

THE WHOLE BIBLE

1 KINGS

This Bible study, one of 66 studies covering the entire Bible, is made up of one-page lessons covering short sections of the book. The electronic format (student's and leader's guides) allows adaptation to individual needs.

Benefits of one-page lessons:

- Hand out only what you need, relative to the length of the class session and how much content you wish to cover. Taken at a steady pace, a page can be covered in about 20 minutes.
- See at a glance all the material that pertains to the section being covered. Use the discussion questions as your basic outline and draw in material from the "Look" and "Apply" sections as you wish.

Suggestions for using these lessons:

- Teach an entire book, or teach just part of a book.
- Use a single lesson sheet for a "19 Minute" style Bible study.
- Use a single lesson sheet as a meeting opener, either as a devotion or a short Bible study.
- Build your own Bible studies. The possibilities are endless. For example:
 - Assemble all the lessons on the penitential psalms, psalms of praise, or David's early years.
 - Assemble sections that deal with predestination, and teach the pertinent passages in their context.
 - Study all references to mountains, cities, nations, etc., pointing out their importance in the lives of God's people.

Note: The appropriate pages in The People's Bible commentary volumes are referenced. However, the authors were given the freedom to develop their own studies, so these lessons are not, in a strict sense, study guides to those volumes.

We pray these lessons will help God's people grow in faith and in service to his kingdom.

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1 Kings 1

Solomon becomes king

(The People's Bible, 1,2 Kings, pages 9-17)

Look

- Verse 1 *"King David was old."* David was 70 years old. The opening chapters of 1 Kings present David's final days and the palace intrigues leading up to Solomon's succession.
- Verse 5 *"Adonijah"*—David's fourth son tried to get the throne, even though Solomon had been designated by the Lord through the prophet Nathan to succeed David. Abiathar, one of the two high priests, and Joab sided with Adonijah. Zadok, the other high priest, Benaiah, and Nathan remained faithful to David.
- Verse 50 *"Horns of the altar"*—According to Exodus 21:13, a person who had committed an unintentional crime could find refuge there until the matter could be settled by the judge. This did not cover the sin of insurrection that Adonijah had committed.

Discuss

- How does verse 6 help us understand why Adonijah felt emboldened to seek the kingship? How did Adonijah follow in the ways of his brother Absalom?
Unfortunately, David did not exercise careful fatherly discipline with Adonijah and in the past had let him go his own way. Like Absalom, Adonijah tried to win over enough people to mount an insurrection, this time by riding before the people in a chariot and leading the people in offering sacrifices.
- What was Nathan's plan to undo Adonijah's plot?
Nathan and Bathsheba worked together to encourage David to exercise leadership in this matter. First Bathsheba appealed to David on the basis of his oath to her and made it clear that if Adonijah succeeded, she and Solomon would be treated as criminals. Then Nathan warned David that the lives of those loyal to him were in danger.
- How did Adonijah learn about Solomon's coronation?
Jonathan, the son of Abiathar (who had so faithfully served David in the affair with Absalom), told Adonijah about David's actions.
- How did Solomon treat Adonijah?
He showed him mercy and did not put him to death.

Apply

- How is this whole episode an example of God's gracious mercy?
God graciously spared Israel from civil war. But God's greatest act of mercy was to put Solomon on the throne of Israel. Solomon, whose name means peace, is a type of Christ. Through Solomon, God gave us several books of the Bible.

The opening chapter of 1 Kings is marked by political intrigue. Nevertheless, God's plans prevailed. The chosen successor, Solomon, was declared to be king. Thus began a long history of human corruption and divine intervention.

1 Kings 2:1-12

David commissions Solomon

(The People's Bible, 1,2 Kings, pages 17-20)

Discuss

1. What kind of king did David want Solomon to be?

Above all, a godly one. David charged Solomon to keep God's laws.

2. According to David, who is a "real man"?

One who trusts in the Lord's mercy and observes what the Lord requires.

3. Briefly review the history of Joab, Shimei, and Barzillai. What had they done, and what did David want Solomon to do to them?

Joab was David's general. In addition to siding with Adonijah, Joab had killed two rival generals, Abner and Amasa. He did not kill them on the battlefield but in a time of peace, tricking them by making them think he was their friend. Shimei had cursed David when David fled from Absalom. David had accepted Shimei's curses as part of God's chastening, but now he charged Solomon to deal with him. Barzillai had risked his life to help David, and David charged Solomon to treat him kindly.

4. Why might David not have punished Joab and Shimei himself?

Perhaps he did not wish to be judge and jury in cases that affected him personally.

5. God promised David a Savior, a son who would rule forever. This was a promise of grace. Yet the right to have his human descendants sit on his throne was a promise contingent on something else. What was it?

It was a promise contingent on David's sons remaining faithful to God. The promise of a Savior was one-sided, but the promise of David's natural children following him as kings was a two-way agreement.

6. What words describe the death of David in verse 2? in verse 10? Explain these expressions.

Verse 2: "go the way of all the earth"—a simple expression of the reality of death

Verse 10: "rested with his fathers"—In David's case, an expression of the blessedness of a believer's death

Apply

7. What concept of manhood do we observe today? Is this different from David's description?

People of this world value physical strength, good looks, athletic ability, business acumen, and other characteristics related to this life. David considered godly character and spiritual strength to be more important.

8. David had forgiven Shimei, but he told Solomon to deal with him. How could David do both?

As a believer, David forgave Shimei. He could use his right as king to punish him. But he chose not to do that and entrusted that duty to Solomon. A Christian can forgive a murderer but still want to see civil justice done and the murderer be punished.

David prepared Solomon for the task of ruling over Israel by sharing some important fatherly advice. If Solomon would walk in the ways of the Lord, he would prosper and God's promises would be fulfilled.

1 Kings 2:13-46

Solomon takes charge of the kingdom

(The People's Bible, 1,2 Kings, pages 20-25)

Look

Verse 31 *"Do as he says."* Joab had fled to the horns of the altar seeking refuge in the Lord. But the Lord had given this law to help those who sinned unintentionally. Such people could find refuge there until the judge had a chance to determine their innocence or guilt. Joab was clearly guilty, so this law did not apply to him.

Discuss

1. What was Adonijah's attitude toward Solomon's right to sit as king?

We sense that he still believed he had a right to the throne and that Solomon was the pretender. Although he confessed that God had given Solomon the throne, he evidently did not believe in God or honor God enough to respect his wishes. (See verse 15.) So he asked for the hand of Abishag, the woman who had kept David warm in his later years. If he married her, he would have a claim on the throne.

2. Why does Adonijah make his request through Bathsheba?

She held great influence with her son. Perhaps Adonijah thought she would not see through the political ramifications of the request.

3. The Lord has his way of seeing that justice is done. How did Adonijah's request put into motion a series of events that solidified the kingdom?

The two people who conspired with Adonijah, Abiathar and Joab, would be punished along with Adonijah. Abiathar was removed as high priest. Joab fled and laid hold of the horns of the altar. There he was put to death.

4. How did Solomon deal with Shimei?

He told Shimei to remain in Jerusalem. He wanted to keep his eye on him. But Shimei, although he had promised to remain in Jerusalem and understood the penalty if he left, did not seem to take the king seriously. He left Jerusalem and was punished for it.

Apply

5. Agree or disagree. Solomon acted according to the principle many rulers use: Do unto others before they do unto you.

Disagree: Solomon had mercifully allowed Adonijah and Joab to live, even though they had conspired against him. He also allowed Shimei to live. These men could have lived to a ripe old age if they had simply respected the Lord and his servant Solomon. But they didn't. They conspired again. Solomon punished those who were actually guilty and not those he only perceived to be a threat.

6. Why is rebellion against the government such a terrible offense? (See Romans 13:1,2.)

God has established the governing authorities for the benefit of society at large. To interfere with that work is to interfere with the work of God.

Solomon established political control in Israel by eliminating those guilty of treason.