

# THE KINGS OF OLD

Devotional & Scripture Reading Guide  
September - October 2019  
South Ridge Church

This Reading Guide has been designed for use during Part I of the "The Kings of Old" message series at South Ridge Church: September - October 2019

## A Note from Pastor Justin:

Throughout the Old Testament, the people of God were set apart to be different. God — who had rescued them from being enslaved in Egypt and led them to a new, fruitful land — provided His people with guidelines in which to live. These guidelines were not intended as restrictions on life, but were instead a way in which His people could live and experience life to the full.

However, some of God's people rejected His way of living, leading them to be enslaved. Not enslaved as they were in Egypt. But enslaved to their own self-centeredness. Instead of God being the ruler of their hearts, the people asked for a king. And over the next 500+ years, various kings ruled over the people of Israel. Some of these kings followed God with their hearts, soul, mind, and strength. Many did not.

Today, there is much we can learn about these kings of old. As we begin this message series, we will see that our lives may not be so different from these ancient kings. We will see that God can use people who are seemingly insignificant to do extraordinary things. And we will see that our life decisions don't only impact our own lives, but the lives of countless others.

My hope for this message series is that you will read, journal, and pray about your life and the daily decisions you make. That you will reflect on how these decisions impact not only your own life, but the lives of countless others. May you also grow in becoming a person who truly follows God with your heart, soul, mind and strength. May you continue to grow into the person God has made you to be.

As we begin this new message series, we encourage you to:

- Commit to joining us every week of this series.
- Commit to reading through this Reading Guide, reflecting and journaling through the questions provided within each daily reading.
- Use a good Study Bible and/or other resources as you read through this Reading Guide. Refer to <https://southridgeblog.com/study-bible-info> for more information on many excellent Study Bibles available today.
- Write down questions you have about what you're reading, and take opportunities to seek out answers to those questions.

# THE KINGS OF OLD

## DAILY READING EXAMPLE:

### DAY 1: LOOKING FORWARD

The left side of each daily reading will contain a brief devotional and question for reflection.

## READING & JOURNALING:

The right side of each daily reading will contain a few Scripture verses to read, and additional questions for reflection. You will most benefit from this study by writing out answers to all of the questions in a notebook. This will help you to pause and reflect on the Scriptures and topics for each reading.

## F260 READING:

This is an additional Scripture Reading for those who want to read through the foundational passages of Scripture throughout the year. This F260 Reading Plan paired with the “7 Arrows” method for reflection is an excellent way to *Read, Reflect, and Respond* to God’s Word.

## PRAYER:

The right side of each daily reading will also contain a brief prayer to read and reflect on.

## MESSAGE SERIES OUTLINE:

SEPTEMBER 15: SAMUEL

SEPTEMBER 22: SAUL

SEPTEMBER 29: DAVID

OCTOBER 6: SOLOMON

OCTOBER 13: JEROBOAM & REHOBOAM

# Week 1: Samuel

Samuel's story is told in 1 Samuel 1-28.  
He is also mentioned in Psalm 99:6;  
Jeremiah 15:1; Acts 3:24; 13:20; & Hebrews 11:32.

## DAY 1: Promises Promises

Have you ever made a promise you weren't sure you wanted to keep? Something like, "God, if you would just get me out of this situation, then I promise I'll never do anything this stupid ever again?"

Guess what? You're not alone. In the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel, we learn about Samuel's mother, Hannah. Hannah was unable to have children, and she so desperately wanted a child that she prayed to God, saying, "...if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life." (1 Samuel 1:11 NIV)

God heard Hannah's prayer, and He answered it. As a result, she had to give up the one thing she most wanted. She desired a son, and God gave her a son. But to fulfill her promise, she had to give her son back to God. The lesson for us: God keeps His promises. And we must be prepared to keep ours as well, no matter the cost.

As you read today, consider this: What is a promise you've made to God (or someone else) that you didn't want to keep? Did you end up fulfilling your end of the promise or not?

## READING & JOURNALING:

### 1 SAMUEL 1:1-2:11

What is a promise you made to God (or someone else) that you didn't want to keep? Did you end up fulfilling your end of the promise or not?

Is there ever a time when breaking a promise may be OK? Explain.

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 1 & 2**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today I simply want to offer my thanks that You have always, and will forever, keep Your promises. I also pray that in the same way Hannah was willing to sacrifice something she dearly loved to You, that I will also be willing to sacrifice things that I love for You. May my devotion to You grow stronger and stronger, so that I may better know You, and better understand who You've made me to be. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## DAY 2: Speak Lord, I'm Listening

Think about it: On a scale of 1-10, how well do you listen to the voice of God? How well do you listen to others?

For most of us, we don't listen very well. When we listen, we often do so while thinking about how we'll respond, not to understand. We listen to hear what others are thinking, but not to understand their heart. If we were being 100% honest, we would all admit that we can grow in our ability to listen.

In 1 Samuel Chapter 3, young Samuel finds himself in a position in which he hears God, but doesn't recognize His voice. Samuel is young and inexperienced, and likely expected God to communicate more directly with Eli than with himself.

But this is one of many situations throughout the Scriptures in which God shows He will speak to and/or through unexpected people in unexpected ways.

As you read today, consider this: Do you take intentional time to listen for the voice of God? How well are you able to recognize His voice?

## READING:

### 1 SAMUEL 3:1-21

Do you take intentional time to listen for the voice of God? How well are you able to recognize His voice?

How may God be inviting you to speak into the life of a family member, colleague, or friend? Have you considered God may use you in unexpected ways to tell others about Him?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 3 & 4**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that I don't always spend time being intentional to listen for Your voice. I commit this day to Your will. And I pray that You will lead, guide, and direct me on the path before me. As I listen to Your voice today, I invite You to use me, God, to speak into the lives of others. Provide me words of encouragement and affirmation to share with others, in the same way You speak words of affirmation to me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



### DAY 3: Israel Asks for a King

Have you ever gone along with the choices of others, even though something deep within you knew it wouldn't be wise to do so?

Throughout the story of the Old Testament, it's clear that God had called Israel to be different. His desire for His people was that they would rely on Him and Him alone as their God, Lord, and King. In 1 Samuel 8:5, the people came to Samuel and said, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

All in all, their desire to have a king was not wrong, but the reason they wanted a king was wrong. They wanted to be like the other nations surrounding them, even though God had called them to be different from all other nations. In short, the people of God decided it would be better to build their nation under the rule of a king than it would be to build their nation under the rule of God.

As you read today, consider this: From where do your values and/or decisions come from? (Is it pleasing others? Working hard? Physical appearance? Something else?) Or do your greatest values truly come from God?

### READING:

#### 1 SAMUEL 8:1-22

From where do your values and/or decisions come from? (Is it pleasing others? Working hard? Physical appearance? Something else?) Or do your greatest values truly come from God?

Why do you think the people of Israel wanted to be like other nations?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 6 & 7**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, Today I acknowledge that even though I may not regularly think about what I most *value* in life, I recognize that I live and act based on what I most value. Like the people of Israel, I, too have valued things which are insignificant to You. So today I simply pray that You will reveal to me the things that are most important to You. May these also become what's most important to me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 4: Saul Anointed as King

Have you ever had a dog (or other pet) wander away from home, and you had to spend hours roaming the neighborhood to find it? Something similar happens to Saul in 1 Samuel 9. The donkeys owned by the family wander off, and Saul's father sends him out to look for them.

We can imagine what Saul may have been thinking. *Stupid donkeys. This is the third time this year they've wandered off!* And of course, he covers miles and miles of land looking for them, to no avail. As a last ditch effort, he and his servants go to a man of God, Samuel, to ask for his help. But Samuel doesn't *just* give them information about the lost animals. He tells Saul that he's going to be the king of Israel!

The Life Application Study Bible notes, "Often we think that events 'just happen' to us, but as we learn from this story about Saul, God may use common occurrences to lead us where he wants. It is important to evaluate all situations as potential 'divine appointments' designed to shape our lives."

As you read today, consider this: Can you think of a time when something 'just happened' but it turned out God had a bigger plan?

### READING:

#### 1 SAMUEL 9:1 - 10:8

Can you think of a time when something 'just happened' but it turned out God had a bigger plan?

Like Saul, God has a plan for your life. If you could write it out in just one sentence, what would you say God's plan for your life is?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 8 & 9**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that today's question about Your plan for my life is one of the most challenging questions I have wrestled with throughout my life. And even though I can write what I *think* may be Your plan for my life, I still have some doubts or fears about what exactly that means and how to live it out. As such, I pray today for Your tremendous wisdom. That You will continue to lead and guide me to not only know Your will, but to live Your will. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: REVIEW

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about how Saul, Samuel, and/or the people of Israel followed and trusted Him and His Word? Similarly, what did the Scripture readings reveal to you about how well you follow and trust the Word of God?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Job 1 & 2**

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)



# Week 2: Saul

Saul's story is told in 1 Samuel 9-31.  
He is also mentioned in Acts 13:21.

## DAY 1: Saul's Inadequacy Shows

Imagine that one day you're sent on a very important errand. For example, the President of the U.S. hands you a sealed envelope and entrusts you to deliver this envelope to another world leader. You're not to mail it, and the contents must not be seen by anybody else. You and you alone have been entrusted with this information, and it's essential that you deliver it. But upon your arrival, this other world leader refuses to see you and sends you away. The next day you're supposed to be meeting with the President to give him a summary of everything that occurred. What do you do?

We may respond to difficult circumstances like Saul does in 1 Samuel 10, by giving into fear or our own feelings of inadequacy. It's here that Saul learns he is supposed to be the first ever king of Israel. But when the time comes, he hides. Chances are, he feels completely inadequate for what he's been called to do, or he's simply afraid to fulfill the role.

As you read today, consider this: What is one situation in which you were afraid to have a hard conversation or fulfill a challenging task? How did you respond?

## READING & JOURNALING:

### 1 SAMUEL 10:17-27

What is one situation in which you were afraid to have a hard conversation or fulfill a challenging task? How did you respond?

Where do you think these fears or thoughts of inadequacy come from?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Job 38 & 39

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that I live in a period of time in which *fear* isn't something people like to talk about. But I *know* I have fears, and I recognize these fears impact me much more than I would like. This week, I pray that You would reveal to me the depths of the fears I have. But instead of allowing these fears to rule my life, may I instead remember that in Christ, I am accepted, significant, and secure! I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

## DAY 2: Saul's Military Might

What's one of the first things that comes to mind when you think of ancient kings? For many, it's that kings were warriors. They didn't just stand towards the back of the battlefield and direct the troops. Instead, a king was on the front lines. He wasn't just willing to go into battle, he was willing to lead the rest of the soldiers in battle.

During Saul's lifetime, the nation of Israel was surrounded by other people groups who could invade their lands. Saul knew that as a king, he would be required to show that he was more than a soldier. He would need to show those who supported him, and those who didn't, that the nation could have superior military strength. In 1 Samuel Chapter 11, Saul does so, and proves that he has the military prowess to be king. As a result, all 12 of Israel's tribes agreed to support him, and the people offer God a peace offering (1 Samuel 11:15). For now, they're still following God. But this will not last.

As you read today, consider this: What is the large 'battle' you're currently facing in life? What's holding you back from turning your fears in confidence?

## READING:

### 1 SAMUEL 11:1-15

Peel back the layers: What would you say is the large 'battle' you're currently facing in life?

What's holding you back from turning your fears in confidence?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Job 40, 41, & 42

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I recognize there are many times in my life in which I don't want to appear *confident*, because confidence can also have the appearance of arrogance. Today's reading has been a great reminder that it's OK to be *confident* as long as it doesn't lead to be cocky or arrogant.

As such, I simply pray today that You will turn my fears into *confidence*, and that I may rest in knowing the largest battle has already been won. I thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: Saul Oversteps

Think about a time when you were a child and your parents told you that you needed to finish something (perhaps your homework or some household chores) before you could do something else you really *wanted* to do. But as the time dragged on, you really struggled to follow through. Your favorite TV show was coming on, and even though your homework wasn't completely finished, you felt like it was finished enough that you could justify turning the TV on.

What happened? Chances are, you got caught. And the punishment was far more severe than you anticipated.

In 1 Samuel 13, Saul finds himself and his troops in a bad situation. The prophet Samuel had given Saul specific instructions on what *not* to do (1 Samuel 10:8), but Saul disobeyed. He felt under pressure to do what needed to be done, so he trusted in himself instead of the instructions God had already provided. The lesson he learned is clear: How we accomplish a goal or task is more important than completing the task.

As you read today, consider this: Read 1 Samuel 13. Would you have responded any differently to the situation than Saul?

#### READING:

##### 1 SAMUEL 13:1-23, DEUTERONOMY 12:4-14

Would you have responded any differently to the situation than Saul?

Why do you think Samuel was so displeased with Saul's decision? (See also, Deuteronomy 12:4-14)

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Genesis 11 & 12

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess there are many times in which I want to see something get done, and that I'm more concerned about it being done than I am concerned about *how* it was accomplished. Saul's story is a reminder that *how* something is done is much more important. Father, my desire is to complete the projects and tasks before me with character and integrity. Reveal to me my character defects, and break me and make me into the person You most desire me to be. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 4: God Rejects Saul as King

God's Word is clear in saying that one day, each and every one of us will give an account for our actions (see Romans 14:12, Revelation 22:12). This isn't because God wants to shame us, but is more so that God can reveal to us just how much our own ungodly choices impacted our relationship with Him and others.

In 1 Samuel 15:22, we read a line that is quoted many, many other times throughout the Bible: "Obedience is better than sacrifice." God is more interested in us trusting and obeying Him than He is interested in sacrifices. He doesn't *need* anything we can offer. We make sacrifices as an act of love and obedience. But when those sacrifices are hollow, they're meaningless to God. They're nothing more than lip service without real trust.

For Saul's disobedience, he will lose the title of 'king.' The LASB notes, "God wasn't rejecting Saul as a person; the king could still seek forgiveness and restore his relationship with God, but it was too late to get his kingdom back."

As you read today, consider this: Be honest: is there an area of your life in which you're paying lip service to God?

#### READING:

##### 1 SAMUEL 14:1-15:35

Saul said that he wanted what God wanted, but his actions showed otherwise. Be honest: Is there an area of your life in which you're paying lip service to God? An area in which you may *say* you're fully trusting God, but your actions show differently?

Take the opportunity to write out a personal prayer to God, acknowledging your lack of trust in this area. Ask God's forgiveness, and pray for wisdom in how you can be intentional to grow in this area of your life.

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Genesis 15

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

#### PRAYER:

Today's prayer is to be written on your own (see above).

### DAY 5: REVIEW

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about how the people of God followed and trusted Him and His Word? Similarly, what did the Scripture readings reveal to you about how well you follow and trust the Word of God?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Genesis 16 & 17

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)





# Week 3: David

David's story is told in 1 Samuel 16 - 1 Kings 2. He is also mentioned in Amos 6:5; Matthew 1:1-6; 22:43-45; Luke 1:32; Acts 13:22; Romans 1:3; & Hebrews 11:32

## DAY 1: David's Inner Life

Take a moment to think over just the past two or three days of your life. How much time did you spend bathing, dressing, and preparing the outside of your body to look good for others? An hour a day? Perhaps more?

Now, also thinking over just the past two or three days, how much time have you intentionally focused on your internal life? For example, anything that may be hindering your growth in the areas of integrity and personal character. Does how you spend your time reflect more concern on your outward appearance, or your inner character?

After king Saul lost favor with God, the prophet Samuel goes off to discover the next king of Israel. But God gives Samuel some very specific instructions. In 1 Samuel 16:7, God tells Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

As you read today, consider this: Is there anybody in your life, including yourself, you regularly judge by their outward appearance?

## READING & JOURNALING:

### 1 SAMUEL 16

Is there anybody in your life, including yourself, you regularly judge by their outward appearance?

How do you think God sees this person (think of at least 3 ways)?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 18 & 19**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, we live in a culture in which outward appearance is what matters most. The houses we live in, the cars we drive, the clothes we wear, and even the food we eat... it regularly points to class and status. There are literally dozens, if not hundreds of things I see or hear each day that focus on outward appearance. God, help me to see the way You see. Help me to see that's what's within a person is of much more value than what's on the outside. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## DAY 2: David the Warrior

What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think of a shepherd? For many, the title of *Shepherd* causes them to think about the Christmas Nativity scene, with peaceful shepherds standing around a manger. Baby Jesus is there, along with Joseph and Mary. A bright star from a clear sky is shining down, and angels are singing a lovely melody.

But this view of a shepherd is far from reality. As a shepherd, David was constantly on alert. When a lion or bear tried to attack the flock of sheep, David attacked back. He didn't have a rifle or even a bow and arrow. He had to hunt the hunter, and it required an extreme amount of skill and courage.

So when a soldier from the opposing military mocked the people of Israel and their God, David was unafraid to step forward and meet him in battle. The story of David and Goliath isn't a mere fairy tale to encourage children. It's the story of a man who may not have had the build of a warrior king, but had the heart of one.

As you read today, consider this: Read the story of David & Goliath as-if you're reading it for the first time. What resonates with you most from the story?

## READING:

### 1 SAMUEL 17

What resonates with you most from the story of David & Goliath?

Think about it: What kinds of life choices had David made that helped him to be unafraid in his battle against Goliath? What kinds of choices can you make today to put you on a path of being unafraid to face life's battles?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 20 & 21**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, Today I am recognizing that the story of David & Goliath isn't *just* a story, but is a true life example of how trusting and following You can lead me to overcome any obstacle. May my trust in You grow ever stronger. I praise You today in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: David the King

Think back to your old high school history class for a minute: How did somebody become a king? The answer, most of the time, is that somebody simply inherited the title. His father was a king. His father's father was a king. And so on.

As you've read through some of David's story, you've likely discovered his path to becoming king of Israel was much different. He wasn't related to the previous king, Saul. His family didn't have a lot of political influence in his day. He wasn't the firstborn son, but was instead the youngest son. From the outside, he seemed like a fairly regular guy. Seemingly, there wasn't anything that set him apart that would've made people think, "That man is going places!"

To use a stronger term, David seemed *insignificant* in the grand scheme of things. But God saw something different. And God was going to work through David to accomplish some things of great significance for the people of Israel.

As you read today, consider this: Do you see your own life as insignificant in the grand scheme of things? What are some things of great significance He may be accomplishing in you right now?

### READING:

#### 2 SAMUEL 2:1-3:1 & 2 SAMUEL 5:1-5:5

Do you see your own life as insignificant in the grand scheme of things?

What are some things of great significance He may be accomplishing in you right now?

Similarly, what are some things of great significance He already *has* accomplished within you and through you?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 22**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that there are times in which I see my life as insignificant. But today, I remember that even though there are over 7 Billion people in the world, You still created me. You must have a wonderful purpose for my life, otherwise I wouldn't be here. Thank You for creating me, and giving my life meaning. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 4: David the Murderer

David's story is lot like an opera. There is so much beauty, yet so much drama and tragedy. After his rise to prominence and becoming king of Israel, David gives in to the temptation and believes he can do whatever he wants and not suffer any major consequences. He sees a beautiful woman bathing, and commits adultery by sleeping with her. Later, after learning she had become pregnant, he has Bathsheba's husband murdered. It's easy to read his story and ask, "What in the world were you thinking? You had done so much good and were clearly a man after God's own heart. What happened?"

But perhaps the story of David should be thought of in a different way. For example, how confident are you that you would've responded differently? How confident are you that if you had all the wealth, power, and influence a person could have, you wouldn't give into a similar temptation?

This one decision in David's story changes his life, and the lives of his family for many generations. But remarkably, God will still use David's family for the good of all humankind.

As you read today, consider this: What have you found most interesting about the life of David?

### READING:

#### 2 SAMUEL 11:1-27; PSALM 51:1-19

What have you found most interesting about the life of David?

Can you think of a time when you were tempted to do something and thought you should be able to do whatever you want and not face any consequences?

What do you find most interesting about David's prayer in Psalm 51?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 24**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I don't want to be a person who thinks I can do whatever I want and not face any consequences. I want to be a person who trusts You, and recognizes You have my best interests at heart. Continue to help me to see that wisdom comes first from loving and trusting You. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: REVIEW

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about how the people of God followed and trusted Him and His Word? Similarly, what did the Scripture readings reveal to you about how well you follow and trust the Word of God?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 25:1-34, & 26**

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)





# Week 4: Solomon

Solomon's story is told in 2 Samuel 12:24—1 Kings 11:43. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 28–29; 2 Chronicles 1–10; Nehemiah 13:26; Psalm 72; & Matthew 6:29; 12:42.

## DAY 1: Solomon Becomes King

If you were dying and had one final conversation with your children, what would you say? Similarly, if one of your parents was about to die and they were able to have one final conversation with you, what would expect them to say?

This is the situation in which David finds himself late in life. As he's old and dying, he learns that one of his sons, Adonijah, has claimed the throne and declared himself king. Politically speaking, it made sense for Adonijah to take this step. But he took it without talking with his father, David. While we may not know for certain, it's quite possible David had already told his sons who would be king after his death.

As soon as David hears the news, he calls for his son Solomon. He tells his son in 1 Kings:2-3, "Observe the requirements of the LORD your God, and follow all his ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will be successful in all you do and wherever you go."

As you read today, consider this: In what ways would your final words to your child/children be similar? In what ways would they be different?

## READING & JOURNALING:

### 1 KINGS 1:1-2:12

In what ways would your final words to your child/children be similar to David's final words to Solomon? In what ways would they be different?

David also shared some harsh words about his enemies. This was to ensure those opposing God and the king of Israel would not interfere with God's plan (see also Exodus 22:28). What are some things that may be interfering with God's plans for your life? What steps can you take to eliminate them?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Genesis 27 & 28

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I recognize there are many things that try to interfere with Your plans for my life, and I confess I sometimes allow them to interfere. Today, may I remember that Your plans for my life are better than any plans I may make myself. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## DAY 2: Solomon Asks for Wisdom

It's a question often asked of children: *If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?* (Of course, you're weren't permitted to ask for more wishes. That wouldn't be fair.)

The answers children (and many adults) give for this question often have to do with money or fame. We wish for money so we wouldn't have to work, or we wish to be extremely talented in a sport, music, or other art.

As king, Solomon likely wasn't expecting to be asked, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you." But that's exactly what happened. In ways we may not fully understand, God appeared to Solomon in a dream, and essentially gave him a free wish. He could ask for anything, anything at all. But his response to this question changed the trajectory for his life and for the entire nation of Israel.

Solomon answered, "Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong." Solomon asked for *wisdom*. And God would provide it.

As you read today, consider this: How regularly do you pray for wisdom?

## READING:

### 1 KINGS 3:1-15

How regularly do you pray for wisdom?

Be honest: When you do pray for wisdom, are you truly praying for wisdom, or are you praying for God to give you something else you want?

Would you agree that God has granted you *wisdom* in a situation when you recognize that the *right* thing to do is harder than you hoped it would be. Explain your answer.

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Genesis 29:1 - 30:24

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I have occasionally learned that sometimes the *wise* thing to do is often more difficult than I want it to be. This shows that while living in wisdom may not always be easy, it is still *good*. I pray today that You would give me the wisdom to know what's right, and the courage to do what's right, even when it's hard. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 3: Solomon Builds a Temple

The kings of old were real people. They had real thoughts, real struggles, and real experiences...just like we do. But there were still some parts of their culture that were quite different from ours. One of those differences, was regarding a place for God to live.

In the ancient world, people of all nations believed that the gods they worshiped truly lived in and around them. They would build temples for their gods, so their gods could live near them. They would carve idols for their gods, believing that a sliver of these gods lived within these idols.

Israel was to be different. In fact, God explicitly commanded them *not* make idols. But God did declare that if Solomon and His people kept His decrees and regulations, His presence would be with them always, and they would not be abandoned.

As you read today, consider this: God promised to be *among* His people forever. Today, He is not only *among* us, but living *within* all who have professed faith in Christ. How does this reality change the way you see God? How does it change the way you see yourself?

#### READING:

**1 KINGS 6:1-38, 8:12-21, & 1 CORINTHIANS 3:16**

How does the reality that God lives *within* you change the way you see God? How does it change the way you see yourself?

The people of God took tremendous care and concern in building and maintaining God's temple. In what ways does God desire us to care for our bodies (a temple)? If possible, use Scripture verses to support your answer.

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 31 & 32**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I confess that there are many days in which I function on my own strength, neglecting to remember that You aren't just *around* me, but that You live *within* me. My prayer today is that this truth would penetrate deeply into my heart, so that I may better reflect You in every way. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 4: Israel Becomes a Powerful Nation

Those who are in Real Estate know that there are some unwritten rules about buying and selling property. One of the most common unwritten rules is that it's better to purchase a lesser house in a nicer neighborhood than it is to purchase a nicer house in a lesser neighborhood. A decent house in a nice neighborhood is more likely to increase in value long term. Whereas a really nice house in a not-as-nice neighborhood is less likely to increase in value as much.

This same unwritten rule applied to the ancient world as well. God had given the people of Israel a section of land that, on the surface, may not have looked like much. But this small sliver of land had direct access to three continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe). This made it excellent for foreign trade.

As a result, the nation became very rich, but this came at a cost. In time, Solomon's wives led him to worship other gods. And the wealth of the nation led the people of Israel to begin to trust in wealth instead of God.

As you read today, consider this: What similarities are there between the life of Solomon and your own? What differences are there?

#### READING:

**1 KINGS 10:14-29**

What similarities are there between the life of Solomon and your own? What differences are there?

What is the one thing God has most revealed to you this week as you've read through the life of Solomon?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 33 & 35**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, As I've read through the lives of David and Solomon, I've been struck by how similar my life is to theirs. In the same way David experienced tremendous suffering, I've experienced suffering. And in the same way Solomon experienced temptation, I have experienced temptation. While there are still differences between our lives, I'm discovering there is much I can learn and apply from people in the Old Testament. Continue to lead me, guide me, and help me as I engage in Your Word. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: REVIEW

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about how the people of God followed and trusted Him and His Word? Similarly, what did the Scripture readings reveal to you about how well you follow and trust the Word of God?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 37**

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)



# Week 5: Jeroboam & Rehoboam

Rehoboam's story is told in 1 Kings 11:43-14:31 and  
2 Chronicles 9:31-13:7

He is also mentioned in Matthew 1:7.

Jeroboam's story is told in 1 Kings 11:26-14:20.

## DAY 1: A Nation Divided

Imagine having a successful boss at work. Even though he was a bit rough around the edges, your job was secure and the business was thriving. But then a new leader appears, and publicly declares that he can do better, and that you won't need to work as hard in order to receive the same results. What do you do?

The kings of Israel started with Saul, David, and Solomon. And for all three generations, the nation of Israel remained whole. Twelve tribes were united under one banner, and thanks to God, the nation as a whole prospered. But because Solomon didn't fully follow God's ways, the nation of Israel was about to be divided.

Early in his rule, Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was asked to lighten the burden of the people. He received counsel from his father's advisors, and counsel from young, inexperienced advisors. Ultimately, he followed the advice of his friends, and the entire nation will suffer for it.

As you read today, consider this: Where do you most often go for advice? Are those you go to experienced and wise, or inexperienced?

## READING & JOURNALING:

### 1 KINGS 12:1-24

Where do you most often go for advice? Are those you go to experienced and wise, or inexperienced?

What is the best piece of advice you've ever received? What is the worst?

What impact did these decisions have on your life? Your family? Others?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Genesis 39 & 40

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that there are a lot of places I go for advice, and that there have been times when I have sought advice from people who told me what I wanted to hear, instead of seeking advice from those who would encourage me to do what is right. Help me to follow the advice of the wise, and the wisdom of Your Word. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## DAY 2: Jeroboam Makes it Easy

Imagine a young boy having to carry firewood from the front of his house to the back. His father warned him not to use the wheelbarrow, but gave specific instructions that the wood needed to be carried in small bundles. About half way through the project, the young boy decides to disregard his father's advice, and starts to load the wheelbarrow with wood. To his chagrin, the wheelbarrow breaks apart as he's hauling the wood, making his job even more difficult than before.

It's a simple illustration, but is similar to something Jeroboam faces in 1 Kings 12. The people of Israel had been commanded by God to worship Him in Jerusalem. Jeroboam sees this as a burden for the people, and he creates alternative worship centers to make it easier on the people. Even though this was a practical idea, it still went against God's desire. The Life Application Study Bible notes that God desires our obedience in all things. He wants us to follow-through His way, no matter the cost, time, energy, or resources involved.

As you read today, consider this: Think of a time you have taken the easy way to do a project instead of the right way. What did you learn from this experience?

## READING:

### 1 KINGS 12:25 - 13:34

Think of a time you have taken the easy way to do a project instead of the right way. What did you learn from this experience?

In this current season in your life, what are at least five ways you believe God is inviting you to be obedient to Him and His Word? (If possible, ask somebody to help keep you accountable to following through in these areas.)

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read:** Genesis 41

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

## PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I know that trusting and following You is better than trusting and following the ways of the world. Today, I once again pray that Your Word would penetrate deep into my life, and that the wisdom of Your Word would continue to shape me into the person You've made me to be. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



### DAY 3: God Punishes Jeroboam

There are a number of stories throughout the Scriptures in which somebody tries to hide from God. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve discovered they were naked, and to hide their shame they tried to hide from God. In 1 Kings 14, Jeroboam has his wife disguise herself in order to try to get a favorable message about his son who is sick. The simple fact that he has her disguise herself is a sign that he was desperate. He knew he hadn't followed God in the way he was commanded to, and instead of pleading to God for help, he tries to manipulate the situation to get what he wants.

Some may read this chapter of Scripture and think that God's response to Jeroboam's sins is too strong. But this passage must be understood in its appropriate context. Jeroboam had been commanded on how to live (1 Kings 11:38) and instead, led the entire nation away from God. Similarly, the people of God had received specific instructions (Deuteronomy 28:15-19, 36-38; 30:15-20) yet neglected to follow them.

As you read today, consider this: Do you find yourself hiding from God, or openly acknowledging your sins and allowing God to refine and renew you?

#### READING:

**1 KINGS 14:1-18 & DEUT 28:15-19, 36-68; 30:15-20**

Do you find yourself hiding from God, or openly acknowledging your sins and allowing God to refine and renew you?

Those who hide from God experience shame. Those who confess to God experience guilt. One leads us away from God, while the other draws us closer. What is something you've been hiding from God? Take the opportunity today to confess it, and allow God to begin to refine you.

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 42 & 43**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

#### PRAYER:

Today's prayer is to be written on your own (see above).

### DAY 4: Rehoboam Humbles Himself

Yesterday we saw that there's a difference between shame and guilt. Shame is best understood as, "I am bad." While guilt is best understood, "I did something bad." There's a significant difference between the two.

Similarly, there's a difference between accepting responsibility for wrongdoing, and simply paying the price for it.

For example, somebody who commits a crime may be punished for their wrongdoing, and even though they fulfill a prison sentence, they may never truly accept responsibility for their actions. However, somebody else in the same scenario may, upon judgment, accept responsibility and humble themselves before the court.

This is what happens in the life of Rehoboam and other leaders in his court. God sends an Egyptian army to plunder their riches and even to subjugate them. And Rehoboam and the leaders respond by humbling themselves, and saying, "The LORD is right in doing this to us (2 Chronicles 12:6)."

As you read today, consider this: Think of a time when you humbled yourself (either before God or somebody else)? How difficult was it for you to do so?

#### READING:

**2 CHRONICLES 12:1-12**

Think of a time when you humbled yourself (either before God or somebody else)? How difficult was it for you to do so?

Who is the most humble person you know? What would you say are three character traits that have helped them grow in humility?

Over the next week, how can you be intentional in pursuing a life of humility?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 44 & 45**

**Journal:** Write it out. Following the pattern from "7 Arrows", (see back page) what did you learn from today's reading?

#### PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, today, I simply pray for the sight to see the foolishness of following my own path, and the wisdom of following Your path. May You continue to lead me on this journey, one step at a time. I know humility may not come easily, but I know it begins by simply trusting You. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### DAY 5: REVIEW

What did the Scripture readings this week reveal to you about how the people of God followed and trusted Him and His Word? Similarly, what did the Scripture readings reveal to you about how well you follow and trust the Word of God?

**F260 READING:** (A Scripture Reading Plan for Busy Believers)

**Read: Genesis 46 & 47**

**Reflect:** What did you H.E.A.R. from God today? (See back page.)



# Journal

Dig Deeper into  
God's Word

Read the passage for the day, and then Reflect and Respond to the passage by answering the questions provided below.

## 7 ARROWS of BIBLE READING

What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its  
original audience?



What does this passage tell  
us about God?



What does this passage tell  
us about man?



What does this passage  
demand of me?



How does this passage change  
the way I relate to people?



What does this passage  
prompt me to pray to God?

