



The rise and fall of King Solomon

1 KINGS 1 – 11

by James Hughes

the rise and fall of king solomon
the good book guide to 1 kings 1 – 11
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CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Why study 1 Kings? | 5 |
| 1. Solomon the king | 7 |
| 1 Kings 1 | |
| 2. Solomon's rule | 13 |
| 1 Kings 1 – 2 | |
| 3. Solomon's wisdom | 19 |
| 1 Kings 3 | |
| 4. Solomon's wealth | 25 |
| 1 Kings 4 – 5 | |
| 5. Solomon's buildings | 31 |
| 1 Kings 6 – 7 | |
| 6. Solomon's prayer | 37 |
| 1 Kings 8 | |
| 7. Solomon and the queen | 43 |
| 1 Kings 9 – 10 | |
| 8. Solomon's fall | 49 |
| 1 Kings 11 | |
| Leader's Guide | 55 |

introduction: good book guides

Every Bible-study group is different—yours may take place in a church building, in a home or in a cafe, on a train, over a leisurely mid-morning coffee or squashed into a 30-minute lunch break. Your group may include new Christians, mature Christians, non-Christians, mums and tots, students, businessmen or teens. That's why we've designed these *Good Book Guides* to be flexible for use in many different situations.

Our aim in each session is to uncover the meaning of a passage, and see how it fits into the “big picture” of the Bible. But that can never be the end. We also need to appropriately apply what we have discovered to our lives. Let's take a look at what is included:

- ↻ **Talkabout:** Most groups need to “break the ice” at the beginning of a session, and here's the question that will do that. It's designed to get people talking around a subject that will be covered in the course of the Bible study.
- ⏴ **Investigate:** The Bible text for each session is broken up into manageable chunks, with questions that aim to help you understand what the passage is about. **The Leader's Guide** contains **guidance on questions**, and sometimes ☑ additional “follow-up” questions.
- 🔍 **Explore more (optional):** These questions will help you connect what you have learned to other parts of the Bible, so you can begin to fit it all together like a jig-saw; or occasionally look at a part of the passage that's not dealt with in detail in the main study.
- ➡ **Apply:** As you go through a Bible study, you'll keep coming across **apply** sections. These are questions to get the group discussing what the Bible teaching means in practice for you and your church. 🗣️ **Getting personal** is an opportunity for you to think, plan and pray about the changes that you personally may need to make as a result of what you have learned.
- ⤴ **Pray:** We want to encourage prayer that is rooted in God's word—in line with His concerns, purposes and promises. So each session ends with an opportunity to review the truths and challenges highlighted by the Bible study, and turn them into prayers of request and thanksgiving.

The **Leader's Guide** and introduction provide historical background information, explanations of the Bible texts for each session, ideas for **optional extra** activities, and guidance on how best to help people



why study 1 Kings 1 – 11?

Solomon can rightly claim to be one of the most famous kings in history. Wealthy and wise, he is credited with writing three of the most influential books ever penned. And the poetic phrases he wrote in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs about life, love and meaning have entered the English language and are still in common use even today.

These chapters at the start of 1 Kings chart the rise and reign of a man made great by a great God. All of God's promises seem to come together as He establishes what appears to be a "golden age" for the people of Israel. In the whole of the Old Testament after Genesis 3, this is as good as it gets.

But in these chapters are also buried some timebombs which bring the sudden decline and ruin of the king, and his kingdom. Israel under Solomon temporarily hits the heights: but it rapidly plumbs the depths.

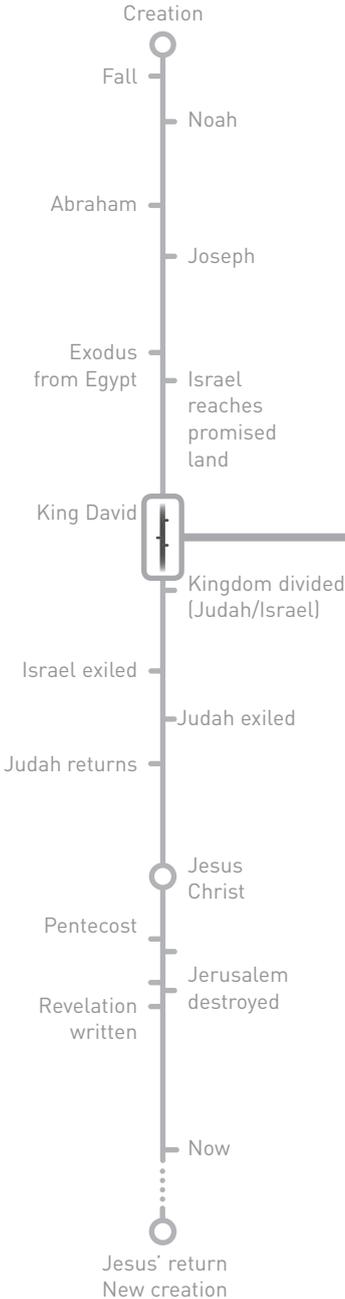
This king and his amazing kingdom were only ever a signpost. Through them God points to the time when He will bring a greater reality: a wise King who would not fail and a kingdom which could not be broken—a person and a place which truly is as good as it possibly gets.

The rise of Solomon and his kingdom turn out to be just a shadow of the reality that is to come in Christ. Its peak shows us how wonderful it is when God's people live in God's land under God's King. And its fading splendour reminds us to look forward to the eternal glory of living under great Solomon's greater Son—Jesus Christ.



BIBLE TIMELINE

Where does the book of 1 Kings fit into the whole story of God's word?



SOLOMON 970-930BC

- 970BC — Solomon becomes king
- 966BC — Temple and palace begun
- 959BC — Temple finished
- 953BC — Palace finished
- 930BC — Solomon dies
Kingdom divided



1

1 Kings 1

SOLOMON THE KING

Who's Who?

It's 970BC in Israel, the land God has given His people to live in. King David is on the throne. He was chosen by God to rule, as a "man after his own heart" (1 Samuel 13 v 14).

God has promised David that his family will continue to rule Israel; that one of them will build a temple in which God will be particularly present, living, among His people; and that one of David's descendants will rule forever (2 Samuel 7 11b-16). God has spoken to David through His prophet, Nathan.

David has a complex family. He has more than eight wives, and dozens of children. His oldest surviving son is Adonijah. One of Adonijah's brothers was Absalom, who rebelled against God a few years before, but was killed in battle (2 Samuel 15 – 18).

One of his other sons is Solomon. He's Adonijah's half-brother, and his mother is Bathsheba. From his birth, God has particularly loved him (2 Samuel 12 v 24-25); and He has promised David that Solomon will succeed him as king (1 Chronicles 22 v 9-10).

David hasn't been a perfect king—but he has been a great one. Now he's old, and approaching death; which is where the book of 1 Kings picks up the story...

talkabout

1. What are the things in this world—people or events—which make you question how God is at work?



investigate

▶ Read 1 Kings 1 v 1-27

2. What are we told about King David (v 1)?

DICTIONARY

Stone of Zoheleth (v 9): a spring near Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.

Prophet (v 10): someone given a message by God, for an audience chosen by God.

Adonijah takes advantage of the situation to push himself to the front of the line to succeed his father. He wins widespread, though not total, support from powerful men (v 7). And he shuts some of David's closest circle out (v 10).

3. How does Nathan the prophet react (v 11-14)?

- Read **2 Samuel 12 v 24-25** and **1 Chronicles 22 v 9-10**. Why does Nathan act as he does in 1 Kings 1?

4. How do Bathsheba and Nathan seek to get David to act?

- v 17:
- v 18-19:
- v 20:
- v 21:
- v 24-27:



5. Summarise what this passage tells us about the political situation in Jerusalem towards the end of David's reign.

 **apply**

6. What do you make of all this jostling for position? How do we see it among God's people today? Is it inevitable? Is it beneficial?

7. What can your church learn from the behaviour of Adonijah, Nathan and Bathsheba (both things to copy, and things to avoid!)?

 **getting personal**

"What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs" (Luke 12 v 3).

How do you go about getting what you want? At church, at work and in the home, what in your conduct is the all-seeing God pleased with? What would He want you to change?





explore more

optional

▶ Read 2 Samuel 7 v 1-16

What things did God promise King David?

Nathan the prophet delivered God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7, and is on the scene when the succession crisis erupts in 1 Kings 1.

How do you think his knowledge both of God's promise then, and of David's weakness now, influences his course of action?



investigate

▶ Read 1 Kings 1 v 28-53

8. What does David do (v 28-31)?

DICTIONARY

Gihon (v 33): another spring near Jerusalem. Adonijah made his bid for power at a spring, at Zohemoth; David ensures Solomon does likewise, but better!

Horns of the altar (v 50): by grabbing these, someone was publicly admitting they had done wrong, and asking for mercy.

9. By verse 40, we have two kings-in-waiting! What is the difference between Adonijah's claim to the throne, and Solomon's?

10. How is Solomon's coronation received by:

- the people (v 39-40)?



- Adonijah's allies (v 41-49)?

- Adonijah (v 50-51)?

11. What do verses 51-53 tell us about Solomon?

 **apply**

12. God hasn't spoken or directly intervened in the whole of the chapter. But Solomon, the man He loves, and who His chosen King, David, had said should inherit his throne, ends the chapter as king. What do we learn about how God works?

- How does 1 Kings 1 encourage us and challenge us when God's church today is facing a crisis?





getting personal

What situation in your life looks as if God is not in charge?
What will help you to keep trusting that the sovereign God has that situation under His control?
Resolve to make the most of that help this week.



pray

Praise God...

that He is in control of every situation, and that His purposes cannot be prevented.

Confess to God...

any ways in which you're trying to resist God's will, or using dubious methods to get to where you want to be in life.

Ask God...

to give you faith, like Nathan's, in His promises and wisdom—and to help you take risks when it's necessary to do so to live His way and put His wishes first.

