**1 KINGS**

**The North-South Divide**

**What you need to REMEMBER:**

God is in the business of restoring His creation to its original factory settings. He made this intention known to Eve when He promised her that one of her descendants would destroy the source of evil. He then promised Abraham that this great blessing would happen through the nation that would be formed from his family lineage. Much of the storyline of Genesis through Judges describes the history of the formation of that nation, which became known as Israel.

Then, beginning with the book of Ruth, another layer was added to the storyline. The narrative continues to be concerned with aspects of the nation’s history, but with an additional emphasis

on the establishment of the specific family within the nation to whom the Promised Child would be born. That specific family was Ruth and Boaz’s great-grandson, David.

In the books of Samuel, we saw how the nation moved from the failed system of rule by Judges to a monarchical system that unified the nation. The books of Samuel also described the ascension and reign of King David. God promised David, *“Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever*.” *2 Samuel 7:16.* And, indeed, eventually, it would be a descendant of The Great King David, who would give birth to Jesus, The Eternal King of Kings.

**What you need to KNOW:**

1 Kings explains the sad story of how the golden years of prosperity and unity under King David began to erode. It didn’t happen all at once, but that’s the trajectory of the events recorded in Kings.

The story begins with David in declining health, causing a rivalry to develop over who will succeed him as king. David’s son, Adonijah, made a powerplay, but with the backing of the prophet Nathan and the priest Zadok, David named his youngest son, Solomon, as the true heir to the throne. With David’s subsequent death, Solomon succeeded him as king.

Solomon had a good start as the leader of the nation. In fact, early on, God approached Solomon in a dream offering him anything he wanted. It put a smile on God’s face when Solomon asked for wisdom. In return, God gave him not only great wisdom, but also immense power and wealth. From this strong platform, Solomon built an impressive temple which became the centerpiece of the nation’s worship. He also penned most of the Book of Proverbs and the Song of Songs.

Later, God reminded Solomon that the secret to continued blessing required faithful obedience. In this Solomon failed. He unwisely married over 700 women many of whom came from surrounding nations wanting to create political alliances with his kingdom. His foreign wives brought their idolatrous worship practices into the palace. Thus, the idolatry that David had so zealously pushed out of the nation were invited and welcomed back in by Solomon’s foolish finish. Through their influence, Solomon, himself, tragically descended into apostacy in his old age.

The united-kingdom that began with King Saul and flourished under David and Solomon lasted for 120 years. However, with the sunset of Solomon’s life also came the sunset of the nation’s golden era. After Solomon’s death the nation began its own tragic death-spiral, fracturing into Northern and Southern Kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom was called “Israel;” the Southern Kingdom was known as “Judah.”

The Southern Kingdom of Judah consisted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and was generally more faithful in its worship of the True and Living God – the One who promised to defeat the source of evil and restore His good creation. Judah’s faithfulness was inconsistent and would eventually dissolve into apostacy, but at least they tried.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel, on the other hand, didn’t even try to remain faithful. Israel was formed by an alliance of the 10 remaining tribes. They reinstituted Calf Worship and Baal Worship as a way to show national pride and their distinctiveness from Judah. There were a couple of leaders who immerged in the north who made some attempt to follow The Lord, but generally, the record shows a pathetic series of wicked kings and influencers.

Still, the record shows that God gave His people a chance to repent by raising up the Prophet Elijah who had the difficult task of speaking God’s truth to a group of people who didn’t want to hear it. Elijah’s words were backed with amazing miraculous powers including the defeat of 450 false prophets in a dramatic contest on Mt. Carmel (Chapter 18).

**GET GOING!**

**Continue your personal Walk Through the Bible by reading or listening to 1 Kings.**