

Sunday Evening Message Series

1st and 2nd Kings

Message One – 1 Kings 1 -

June 18, 2023

Title – Introduction to 1st Kings

Text – 1st Kings 1

Introduction to 1st and 2nd Kings

1st and 2nd Kings were originally one Book, as was 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Chronicles. These books were divided in the Septuagint, which was an early Greek translation of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew text, 1st and 2nd Kings were simply known as “Kings.” Modern Hebrew Bibles title the books “Kings A” and “Kings B.”¹ You may notice in your Bible a sub-heading underneath 1st Kings that says, “Commonly called the third Book of the Kings.” The reason is that 1st and 2nd Samuel, and 1st and 2nd Kings together provide a complete history of the kings of Israel and Judah from the time preceding King Saul right up until the beginning of the Babylonian captivity. 1st and 2nd Samuel, which are really the 1st and 2nd books in the Bible dealing with this period of the kings, refer to the prophet Samuel who was also a judge over Israel, and then cover the reigns of both Kings Saul and David. 1st and 2nd Kings begin with the death of King David and the reign of King Solomon, David’s son. The Books of the Chronicles are also historical books that deal with this same period, but they primarily deal with the kings of Judah.

- ✕ The Books of the Kings, or at least the last part of 2 Kings was written during the Babylonian captivity as that is the last recorded event taking place. There is no mention in 2nd Kings of the end of the captivity. The approximate time for 1st and 2nd Kings ranges from around 970 BC when Solomon becomes the king to around 586 BC, when Judah is taken into captivity; so, we will be covering a period of approximately 400 years. It is believed by some that Jeremiah is the author, though he could not have written the final portion of the Book, which deals with what happens in Babylon. Jeremiah never went to Babylon. He went down into Egypt with the remnant that were left in Judah after the time of the captivity. It could very well have been somebody else that wrote it. It was definitely written with the benefit of other historical records (See 1 Kings 11:41; 14:19; 14:29).

There are three major events that take place in these books. First, we learn of the dividing of the kingdom that takes place during the reign of King Rehoboam. Israel is split

¹ MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. 1997. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. Electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

geographically in two: Israel is in the north, and Judah is in the south. We also will see the northern kingdom taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 BC, and then approximately 150 years later, the southern kingdom was taken captive by the Babylonians.

The main characters of these books are the kings of Israel and Judah, ten of which were considered good kings, and thirty-two of them were considered bad. Some of the more memorable good kings include David, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, and Josiah. Though it is important to note that the good kings were not always good, and the bad kings were not all-bad. Some kings like Solomon, started out very good but let idolatry enter their lives. Some kings like Manasseh started out extremely bad but were saved and became good before they died. All the northern kings were evil, especially King Ahab with his wife Jezebel. We will spend quite a bit of time looking into their lives and reign. We will also spend a lot of time studying the lives of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, as several chapters are dedicated to them. We will also meet another, lesser-known prophet named Micaiah.

✕ The reason that we will benefit greatly from the study of 1st and 2nd Kings is that we see a lot of our own human problems in the lives of these kings. People are the same today as they were back then. We can learn a lot from both the good and bad examples of behavior recorded in these books, as well as from the principles taught by God directly as He dealt with these people 2,600 – 3,000 years ago.

Introduction 1 Kings 1

The first eleven chapters of 1 Kings involves the reign of Solomon (1 Kings 1 – 11).

In this chapter we will see David at the end of his life as he is about to turn the kingdom over to his son, Solomon. We will learn in this chapter that one of Solomon's half-brothers, one of David's sons, Adonijah, who, interestingly enough, was Absalom's brother, tried to take the throne away from Solomon, even before David had died. Though David loved the Lord dearly, he was not successful in communicating his faith effectively to at least some of his children. Absalom was the son of David from his union with Haggith and he led the nation in rebellion against his father. Now his brother, Adonijah, was rebellion against God's choice for king, which was Solomon:

"7 And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God: 8 But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. 9 Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. 10 He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be

my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever." (1 Chronicles 22:7-10)

"4 Howbeit the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he liked me to make me king over all Israel: 5 And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. 6 And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. 7 Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day." (1 Chronicles 28:4-7)

It is believed by most theologians that this charge that David gave to Solomon regarding the Temple was given before the rebellion of Absalom, which was long before this time in 1 Kings 1, so it was clearly God's will that Solomon be king, not Adonijah.² According to 2 Kings 2:15, Adonijah knew this:

*"15 And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: **for it was his from the LORD.**" (1 Kings 2:15)*

This lust for power, control, and money is certainly not a problem limited to Bible characters from 2,600 years ago. We see this everywhere today.

"1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? 2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. 3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James 4:1-3)

Illustrate – Supermarket owners – the kids all fight over who will take control.

I. The Closing Days of David's Life (vs. 1 – 4)

David certainly had his problems with immorality in his lifetime. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and also married many wives, which is against the teaching that *"a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his **wife (not wives): and they shall be one flesh.**"* (Genesis 2:24) Jesus clarified this further when He said: *"For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they **twain** shall be one flesh?"* (Matthew 19:5). I do not think that we can say that the event recorded here was a

² Crockett, William. 1897. *A Harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles: The Books of the Kings of Judah and Israel*. New York; Chicago; Toronto; London; Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company.

moral failure. David was an old man (about 70 – see 2 Samuel 5:4) who was failing in health, and he was cold. So, they brought in this young girl, Abishag, to keep him warm. Frankly, I don't know why one of his wives could not minister to that need, but the Scripture is very clear that David "knew her not" (v. 4), meaning he was not intimate with her. Though this may seem strange to us, "this was in harmony with the medical customs of that day; both the Jewish historian Josephus (first century a.d.) and the Greek physician Galen (second century a.d.) record such a practice."³

We could make the argument that David held on to his throne for too long and perhaps should have turned it over to Solomon earlier. It appears that Adonijah was taking advantage of David's apparent weakness and saw it as an opportunity to take over.

II. The Crafty Deception of Adonijah (vs. 5 – 27)

Adonijah was perhaps the oldest remaining son of David:

"2 And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; 3 And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; 4 And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;" (2 Samuel 3:2-4)

Of these four sons, we know that Amnon and Absalom were both dead. Amnon was killed by Absalom after Amnon raped Absalom's sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13:28). Absalom was killed by Joab after he led a rebellion against his father David (2 Samuel 18:14). We do not know what happened to Chileab, but it may be a safe assumption that he died. Thus, Adonijah may have felt justified to take the kingdom as he was the oldest.

Notice his statement in v. 5, "I will be king." He reminds you of Satan doesn't he. Satan said:

"13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Isaiah 14:13-14)

You need to watch out for those "I will" statements. Maybe we should replace them with: "if the Lord wills." James said:

"13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the

³ MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. 1997. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. Electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. 16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil." (James 4:13-16)

Isn't it inside all of us to seize control of our lives away from the reign of God? God wants to be the King in our lives, but we are constantly trying to knock God off the throne and assume power. Recognizing that this little battle rages within us, we must daily acknowledge and submit to God's authority in our lives. Every time self begins to elevate itself, we must consciously abase him, and yield our allegiance to the Holy Spirit of God. We are really no different than Adonijah. Our pride causes us to lust for the dominion and power that does not rightfully belong to us. The key to successful Christian living is submission to the will of God. He is the only King.

"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14:11)

Notice in v. 6 that David had not discouraged Adonijah from his pursuit of the throne that was clearly given to Solomon by God. Apparently, Adonijah was a good looking and likeable guy, like his brother Absalom, and he was able to also win over the hearts of many within the kingdom, including Joab, which is surprising because Joab was the one who killed his brother Absalom.

Adonijah saw an opportunity to seize power. He made a conspiracy with Joab and Abiathar to take control of the kingdom. With the backing of the military and the temple, it would be difficult to stop him. He called all the king's sons (except Solomon), and all the important men of Judah (except Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, and Benaiah, one of David's mighty men) to announce that he was king. Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, finds out about the conspiracy and reveals it to the king.

III. The Clarified Decision of David (vs. 28 – 48)

Apparently, the final and clarified word of King David was enough to quell the rebellion. David still had the hearts of the people, though he may not have had the loyalty of everyone who was in leadership, but when Solomon was anointed king by Zadok and Nathan, that was enough to cause the rebellion to stand down.

IV. The Compassionate Decree of Solomon Regarding Adonijah (vs 49 – 53)

Perhaps Solomon should not have had mercy on Adonijah. He made the decision to be merciful before he was given wisdom by God. Adonijah will demonstrate that he was not an honorable man deserving of mercy, and in the next chapter, he will be put to death.