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# FAILING KINGS FAITHFUL GOD

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A STUDY IN 1 & 2 KINGS

*Dear Providence,*

*In 2 Samuel 7, God promised King David that one of his descendants would sit on the throne forever. The books of 1 and 2 Kings (originally written as one book) tell the story of the long line of kings after David, starting with his son Solomon. Not only do none of those kings live up to the promise of the forever king, but they actually lead the nation astray and eventually into exile. All the kings (even the few good ones) end up failing to walk in God's ways and love him with a whole heart. And as the heart of the king goes, so go the people. But despite the failure of the kings, God is faithful. He sends his prophets to call his people to repentance. He shows his grace again and again. And he ultimately keeps his promise to raise up his True King!*

*As we study Kings this summer, we will gain wisdom from looking at both the successes and failures of these flawed human leaders. But more importantly, we'll see the steadfast, promise-keeping love of God in the face of human failure. And we'll be pointed in hope to Jesus, who is the King of kings. He's the king we need!*

*We would love for you to read 1 and 2 Kings on your own this summer and we want to help you dig into it more deeply. Kings can be broken down into five main sections. It's helpful to refer back to this breakdown from time to time, because it's easy to get lost in the minutiae and miss where you are in the overall story.*

<b>1 KINGS 1-11</b>	<i>Solomon's Reign</i>
<b>1 KINGS 12-16</b>	<i>The Kingdom Divides</i>
<b>1 KINGS 17 - 2 KINGS 8</b>	<i>The Kings &amp; the Prophets</i>
<b>2 KINGS 9-17</b>	<i>Israel's Sin Leads to Exile</i>
<b>2 KINGS 18-25</b>	<i>Fall of Judah and Exile</i>

*This reading guide will follow these five main sections, but it will do so over the course of seven weeks (i.e. we'll spend two weeks in sections 1 and 3). This is a simple plan to help you read all of Kings, but also to study and reflect on the scriptures. Each week will have four touch points: two reading days, one day of study, and one day of reflection. Here's the flow for each week:*

**Day 1:** Read the first part of the week's readings.

**Day 2:** Read the second part of the week's readings.

**Day 3:** Briefly look back over the section and any notes you made. Then answer a few study questions designed to help you understand the text more.

**Day 4:** Answer the reflection questions designed to help you reflect on God, his word, and how it applies to you personally.

*We pray that this guide would help you meditate on God's word this summer and that God's faithfulness to his people would speak to us in a new way.*

- The Providence Staff

## SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

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### BIBLE PROJECT | 1 & 2 Kings Overview



Israel's prophets labor to turn people from idolatry and injustice, but the people refuse. God allows them to face the consequences of their decisions, and despite Israel's exile, a hopeful remnant suggests that God has not abandoned his promise to David.

### TIM KELLER | Discovering the Gospel in 1 & 2 Kings



In "Discovering the Gospel in Every Book of the Bible", Tim Keller looks at the books of 1 & 2 Kings. Each episode from this series highlights themes that point to the Gospel and help you discover the overarching narrative of God's Word in every book — Christ coming into the world to save us from our sins and reconcile us to God the Father.

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## Day One: Read 1 Kings 1-4

## Day Two: Read 1 Kings 5-8

## Day Three: Study

- 1** 1 Kings 1-2 describe Israel in transition, from David's death to Solomon's succession. David gives Solomon a charge in 1 Kings 2:1-4. What do you notice in his exhortation? What are Solomon's criteria for success as a king?
  
- 2** Quickly, a conspiracy arises with Adonijah and Joab, both of whom are killed at Solomon's command. How might this foreshadow the rest of 1-2 Kings?

- 3 God visits Solomon in a dream (1 Kings 3:1-14) and tells Solomon “Ask what I shall give you” (v. 5). What does Solomon ask for, and what does that reveal about him as king? How is this connected to other parts of scripture?
- 4 As you read through Solomon’s construction of the temple, his own home, and his prayer of dedication in 1 Kings 5-8, what evidence do we see of Solomon’s faithfulness to God? And what evidence do we see of Solomon’s failure?
- 5 Summarize the story of this section. Who are the main characters and what is the narrative arc?

## Day Four: Reflect

- 1 How is Solomon like Jesus? How does Solomon come up short, showing us our need for Jesus as the true and better son of David?
- 2 What do we learn about the limitations of human leadership from this section?
- 3 How do you see God's faithfulness at work in spite of human failure? How do you see his grace, patience, or promise-keeping?
- 4 Spend time in prayer. Praise God for his justice and mercy. Confess ways in which we are like Solomon. Turn in faith to Jesus and receive his grace and mercy.



- 3** Look at the description of Solomon's wealth in 1 Kings 10:14-29. What do we learn about Solomon? What details reveal Solomon's drift from God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4** 1 Kings 11:1-8 describes Solomon's final downfall. What does this passage say about his heart? Why is that important? How does God respond to his failure (1 Kings 11:9-13)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5** The divided devotion of Solomon leads to a divided kingdom. God raises up Ahijah the prophet (1 Kings 11:26-40) to proclaim God's judgment on Solomon and Israel. What do we learn about the role of prophet in this narrative? Why does God use them?



## Day Four: Reflect

- 1 How is Solomon like Jesus? How does Solomon come up short, showing us our need for Jesus as the true and better son of David?
- 2 What do we learn about the limitations of human leadership from this section?
- 3 How do you see God's faithfulness at work in spite of human failure? How do you see his grace, patience, or promise-keeping?
- 4 Spend time in prayer. Praise God for his justice and mercy. Confess ways in which we are like Solomon. Turn in faith to Jesus and receive his grace and mercy.

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## Day One: Read 1 Kings 12-14

## Day Two: Read 1 Kings 15-16

## Day Three: Study

- 1** 1 Kings 12:1-15 describes Rehoboam's ascent as king of Israel. How do the people of Israel respond? Why is their complaint important?
  
- 2** The kingdom divides between the southern tribe of Judah and the northern tribes of Israel. What's at the heart of this divide? Why do they split?
  
- 3** Prophets begin to take central stage in this section (12:15; 13:1-32; 14:18). An unnamed prophet both confronts Jeroboam and disobeys God's word. Why is this an important story to include? What expectation does it build for the future narrative in Kings?

- 4 There are several reigns described in 1 Kings 15-16. What do you observe about their reigns? How does the author describe the “bad” kings contrasted with the “good” kings?
- 5 Jeroboam becomes the prototypical “bad” king, with Omri and Ahab both walking “in the way of Jeroboam” (1 Kings 16:26, 31). What about their reigns connects with Jeroboam? How do they repeat his failures?
- 6 Summarize the narrative of this section. Who are the main characters and what is the narrative arc?

## Day Four: Reflect

- 1 How do Rehoboam and Jeroboam reveal our tendency towards idolatry and pride?
- 2 How do Rehoboam and Jeroboam show us our need for Jesus as the true and better son of David?
- 3 What do we learn about the limitations of human leadership from this section?
- 4 How do you see God's faithfulness at work in spite of human failure? How do you see his grace, patience, or promise-keeping?
- 5 Spend time in prayer. Praise God for his justice and mercy. Confess ways in which we are like Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Turn in faith to Jesus and receive his grace and mercy.

## Day One: Read 1 Kings 17-19

## Day Two: Read 1 Kings 20-22

## Day Three: Study

- 1** Omri and Ahab reach the depths of depraved kings, so the Lord sends the prophet Elijah to confront them. How would you summarize the miracles in 1 Kings 17? What do they reveal about the Lord?
  
- 2** The confusion of idolatry brought by Israel's fall into Baal-worship leads to the conflict between Elijah and the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). Compare and contrast the behavior between the two. What is different about their rituals and actions? Why is this important?
  
- 3** Why is it important that the Lord's fire consumes Elijah's sacrifice? How do we see God's judgment and mercy in the end of this conflict?





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## Day One: Read 2 Kings 1-4

## Day Two: Read 2 Kings 5-8

## Day Three: Study

- 1 What do you observe about Elijah's prophetic ministry passing to Elisha? What other stories in Scripture does it remind you of?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2 Moab rebels against Israel in 2 Kings 3:1-5, prompting Jehoram of Israel (with the aid of Jehoshaphat of Judah) to attack. What is Elisha's prophetic word to these kings? What is the result of the word? Is it fulfilled in the way we would expect?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3 List the miracles of Elisha in 2 Kings 4:1-5:27. What do you notice about them? Compare and contrast them with Elijah's miracles in 1 Kings.



- 4 2 Kings 6:24-7:20 describes Israel in a famine and under Syrian siege. Who delivers them? What about the Syrians' retreat is surprising to you?
- 5 Elisha goes to the Syrian capital of Damascus in 2 Kings 8:7-15. How does Ben-hadad, the Syrian king, respond? How does this compare to the Israelite kings?
- 6 What does this section teach us about the role of a prophet?
- 7 Summarize the narrative of this section. Who are the main characters and what is the narrative arc?

## Day Four: Reflect

- 1 How do the miracles of Elisha point to Jesus as the true and better prophet of God?
- 2 How does the proclamation of “good news” by the lepers in 2 Kings 7:9 point to the teaching of Jesus and the nature of the kingdom of God?
- 3 What do we learn about the limitations of human leadership from this section?
- 4 How do you see God’s faithfulness at work in spite of human failure? How do you see his grace, patience, or promise-keeping?
- 5 Spend time in prayer. Praise God for his justice and mercy. Confess ways in which these stories reflect our own sin and failure. Turn in faith to Jesus and receive his grace and mercy.

## Day One: Read 2 Kings 9-13

## Day Two: Read 2 Kings 14-17

## Day Three: Study

- 1** How does Jehu fulfill the prophecies against Ahab's family? How does God respond to Jehu's actions?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2** Athaliah, a granddaughter of king Omri in Israel, threatens Judah's line of kings. How is the line of David saved? How do the people respond in 2 Kings 11:17-20?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3** Why is the repairing of the temple under Jehoash important (2 Kings 12)? What went wrong in the repairs?

- 4 God promised four generations for Jehu's family in Israel. Jehoahaz (13:1-9), Jehoash (13:10-13;14:8-15), and Jeroboam (14:23-29) reign after Jehu. How are their reigns described?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5 After a succession of failing kings, the northern kingdom of Israel is finally sent into exile (which the prophets said would happen). 2 Kings 17:6-23 describes this exile. What do you observe in this section? Why does the Lord send them into exile?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 6 Summarize the narrative of this section. Who are the main characters and what is the narrative arc?



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## Day One: Read 2 Kings 18-21

## Day Two: Read 2 Kings 22-25

## Day Three: Study

- ❶ How is Hezekiah's reign described in 2 Kings 18:1-12? What does his prayer in 2 Kings 19:14-19 reveal about Hezekiah's character?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❷ Describe Manasseh's reign (2 Kings 21:1-18). How did his reign lead to Judah's eventual exile?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❸ Josiah's reign is marked by repairing the temple and discovering the Law. How do they respond to discovering the Law? What does it lead to?

- 4 Josiah is killed by the Egyptian army. Jehoahaz, his successor, ends up in exile with Judah paying a tribute to Egypt. How is this contrasted with the beginning of Solomon's reign (1 Kings 5-10)?
- 5 What happens to Jerusalem when the Babylonians conquer it in 2 Kings 24:10-17?
- 6 Jehoiachin is the last king described in 2 Kings 25:27-30. What do you notice in this final scene? How does it provide a glimmer of hope?
- 7 Summarize the narrative of this section. Who are the main characters and what is the narrative arc?

## Day Four: Reflect

- 1 Jehoiachin is in the line of David, and 1-2 Kings ends with his freedom at the table of a Babylonian king. How does Jehoiachin show us our need for Jesus? How does he give us hope that God is at work fulfilling his promises?
- 2 What do we learn about the limitations of human leadership from this section?
- 3 How do you see God's faithfulness at work in spite of human failure? How do you see his grace, patience, or promise-keeping?
- 4 Spend time in prayer. Praise God for his justice and mercy. Confess ways in which these stories reflect our own sin and failure. Turn in faith to Jesus and receive his grace and mercy.