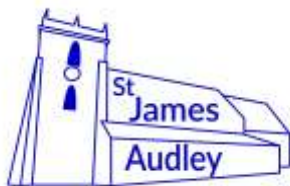




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Bible Reading Notes

May 2022 – 1 Kings 1-11



How to use these Bible Reading Notes:

These Bible reading notes are a resource to help you feed on God's word a little and often and allow it to change your life. If you miss a day (or several!), don't feel guilty or try to catch up; just pick up wherever you left off – it doesn't matter if it's the wrong date.

Here are some tips on how to get the most out of this:

1. Find a time and place where you can be quiet but awake.
Maybe set an alarm on your phone to remind you each day.
2. Pray. Ask God to help you understand what he says.
3. Use the notes to help you think about the Bible passage (use a good translation of the Bible like the NIV).
 - *'Read' tells you which verses to read.*
 - *'Apply' shows how it affects you.*
 - *'Pray' suggests ways to talk to God about it.*
4. Pray about what you have read.
5. Look for a chance to share with someone what God has been saying to you.

*These notes are easy to install on most phones or tablets.
Install the 'PrayerMate' App and you'll find it under 'Add Subject →
Biblical prayers & devotions → Real Food.'
If you have any problems, email info@prayermate.net.*

Sunday 1st May

This month we're going to hear God speak through the first 11 chapters of 1 Kings. The books of 1 & 2 Kings tell the story of God and his people Israel, from the time of King David until Israel are exiled in Babylon. Two earlier Bible passages will help us to understand what is going on - the first is God's promise to King David:

Read 2 Samuel 7v11-13

- What sort of house will God build for David?
- What sort of house will David's son build for God?

The second passage is God's command to the kings of Israel:

Read Deuteronomy 17v16-20

- What must the kings of Israel not do? (v16-17)
- What must the kings of Israel do? (v18-20)

Apply

The book of Kings was written after David's house was broken up and God's house was destroyed. God's people were confused and downhearted. Kings tells a story of hope – God's leaders failed, but God's promises did not.

- Do you and your church need a boost of hope at the moment? In what ways?

Pray that you (and others in your church) would have your hope strengthened through 1 Kings this month.

Monday 2nd May

When there is a changeover of leadership, it brings uncertainty.
Who will lead, and in what direction?

Read 1 Kings 1v1-4

- In what ways are we shown that David is weak?

The word “king” comes 70 times in this chapter – the question is: who will be king after David? Because David is impotent in more ways than one...

Read 1 Kings 1v5-10

- How does Adonijah (David’s son) try to take advantage?
- What hints are we given that he wouldn’t be a good king?

Apply

Looks, popularity and drive don’t count when God looks for leaders for his church – godliness, character and love for Jesus do.

- What do you look for when you’re looking for a leader to promote or follow in church?

Praise God for King Jesus, our humble and godly king, and pray that the leaders of your church would be more and more like him.

Tuesday 3rd May

Who will be king after David? Adonijah looks strong, but Nathan the prophet knows David promised his son Solomon would be king next.

Read 1 Kings 1v11-14

- What does God say to Bathsheba through Nathan?

In verses 15-27, they carry out Nathan's plan.

Read 1 Kings 1v28-35

- Why does David agree to crown Solomon king?
- What must they do to show Solomon is king?

In verses 36-53, they carry out David's plan: Solomon enters Jerusalem on a donkey, he's declared king, and Adonijah admits defeat.

Apply

As David kept his oath to Bathsheba, so God kept his oath to David. The donkey points us to when Jesus rode into Jerusalem to be crowned King by his death and resurrection: No-one can dethrone him!

- How does this reassure you when the future of God's kingdom feels in danger or uncertain? How does it reassure you when leadership in your church/community/country is changing?

Wednesday 4th May

Kingdoms and churches need security. How can Solomon make his kingdom secure?

Read 1 Kings 2v1-4

- If Solomon wants a secure kingdom, how must he relate to God?

God is the real king, so obedience to him is the key to true security – not money, property, skills, friends, power or reputation.

Read 1 Kings 2v5-7

- If Solomon wants a secure kingdom, how must he relate to his enemies? (v5-6)
- If Solomon wants a secure kingdom, how must he relate to his friends? (v7)

Solomon can only show kindness to his friends safely if he deals firmly with his enemies.

Apply

- From what you know about Jesus, how does Jesus show this obedience, strength and hospitality?
- How does it reassure you to know that Jesus' kingdom is secure, especially when your job, family, friendships and finances don't feel secure?

Thursday 5th May

Can Solomon secure his kingdom after David dies?

Read 1 Kings 2v12 and 2v46

- These verses bracket the chapter and tell us what it is about – what did Solomon achieve?

In between are 3 episodes that all end in one of Solomon's enemies being killed. We'll focus on one:

Read 1 Kings 2v26-35

- How does Solomon justify his killing in verse 32?

Apply

Solomon establishes his kingdom and provides security for his people. Like him, Jesus will put an end to the enemies that threaten us.

- What are you fearing today? How does knowing this about Jesus counter your fear and build your hope today?

Unlike Solomon, Jesus provides security without any hint of injustice. Solomon became king by shedding the blood of his enemies; Jesus became king by shedding his blood *for* his enemies.

- How does this build your hope today?

Friday 6th May

Every good leader needs wisdom – the ability to make good decisions for the good of others.

Read 1 Kings 3v1-3

Alliances with Egypt, marriage to someone who worships another god, sacrifices at high places... Solomon isn't showing much wisdom!

Read 1 Kings 3v4-15

- What offer does God make to Solomon?
- What would you have asked for? What does Solomon ask for?
- How does God go beyond Solomon's request?

Apply

We need wisdom too! James 1v5 says *"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."*

- What difficult situations are you facing, that you need wisdom to know what to do?
- What do you tend to ask for instead of wisdom?

Pray now and ask God "who gives generously to all, without finding fault" for the wisdom you need to live for him in the circumstances you are in.

Saturday 7th May

Solomon asked God for wisdom. Will it make any difference?

Read 1 Kings 3v16-28

- How does Solomon show he has God's wisdom?
- Why is that good news for the people he rules?
- How do people respond to this wise king? (v28)

Apply

Isaiah 11v1-9 describes Jesus as the King who is given wisdom by God's Spirit. His wise rule brings justice, freedom and peace to his people.

- How will remembering Jesus' wisdom...
 - ...change the way you listen to his teaching?
 - ...change who you go to for advice?
 - ...change the way you react to injustice in this life?

The people of Israel held their wise king in awe (v28).

- How has this chapter helped you to hold King Jesus in awe?

Praise Jesus for his wisdom and pray that you would listen to him with awe.

Sunday 8th May

Who would ever want to submit to someone else and be ruled by them? Surely that leads to misery?

Read 1 Kings 4v1-19

- Who does Solomon rule over? (v1)

Verses 2-6 list Solomon's cabinet, in charge of central government. Verses 7-19 list his governors, in charge of local government.

It may sound dull, but look at the benefits wise government has on a nation:

Read 1 Kings 4v20

- What effect does Solomon's rule have on the people he rules over?

Apply

If Solomon's rule has this effect, how good must Jesus' rule be?!

- Which areas of your life have been improved since you started living under Jesus' rule?
- What command from Jesus are you disobeying because you think it will make you unhappy? How do these verses help you?

Praise Jesus that his rule brings us true joy.

Monday 9th May

Solomon doesn't just rule over Israel; he rules over nations.

Read 1 Kings 4v21-28

- How dominant was Solomon's rule? (v21, 24-25)
- How abundant was Solomon's rule? (v22-23, 26-28)

Through David's son Solomon, God has kept his promises to Abraham that his family would be like "sand on the seashore" and that their land would stretch from Egypt to the River Euphrates (Genesis 22v17 and 15v18).

When the king obeys God, God's people are blessed and God's promises become reality.

Apply

- How does this passage help you to trust God's promises?
- How does this passage make you glad that Jesus is your king?

Jesus teaches us to pray for God's kingdom to come – why not pray for that now?

Tuesday 10th May

The next 5 chapters all focus on Solomon building God's temple. Why is it so significant?

Read 1 Kings 5v1-7

- Why had David not built God's temple? (v3)?
- Why does Solomon intend to build God's temple? (v4-5)
- How does Hiram respond to Solomon's plan? (v7)

King David is mentioned 5 times to remind us of God's promise to him; God would establish his son's kingdom, and then his son would build God's temple. In chapters 1-4, Solomon's kingdom has been established. In chapters 5-9, the temple will be built.

Apply

When Jesus died and rose again, he established his kingdom. Now he's building a temple for God to dwell in by his Spirit – his church.

- How does this give you confidence that Jesus will keep building his church?
- How would your attitude to church change if you remembered that it's the temple Jesus is building for God to dwell in?

Like Hiram, let's praise God for giving David a wise son to build this temple – the church.

Wednesday 11th May

Like every building project, this temple needs materials and labour.

Read 1 Kings 5v8-18

- What materials does Hiram provide for building God's temple?
- How many people are involved in building God's temple?

Apply

The stones for God's new temple, the church, are people – everyone who trusts and follows Jesus. But this building project also needs resources and labour;

- Hiram provided timber for the temple. What resources do you have that you could give to be used to build up Jesus' church?
- All the Israelites were workers for the temple. What role can you play in working to build up Jesus' church?

Ask God to show you what resources and skills you could give and pray that he will help you to give them cheerfully. Pray for those in your church family who steward the resources used to build up God's church.

Thursday 12th May

God makes an amazing promise to Solomon as he builds the temple.

Read 1 Kings 6v11-14

- What is thrilling about God's promise? (look for "I will...")
- What is daunting about God's promise? (look for "if...")

Apply

1 Kings was written after the temple had been destroyed and after God had thrown the Israelites out of his home for worshipping other gods.

This conditional promise helps the readers of 1 Kings to keep trusting God. The temple wasn't destroyed because God's promise had failed, but because God's kings had failed. So, they could hope that one day God would provide a king who fully obeyed him, who would build an eternal temple...

- How does this passage make you grateful for Jesus?
- How does this passage help you to keep trusting God when other Christians, and Christian leaders, let you down?

Friday 13th May

The Bible gives a lot of space to describing the interior decoration of God's house, the temple.

Compare 1 Kings 6v21-29 and Genesis 2v8-9

- The beginning of the Bible describes the Garden of Eden – rivers, gold, trees, flowers, fruits, cherubim. What links can you spot between the Garden of Eden and the temple?

The goal of God's rescue plan is that his people will live with him again in a renewed Eden! And the decoration of the temple pointed to that.

Apply

The end of the Bible (Revelation 21-22) shows us that the goal of God's rescue plan hasn't changed – the new creation will be a new Eden, God's home on earth. And the best bit is that we are invited in!

- How does seeing the Bible writers' excitement about the temple increase your hope?

Praise God that homesick-wanderers like us will be brought home to rest and enjoy God himself.

Saturday 14th May

The temple was God's address on earth, but it wasn't the most impressive building in Jerusalem...

Read 1 Kings 6v2, 6v38, and 7v1-8

- How does Solomon's palace compare to the temple in the time spent building it?
- How does Solomon's palace compare to the temple in size?

God had warned his kings not to chase after wealth and prestige (Deuteronomy 17v17).

- How does this passage show us Solomon's wrong priorities?

Apply

Jesus himself is God's temple – his address on earth (John 2v19-22). So, he must be our top priority.

- In what ways are you making Jesus take second place to your comfort, and your home?
- In what ways are you making Jesus take second place to your reputation?
- How does the glory of the temple remind you of who is important?

Turn to God in prayer and tell him what you want to change.

Sunday 15th May

The temple was full of reminders that God's promises can be trusted.

Read 1 Kings 7v13-22

- What did Hiram craft with his God-given wisdom?
- What were the pillars called?

The names are significant:

- Jakin means "he will establish" – a reminder of God's promise to establish David's son's kingdom.
- Boaz means "in him is strength" – a reminder of God's power to help and sustain his people.

These two truths about God remain the solid foundation we build our hope and confidence upon.

Apply

- How does it encourage you today to remember that God will establish Jesus' kingdom for ever?
- What are you struggling with at the moment? How does it encourage you today to remember that in God is strength?

Monday 16th May

God's house has been built and furnished – now it's time for the housewarming party!

Read 1 Kings 8v1-6

- Who are the guests at this housewarming party?

Read 1 Kings 8v10-13

- Who moves in to live in the temple?
- How do they know he has moved in?

Read Ephesians 2v19-22

Jesus is building the church as God's temple, for God's glorious Spirit to dwell in. Wow!

Apply

- How does knowing that the same God who lived in Solomon's temple is living in your church family affect your attitude to your local church?

Pray Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3v14-19 for yourself and your church:

"I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

Tuesday 17th May

What should our response be to the fact that God wants to dwell with his people?

Read 1 Kings 8v14-21

- What promises has God kept?
- How does God describe his presence in the temple?

The emphasis on 'Name' shows God's presence is very real in the temple, but that God isn't restricted only to the building.

- How does Solomon respond? (v15)

Apply

- How has God kept his promise to dwell with you and your church?
- How does it make you feel to know that God has promised to always be with you (Hebrews 13v5)? When do you need to remember that?

Spend some time praising God for keeping his promises. Praise him for his presence with his people, and particularly for being with you in your day today.

Wednesday 18th May

If God can dwell in a temple, doesn't that make him small and limited? Solomon's prayer to dedicate the temple shows that's not the case.

Read 1 Kings 8v22-30

- What is unique about the LORD? (v23-24)
- How does Solomon show God is not limited by the temple? (v27)
- What does Solomon pray that God will do? (v28-30)

Wow! The limitless God of heaven wants to make himself knowable and available to limited sinners like us. The universe can't hold God, but our prayers can reach him!

Apply

- How has this passage reminded you of how big God is?
- The first readers of Kings had seen this temple destroyed – how would this reminder have encouraged them?
- How does it encourage you today?

Pray to this infinite-but-available God for any help you need today.

Thursday 19th May

Do you ever wonder if God is too big or too busy or too far away to hear your prayers? As he dedicates the temple, Solomon prays that God would hear people's prayers.

Read 1 Kings 8v33-34

- What situation does Solomon pray about?
- What does he ask God to do when people pray to him in the temple?

Apply

When we have sinned and been defeated, we have a greater temple to pray in: we can pray to our Father in heaven, in Jesus' name, and know that he hears us (John 14v13-14).

- Do you feel defeated in your attempts to follow Jesus?
- In what ways have you been sinning against the God of heaven?

Pray now in Jesus' name for the forgiveness and strength you need - and be assured that God will hear you and forgive you.

Friday 20th May

We find it really hard to believe that God will hear our prayers and forgive us, so he gives us more assurance.

Read 1 Kings 8v35-40

- What situations does Solomon mention?
- What does he call on God to do when people pray towards his temple?
- What will be the result of God answering these prayers?

Read John 14:13-14; and John 16:23-24

Jesus repeats the promise that he will answer our prayers when we ask in his name. We need to hear this more than once!

Apply

- Are there any difficult situations in your life that are the result of your own sin?
- Are there any difficult situations in your life that don't seem to be connected to your sin?

Pray about all those difficult situations in Jesus' name, knowing that he has promised to hear, to forgive and to act.

Saturday 21st May

It seems that we need even more convincing that God will hear our prayers...

Read 1 Kings 8v41-45

- What situations does Solomon mention?
- What different sorts of people can pray to God?
- What does he call on God to do when people pray towards his temple?

Apply

“Through Christ, both Jews and Gentiles have access to the Father by one Spirit.” (Ephesians 2v18)

- Do you ever feel like you are not the sort of person God would listen to? How do these verses help you?
- What battles are you facing at the moment?
- If you were sure that God would listen to your prayers and answer them, how would you pray about those battles?

Pray in that way now!

Sunday 22nd May

But what if his people completely turned their backs on God – would God still listen to them then?

Read 1 Kings 8v46-53

- What situation does Solomon pray about? (v46)
- What does he say God's people might do? (v47-48)
- How does he ask God to respond? (v49-51)

Apply

The first readers of Kings had experienced exactly that situation: God had given them over to their enemies, who had taken them as captives to a faraway land.

- How would this prayer give those readers hope?
- What would this prayer encourage those readers to do?

It doesn't matter how much you've messed up. This prayer shows us that if you turn back to God, he will also hear you and forgive you. If you need to, confess your sin to him now and ask for the mercy he has promised.

Monday 23rd May

As Solomon finishes praying, we see both how awesome God is and his intimate care for each of us.

Read 1 Kings 8v54-61

- What promises has God kept? (v56)
- How faithful and close does Solomon expect God to be with his people? (v57)
- How frequently does Solomon pray for God to be remembering us and helping us? (v59)
- How are God's people to live in relationship to God and how is that achieved? (v61 then v58)

Apply

- What promises from God do you need to remember today?
- What 'small' concerns have you not brought to God in prayer yet? Pray those now!
- What 'big' concerns have you not brought to God in prayer yet? Pray those now!

Pray that God would unite your heart and mind to live for Jesus – delighting in his intimacy with you!

Tuesday 24th May

When things are going really well, it's hard to listen to anyone who warns you about the future – even if the person warning you is God.

Read 1 Kings 9v1-9 (and 1 Kings 8v10-13)

- How is God's promise in verse 3 an answer to Solomon's prayers in chapter 8?
- What does God promise to do if Solomon walks before him faithfully? (v4-5)
- What does God threaten to do if Solomon turns away from him? (v6-9)

Apply

The first readers of Kings had experienced this threat becoming reality. This warning shows them that God's promises hadn't failed – but their leaders had.

- How does this encourage you to keep putting your hope in God?
- Are things going well for you? How will you make sure that this doesn't lead you to take God's warnings lightly?
- How does this chapter make you thankful for Jesus, the king who has already loyally followed God all the way to the cross?

Wednesday 25th May

God had promised Abraham that he would first bless his people, and then he would bless the nations through them.

Read 1 Kings 10v1-10

- What did the queen of Sheba see that overwhelmed her? (v4-5)
- What does she say about the effect of Solomon's wisdom for his people?
- What did she say about the LORD? (v9)

Apply

Solomon received God's wisdom, but Jesus *is* God's wisdom. Jesus used the queen of Sheba as a warning to people who demanded more evidence before they would follow him (Matthew 12v42).

- Are you as keen as the queen of Sheba to hear Jesus' wisdom?
- Are you as quick as the queen of Sheba to respond to Jesus in worship?

Praise Jesus for his wisdom, and pray that you would be as hungry as the queen of Sheba was to hear it.

Thursday 26th May

If the king worships God, God's people will be blessed; if he doesn't, they'll be cut off. So how will Solomon do?

Read 1 Kings 10v14-25

- What different items does Solomon make out of gold?
- How generous was God to Solomon?
- How generous was Solomon to others?

Apply

In Deuteronomy 17v16-17, God told the king not to make himself rich with gold. In chapter 4, Solomon shared his riches by being hospitable. Now he spends it on luxury goods. He thinks that happiness, status and security come from having lots of money.

- How is this a temptation for you?
- How should God's generosity to you make you generous to others?

Thank Jesus that he is the wise king who resisted the temptations of riches (Matthew 4v8-10) – in fact, he made himself poor so you could be rich (2 Corinthians 8v9). Ask him for a heart of generosity.

Friday 27th May

Will Solomon be any more faithful to God when it comes to his army?

Read 1 Kings 10v26-29

- What does Solomon get more and more of?
- Where does he get them from?

Apply

In Deuteronomy 17v16-17, God told the king not to get lots of horses and chariots, and not to get them from Egypt. Israel's kings were meant to be different from the kings of other nations. But Solomon thinks he needs this weaponry to give him power and keep him safe.

- What possessions do you buy to give you power and keep you safe? Do they stop you from trusting God?
- The more power we have, the more we want. Is a lust for power and influence a temptation for you?

Thank Jesus that he is the wise king who resisted the temptations of power (Matthew 4v8-10). Ask him for strength to do the same.

Saturday 28th May

Solomon has started to compromise his loyalty to God. Now he completely betrays him.

Read 1 Kings 11v1-8 and 1 Kings 3v3

- Who did Solomon marry? (v1-3)
- What happened to Solomon's heart after he married women who didn't worship God? (v4-8)
- How does this compare with Solomon earlier? (3v3)

Apply

In Deuteronomy 17v16-17, God told the king not to have many wives (especially not those who worship other gods!). In chapter 10, a foreign queen came to worship Israel's God; now Israel's king worships foreign gods. What a tragedy!

- Jesus tells us not marry people who don't worship him (e.g. 1 Corinthians 7v39). Do you know anyone who is getting involved with a non-Christian (maybe it's you!)? How could you warn them from this chapter?

Thank God for Jesus, the wise king who always worshiped God alone and ask him to give you the strength to guard your heart for him alone.

Sunday 29th May

Solomon has broken the greatest commandment – to worship God alone. How will God respond?

Read 1 Kings 11v9-13

- What is God's verdict on Solomon?
- What is God's sentence for Solomon?
- Why does God not carry out this punishment straight away?

Apply

Sin always has consequences. Solomon's heart was torn, so now his kingdom will be torn. Yet again we see that God's promises never failed, but God's leaders did.

- How does this passage warn you not to let your love for other things or people rival your love for God?
- How does this passage help you to put your hope in God and his perfect king Jesus, rather than in fallen human leaders?
- How does it encourage you that God was gracious even to a treacherous love-rat like Solomon? (v12-13)

Monday 30th May

Solomon's heart was divided. Now his kingdom will be divided. Here we see the devastating effect of sin.

Read 1 Kings 11v14-25

- What did the LORD do in response to Solomon's idolatry? (v14 and v23)
- How useful did Solomon's marriage alliance with Pharaoh turn out to be? (v17-22)?
- How is God being faithful to his word to Solomon in 11v9-13?

Apply

The Canaanites worshiped other gods, and God used Israel to drive them out. Now Solomon worships other gods, and he will be treated the same way.

- How does this passage help you to hate sin?
- How does this passage motivate you to guard against loving other gods (like family, money, education, sex)?
- Which of God's threats and promises do you need to pay more attention to?

Tuesday 31st May

More dire consequences from Solomon's sin.

Read 1 Kings 11v26-40

- How does this passage show that Jeroboam's rebellion was from the LORD's hand?
- What conditional promise does God give Jeroboam? (v38)
- What unconditional promise is God refusing to break? (v34-39)

Apply

The disasters that happened to Israel didn't come because God wasn't faithful to them; the disasters came because *they* weren't faithful to *him*.

- How does this chapter help you to appreciate God's faithfulness?
- How has this section of Kings made you thankful that Jesus is truly a faithful king?
- How does this make you want to be faithful to God?

Pray that God's word here would lead you to hate your sin, and to love God and his promises.