

## Read Through the Bible

**Week18:** May 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>

**Readings:** 1Kings1 -15; Luke 22:54 - John 1:28

### Reflections & Questions for Thought

Submitted by Don Wegworth, aided by "An Outline of the Bible"- Landis - "Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts"- Nelson - ESV Study Bible and I pray with some tweaking by the Holy Spirit

1Kings-This book is credited to the prophet Jeremiah, or certain Levites, priests, or "wise men". Written @600BC or later, and perhaps during part of the Babylonian captivity. We focus on the message and not so much on the messenger.

The book is a historical aspect telling of the later years and death of King David; the reign of Solomon; the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon: into the northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah. We will see various kings' rise and fall; an alliance with Egypt, and a dispute of great magnitude with Egypt. We will see invading armies of Assyria and Babylonia, and captivity. WHY? Are not these God's chosen people? Are we similar to them?

The book is full of "Deuteronomic influence", the strivings of those who sought the worship of the one true God: and total regulation of life in accordance with loyalty to Him. It is a historical account with an instructional message: the kings that followed dare assessed not by their material achievements, but by their moral purpose "in the sight of the Lord".

Solomon's reign lasted around 40 years, married a pharaoh's daughter and appeared to be one of peace and prosperity, BUT! Solomon wanted "an understanding heart to judge people by and to be able to discern between good and bad. Can we acquire this gift and also have compassion and forgiving? The glitch was even though Solomon built a magnificent Temple and gave regular sacrifices to God; his numerous foreign wives led him towards idolatry. Do we also misstep and stumble away from the true path?

Luke 22:54-John 1:28

Luke, a probable Gentile physician, had a strong faith within him, and he reminds us again of the betrayal, giving into mob mentality, the trial and passion, the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Luke stresses that this is HE WHO IS, the savior of all, including the poor, the outcasts, women and children, the infirm, etc. Luke reminds us to be thankful and raise

### Introduction to 1 & 2 Kings

By Eugene Peterson, the *Message*

Sovereignty, *God's* sovereignty, is one of the most difficult things for people of faith to live out in everyday

our voice in prayer, in praise, and thanksgiving. Do we recognize the savior when he is talking to us? Do we call out to HIM in our need? If we try we can see, if we pray we can ask. But can we act and do what is right? Favorite verse-Luke24:49: please read and ask that you are also blessed with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

John's one conclusion summed up in Thomas' words: "My Lord and My God". What John had seen and heard "concerning the Word of Life" supported the humanity and divinity of Christ-a raised question many times over the years dividing Judaism and the new religion.

The Word began all, and the Word was with God. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Those blessed saw his glory and the only begotten of the Father, full of grace, love, and truth. The incarnation came to the world and is recognized. All leading to the "I AM" statements expressing His saving relationship toward believers of the Word and supports the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

So move forward in the now with a solidly grounded faith in the one true God who controls both nature and history. There is a payment for sin, which is within us; yet there is hope in finding God's forgiveness if truly repentant. With stiff necks, locked knees and rigid backs, can we bend in prayer and ask HIM for help in all things?

These are my reflections: One who had to seek answers concerning God, without my parent's guidance. Also blessed by acquiring a great education from graduating from a Catholic University. And always also blessed from being around "Good People".

Favorite textbook: The Portable Seminary-Horton (a study in theology)

For now a favorite saying from "some biblical scholar": "It took God only one night to get Israel out of Egypt; but it took 40 years to get Egypt out of Israel. How long is our journey?"

routines. But we have no choice: God is Sovereign. God rules. Not only in our personal affairs, but in the

cosmos. Not only in our times and places of worship, but in office buildings, political affairs, factories, universities, hospitals—yes, even behind the scenes in saloons and rock concerts. It's a wild and extravagant notion, to be sure. But nothing in our Scriptures is attested to more frequently or emphatically. Yet not much in our daily experience confirms it. Impersonal forces and arrogant egos compete for the last word in power. Most of us are knocked around much of the time by forces and wills that give no hint of God. Still, generation after generation, men and women of sound mind continue to give sober witness to God's sovereign rule. One of the enduring titles given to Jesus is "King."

So how do we manage to live believably and obediently in and under this revealed sovereignty in a world that is mostly either ignorant or defiant of it?

Worship shaped by an obedient reading of Scripture is basic. We submit to having our imaginations and behaviors conditioned by the reality of God rather than by what is handed out in school curricula and media reporting. In the course of this worshipful listening, the Books of Kings turn out to provide essential data on what we can expect as we live under God's sovereign rule.

The story of our ancestors, the Hebrew kings, began in the Books of Samuel. This story makes it clear that it was not God's idea that the Hebrews have a king, but since they insisted, he let them have their way. But God never abdicated his sovereignty to any of the Hebrew kings; the idea was that they would represent *his* sovereignty, not that he would delegate his sovereignty to them.

But it never worked very well. After five hundred years and something over forty kings, there was not much to show for it. Even the bright spots—David and Hezekiah and Josiah—were not *very* bright. Human beings, no matter how well intentioned or gifted, don't seem to be able to represent God's rule anywhere close to satisfactory. The Books of Kings, in that light, are a relentless exposition of failure—a relentless five-hundred-year documentation proving that the Hebrew demand of God to "have a king" was about the worst thing they could have asked for.

But through the centuries, readers of this text have commonly realized something else: In the midst of the incredible mess these kings are making of God's purposes, God continues to work his purposes and *uses them* in the work—doesn't discard them, doesn't detour around them; he uses them. They are part of his sovereign rule, whether they want to be or not, whether they know it or not. God's purposes *are* worked out in confrontation and revelation, in judgment and salvation, but they are worked out. God's rule is not imposed in the sense that he forces each man and woman into

absolute conformity to justice and truth and righteousness. The rule is worked from within, much of the time invisible and unnoticed, but always patiently and resolutely *there*. The Books of Kings provide a premier witness to the sovereignty of God carried out among some of the most unlikely and uncooperative people who have ever lived.

The benefit of reading these books is enormous. To begin with, our understanding and experience of God's sovereignty develops counter to all power-based and piety-based assumptions regarding God's effective rule. We quit spinning our wheels on utopian projects and dreams. Following that, we begin to realize that if God's sovereignty is never canceled out by the so deeply sin-flawed leaders ("kings") in both our culture and our church, we can quite cheerfully exult in God's sovereignty as it is being exercised (though often silently and hiddenly) in all the circumstantial details of the actual present.

### **Introduction to John** **By Eugene Peterson, the *Message***

In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, God is presented as speaking the creation into existence. God speaks the word and it happens: heaven and earth, ocean and stream, trees and grass, birds and fish, animals and humans. Everything, seen and unseen, called into being by God's spoken word.

In deliberate parallel to the opening words of Genesis, John presents God as speaking salvation into existence. This time God's word takes on human form and enters history in the person of Jesus. Jesus speaks the word and it happens: forgiveness and judgment, healing and illumination, mercy and grace, joy and love, freedom and resurrection. Everything broken and fallen, sinful and diseased, called into salvation by God's spoken word.

For, somewhere along the line things went wrong (Genesis tells that story, too) and are in desperate need of fixing. The fixing is all accomplished by speaking—God speaking salvation into being in the person of Jesus. Jesus, in this account, not only speaks the word of God; he is the Word of God.

Keeping company with these words, we begin to realize that our words are more important than we ever supposed. Saying "I believe," for instance, marks the difference between life and death. Our words accrue dignity and gravity in conversations with Jesus. For Jesus doesn't impose salvation as a solution; he *narrates* salvation into being through leisurely conversation, intimate personal relationships, compassionate responses, passionate prayer, and—putting it all together—a sacrificial death. We don't casually walk away from words like that.