

God or Tyrants: A Study of 1 & 2 Kings

Lesson 04: How to Ruin a Kingdom

Settling In

What questions do you have from your reading of 1 Kings 11 – 16?

Introduction

If you were to decide what is the “one thing” that ruined the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, what would it be? What was the “one thing” that sustained either of them on their course? As a group, think of a present-day (or “in your life”) circumstance in which it would be valuable to remember the truths about the “one thing” of these chapters of 1 Kings:

Just the Facts

1. What ominous change occurred in Solomon’s later life as it concerned his relationship with the LORD? _____
2. What THREE enemies did the LORD bring against Solomon? _____
_____.
3. In the “Divided Kingdom” who is the first king of Israel and who is the first king of Judah? _____
_____.
4. Describe the “bootleg” religion set up by Jeroboam and give Jeroboam’s logic for “inventing” it? _____
_____.
5. Identify all the prophets you met in this reading: _____,
_____, _____, _____, _____.
6. What happened to Jeroboam’s son, how did it come about, when was it announced, and why did it happen? _____
_____.
7. Why was the Kingdom of Judah spared the dynastic turmoil of Israel (Judah had one ruling family, not multiple), even though they regularly failed in the First Commandment? _____
_____.
8. Name any “good” kings that you read about in the assigned reading: _____
9. Name at least FOUR kings of Israel from this assigned reading: _____
_____.
10. Page forward through 1 Kings... which king is in focus and what strikes you as unusual? _____
_____.

Take it to Heart

1. (ch.11) A commentator notes: *It is interesting to note the assumptions 1 Kings 11:1-0 overthrows (by implication). One sometimes reads Christian writers who bemoan the current lack of “heroes” [my edit, “role models”]... But the text says Solomon had a fine model – David his father (vv. 4,6). (The idea is not that David was Simon-pure, but that he was first-commandment faithful). Yet that did not keep Solomon from folly. This exposes **the example fallacy**. Yahweh’s anger in vs. 9 is ‘because his heart had turned away from Yahweh, the God of Isreal, who had appeared to him two times’ (see 3:4-15 and 9:1-9). Note the inference: even the most privileged, intimate experiences with God do not guarantee immunity from infidelity – undermining **the experiential fallacy**. Vs. 10 affirms that Yahweh had clearly warned Solomon about this other-gods seduction, yet Solomon ‘did not keep what Yahweh had commanded.’ How often socio-political groups assume that if people are only informed about some danger they will then avoid it. If only youth know that drugs will fry their brains like an egg in a skillet, well, then, they will ‘just say no’ to drugs. Or even Christians can assume that if only the indoctrinate their children in biblical doctrine and with a biblical world view, then they will not fall away. But Solomon did – with Yahweh as his teacher; and that exposes **the educational fallacy**.*

- To what extent do you agree with the commentator’s assessments and, if so, what implications do they have in the present?

- To what extent would you offer some balance to the commentator’s assessments?

2. (ch.12) It has been said that Jeroboam “invented/imported” the bootleg religion of “golden calves” because he was afraid of “orthodoxy” (read 12:26,27). What is meant by that? How is that true of both false religions and heretical Christianity still today?

3. (ch. 13) Read 1 Kings 13 and then list all the questions you want answered!

Now read vs. 1,2,5,9,17,18,20,26,and 32 – what is the theme of this chapter?

Finally, see if you can match the following outline that reflects the *teaching* of this chapter (it follows the three main characters of the story):

- | | | | |
|-----|----|---|---------------|
| ___ | 1) | Jeroboam: The Word of God was his _____, | A. abused |
| ___ | | but he _____ it! | B. safety |
| ___ | 2) | Judean Man of God: The Word of God was his _____, | C. mercy |
| ___ | | but he _____ it! | D. abandoned |
| ___ | 3) | Old Prophet: The Word of God was his _____, | E. profession |
| ___ | | but he _____ it! | F. despised |

4. (ch.14) vs. 19,20 is an equation that we will run into multiple times through the Book of Kings. Its terseness helps us understand what is important to the inspired writer (and the one who inspired it, the Holy Spirit). The writer has little interest in those things secular historians or gossip columnists might find compelling. In this section, he is only interested in how Jeroboam *worshiped*. As God evaluates your life experience, what story is he interested in telling others? To answer that question, write your obituary in the space below. When you're finished, ask yourself what things in your obituary mattered to God on high?

5. (ch.15) If Abijah (king in Judah) had a "heart not fully devoted to the LORD", then why is there still a king in Judah or, at least, why isn't the LORD causing dynastic havoc as he did in Israel? What is the answer given by the writer of Kings (confer 15:4)?

Think of a life circumstance in which this principle would be valuable?

On the flip side, the LORD did send respite and reform under the rule of Asa. What does Asa's rule say to 21st century Christians who bemoan the sad situation in both the secular world and the Christian community?

6. (ch.16) What strikes you about the writers summary of Elah's rule (16:8-14)?

Consider and comment on this insight from a commentator given concerning this brief text: *How stupid our diversions are! The potential damage is greater when a ruler turns diversions into occupations, but, sadly, it is not merely a royal malady. The epitaph has already been earned, for example, by any number of professing Christian men who populate our evangelical churches. How would one of their lives be summed up? 'He really loved his football! Why, he wouldn't leave that tube for anything while...' We have men in our churches who can name all the linebackers on the New York Jets but have never taught the catechism to their children.*

What solution(s) would you propose to turn the tide in those situations in which the "trivia" of life seems more important to "heads of households" than the truths of God's Word?

7. (All) Identify both *Specific Law* and *Specific Gospel* in this section of 1 Kings.

In what ways has this section of 1 Kings fit the theme: "God or Tyrants: A study of the unfaithfulness of humankind versus the faithfulness of the LORD"?