

READING 1 KINGS TOGETHER

JULY 2025

INTRODUCING 1 KINGS

In 2 Samuel, the Lord made a promise: a special King (the Messiah) would come from David's royal line and reign forever. In 1 Kings, we follow the history of this promise after the death of David. Ultimately, none of the following kings live up to the portrait of the promised Messiah.

Initially, King Solomon's reign seems promising. He seeks God's wisdom, builds the temple, and has an international influence. Tragically, his heart is divided and he disobeys the Lord. After his death, the kingdom divides in two – a northern kingdom (Israel) under Jeroboam and a southern one (Judah) under Solomon's son Rehoboam.

1 and 2 Kings describe the reigns of successive kings in both kingdoms, evaluating them based on their obedience to God's word and their worship of him alone. There are no good kings in the north and only a few in the south.

During Ahab's reign, we also meet the prophet Elijah, who confronts Ahab over his idolatry. This leads to the famous "God contest", where the Lord shows with fire that he is the one true God.

FIVE KEY THEMES

- **The promise-keeping God** – Throughout, we see God's commitment to his promises to Abraham and David. As a result, Solomon's reign is blessed, and the promised royal line survives his disobedience.
- **The authority of God's words** – God's instructions, promises and warnings should all be taken very seriously. This is demonstrated in the downfall of various kings and in the ministry of Elijah.
- **The tragedy of idolatry** – The events of 1 and 2 Kings lead to the judgement of exile. When we see the idolatry and compromise in 1 Kings, it's clear this judgement was deserved. This is a warning for us.
- **The Lord's patience** – Despite persistent rebellion, the Lord continues to show grace to his people. He does not abandon them, but keeps lovingly warning, correcting and calling them to repentance.
- **Our need for King Jesus** – At the end of the book, we are left longing for a King who will keep the Law perfectly. We rejoice in King Jesus, the Son of David (Matt 1:1), the One greater than Solomon (Matt 12:42).

FIVE KEY PEOPLE

- **David** – Although King David dies near the start of 1 Kings, he is named in more than half of the book's chapters. Keep an eye out for his name – why is he mentioned so often?
- **Solomon** – The reign of Solomon is filled with great highs and serious lows. As you read, notice the moments where things seem to go wrong. What can we learn from his life and heart?
- **Jeroboam** – The negative legacy of Jeroboam continues through several generations, as later kings "walked in the way of Jeroboam" (15:26, 15:34, 16:26, 16:31). In what ways was his bad example imitated?
- **Elijah** – We see several amazing things happening in Elijah's ministry. Yet in James 5:17, he serves as an example for us, as a "man with a nature like ours". How does Elijah's story encourage you in prayer?
- **Ahab** – The reign of Ahab was filled with idolatry, evil and violence. Through all of this, however, the Lord still reigned and still worked out his plans. What lessons does this give us as we look at our world today?

OTHER RESOURCES

There are some extra resources you might find helpful on our website, including book overviews, a table of kings, sermon series and book recommendations:

litchardmission.co.uk/rbt

A SUGGESTED READING PLAN

1 Kings has 22 chapters. You may find it easier to split up some of the longer chapters. Here's a possible 31-day plan:

SOLOMON

- 1:1–27
- 1:28–53
- 2:1–12
- 2:13–46
- 3:1–28
- 4:1–34
- 5:1–18
- 6:1–13
- 6:14–7:12
- 7:13–51
- 8:1–21

8:22–53

8:54–66

9:1–28

10:1–29

11:1–8

11:9–43

DIVISION

12:1–33

13:1–34

14:1–31

15:1–32

15:33–16:34

AHAB/ELIJAH

17:1–24

18:1–19

18:20–46

19:1–21

20:1–25

20:26–43

21:1–29

22:1–28

22:29–53