

September 24 – 1 Kings 11-16

Disobedience, Division, Decline

Large Group Teaching Review

First Kings 11 recounts Solomon's tragic turn toward idolatry, as his many foreign wives lead him to worship other gods. Solomon's disobedience is the first step in the long spiral downward that characterizes 1 and 2 Kings, seen especially in the division of the nation in 1 Kings 12 into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Several cycles of evil kings from both kingdoms follow in this section of 1 Kings (chs. 11--16), with the sole exception of Asa in Judah. Along the way, God raises up prophets who call the people to repentance.

Gospel Glimpses

A LAMP IN JERUSALEM. First Kings 11–16 demonstrates God's unconditional resolve to preserve the Davidic monarchy despite the rebellion of Israel against it. When God promises to tear the kingdom away from Solomon, he makes the concession that he will leave one tribe to Solomon's line "for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen" (11:13). Later he stipulates that he will leave one tribe to Solomon's line "that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name" (11:36). Through 1 Kings 12–16, and indeed through the entire book, we find God faithfully preserving the Davidic line. For instance, during the reign of Abijam (Solomon's grandson), although the king's heart was not devoted to the Lord, nonetheless "for David's sake the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem" (15:4). The imagery of a burning lamp signals God's unconditional faithfulness to his promises despite the frequent disobedience of his people, directing our expectation to Jesus Christ, the Davidic Messiah who rules "on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and forevermore" (Isa. 9:7).

Small Groups

Opening Announcements

1. Take Attendance
2. Get-to-know-you question: If you could have any animal as a pet, even a wild one, what would you choose?

Prayer

Ask for personal prayer requests and then go around and pray for the person next to you.

Study Questions

Solomon Turns from the Lord (ch. 11)

In 11:9–43 the Lord responds to Solomon’s disobedience by promising to tear the kingdom away from him after his death and by raising up adversaries within his lifetime. How do you see the Lord’s judgment on Solomon mitigated with mercy? Consider especially verses 12–13 and 34–39.

The Kingdom Is Divided (ch. 12)

In 12:1–24, Rehoboam’s foolish choice to listen to the counsel of younger men rather than the counsel of his elder advisers results in the division of the kingdom. As you read this story, where do you see God’s sovereignty at work amid human foolishness and sin?

Prophetic Warning (chs. 13–14)

In 13:1–10, a man of God prophesies against the altar at Bethel, a prophecy that will be fulfilled during the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22–23). How does this episode show that God is still in control, despite the sinful reign of Jeroboam? In what ways can you see both God’s mercy and his judgment in this story?

Kings of Israel and Judah (chs. 15–16)

In 15:16–24, civil war erupts between Israel and Judah. How are the events of this chapter portrayed as the consequences of the earlier behavior of David and his house versus Jeroboam and his house?

First Kings 15:25–16:34 describes a succession of progressively worse kings in Israel. Nadab’s rule is quickly overturned by Baasha, thus ending the house of Jeroboam and fulfilling Ahijah’s prophecy in 14:5–11. Baasha’s house is soon destroyed as well, fulfilling Jehu’s prophecy in 16:1–4 and resulting in the rule of Omri, who does more evil than all who come before him. This sad story culminates in the long rule of Omri’s son Ahab, who does even more evil than all of his predecessors, including Omri (16:30, 33). As you read this

tragic narrative of decline, what effect does it have on you? Where do you see the destructive consequences of sin?

Application

1. In these chapters we have seen how idolatry leads to destruction. How is your own heart tempted towards worshipping things in the place of God (even good things can become idols)?
2. What are some of the negative consequences of pursuing idols? What are you missing out on by not pursuing Christ in these areas?