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THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

HOW CAN A PROMISING START LIKE THIS:

God said to David, "Your throne will be established forever." *2 Sam 7:16.*

LEAD TO THIS:

"In the end, God thrust them from his presence." *2 Kings 24:20.*

WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT OUR GOD AND OURSELVES?

Introduction

Over twenty percent of God's word in the Old Testament is made up of the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, spanning 500 years. Therefore we must take seriously the fact that God intends us to learn from these narratives. We can learn much about God, and about his purposes for his people, amongst whom we are now counted. We can also understand ourselves better, as we see ourselves reflected in these narratives.

Purpose of Samuel and Kings

The four books 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings are really one continuous work, divided only because of the limited size of ancient scrolls. The last event recorded (2 Kings 25) happened when the Jews were in exile in Babylon (about 561 BC). Hence it is probable that the whole four books were compiled during the exile of Judah (but using earlier source material), for the primary benefit of the people in exile. They were faced with critical questions such as, "Had God been defeated by King Nebuchadnezzar and his gods?"; "Why was the Jewish nation destroyed, and its people exiled?"; "Had God abandoned his people and his promises to Abraham and David?"; "What did the future hold for the Jews?"

This purpose is clearly evident towards the end, particularly in the interpretations of: the destruction of Israel (2 Kings 17); the Book of the Law, (2 Kings 22:14-20); the reign of Manasseh (2 Kings 21:10-15); and the exile of Judah (23:26-27; 24:18-20).

Type of Literature

Samuel and Kings are not systematic political histories in the modern sense. Events are selected, emphasised and interpreted in so far as they are relevant to the sort of questions just mentioned. Other events of major political or economic importance (some of which we know about from the ancient records of surrounding countries) are omitted or treated briefly, because they are less relevant for the author's purpose.

Major Themes

(1) *Covenant Blessing and Curse*. In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, God had set out the blessings and curses that would flow according to whether or not his people lived according to his covenant requirements (eg Exodus 19-23). Kings records how, by and large, the kings and people did not live according to God's ways, and thus shows how the people suffer the covenant curses (eg 2 Kgs 17:7-23).

(2) *God's promise to David*. God had nonetheless promised that his love would never leave the house of David, whose throne would endure forever (2 Sam 7:15-16). This controls much of the action in Kings (eg 1 Kgs 11:36-39; 2 Kgs 8:19; and hovers in the background of the ambiguous conclusion of 2Kgs 25).

(3) *The Extent of Human Sin*. Of the 35 kings of Judah and Israel, only two are assessed in fully positive terms. The record of careless disregard of God, idolatry, and outright rejection of God is simply appalling, especially given the repeated blessings and warnings given by God to his people (summarised in 2 Kgs 17:7-23). The effect of the sheer repetitiousness of the accounts of Israel's sins forces us to think repeatedly: Are we any better? What fate do we deserve?

Unresolved question

The question looms large: How can God's promise to David be fulfilled in the presence of (i) such pervasive human sin, and (ii) God's commitment to his covenant curses (and blessings). Kings ends in tension: God is affirmed as faithful to his promises, yet Israel has been destroyed and Judah is hopelessly in exile. Something radically new is needed.

The Gospel is needed

The tension with which Kings ends is ultimately resolved in Jesus. It is Jesus who sets the prisoners free (Luke 4:18). It is Jesus who became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21). It is through Jesus that "the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit." (Rom 8:4). Perhaps one of the greatest values of studying Kings is that we might see ourselves in the brutally frank account of the wickedness of our ancient ancestors. This throws us onto the mercy of God and the grace of his gospel in Jesus.

Max Gilbert, 1997

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

During our studies this term it is helpful to have an outline of the history of the time firmly in mind.

1. The United Kingdom

After Saul's death, David became king of all Israel. Under him and his son Solomon, Israel reached its greatest power and size, virtually fulfilling God's promises to Abraham (eg Genesis 15:18-21). However Solomon, after a good start, displeased God. In 930 BC the kingdom was divided.

2. The Kingdom of Israel

The Northern Kingdom, Israel comprised 10 of the original 12 tribes. It uniformly displeased God. They combined the idolatrous worship of their pagan neighbours with what God had prescribed. They did not worship at Jerusalem, but set up rival altars at Bethel and Dan. These were the sins of Jeroboam.

In time this led to the actual worship of other Gods, especially under Ahab and his Baal worshipping wife, Jezebel. Despite some reforms (eg under Jehu), this idolatry ultimately led God to destroy the Northern Kingdom. God did this by the hand of the Assyrian King Shalmaneser in 722 BC.

3. The Kingdom of Judah

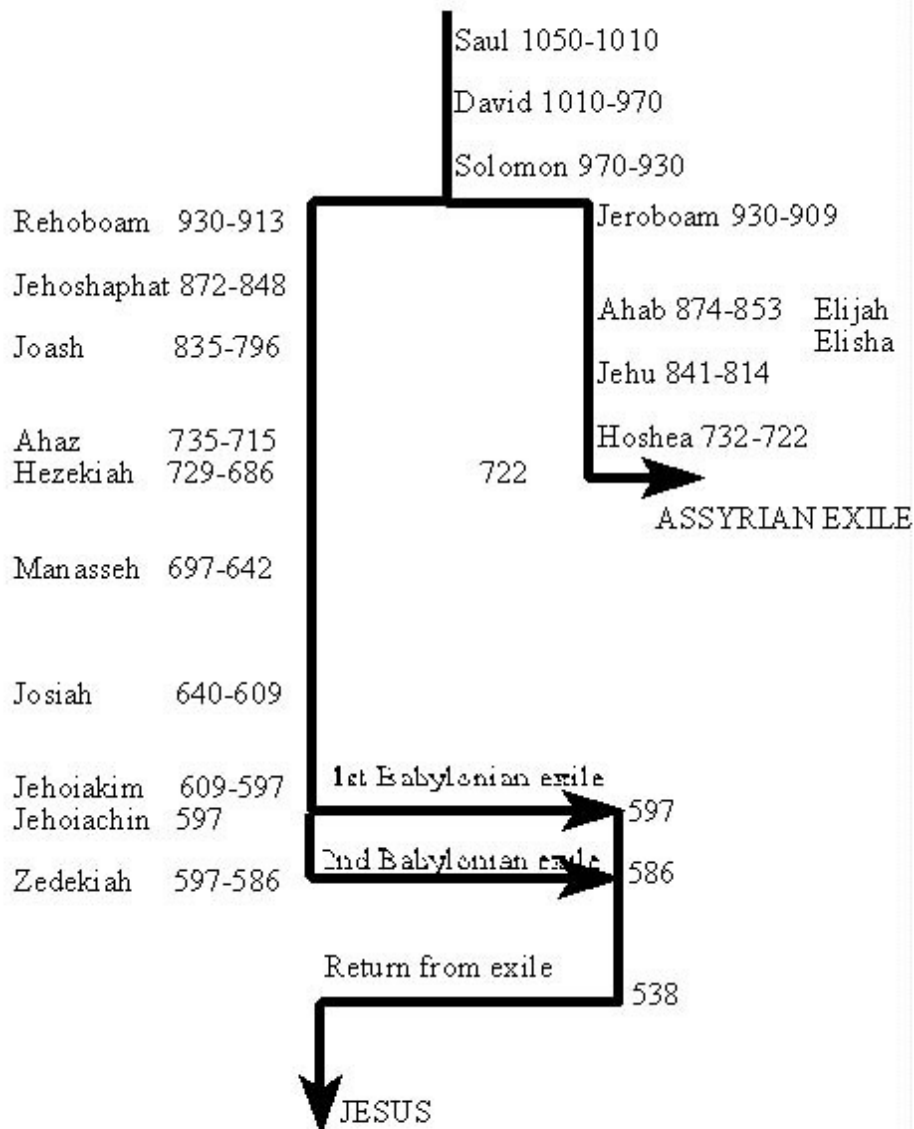
The Southern Kingdom, comprising Judah and part of Benjamin, was ruled by the successive descendants of David. This kingdom was blessed by God's promise that David's throne would be established forever. However, despite the warning of what happened to the Northern Kingdom, it too ignored God and turned to idolatry. Although some southern kings pleased God (eg Hezekiah and Josiah), the nation's fate was sealed by Manasseh who acted like Ahab (the worst of the Northern Kings). Ultimately Judah too was destroyed, and taken into exile by the Babylonians in 597 and 586 BC.

4. The Exile and Return

God permitted the people of Judah to return, and a measure of restoration of the nation occurred. However it was in David's greatest descendant, Jesus that God's promise to establish David's throne forever was fulfilled.

JUDAH

ISRAEL



THE MAIN KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Week 1

THEME: Our Reaction to the Greatness of God's Promises.

Day 1 2 Samuel 6:1-23

In 2 Sam 5, King David first conquered Jerusalem. What did David do next? (v2 and 17)

Day 2 2 Samuel 7:1-13

David wanted to build a house (temple) for God (v1-5). But who did God say was going to build the house for him? (v12-13) What was his name? (1 Kings 2:12 and 5:5).

Day 3 2 Samuel 7:13-17

God made a great promise to David, which has controlled the rest of the history of the world. What was it?

Day 4 2 Samuel 8 and 10

Chapters 8 and 10 describe David's victories over surrounding enemies. What was the effect of this on David, and what was the cause of his victories? (8:13-14)

Day 5 2 Samuel 9

Saul's son Jonathan had helped David in his struggles against Saul (eg 1 Sam 20:12-17). In return, what did David do for Jonathan's son Mephibosheth? (v7).

STUDY PASSAGE 2 Samuel 7:18-29

To Discuss:

1. 2 Samuel 7:1-17 is one of the key passages in the OT. We studied it in the "Genesis to Jesus" series in 1996. What promises did God make in verses 11-16? Throughout this series, we will observe the ways in which these promises are fulfilled. (refer 1 Kgs 11:36-39; 2 Kgs 8:19; Dan 2:44-45)

2. (v18-29) What did David do when he heard these promises? How did he feel? Why did God make these promises(v26)?

3. What is David's prayer (v29)? On what is it based (v28; compare Mat 24:35)? In what ways is this a model for our own prayers?

4. Who is the greatest king descended from David (Rom 1:3)? Where is his kingdom (John 18:36-37)? As Christians we are covered by the blessing mentioned in v28. What aspects of David's reaction do/should you share?

PRAY

Thank God for the great promises that he made to King David, the benefits of which we share.

Week 2

THEME : God's Judgement and Grace.

Day 1 2 Samuel 11:1-27

Who are the four main characters in chapter 11?

Day 2 2 Samuel 11:1-27

What were the four sins which David committed in chapter 11?

Day 3 2 Samuel 11:27

What did God think about what David had done?

Day 4 2 Samuel 12:1-31

Who made David realise his sin? (v7)

Day 5 2 Samuel 13

David's punishment was that there would be bloodshed and calamity within his own household (12:10-12). Note how this starts: 13:1, 14, 21, 28-29, 38.

STUDY PASSAGE 2 Samuel 12:1-14

To Discuss:

1. In Nathan's story, *what* or *who* do the following symbolise: the poor man; the rich man; the traveller; the large number of sheep; the little ewe; and, the meal?

2. Why is it true (v10) that in his sins, David had *despised* God and that he had despised *God* (in contrast to Bathsheba or Uriah)? Read Ps 51:1-4. Reflect on the fact that all our sins are primarily against God and only secondarily against people. What difference does this make to the way we relate to God, and to the way God relates to us?

3. What was the normal penalty for adultery (Lev 20:10)? and for murder (Lev 24:17)? What penalty did David himself prescribe for the rich man in Nathan's parable (v5)? Discuss, from your own life, and from v10-14, whether it is true that though God forgives us, he also punishes us. What was David's heartfelt prayer (Ps 51:1, 10-12)?

4. Despite this terrible crime, how did God show grace to David and Bathsheba (v24-25)? How do the events of this episode fulfil 2 Sam 7:12-16?

PRAY

Pray for a sense of the seriousness with which God views our sins. Pray with David in his words in Ps 51:1-4, 10-12. Thank God for his grace and mercy to us.

Week 3

THEME: God dwells with man.

Day 1 1 Kings 1 - 2

Who succeeded David as king (1:32-35)? What did David command his successor to do (2:2-9)?

Day 2 1 Kings 3 - 4

What special gift did Solomon ask for and receive from God (3:7-12)?

Day 3 1 Kings 5-6

What special project did Solomon undertake (5:3-5)? How did this fulfil God's promises in 2 Sam 7:12-16?

Day 4 1 Kings 7-8

What was the final item brought into the temple when it was completed (8:6)? What was in the ark (8:9)?

Day 5 1 Kings 9-10

What promises and warnings does God give to Solomon after the temple has been consecrated (9:3-9)?

STUDY PASSAGE 1 Kings 8:10-30, 46-61

To Discuss:

1. How did God visibly demonstrate his presence in the new temple (v10-11.- note that "cloud" and "glory" are almost synonymous here)? Compare this to what happened when the tabernacle was completed (Exodus 40:33-35), and when the temple was about to be destroyed (Ezekiel 10:3-5, 18-19), and when Jesus became man (John 1:14).

2. Do you think that OT people *really* thought that God dwelt in the temple (v12-13, 27; compare Acts 7:44-50)? What then is the real significance of the temple being built for the Name of the Lord (v17, 29-30)?

3. v46-53 is the last of a series of 7 specific requests (v31-53) that God would hear the prayers of his repentant people. What is the basis on which Solomon makes these requests (v23-26, 51, 53, 59-60)? In what ways do v46-53 describe your own relationship with God?

4. Solomon's great temple was eventually destroyed because the people turned away from God (2 Kings 25:8-9). It was replaced, but it too was destroyed in AD 70. What is God's ultimate temple (John 2:19-21)?

PRAY Praise God that as Jesus, he dwelt among people, and as the Holy Spirit, he dwells within us. Reflect on this and pray in the words of v56-58.

Week 4

THEME: Humiliation ... but not forever.

Day 1 1 Kings 11:1-25

Why did God become angry with Solomon (v9)?

Day 2 1 Kings 11:26-43

What happened to the kingdom because Solomon and the people forsook God and worshipped other gods?

Day 3 1 Kings 12:1-24

What was the immediate political factor which caused the kingdom to be divided (v13-16)?

Day 4 1 Kings 12:25-33

In later studies we will see that Jeroboam becomes the standard of evil by which bad kings are measured. What evil did Jeroboam do?

Day 5 1 Kings 13:1-10

What did the man of God prophesy concerning the pagan practices adopted by Jeroboam (v2-3)? Note how this was fulfilled 300 years later (2 Kings 23:15-20).

STUDY PASSAGE 1 Kings 11:26-40

To Discuss:

- 1.** Israel reached its pinnacle of wealth and political success under Solomon (10:14-28). But, how did Solomon fail to live up to God's expectations for a king (read Deut 17:14-20)?

- 2.** What role did Solomon's wives have in his downfall (11:1-6)? What parallel situations can occur in your own life?

- 3.** In this passage, how did God fulfil his promises in 2 Sam 7:14-15, in regard to both chastisement and the permanence of David's kingdom?

- 4.** Read v39. The division severely weakened David's kingdom. Yet, what hope is hinted at? Read God's revelation (some 350 years later) in Ezekiel 37:15-28, where ultimate reunification under the true David (ie Jesus) is anticipated. As a member of Jesus' kingdom, what hope does this give you?

PRAY

Thank God that he keeps his promises, both in judgement and grace. Pray that we might walk in God's ways, and that God might be with us (v38).

Week 5

THEME: God's sustaining grace.

Day 1 1 Kings 15:1-24

Who were the two kings of Judah who followed Rehoboam? Summarise their reigns (v3, 11). Likewise, summarise the next two kings of Israel (v26, 34).

Day 2 1 Kings 16:1-27

In Judah, when a king died he was succeeded by a son. How was the next king often determined in Israel (15:28; 16:10, 17-18, 22)?

Day 3 1 Kings 16:25-34

God said of Jeroboam, "You have done more evil than all who lived before you" (1 Kings 14:9). How did his successors, Omri and Ahab compare with him (16:25, 30)?

Day 4 1 Kings 17:1-6

What did Elijah tell Ahab (v1)?

Day 5 1 Kings 17:7-24

How did God care for Elijah during the drought (v15-16)?

STUDY PASSAGE 1 Kings 16:29 - 17:24

To Discuss:

- 1.** In what ways was Ahab worse than his predecessors? (compare 16:31-33 with 12:28-33; 13:33-34; 14:9)

- 2.** Discuss the dangers of behaviour like Jeroboam's gradually moving to behaviour like Ahab's.

- 3.** How did God show sustaining grace to Elijah and the widow of Zarepath? What parallels are there with the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness? How do you experience the grace of God?

- 4.** What examples are there in this chapter of faithfulness in adversity?

PRAY

Pray that our faithfulness to God might be like that of Elijah and the widow of Zarepath; and that God might likewise sustain us against adversity and against sins like those of Ahab.

Week 6

THEME: How long will you waver? ... If the Lord is God, follow him!

Day 1 1 Kings 18:1-2

Why did Elijah return to meet King Ahab? How long had the drought lasted?

Day 2 1 Kings 18:3-5

What evidence is there of persecution of those who remained faithful to God?

Day 3 1 Kings 18:6-15

How would you describe the mixed aspects of Obadiah's faith?

Day 4 1 Kings 18:16-24

What was the point of the "contest" on Mount Carmel? (v21)

Day 5 1 Kings 18:25-46

After God sent fire to burn the sacrifice, how did the people react? (v39); what happened to the prophets of Baal? (v40); what happened to the drought (v41-45)?

STUDY PASSAGE 1 Kings 18:16-46

To Discuss:

1. Some decisions we have to make are of no major consequence; others are important, but can be deferred. Why was the choice that Elijah put to the people (v21) *important* and *urgent* ? Why was it specially urgent at that time in the reign of King Ahab? How urgent is the choice today?

2. Read 1 Kings 8:35-36. What aspects of such a prayer were answered in the contest on Mount Carmel?

3. Was this dramatic display initiated by God or Elijah? (v36, 1) Under what circumstances would you put such a challenge to your non-Christian neighbours? In what ways could you urge someone you know to "stop wavering" between the true God and all other alternatives?

4. In the New Testament, Jesus says that Elijah had come again in the form of John the Baptist (Matt 11:14; 17:12-13). What is the miracle to which this second Elijah points? and what is the urgent decision to which he called people? (John 1:29-34; Mat 3:1-2)

PRAYER

Consider someone you know who has not yet decided to follow Jesus. Pray that God will move that person to decide. And that God will move us to do what he wants in bringing that about.

Week 7

THEME: God sustains his prophet and a remnant of his people.

Day 1 1 Kings 19:1-21

Why did Elijah flee to Horeb? (v3)

Day 2 1 Kings 20:1-43

Aram (Syria) initially dominated Israel (v1-4), but was then defeated by Israel in two battles. Why did God give the Israelites victory? (v13, 28)

Day 3 1 Kings 21:1-17

How did Jezebel get Naboth's vineyard for Ahab? (v7-17)

Day 4 1 Kings 21:18-29

What is God's punishment on Ahab, his descendants and Jezebel?

Day 5 1 Kings 22:1-53

How did Ahab die in the battle against Aram (Syria)? (v34-37)

STUDY PASSAGE 1 Kings 19:1-21

To Discuss:

1. How does Elijah show fear and despair in 19:1-4, 10, 14? How does this compare with the Elijah of chapter 18? Can you recall such "ups" and "downs" in your Christian life?

2. In what ways did God sustain Elijah, even when Elijah fled? (v1-8) How did God retain a remnant of Israel and how did he deal with the rest? (v15-18)

3. Read Exodus 33:12 - 34:7, which describes an earlier revelation of God on Mount Horeb (Sinai), following the Israelites' idolatry with the golden calf. What parallels and differences are there to the revelation to Elijah at Horeb?

4. Which of the following do you think is true of v9-14?
 - (a) God was rebuking Elijah for being in the wrong place;
 - (b) God was showing Elijah that mighty demonstrations and violence as in ch18 would in future be replaced by quieter means;
 - (c) God was showing Elijah that He was in control of nature;
 - (d) God was showing the importance of the tasks described in v15-18.

5. What do we learn of the character of God and his purposes for his people in this chapter? How is this consistent with 2 Sam 7:12-16?

PRAY

Thank God that he seeks us and loves us even when we flee from the tasks he has given us, and that he will make clear to us where he wants each of us to be.

Week 8

THEME: God's Defeat of Death.

Day 1 2 Kings 1 - 2

How did Elijah's time on earth end (2:11-12) and who succeeded him as prophet (2:13-15)?

Day 2 2 Kings 2:19 - 6:7

What were the 9 miracles involving Elisha in this passage?

Day 3 2 Kings 6:8 - 7:20

Ultimately Joram, king of Israel, and his family were exterminated with God's approval, because of the idolatry which they allowed to abound in Israel (9:22; 10:30). Yet, what kindness did God show to Joram prior to this?

Day 4 2 Kings 8:7 - 9:13

Which prophecies of 1 Kings 19:15-18 are fulfilled here?

Day 5 2 Kings 9:14 - 10:36

How complete was the extermination of the house of Ahab and the ministers of Baal?

STUDY PASSAGE 2 Kings 4:8-37

To Discuss:

1. How do you view the prospect of death, for yourself or your loved ones?

2. From the clues in the account, how would you describe the Shunamite woman, her motives, her behaviour, her relationship to God, and her relationships to Gehazi and Elisha? What basis, if any, does she have for her belief that "everything is all right"(v23, 26)? Given that the bible, and experience, makes it clear that physical death is universal, in what sense, if any, is the Shunamite woman a role model for us?

3. Elijah, Elisha and Jesus all raised a dead person(s) back to life shortly before undertaking major actions. How did this serve to authenticate their subsequent actions? (1 Kings 17:24; 2 Kings 4:37; 8:1-6; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:38-44; 12:17-19).

4. This incident is an OT glimpse of the defeat over death which Jesus has achieved. What does the NT tell us about death and resurrection (1 Cor 15:20-28; John 11:25-26; Phil 1:21)? Reflect on this great hope that we have as Christ's people.

PRAY

Thank God that in Christ, though we die, yet we will live. Pray that our lives might reflect this reality.

Week 9

THEME: God's judgement explained.

Day 1 Report cards on Israel's Kings

Read and summarise God's "report cards" on the final kings of the Northern Kingdom: Jehoahaz (13:2), Jehoash (13:11), Jeroboam II (14:24), Zechariah (15:9), Shallum (no report), Menahem (15:18), Pekahiah (15:24), Pekah (28:28) and Hoshea (17:2).

Day 2 2 Kings 11

Who was the only female ruler of Judah? How was David's line preserved? (11:1-3)

Day 3 Report cards on Judah's Kings.

Read and summarise God's "report cards" on the kings of Judah: Joash (12:2-3), Amaziah (14:3-4), Azariah (15:3-4), Jotham (15:34-35). How does the report on Ahaz (16:2-4) differ?

Day 4 2 Kings 16:1-20

How did political expediency compromise obedience to God?

Day 5 2 Kings 17

When the Israelites were taken into exile, who lived in Israel? (17:24)

STUDY PASSAGE 2 Kings 17:1-23

To Discuss:

1. What were the immediate historical events which led to the destruction of Israel? (v1-6)
2. There are about 20 sins listed in v7-22. How would you summarise them? What does this imply about what is really important in *our* relationship to God?
3. What are the three or four main factors in the explanation of why God "removed them from his presence" (v18,20,23)? How does God's action here relate to Deut 28:15, 49-52, 64-66?
4. Israel and Judah failed consistently; do you think there is any hope for us to do "better" than they did? How *did* God make it possible for us to be reconciled to himself? (2 Cor 5:20-21)

PRAY

Pray for the desire and ability to serve God as he wants; and thank him that Jesus has taken the punishment that we deserve, just like the Israelites.

Week 10

THEME: Reaction to God's Law

Day 1 2 Kings 18 - 19

Read Hezekiah's "report card" (18:3-4). It is the only fully positive report on any king to date.

Day 2 2 Kings 19

Sennacherib king of Assyria came to attack Jerusalem. What did Hezekiah do? (v14-19)? What did God do? (v35-36).

Day 3 2 Kings 21

How did Manasseh compare to his father? (v2-6). To whom is he compared (v3)? What will be God's judgement on him and Judah (v12-15)?

Day 4 2 Kings 22

Read Josiah's "report card" (v2; also 23:25). What was found in the temple? (v8) What did Josiah conclude after reading the Book of the Law? (v13)

Day 5 2 Kings 23

What did Josiah and the people do in response to the Book of the Law? (v1-3)

STUDY PASSAGE 2 Kings 23:1-27

To Discuss:

1. How do you react when people tell you what to do? How do you react to the fact that God has given us guidelines for our lives? Compare Josiah's reaction to the discovery of the Book of the Law (ch 22) to the way the modern world, even Christians treat God's law.

2. There are about 16 religious reforms described in v4-27. Choose 2 or 3 and discuss how they might have parallels in our own lives. Compare the NT call to renewal (Rom 12:1-8).

3. Despite the way Judah returned to God under Josiah, the idolatry under Manasseh had made God's judgement inevitable (22:14-20; 23:26-27). How is this consistent with 2 Sam 7:12-16? How does God's love ultimately remain on his people? (Rom 5:8-9) Does the time for repentance ever run out?

4. What words and phrases describe Josiah in 23:25? Compare Deut 6:4-5. What steps could we take to bring our lives more into line with our belief, that the Lord our God is the *one* God.

PRAY

That we might have the commitment and enthusiasm of Josiah, and for the wisdom to know how to apply these qualities for God's glory.

Week 11

THEME: The lessons of the Kings: without Christ we remain in exile.

Day 1 2 Kings 23:30-24:20

Who were the last 4 kings of Judah? Which were sons of Josiah and which were grandsons? (23:30, 34; 24:6, 24:17 and Jer 1:3)

Day 2 2 Kings 23:30 - 24:20

How would you describe the "report cards" on these last four kings?

Day 3 2 Kings 24

Why did God finally remove the people of Judah from his presence? (24:2-4, 20)

Day 4 2 Kings 25

Which king destroyed Jerusalem? From what country did he come? (25:1)

Day 5 2 Kings 25

Who was the last king of Judah to survive? (25:27)

STUDY PASSAGE 2 Kings 25:1-30 and Review of 2 Sam - 2 Kings.

To Discuss:

1. What does the long history of Israel and Judah, from King David (1010 BC) to the destruction of Jerusalem (587BC), indicate about human nature? Does it seem likely that people will *ever* love God with all their hearts, minds and strength? In what ways do you think this picture is true of mankind today?

2. Read Deut 28:58-68. If you were a Jew in exile, how would you have felt, and what hope would you have had of ever being reconciled to God? What would you have learned about God? How is that relevant to you today?

3. 2 Kings concludes with Jehoiachin, the last surviving Judean king released from prison and eating at the Babylonian king's table. Do you think this is:

- (a) a note of hope, suggesting that the Davidic line will survive, as promised in 2 Sam 7:12-16?
- (b) a note of despair, with the last Judean king capitulating in total dependence on a pagan master "as long as he lived"?
- (c) a note of deliberate ambiguity: will there be a future?
- (d) a note of no particular significance (particularly as the last reigning king was in fact Zedekiah, not Jehoiachin)?

4. Though the Jews were allowed to return in 536 BC (2 Chr 36:22-23), they were subjugated to the Greeks and later to the Romans. In what way did ultimate release from exile come? (Luke 4:14-21) Unless Jesus had dealt with the problem of the sinful human nature, do you think true release from exile was possible (2 Cor 5:16-21)?

PRAY

Thank God for what you have learned from these studies of the kings, and that Jesus he *now* made possible what must have *then* seemed impossible.

HOW TO USE THESE NOTES

- 1.** Read the daily Bible readings on the left hand side of the double page, and think about the question for the day. Make a note of your answer and any difficulties you have.
- 2.** The questions on the right hand side of the double page are designed for group discussion. Think about these questions before you go to your discussion group.
- 3.** The daily bible readings and study passages follow the morning and evening sermon series. You may find it helpful to take notes of the sermons.
- 4.** Please don't be frustrated if you can't understand or answer the questions: the important thing is that you read God's word.
- 5.** Use this guide for family or personal Bible reading, and if you would like to join a discussion group, please see one of the ministers.

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