

THE KINGS

Date: 5.26.24 | Title: The Divided Kingdom- More Bad Than Good | Scripture: 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, 1 Kings 16:29-33

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

Middle School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus. God deserves respect, obedience, and honor. God wants us to live for His glory. God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

High School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus. God deserves respect, obedience, and honor. God wants us to live for His glory. God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins. Jesus gave his life for us on the cross and He is the only way for salvation.



MEMORY VERSE

"But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them." 1 Samuel 8:6-7

THE KINGS

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

The Old Testament books of Kings and Chronicles cover the same period of time. 1 & 2 Kings can be thought of as one on-going narrative with 1 Kings covering the life of King Solomon during the United Kingdom and 2 Kings covering parallel accounts of the various kings of Israel and Judah after the kingdom divides. All the kings mentioned in 2 Kings are mentioned again in Chronicles, where the focus is on religious history instead of political history.

Saul (1050 to 1010 B.C.), David (1010 to 970 B.C.), and David's son, Solomon (970 to 931 B.C.) each rule the one united nation or kingdom of Israel for around 40 years. The 12 tribes of Israel were once seeking to honor God in a special covenant relationship. In the book of Deuteronomy, God gives instructions and laws by which He wants His covenant people to live. He clearly lays out blessings that will follow obedience and curses that will be brought upon disobedience. In 1 and 2 Samuel, God establishes a monarchy led by kings beginning with King David. The kings are responsible to make sure the kingdom worships the god of Israel alone, rids Israel of idolatry, and are faithful to the covenant (God's laws).

Because of Solomon's sin and disobedience (1 Kings 11:1-8), God allows the United Kingdom to divide into two separate kingdoms: Israel and Judah, after Solomon's death (11:9-13). The Northern Kingdom is made up of 10 tribes called Israel. The Southern Kingdom consists of Judah and Benjamin and is called Judah. Now, separate kings are appointed for each kingdom. The fate of the people in the two kingdoms rides on the reign of the kings who represent those people. It seems that both blessing and curse come to the people through the lives of their kings. After the division of the kingdom, Israel, and Judah both suffer in sin. Despite God's continually outstretched pursuing hand of mercy and forgiveness, many kings in both kingdoms harden their hearts, choosing idolatry and wickedness.

The books of 1 and 2 Kings tell the grim stories of the history of the Northern and Southern kingdoms. There is continual war and regular fighting between north and south (14:30; 15:6, 16). The narrator records the names of the kings who were reigning in each kingdom, as well as the length of their reign. The kings ruling Judah and Israel are usually corrupt, sinful and self-serving. They severely disobey God, enter a downward spiral both theologically and morally, and abandon any attempt to obey Deuteronomy.

THE KINGS

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Out of 20 kings in the Northern Kingdom not one is a good king. All of them are bad- rotten leaders, spiritual apostates, idolaters, and pagan worshippers. The Southern Kingdom of Judah does have 8 good kings, including Asa and Jehoshaphat who did right in God's eyes, but the majority are bad as well. The nation is unraveling and turning to false gods instead of trusting in the Lord. Overall, it is a time of apostasy and chaos that lasts for hundreds of years. During the history of the Northern Kingdom (931-722 B.C.) they have the same number of kings (20) the Southern kingdom has in 125 years longer (931-587 B.C.). The success of kings who rebel against God is not good.

One northern king stands out as the worst of the worst: King Ahab (1 Kings 16:30-33). King Ahab is the seventh king of the northern kingdom of Israel, and reigns for 22 years from 874-853 B.C. Ahab is politically one of the strongest kings in Israel but is remembered for the religious apostasy that occurs in Israel during his reign. "He did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him" (1 Kings 16:30). Ahab marries Jezebel, daughter of the king of the Sidonians, who was politically advantageous but religiously disastrous. Her name has become synonymous with evil. Jezebel introduces the idolatrous worship of BAAL into Israel. Baal is a storm god and some believe the fertility of the land depends on his sending rain with his weapons of thunder and lightning. Baal worship presents an attractive alternative to the worship of the Lord (Yahweh) for many Israelites because the land is so dependent on rain for fertility. "Ahab erected an alter for Baal and made an Asherah. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him". Jezebel also institutes a severe persecution against the followers of the Lord and has all the prophets of the Lord killed with the sword, except the 100 who were hidden by Obadiah (18:4). Ahab's religious corruption is equaled by his love for material wealth and display. He is well known, for example, for his elaborately ornamented ivory palace (1 Kings 22:39). He is not content with what he has and covets his neighbor's property, stopping at nothing to get what he wants. Ahab's character is succinctly summarized by the historian: "There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife" (1 Kings 21:25).

THE KINGS

LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



Solomon's sin not only affects his life, but the lives of the people in the nation he rules. He has many foreign wives, and before long they are able to turn Solomon away from God. Solomon begins to worship the false gods that his wives worship, and the people in Israel then begin to worship the false gods too.

TELL
THE
STORY



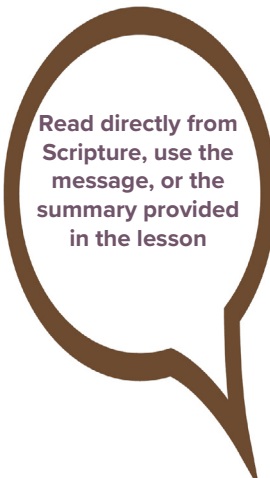
When this happens, God is angry. God says to Solomon, "Since you have done this, I will take the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. You will be king the rest of your life, but when your son becomes king, he will lose everything except for one tribe." This is exactly what happens.

For the next hundreds of years, bad king after bad king reign over Israel and Judah. There are a few "good" kings here and there in Judah, but none of them are perfect. Today we will study 1 Kings 16:29-33 and read about one of the worst kings of all!

Re-tell the Bible Story: put events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc.

Attributes of God: Use the attributes of God list and determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true, change the way we live in Christ?

Share the GOSPEL: King Solomon's sin leads to the division of the kingdom. The same problems of idolatry, foolishness, and pride keep king after king from finally and fully doing what a king ought to do. The kings are all unfaithful and face discipline. The years roll by and the kings get worse, leading the people of God further and further away from the blessing of God. The people need a faithful king who can keep the law of God perfectly. The people of God need a substitute who will solve the problem of sin once and for all. God's people need a better king. Through David's family, God sends His own Son, Jesus, to be the perfect King over God's people forever. Jesus is greater than Saul, David, Solomon or any of the divided kings. Jesus brings His people together and leads them back to God.



Re-Tell
The Bible
Story

Put the events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc...

THE KINGS

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

THE KINGS

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.

THE KINGS

QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

“Storying” Questions: As you ask these questions, have your students support their answers by sharing evidence they took from Scripture.

1. Who did God want to rule over the people as king?
2. Why did the people insist on having a man rule them as king?
3. How did the reign of Saul go?
4. How did the reign of David go?
5. How did the reign of Solomon go?
6. In what ways did they all fall short? How would having God as king be better?
7. What are some God’s commandments and expectations for his people in Deuteronomy?
8. What two kingdoms does the United Kingdom divide into?
9. How many tribes make up each kingdom?
10. Which kingdom has all bad kings? Which kingdom has a few good ones?
11. What sins do we see continually affect the kings and their people?
12. What does the Bible teach us about Ahab? In what ways do we know he was a bad king?
13. How could these years of sin and disobedience been avoided?
14. Is there still hope for God’s people? How do we know? (Think about God’s promise to David and the king that will eventually come from his family!)

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PRAYER PROMPTS

God thank you for sending Your Son, Jesus, as our perfect King! Help us to turn from our own sin and desire to rule and follow You alone!

IF TIME ALLOWS:

Bible Skills Practice: Encourage your students to not only know the order of the books of the bible but also the different divisions they come in.

The Torah: Genesis - Deuteronomy | **History:** Joshua - Esther | **Poetry:** Job - Song of Solomon | **Major Prophets:** Isaiah - Daniel | **Minor Prophets:** Hosea - Malachi | **Gospels:** Matthew - John | **Acts** | **Paul's Letter:** Romans - Philemon | **General Letters:** Hebrews - Jude | **Revelation**

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

We will have no mission focus for the remainder of the school year. As we pray through what our next focus will be, please continue to give generously.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Work on memorizing this week's verse with the students in your group. You can use the first letter of each word in the verse to help with this. For example, the unit verse would look like this:

BSASYAMAKTCOTLYGWIHWAKHSHCHRAHTAIWITLOMTYMPIATYDAWYT - 1 Kings 2:3

THE KINGS



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?

THE KINGS



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?