered the prophets at Mount Carmel. 21 Then Elijah approached all the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him. But if Baal, follow him." But the people didn't answer him a word.

22 Then Elijah said to the people, "I am the only remaining prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. 23 Let two bulls be given to us. They are to choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and place it on the wood but not light the fire. I will prepare the other bull and place it on the wood but not light the fire. 24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The God who answers with fire, he is God."

All the people answered, "That's fine."

25 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Since you are so numerous, choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first. Then call on the name of your god but don't light the fire."

26 So they took the bull that he gave them, prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "Baal, answer us!" But there was no sound; no one answered. Then they danced around the altar they had made.

27 At noon Elijah mocked them. He said, "Shout loudly, for he's a god! Maybe he's thinking it over; maybe he has wandered away; or maybe he's on the road. Perhaps he's sleeping and will wake up!"

STUDY QUESTIONS

Where we left off last week, we heard that Ahab had done more evil in the sight of the Lord than all the kings before him. Together with his Canaanite wife, Jezebel, Ahab instituted the worship of the Canaanite god, Baal, over Israel. And in the face of such a low in Israel's history, God raises up Elijah, one of the most iconic Old Testament figures, to confront Ahab.

In Canaanite religion, Baal was thought to be the god of storms, holding particular power over rain and fertility. In light of this, why do you think God sent judgment in the specific form of a drought (17:1,7)? What message would this have sent?

Read 1 Kings 18:1-16.

Amidst the astounding public acts for God that Elijah's ministry involved, there were the hidden acts for God that Obadiah was doing—hiding a hundred prophets from Ahab and Jezebel's slaughtering. What about for you--are you tempted to see God's hand more at work in big, public acts, or quiet, private acts?

What does this hiding of prophets tell us about the state of Israel?

In verse 5, it sounds like Ahab's more concerned with saving his horses than anything else. Given what God's said about kings and horses (Deuteronomy 17:16), what does this suggest about the state of Ahab's heart?

What do we learn from the short exchange between Obadiah and Elijah?

Read 1 Kings 18:17-46.

The contest on Mount Carmel demonstrates unmistakably that the Lord, not Baal, is the true and living God. How do all the following details hammer this home for us?

This contest happens on Baal's home ground. Mount Carmel was known as Baal Mountain.

Elijah's taunt (18:27).

The extremes to which the prophets of Baal go (18:28–29).

All the water that Elijah poured on the altar (18:33–40).

Elijah's simple prayer (18:36-37).

How does Elijah show Ahab (and the nation) the power of the living God?

Has God ever really turned up to work in your life, in a surprising way, even though you'd only said small prayers, or felt you'd done little (or nothing) to ask God to work?

Jesus told this parable, about a big prayer that went unanswered, and a small prayer that God was delighted to answer:

Read Luke 18:9-14.

What does this tell us why God listens to a person's prayers?

In Jesus' parable, the tax collector's prayer didn't cause God to rain down fire. But an even greater display of God's love and power entered into this man's life: "You are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— not from works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9.

How is the cross the ultimate display of God's surprising power at work in the midst of our weakness?

CHAPTER 19

THE WHISPER OF GOD



19:9 Suddenly, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are looking for me to take my life."

11 Then he said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the Lord's presence."

At that moment, the Lord passed by. A great and mighty wind was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Suddenly, a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

14 "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Armies," he replied, "but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they're looking for me to take my life."

STUDY QUESTIONS

From what you remember last week in chapter 18, what would you assume would happen next in the story?

Read 1 Kings 19:1-9.

Why do you think Jezebel put a target on Elijah's head?

What made Elijah feel so despairing?

Read 1 Kings 19:10-18.

How do you think God felt about Elijah's words in verse 10?

Probably, a part of it was that Elijah had been feeling discouraged because his ministry wasn't as successful as he'd hope it would be. Elijah was feeling scared, because there were people who had set out to take him down. Have you ever felt either of these, when you have been trying to serve God faithfully?

From verses 11-13, we see multiple displays of earthly power (including one very similar to chapter 18), but we hear that God isn't present in them. But instead, as we've been hearing repeatedly throughout 1 Kings, we meet God in his word.

What does this "whisper" tell us about who God is?

If we really believed that God works through his word, how would this change our lives?

Why do you think Elijah says exactly the same thing before and after God appears to him? (verses 10 and 14)?

Throughout 1 Kings 18–19, Elijah expresses the belief that he is

the only true prophet left in Israel (18:22; 19:10, 14). However, God declares that he has preserved a remnant of seven thousand of his people (19:18). Why do you think Elijah got such tunnel-vision about his importance?

Do you think Christians can fall into a similar mindset concerning the church today?

Either work together or split into groups to compare these passages, to compare Elijah's ministry with Jesus's:

Old Testament	What does Elijah do?	New Testament	What does Jesus do?
1 Kings 17:17-24		Matthew 9:18-25	
1 Kings 19:4-8		Matthew 4:1-2	
1 Kings 19:5-7		Matthew 4:11	
Malachi 4:5-6		Luke 1:17	

Why do you think Jesus had such an Elijah-like ministry?

Unlike Elijah, when Jesus felt alone and people were coming for his life, he submitted to God's will.

Read Matthew 26:36-46.

Whereas Elijah gave up in the face of danger, Jesus saw God's plan in it, and trusted his life to God's will.

How is Jesus the greater Elijah?

CHAPTERS 20-21

OF WARS AND VINEYARDS



21:1 Some time passed after these events. Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard; it was in Jezreel next to the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. 2 So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard so I can have it for a vegetable garden, since it is right next to my palace. I will give you a better vineyard in its place, or if you prefer, I will give you its value in silver."

3 But Naboth said to Ahab, "As the Lord is my witness, I will never give my ancestors' inheritance to you."

4 So Ahab went to his palace resentful and angry because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had told him. He had said, "I will not give you my ancestors' inheritance." He lay down on his bed, turned his face away, and didn't eat any food.

5 Then his wife Jezebel came to him and said to him, "Why are you so upset that you refuse to eat?"

6 "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite," he replied. "I told him, 'Give me your vineyard for silver, or if you wish, I will give you a vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I won't give you my vineyard!'"

7 Then his wife Jezebel said to him, "Now, exercise your royal power over Israel. Get up, eat some food, and be happy. For I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal. She sent the letters to the elders and nobles who lived with Naboth in his city. 9 In the letters, she wrote:

Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people. 10 Then seat two wicked men opposite him and have them testify against him, saying, "You have cursed God and the king!"

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read 1 Kings 21:1-16.

Why does Ahab want Naboth's vineyard?

Naboth's only spoken words are heard in verse 3. What do these words tell us about Naboth's character?

Who do you think is being more reasonable?

Based on this story, try to describe Ahab and Jezebel, using two words each:

Ahab	Jezebel

How do you rate Jezebel's scheme to get the vineyard?

Read 1 Kings 21:17-29.

It almost feels like the story has finished--everything has been wrapped up in verse 16, and the injustices have been gotten away with. But then, we read verses 17-18. How does God step in to work here?



What does the prophet
have to say to the king?

.....

In what ways is Elijah's pronouncement in 21:17–29 a good response to Ahab's sin?

In verses 25-26, we get an early summary of Ahab's life:



Did they worship the God of Israel
alone?

.....

Did they deal with idolatry among the
people?

.....

Did they remain faithful like David, or
were they corrupt and unjust?

.....

Given

think this meant that Ahab's repentance was sincere, and the king report that was just given is invalid?

Read Matthew 26:59-60.

Jesus has been where Naboth was, of false witnesses giving testimony against him, to plot to put him to death. And in the same way, justice may be delayed, but God sees all injustice, and God will make all right.

Read Romans 12:17-21.

How are those who follow Christ to face injustices in life?

How does the cross of Christ change the way that we react to injustices done to us?

CHAPTER 22

OF KINGS AND PROPHETS



22:1 There was a lull of three years without war between Aram and Israel. 2 However, in the third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit the king of Israel. 3 The king of Israel had said to his servants, "Don't you know that Ramoth-gilead is ours, but we're doing nothing to take it from the king of Aram?" 4 So he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight Ramoth-gilead?"

Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 5 But Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "First, please ask what the Lord's will is."

6 So the king of Israel gathered the prophets, about four hundred men, and asked them, "Should I go against Ramoth-gilead for war or should I refrain?" They replied, "March up, and the Lord will hand it over to the king." 7 But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of the Lord here anymore? Let's ask him."

8 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man who can inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he never prophesies good about me, but only disaster. He is Micaiah son of Imlah."

"The king shouldn't say that!" Jehoshaphat replied. 9 So the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Hurry and get Micaiah son of Imlah!"

10 Now the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, clothed in royal attire, were each sitting on his own throne. They were on the threshing floor at the entrance to the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying in front of them. 11 Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah made iron horns and said, "This is what the Lord says: 'You will gore the Arameans with these until they are finished off.'" 12 And all the prophets were prophesying the same: "March up to Ramoth-gilead and succeed, for the Lord will hand it over to the king."

STUDY QUESTIONS

In this final chapter in 1 Kings, it seems like there are kings and prophets everywhere, trying desperately to find out where God is leading them.

Read 1 Kings 22:1-29.

In all of the chaos of kings and prophets, which king do you think is the most faithful? Which prophet is the most faithful? What makes you think that they're more faithful?

Why do you think that Micaiah starts out by echoing the words of the other prophets (in verse 15)?

What do you think about the multiple mentions of "spirits" in verses 21-24?

One of the ways that we can see that Micaiah's prophecy is from the Lord is that it came true. Read verses 34-36. How is this a fulfilment of Micaiah's prophecy?



What does the prophet
have to say to the king?

.....

When you're facing a tough decision in life, how do you make sure that you're being faithful to God's word, and not just listening to voices that are telling you what you want to hear?

We get a summary of Jehoshaphat's life in verses 41-50.



Did they worship the God of Israel
alone?

Did they deal with idolatry among the
people?

Did they remain faithful like David, or
were they corrupt and unjust?

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-3.

People have always wanted to listen to prophets who speak positive messages for them. But there's a warning—in 1 Kings 22, and in 2 Timothy 4—that sometimes, the ones with a difficult message are the only ones faithfully speaking the word of God.

“The gospel is terribly offensive to the human heart. People find it insulting to be told that they're too weak and sinful to do anything to contribute to their salvation. The gospel is offensive because it says that the only way to be saved is through the cross. The gospel is offensive because it states that, without the cross, ‘good’ people are in as much trouble as ‘bad’ people... We can only grasp the sweetness of the cross if we first grapple with its offense. If someone understands the cross, it's either the greatest thing in their life, or it's repugnant to them. If it's neither of those two things, they haven't understood it.” Tim Keller.

What do you think of this quote?

Have you ever been tempted to listen to other, easier messages because of the offensiveness of the Gospel?



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