

United We Stand; Divided We Fall

I Kings Overview

(preached Pine Grove 3/15/15; Sunday PM)

Introduction

In 8th grade, I had Mrs. Campbell for South Carolina history.

We studied everyone from the “Swamp Fox” Frances Marion to Carroll Campbell, who was governor at the time.

You ever had those moments in your life when you wish you could travel back in time and yell at yourself when you were young.

Well, I would definitely go back to that young teenager in 8th grade and yell at him.

Because at the time, I had no interest in SC history or any history for that matter.

I was simply memorizing facts to pass a test.

But Mrs. Campbell was a dear lady who loved this state and loved teaching about it.

And she also did a great job at teaching US history as well; I was just too distracted to listen.

Some years later after I was saved, the Lord really gave me an interest in history.

And now, I would love to go back and be taught history.

Now, I would appreciate the hard work of learning about the history of our state.

I would enjoy the pages that I was assigned to read in the textbook.

Unfortunately, the main concerns of most 8th graders is not history of any kind.

However, as I have come to read and try to explain the Bible to God's people, an understanding of history is a very important part of that.

And to see the events of history and know that God's hand is guiding all of them is incredibly exciting and interesting.

Well, God is the God of history.

He is a God who inspired men to write down events that happened in times past.

And God started with the very first event of history on earth because he inspired Moses to record that first act in Genesis 1:1...

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

That is a historical event.

History is defined as a study of the past.

And you cannot go any farther back in the past on this earth than the creation of it.

And God, who could have communicated with man in any number of ways, chose to use history as a way of explaining who He is.

The Bible is unique among all the books of the earth.

It is written by God.

It is error free.

It is supernatural.

But the Bible also some things in common with other books.

It contains drama.

It contains statistics and facts.

But it also contains history.

The Bible contains a lot of history, and 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles are going to be books that offer a lot of history to us.

If you have been here over the past few weeks, we have watched Israel become a nation, who is given laws and a land by God.

Yet, they are not satisfied in that, and demand a king, thinking that having a king will make them look like a real nation.

So, God gives them Saul, who doesn't work out.

And then he gives them David, who is a good king and unifies the nation, but he also has problems of his own due to his sins of adultery and murder.

So, when we left off last week in 2 Samuel, David's reign is coming to an end as he nears death.

Since we are going to see a lot of history in 1 and 2 Kings, I want to ask this question to get us going.

What is the purpose of God inspiring and recording all this history?

What is the value to you today of reading about Israel's past and talking about king after king after king?

Some of you may have the same questions...

For some of you, the thought of going through 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles is boring and unexciting.

Some of you want help now in this world.

You desire something real practical.

You want something that you can use today.

You sound like the boy in Algebra I who says,
where am I ever going to use algebra in my life..

Or you sound like me in SC history...

“Why do I need to learn about a bunch of dead
men.”

And so, let me offer a few suggestions of the value
of what we are doing here...

Before we get into our study tonight....

**First, the Bible offers a history like no other
book in the world.**

When you are reading about former kings of Israel,
you are reading the very words of God.

While the history of the world is important and the
history of a nation or state is valuable and even
teaches us....

It cannot compare to the very words of God that he
inspired in the Scriptures.

Every word of God is pure and is meant to instruct us.

No other book in the world can make that claim, no matter how well it details the history it contains.

Second, histories in the Bible are meant to remind us not to repeat the sins of past generations.

You say that these people lived 1000s of years ago and I would agree...

But there are no new sins....

Just new ways to commit the same sin.

1 Cor 10:6..

⁶ Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. ⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." ⁸ Nor let us act immorally, as some of them ^[b] did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. ⁹ Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them ^[c] did, and were destroyed by the serpents. ¹⁰ Nor grumble, as some of them ^[d] did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands

take heed that he does not fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man;

As we move through the history and list of these kings of Israel, we need to be reminded that we need to avoid the sins and the consequences that come from it.

Third, studying the history of Israel reminds us that we are not the point of all of history.

God has worked and is working and will continue to work out his plan.

We are not the center of all of human history.

God has been at work for centuries and His plan is being carried out in His time.

He was a patient God in the face of some incredibly evil people...

And HE is a patient God today in the face of some incredibly evil people....

Fourth, studying the histories in the Bible gives us a better understanding of what the Bible is all about.

This is really the focus of these Sunday nights.

The Bible is not a collection of random events.

For instance, you can take a photo album and fill it with pictures of your family without any plan at all.

Or you can make a picture album with a plan, where you start where the kids were small and then let them age with each new page.

That is the Bible.

God didn't throw a book together without any thought.

He carefully laid out His plan in an ordered way over time.

And I think when we see the big idea...the big picture of the Bible...it makes the Bible smaller....

But it also makes God that much bigger...

And there's one final reason why we need to study the history contained in the Bible...

Fifth, it encourages us to press on to the finish.

Here's what Romans 15:4 says,

⁴ For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

As we looked at David last week and as we look at Solomon this week, we are reminded of two incredible truths.

The first is that no one is good enough on their own to please God and that all sin against him.

But the second equally important truth is that these men were still mightily used by God.

David wrote a number of psalms.

Solomon wrote a number of Proverbs, wrote Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes and a few psalms.

Which means that there is hope for all of us to be mightily used by God.

IF I simply summarized that, I would say that studying the history passages in the Bible...

Motivate our obedience, help us understand the flow of God's plan in the world, and give us encouragement that God can use us "warts and all."

So, with that in mind, let us look at 1 Kings tonight....

It is a rather simple book to outline...

The first 11 chapters are the story of Israel under the leadership of Solomon, and the last 11 chapters are the story of Israel splitting into two kingdoms.

I. The United Kingdom under Solomon (1-11)

- A. Solomon's Rise (1-2)**
- B. Solomon's Wisdom (3-4)**
- C. Solomon's Temple (5-8)**
- D. Solomon's Decline (9-11)**

II. The Divided Kingdom under Many Kings (12-22)

- A. Division of the Kingdom (12-14)**
- B. Kings of the Kingdoms (15-22)**

I. The United Kingdom under Solomon (1-11)

A. Solomon's Rise (1-2)

As 1 Kings begins, we find ourselves at the end of David's life as king of Israel.

Israel wanted a king and after their first king Saul died, God gave them David...

Who was Israel's greatest king.

Yet, he also sinned and disobeyed God.

And now, we have a nation in 1 Kings that is preparing to say good bye to David...

And in chapter 2 of 1 Kings, David anoints his son Solomon to be the next king of Israel.

As David's ^[a]time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, ² "I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and ^[b]show yourself a man. ³ Keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, ⁴ so that the Lord may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in ^[c]truth with all their heart and with all their soul, ^[d]you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

David then dies in the second half of chapter 2 and Solomon assumes the throne in Israel.

God goes to Solomon and tells him that HE will give him anything, and Solomon asked for wisdom.

B. Solomon's Wisdom (3-4)

And in chapters 3 and 4, God grants Solomon great wisdom.

In his first act as king, he decides a dispute between two women who both claim that a baby belongs to them.

So, he commands that the baby be cut in two, knowing that the real mother would never allow that to happen.

And when one speaks up and says to give the baby to the other woman, Solomon knows that she is the true mother and gives her the child.

Because of that judgment, Israel's respect for Solomon grew.

And so did Solomon's wisdom.

Since the nation was now in a peaceful time, Solomon decided to build a temple for God in chapters 5-8.

C. Solomon's Temple (5-8)

Once the temple is built, they have a ribbon cutting ceremony and Solomon prays to dedicate the temple in 1 Kings 8:22....

²² Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. ²³ He said, "O Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart, ²⁴ who have kept with Your servant, my father David, that which You have ^[h]promised him; indeed, You have spoken with Your mouth and have fulfilled it with Your hand as it is this day. ²⁵ Now therefore, O Lord, the God of Israel, keep with Your servant David my father that which You have ^[l]promised him, saying, ^[il]You shall not lack a man to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your sons take heed to their way to walk before Me as you have walked.' ²⁶ Now therefore, O God of Israel, let Your word, I pray, be confirmed which You have spoken to Your servant, my father David.

And with that prayer, we reach another high point in the history of the nation of Israel.

The are in the land, they have a king, and they have built and dedicated a temple to God.

D. Solomon's Decline (9-11)

This brings us to chapter 9 and a warning from the Lord to Solomon...

Look at verse 4 of chapter 9.....

⁴ As for you, if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, ⁵ then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just as I ^[b]promised to your father David, saying, ^[c]You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’
⁶ “But if you or your sons indeed turn away from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will ^[d]cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ⁸ And this house will become ^[e]a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astonished and hiss and say, ‘Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?’ ⁹ And they will say, ‘Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them, therefore the Lord has brought all this adversity on them.’”

When I read that, I see the clear warning, but I also see the incredible grace of God.

Solomon, let bygones be bygones.

From here on out, simply obey me and I will bless you.

But what always seems to happen after warnings like this?

Incredible disobedience usually follows.

Which brings us to Solomon's decline in chapter 11...

Though Solomon was incredibly wise, his love for multiple women got his in great trouble..

In 1 Kings 11:4, we read....

⁴ For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not ^[c]wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

Solomon goes on to build altars for all the false gods of his wives...

Important principle here..

The need to be equally yoked in marriage.

Not only did Solomon break God's law of having more than one wife...

He had wives who believed in false gods...

That's why believers are only allowed to marry other believers.

The New Testament clearly teaches that a Christian is not to be married to a non-Christian.

Why?

Because you are to be one flesh, but you can't be one flesh if you believe in two different gods.

Solomon was influenced by his ungodly wives.

And it led him to do evil in the sight of God.

And here we go again..

Not only did his sin affect him, it affected the entire nation of Israel.

Because here is another huge turning point in the nation of Israel.

You should start 1 Kings 11:11...

¹¹ So the Lord said to Solomon, "Because ^[1]you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have

commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. ¹² Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³ However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”

The consequence of Solomon’s sins was the dividing of Israel into two sections.

The kingdom would be cut in half.

And this is where it gets confusing because the northern section kept the name Israel...

While the southern section became known as Judah.

Here’s a map to look at how the nation would soon look.

Now, this is a nation that had been united since its very beginning.

They had finally been united under one king, but now the sins of just 3rd king lead them to be divided.

And the move from a united kingdom with one king to a divided kingdom with two kings begins in chapter 12....

II. The Divided Kingdom under Many Kings (12-22)

A. Division of the Kingdom (12-14)

Here is a list of the kings that would rule over each kingdom from chapter 12 forward...

So in the year 931 BC, Israel split into two kingdoms with Rehoboam the king in Israel and Jeroboam the king in Judah.

And the remainder of the book of 1 Kings is the story of the kings of both kingdom...

And it is not a pretty picture...

B. Kings of the Kingdoms (15-22)

Then in 1 Kings 17, we meet the prophet Elijah.

Now, Israel has had a few prophets already.

And a prophet in the OT was simply someone who spoke to God's people for God.

Nathan was a prophet who told David that he sinned.

Samuel was a judge, but Samuel was also a prophet who told Saul that he sinned by not killing Agag.

With both kingdoms of Israel now in great sin that began at the very top with their kings...

Israel is going to hear from prophets that God is going to send to call them back to him.

And one of the first prophets to call Israel back to God is Elijah.

I think we see a great principle of how God deals with people when he can't get their attention through normal means...

At times, God uses other methods to get their attention.

It may be disease or sickness...

It may be economic hardship or financial distress...

But God also has the power to shut up the rain from falling as well...

And that is what Elijah predicts in 1 Kings 17:1...

¹Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of ^[a]the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

Now Ahab was the king of Israel and he had married Jezebel.

She was an evil woman who worshipped Baal and led other Israelites to worship Baal as well.

Baal was a false god who was empowered by Satan.

And Baal worship had become so widespread in Israel that many worshipped him instead of the true God of the world.

So Elijah went to Ahab and declared that no rain would fall.

Now, this was an incredible prediction because the people believed that Baal was the god of the rain.

They believed that he was in control of the rain.

It's the same god that many people call Mother Nature today.

There is no Mother Nature, there is but one controller of the rain, wind, sun and snow...

And HE is the Lord of all Creation.

The God of the Scriptures.

And in chapter 18 of 1 Kings, Elijah challenges the false god Baal to showdown.

Verse 17 of 1 Kings 18...

¹⁷ When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is this you, you troubler of Israel?"¹⁸ He said, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's

house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and you have followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now then send and gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

²⁰ So Ahab sent a message among all the sons of Israel and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel. ²¹ Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you ^[i]hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people did not answer him a word. ²² Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. ²³ Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire under it. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, He is God." And all the people said, "^[i]That is a good idea."

And though we don't have time to read it all, most of know what happens here.

The false prophets call on Baal to send fire upon the sacrifice, but he doesn't even answer...

Because guess what?

He isn't real.

Then Elijah tells the people to cover his sacrifice in water, and then he calls upon God to cast down fire from heaven...

Which he does and burns up the offerings along with drying up all the water.

The people are convinced that God is the true God and they worship him there.

The false prophets of Baal are captured and killed.

Elijah runs in fear of what Jezebel may do to him, so God removes him as prophet and installs Elisha as his next prophet.

God also issues a judgment against Ahab and his wife Jezebel, saying that wild dogs would eat her in the street...

And guess what we see next week in 2 Kings 9?

Wild dogs eat Jezebel in the street.

And with that, we will end our look into 1 Kings.

Conclusion

What do we say about 1 Kings?

First, we see how fast sin can infect our life not matter how smart or rich we are.

Solomon went from wise to unwise in a matter of years.

Many people say that when God asked Solomon what he wanted, he should have asked for righteousness instead of wisdom.

And I don't disagree.

Even with more wisdom and wealth than any other person in the world, Solomon still had a sinful heart.

That is why the brightest minds in the world are just as lost without Christ as the most ignorant minds in the world.

WE don't need knowledge, we need righteousness.

WE don't need all the money, we need to be without sin in order to please God.

Second, we see how fast sin can infect a nation when the leaders are corrupt.

Though everyone is responsible for their own sin, when the leadership of a nation falls into sin, the nation is not far behind.

David sinned, Solomon sinned, and quickly the whole nation was filled with sin and worshipping other gods.

Third, God preserves His people and his plan.

Even though the nation was neck deep in sin, God had preserved a remnant of people.

In chapter 19 after Elijah had performed his miracle, he thought that he was the only one left who was true to God....

But God told him that there were 7000 left in Israel who had not worshipped Baal.

God keeps his people true to him.

He protects them and helps them to believe when it seems like no one else does.

And it is also true that God's plan marches forward as well.

The evil nature of most of the kings was used by God to make Israel long for a perfectly righteous King.

The design of God is to motivate Israel to look for the perfect King to come.

Even the evil actions that surround us should cause us to look forward to the day when evil no longer exists.

1 Kings is proof that God's plan is moving forward.

Evil may be winning but it will not prevail forever.

And that is a great lesson for us to end on as well..

We live in an ever increasing evil world.

Like Elijah, at times we would like to simply crawl up in a cave and wait to die rather than face the sin that surrounds us.

But that is not the right response.

As the Lord allows, we must speak the truth of His word into this world....

By the way we live.

By the words we say.

By the actions we take.

Let me also say this...

Our job is not to correct every injustice and right every wrong.

Some problems will never go away until the true King comes with the true Kingdom of this world.

Some problems will continue simply because the world is broken and it needs to be fixed.

The greatest problem we can speak the truth about is the problem of how a person's sin separates them from God....

And that problem is solved by exchanging our sin for the sinless perfection of Christ...

We will never fix poverty or hunger or disease or government injustice....

They are only fixed when a truly righteous One rules the world...

But we can preach Christ and Him crucified as a solution for sin.