

# The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom

## Chapter 14

### Audio Lesson: Old Testament Survey lesson 40



Objective: To understand what led to the fall and captivity of the kingdoms and how, with patience and mercy, God deals with His people.



*“Your hearts must be fully committed to the Lord our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.”*

—1 Kings 8:61

The books of Kings give us examples of leaders who had both good and bad qualities. They begin with the reign of Solomon, the son of David, who humbly asked God for wisdom to lead His people. God blessed Solomon with wisdom, riches, and honor. He was a great example of putting God first in his life before riches or personal gain. But at the peak of Israel’s glory, Solomon turned away from God. He married many wives who worshiped foreign idols, and he joined in their worship. As a result, the kingdom was soon divided into two kingdoms, and after the reign of many evil kings, both kingdoms were conquered and taken into captivity.

In spite of the nation’s idolatry, God was very patient with His people. Every time the work of God ran into an obstacle, God raised up a prophet. One of the roles of God’s prophet was to center his preaching on that obstacle until it had been removed and the work of God could go on again. Being God’s instrument to remove problems and obstacles that blocked the work of God was the chief role or function of the prophets.

As you read 1 and 2 Kings, observe the rise and fall of the kingdom. As you learn about this kingdom, you will be able to learn what God wants to do today with His church. Also notice the lives of the kings; most of them are warnings for us, and a few are good examples. Then follow the prophets carefully, because they provide godly examples for us to follow.



1. True or false? The kingdoms in the books of Kings are not the same as the kingdom of God in the New Testament.
2. True or false? The united kingdom of Israel reached its worst point under Solomon's reign.
3. True or false? Both the northern and southern kingdoms were taken captive at the same time and in the same way.

*Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.*

4. How did the southern kingdom of Judah's captivity come about?
  - a. Very suddenly and decisively
  - b. Just like the northern kingdom of Israel's captivity in Assyria
  - c. In three phases, with time to repent before the last phase
  - d. So quickly that they did not have time to repent
5. What was the international reputation of the Hebrew people during the times of the kings?
  - a. They were very rebellious.
  - b. They were very obedient to God.
  - c. They were clever strategists.
  - d. They were very righteous.
6. What is the balance of examples and warnings given in the books of Kings?
  - a. More examples than warnings
  - b. More warnings than examples
  - c. About the same
  - d. Not much of either
7. Who is the most important king in these books?
  - a. Saul
  - b. David
  - c. Nebuchadnezzar
  - d. Solomon
8. What kind of prayers did Solomon pray at the beginning of his reign?
  - a. Weak and faithless
  - b. Humble and pleasing
  - c. Strong and forceful
  - d. Strange and obscure
9. Read Psalm 127:1. Why did Solomon write these words?
  - a. Because he toiled in vain for many years
  - b. Because he learned from his friends' mistakes
  - c. Because he pitied ungodly people who did not know God
  - d. Because he never tried to live independently of God

*Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.*

—Psalm 127:1

10. What message did Solomon preach in the book of Ecclesiastes?
  - a. “I lived the right way. Imitate me and you will be blessed.”
  - b. “Always obey your king.”
  - c. “Do not make the same mistakes I made.”
  - d. “God did not bless me the way I wanted Him to.”
  
11. What were Judah’s good kings known for doing well?
  - a. They managed the economy well.
  - b. They obeyed God and destroyed idols and their places of worship.
  - c. They shrewdly made alliances with ungodly nations.
  - d. They killed everyone who opposed them.
  
12. What can we learn from Hezekiah’s prayer for healing?
  - a. God disapproves when we pray against His judgments.
  - b. It is not wrong to pray for healing.
  - c. God will always heal us instantly.
  - d. Isaiah was a false prophet for predicting Hezekiah’s death.
  
13. What does Elisha’s ministry to Naaman teach us about what God thinks of foreigners?
  - a. God is compassionate toward anyone who seeks Him.
  - b. God would not heal Israel’s enemies in those days.
  - c. God’s promises are only for the Hebrew people.
  - d. God rejects foreigners.
  
14. What does Naaman’s story teach us about God’s instructions?
  - a. They always make sense right away.
  - b. They are always extremely difficult.
  - c. They are always exactly what we expected.
  - d. They sometimes appear very foolish to test our obedience.



*If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking.* —James 1:5

Have you ever prayed for wisdom as Solomon did? If so, how did God respond? If not, how do you think God would respond if you did?

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Read Solomon’s request in 1 Kings 3:9. Like Solomon, ask God to give you a discerning heart that can distinguish between right and wrong.

*“Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.”*

—1 Kings 3:9



**Going Deeper**

1. How can you relate the Kingdom of God in these kingdom books (1 Samuel-2 Kings) to the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God in John 3: 3-5? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Relate the hard reality that the divided kingdom and the captivities were the consequences of the sins of Solomon, to Psalm 127 (especially the first two verses). \_\_\_\_\_

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3. After the first two verses of this swan song of Solomon, why does he abruptly begin talking about the blessing of having and nurturing children? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. How does this psalm relate to the book of Ecclesiastes, and how can we relate the way Solomon began his reign to the way he became apostate and caused this calamity for the people of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. When Solomon asked God for the wisdom to lead the people, and God made him the wisest man who ever lived, do you think he will give you wisdom when you ask Him for it, as instructed by James? (James 1:5) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What do we learn about the essence of prayer (what God sees when Hezekiah prays) from the prayer of Hezekiah, when Isaiah told him he was going to die? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Give at least three ways that the story of Elisha and Naaman the leper parallels the right ways and the wrong ways to respond to the Gospel when it is proclaimed to an individual. \_\_\_\_\_

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