

## THE BIG READ (33)

### Jesus in Kings

#### A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”  
(Luke 24:45-47)

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

2. The Old Testament that Jesus read has three sections – the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

The next book of the Prophets is the book of Kings.

This originally was one book, but like Samuel, when Kings was translated from Hebrew to Greek, a second scroll was needed, and so Kings was split in two.

This explains why the account of Ahaziah king of Israel is split in two, with 1 Kings ending with him becoming king of Israel, and 2 Kings beginning with his death.

3. We don't know who wrote Kings.

Jewish tradition says that, "*Jeremiah wrote his own book, the Book of Kings, and Lamentations.*"

This is unlikely because Kings seems to have been written or completed as a book in Babylon during the time of exile (the most probable date is 560-550BC), yet at the time of exile Jeremiah ended up not in Babylon but in Egypt.

One thing is clear, is that whoever wrote it, clearly knew the book of Deuteronomy well, as many of the things that happen in Kings are anticipated by or explained in this book.

#### B. Getting Started with Kings

1. Kings continues the story of the people of Israel after they entered the Promised Land that began in the book of Joshua.

After entering and conquering Canaan, different parts of the land were allocated to the different tribes who were given the responsibility of destroying the remaining Canaanites living there.

However, as Judges records, the tribes failed to do this and soon began to worship the gods of the Canaanites and God's response was to hand them over to their enemies.

In His mercy, God did raise up judges to rescue them, but the rescue the judges brought was temporary, lasting only the lifetime of the judge.

Not only that, the Priests and Levites who were responsible for providing spiritual leadership for the people and ensuring that they were obeying the Law of Moses failed to do this, and the book ends with Israel in a mess spiritually and morally.

Israel needed a king, who would lead them into battle and destroy their enemies, provide lasting peace and security in the land, and who would keep and enforce the Law of Moses, and the book of



2. In 1 Kings 1 to 11 we see that the failure of the United Kingdom of Israel under the direction of Solomon to keep the Law of Moses led to the kingdom being divided in two.

Kings begins full of hope – could Solomon be promised Son of David, the King the people needed?

We're told about Solomon's great wisdom.

"At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Solomon answered... "Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties... So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him... "I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be." (1 Kings 3:5-6, 7, 9-11, 12)

We're told about Solomon's great work.

"In the eleventh year in the month of Bul, the eighth month, the temple was finished in all its details according to its specifications. He had spent seven years building it." (1 Kings 6:38)

We're told about Solomon's great worship.

"Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands towards heaven and said: "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below – you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it – as it is today." (1 Kings 8:22-24)

But Solomon sadly was not this King.

Solomon did the three things the king of Israel was not to do (see Deuteronomy 17:16-17): he acquired a great number of horses, he accumulated large amounts of silver and gold, and he took many wives and was led astray.

"As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been... So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done." (1 Kings 11:4, 6)

Solomon's failure to keep the Law of Moses led to the kingdom of Israel being divided in two – but not in his lifetime.

"So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen." (1 Kings 11:11-13)

3. In 1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 25 we see that the failure of the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah under the direction of their kings to keep the Law of Moses led to people being sent into exile.

After Solomon died, God's Word came to pass, as Jeroboam led the 10 northern tribes of Israel to rebel against Rehoboam, Solomon's son.

These 10 northern tribes split away and formed a new kingdom called Israel with Jeroboam as their first king. Jeroboam's first act is to erect golden calves to worship at Bethel and Dan, a direct violation of God's Word.

Rehoboam continued to rule over Judah (and Benjamin), the two southern tribes. Under his rule, high places were set up where idols were worshipped as alternatives to the true God.

Both kings led the people to do what was evil in the eyes of the Lord.

The rest of Kings tells the story of Israel and Judah's kings in chronological order.

We are told when the king came to reign, how long he reigned for, one or more things that happen during their reign, and then information about their death, burial and succession.

Most importantly, we're told about whether they led the people to keep the Law of Moses or not, and in particular whether the kings of Israel remove the two golden calves, and whether the kings of Judah got rid of the high places.

None of Israel's kings led the people to keep the Law of Moses. During this time God raised up prophets including Elijah and Elisha, Jonah, Amos and Hosea, to warn the nation and call them to repent. But they were not listened to, and in 722BC Israel went into exile at the hands of Assyria.

"The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria... All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt." (2 Kings 17:5-7)

Of Judah's kings, only Hezekiah and Josiah led the people to keep the Law of Moses and removed the high places. There were other kings who were personally faithful to God but who did nothing about the high places.

Most of Judah's king, like the kings of Israel, led the people away from the Lord. Again, God raised up prophets including Joel, Obadiah, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah, but most of the time they were not listened to.

The worst of all Judah's kings was Manasseh.

"He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshipped them. He built altars in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put my Name." In both courts of the temple of the LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts. He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practised sorcery and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger. He took the carved Asherah pole he had made and put it in the temple... Manasseh led them astray." (2 Kings 21:2-7, 9)

It was Manasseh's sin that would bring about the destruction of the temple and the exile of the people of Judah to Babylon in 587BC.

"It was because of the LORD's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence." (2 Kings 24:20)

The failure of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah to keep the Law of Moses led to their exiles. But this should not have been a surprise to them. God had warned them that this would happen.

"If you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you... the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other." (Deuteronomy 28:15, 64)

Yet God had not forgotten the promise He had made to David.

"In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year Evil-Merodach became king of Babylon, he released Jehoiachin from prison on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month. He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat of honour higher than those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table. Day by day the king gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived." (2 Kings 25:27-30)

The book finished with one of David's descendants alive and being shown favour.

There is hope after all! A son of David, the promised King is still to come.

#### **D. Jesus in Kings**

1. Jesus is the King who is greater than Solomon.

"The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here." (Matthew 12:42)

2. Jesus is the King who is not warned by the Prophets.

"And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus... Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" (Mark 9:4, 7)

3. Jesus is the King who is able to bring His people back from exile.

"About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" – which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)