

# Preview of 1 Kings

The Book of I Kings continues the history of the nation of Israel. The book begins with David's final days and the appointment of his son Solomon to succeed him. Recorded events over the next 125 years include the building of the temple, the dividing of the kingdom, the reigns of the kings of both Israel and Judah to the death of King Ahab, and the ministry of the prophet Elijah.

The book is more, however, than just a historical account. It was written to exhibit God's faithfulness and to testify to the predicted outcome of breaking His covenant and following other gods. It was a reminder that Israel's kings had been appointed by and were answerable to the King of Israel, God Almighty. Each king is judged not by the wealth or might of his reign but by his faithfulness to God and his efforts to further God's kingdom. The accounts of God's prophets as they worked among His people are important in revealing the varied methods God was employing to benefit His people.

The reign of David, recorded in 2 Samuel, had greatly enlarged Israel's borders. The peaceful reign of Solomon was marked by internal improvements. He increased the wealth of the nation through foreign trade and tribute. He instigated building projects that increased Israel's standing among the nations. This was likely the zenith of Israel's prosperity and influence. Decline quickly followed with the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam. The Northern Kingdom, founded on idolatry, was led exclusively by wicked kings into captivity. Judah, the Southern Kingdom, had periods of faithfulness followed by periods of idolatry. Though the Southern Kingdom endured longer, the pattern of failure also led to captivity. This degradation and downfall came because of their refusal to acknowledge and obey God as their King.

## Solomon Is Anointed King

**Lesson Scope:** [1 Kings 1 and 2](#)

### Lesson Focus

First Kings opens with King David but a shadow of his vigorous former self. He was apparently in his seventieth year, and his feebleness had become obvious to others. The time was ripe to establish a new leader. Adonijah took matters into his own hands, soliciting the aid of Joab and Abiathar to establish him as king in David's place.

Bathsheba alluded to an earlier oath that Solomon would succeed David on the throne (.1:13). David declared that God Himself had made the choice of Solomon (1 Chronicles 28:5, 6). When David was roused from his torpor, he immediately took the necessary steps to secure the kingdom according to God's revealed will.

In sharp contrast to Adonijah's scheming, Solomon refrained from all political maneuvering. Rather, he waited calmly until his call from God was affirmed through King David and the prophet Nathan.

God's kingdom will endure from generation to generation as time continues. Each generation and every individual must choose to fill his God-given place.

Regardless of how lengthy or influential our lives may be, we must eventually lay down our responsibilities just as David did. Are we preparing the rising generation to take up the work where we leave off? Many insistent and alluring voices are calling for the loyalty and service of our young people. Will they turn a deaf ear to those voices and choose the way of godliness, following it with unwavering conviction and purpose? What can we do now to instill within them a determination to bear the cross in Christian discipleship, no matter what the cost?

**Lesson Aim:** To glean truths for inspiring successive generations to embrace the faith and serve loyally in the Lord's work.

**Theme Verse:** [1 Corinthians 16:13](#). Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

## Lesson Text

### The Urgent Need

**1 Kings 1:1** <sup>1</sup> Now king David was old *and* stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat.

**1 Kings 1:5** <sup>5</sup> Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

**1 Kings 1:15-18** <sup>15</sup> And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. <sup>16</sup> And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou? <sup>17</sup> And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, *saying*, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. <sup>18</sup> And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest *it* not:

### The Decisive Choice

**1 Kings 1:29-35** <sup>29</sup> And the king sware, and said, *As* the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, <sup>30</sup> Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. <sup>31</sup> Then Bathsheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever. <sup>32</sup> And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. <sup>33</sup> The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: <sup>34</sup> And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. <sup>35</sup> Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

### The Solemn Charge

**1 Kings 2:1-12** <sup>1</sup> Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, <sup>2</sup> I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; <sup>3</sup> And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his

commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: <sup>4</sup> That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel. <sup>5</sup> Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, *and* what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that *was* about his loins, and in his shoes that *were* on his feet. <sup>6</sup> Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. <sup>7</sup> But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzilai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. <sup>8</sup> And, behold, *thou hast* with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. <sup>9</sup> Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou *art* a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood. <sup>10</sup> So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. <sup>11</sup> And the days that David reigned over Israel *were* forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. <sup>12</sup> Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

## **Questions for Study**

### **The Urgent Need**

1. Why was it important that David take steps to replace himself as king?
2. Why is what we teach our children about God and the church so important?

### **The Decisive Choice**

3. How did David's action promote security in this situation?
4. In what ways should the church show confidence in her youth? The

## **Solemn Charge**

5. What reasons did Solomon have to face his new responsibility with courage?
6. How can we lend encouragement that will help pass on the torch of truth today?
7. How does a strong sense of responsibility lay the groundwork for loyalty to God?
8. How can we foster a greater God-consciousness in our homes?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

Adonijah followed Absalom's example very closely. Both were elder sons of David. King David apparently had not given them the discipline they needed (1:6). Adonijah's chariots and horsemen could not equal the prestige that Solomon gained by riding on David's own mule. David decisively declared that Solomon was the next king, and he commanded Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet to anoint him before the people (1:33, 34).

Gihon was located just outside the eastern wall of Jerusalem and about half a mile north of Enrogel, the site of Adonijah's celebration.

David's charge to Solomon was threefold: be strong and manly, keep the Lord's charge, and deal judiciously with certain individuals. Perhaps the first part is especially significant in light of David's words in 1 Chronicles 22:5: "Solomon my son is young and tender." The second part emphasized Solomon's need to walk in obedience to God. The third part related to some unfinished business that needed attention in order for Solomon's kingdom to be established.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **The Urgent Need**

1. In each generation, some will choose to take their own way (1:5). Parents need to diligently provide a good example for their children, not only in word and deed but also in attitude toward God and toward human authorities. Parents need to teach that pleasing God must take priority over pleasing self. Satan is ever busy, and he is still successful in using pride and self-exaltation to lead people on a wrong course.
2. Alertness toward deviations and a willingness to speak out are essential for remaining under God's blessing (1:15-18). Christians cannot ex-

perience victory by sitting back and depending on the church to fight their battles. We are in warfare against one who knows our every move. We must carefully guard against our tendency to express pride, to sow discord, and to fail in giving God His rightful place. Unless we properly identify and deal with sin, we cannot remain under God's blessing.

### **The Decisive Choice**

3. The exercise of decisive leadership will inspire successive generations to choose God's way (1:29, 30). David's clear and specific direction restored order in what was rapidly becoming a chaotic situation. Confusion feeds insecurity that can be devastating to youth. Decisive leadership, exercised in the fear of God, inspires confidence.

4. Providing new leaders to share in and take up the work inspires faith in successive generations (1:32-35). Thoughts of the future stir varying degrees of uncertainty. Having a plan in place for younger generations to help in the work builds their confidence, interest, and zeal.

5. Exhibiting confidence in those coming on inspires them to serve God loyally (1:33-35). Overlapping terms of leadership give opportunity for leaders to work together and slowly transfer responsibility. This gives opportunity for people to build confidence in new leaders. As the older and younger work together, the older communicate their vision, and the younger inspire the older by their zeal and faithfulness.

### **The Solemn Charge**

6. Sound instruction prepares successive generations to walk in the way of truth (2:1-4). Time is too short and souls are too precious for each generation to learn all life's important lessons by personal experience. Godly counsel, confirmed by personal experience, carries a weight of influence that every young person needs.

7. The oncoming generation must grasp the relationship between obedience and blessing (2:3, 4). This is communicated by keeping current with issues and by dealing with disobedience and disrespect for authority. We must be an example of obedience before our children: submitting to church leaders, employers, and government officials. We will follow not only the letter of the law but also the spirit of it. If we give attention to careful obedience, we will be able to enjoy the peace and joy that God gives His children.

8. Clear admonition concerning the law of sowing and reaping motivates right actions (2:5-7). King David reaped a harvest of grief and

trouble because he slew Uriah. He repented, however, and consequently received God's blessing and a faithful son to sit on the throne.

Today, as we study history, we see the continuation of this law of sowing and reaping. We dare not make light of wrongs committed in our past, or our children will repeat those mistakes.

We help our children to understand the law of sowing and reaping by giving them proper discipline. We must be consistent and give clear direction to the issues that confront them. This will help them build conviction and be loyal to the cause.

### **Important Teachings**

1. In each generation, some will choose to take their own way (1:5).
2. Alertness toward deviations and a willingness to speak out are essential for remaining under God's blessing (1:15-18).
3. The exercise of decisive leadership will inspire successive generations to choose God's way (1:29, 30).
4. Providing new leaders to share in and take up the work inspires faith in successive generations (1:32-35).
5. Exhibiting confidence in those coming on inspires them to serve God loyally (1:33-35).
6. Sound instruction prepares successive generations to walk in the way of truth (2:1-4).
7. The oncoming generation must grasp the relationship between obedience and blessing (2:3, 4).
8. Clear admonition concerning the law of sowing and reaping motivates right actions (2:5-7).
9. Facing death calmly prepares the oncoming generation to embrace the faith (2:1, 2).
10. Each generation is responsible to pass on a legacy upon which the oncoming generation can safely build (2:10, 12).

### **Answers to Questions**

*1. Why was it important that David take steps to replace himself as king?*

David was old and feeble, unable adequately to fill his role as leader. Adonijah was in the process of taking the throne for himself, which was not according to the plans of God or King David. Popular support for

Adonijah was growing, and the stage was set for insurrection against David.

*2. Why is what we teach our children about God and the church so important?*

What we teach them about these things forms their frame of reference, the base on which they will make decisions when they reach the age of accountability. A strong God-consciousness prepares them to take up the work when we are gone.

*3. How did David's action promote security in this situation?* By assuming his role and giving clear direction, David ended Adonijah's threat and placed on the throne God's choice for a new king.

*4. In what ways should the church show confidence in her youth?*

As youth are a consistent example and handle lesser responsibilities faithfully, we can have confidence regarding their faithfulness in greater things. Confidence is expressed by including them in tract distribution and outreach efforts, by using young men as devotional leaders and song leaders, and by giving them the opportunity to teach Sunday school and Bible school.

*5. What reasons did Solomon have to face his new responsibility with courage?*

His new responsibility was from the Lord, the faithful, covenant-keeping God, who promises His presence and blessing to those who keep His law. Solomon's father had confidence in him too.

*6. How can we lend encouragement that will help pass on the torch of truth today?*

We need to maintain fellowship across all age groups. We should express appreciation for the efforts of others. We must share our burden for what yet needs to be done.

*7. How does a strong sense of responsibility lay the groundwork for loyalty to God?*

A strong sense of responsibility and a sensitive conscience go hand in hand. They provide strength to overcome our natural tendency to become lax and self-indulgent. They help us focus on what is most important in life.

*8. How can we foster a greater God-consciousness in our homes?*

We must first be God-conscious as parents. Reverent regard for God's Word, meaningful family worship, and spiritual conversation all make

their contribution. We must replace jesting, shallow literature, and idleness with singing, good reading, and industry.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

We cannot inspire loyalty by a deathbed charge only. Rather, it is a life-time responsibility that calls for our consistent example, sound instruction, and timely discipline. In most cases, our children will finally embrace the values we hold dear.

### **Research Guide**

1. Read the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 28 and 29.
2. Read the passages listed under "Children—Instruction " *Nave's Topical Bible*.