

Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

Week 16: 1 Kings 1-18 Solomon Reigns, the Kingdom Splits

Welcome to Week 16 of the Bible reading coach podcast. My name is Karl Vaters and I'm here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks.

This week, we're going to be looking at the life of King Solomon. We know a lot about Solomon, he's one of the two great kings of Israel, of course, we know a lot about him because he wrote some of the Psalms. He wrote most of the proverbs, and he wrote all of Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes, that's quite a resume. But his time as king, even though it was prosperous and very eventful, it doesn't take much time to actually record it in Scripture. It starts this week, but it's over and he's dead in just 11 chapters. So let's get right into it and see this important figure who comes and leaves the scene pretty quickly, despite the impact that he had.

So first of all, we are beginning the book of First Kings. So we've left the Samuels, we are now in the Kings. And in the first two chapters of First Kings Solomon becomes the king as David gets old and weak, his son Adonijah actually plots to become king instead of Solomon. That is dealt with in the first two chapters, and Solomon becomes king as he has been anointed to be and as he's been called, by God to be. Whenever I read these stories of kings and other powerful people, especially somebody, like at an age of plotting to become the next king, it always makes me wonder, why would anyone want to be a king or a president or a prime minister? Let alone why would they fight so hard to get it into keep it the, the appeal to that kind of earthly power has always eluded me? And maybe it has you or maybe you're one of the people who has that kind of desire? Either way, I think there's some great lessons in this for all of us.

We then moved to First Kings, 3 and 4, and we get here now to one of the great Bible episodes. Let me ask you this question. If God said He would give you anything, what would you ask for? Before you jump to the conclusion to quickly think about how bad this always goes in Genie stories, right? There's, there's always stories out there about the genie who grants three wishes. And every single time it goes really, really badly, because they asked for dumb stuff. But when Solomon the only person who was actually legitimately given that question, by someone who could actually legitimately answer that question, God asked Solomon, that exact question, I'm going to give you one thing you can ask for whatever you want. What does Solomon do? Solomon gets it right. Solomon asks for wisdom. And God says, Wow, good answer. Because you've done that, I'm going to give you everything else as well. And then we get to see some of the amazing results of his wisdom after he asks for it, in chapters five through nine in First Kings.

Then we get to see Solomon, building God's temple. If you remember from previous episodes, and from your previous reading, David had been told that the temple wasn't his to build, even though David was the one who wanted to build God a temple out of the goodness of his heart and his love for God. So since he hadn't been granted, to do that, by God, instead, he

spent the last half of his life getting all of the materials together so that his son Solomon, could build the temple. So that's one of the first things Solomon does in his reign is to fulfill that dream of his father and that opportunity to worship God in that way.

And I encourage you this week, as you read through, and you read about the glory of the temple. Note that it took multi generational work and multi generational cooperation for that to happen. David got the call, had the dream to do it. David was told by God, it's not yours to do. But David didn't just go, Oh, well, then and walk away. David said, well, then what can I do? How can I help the next generation do that, and he spends the time he spends the money, he prepares it all. And then the next generation comes in and the next generation doesn't look back at the previous generation and go, "Ah, they didn't know what they were doing." They honor the sacrifice of the previous generation. And when one generation feeds into the next generation, and when the new generation honors the sacrifice of the previous generation, amazing things can happen. When we have multi generational cooperation.

This is something that I think we really could learn better in the church. Right now we have this, well we've always had it, this dispute between you know, the older generation going out kids these days, right? Like every generation before ours is done. And the new generation going our parents just don't get us like every new generation is done. If we could just learn our lessons at some point that anytime we do learn that lesson, it always goes better. Let's build generation to generation I think this is a great example here.

We then moved to First Kings chapter 10, where we have the visit from the Queen of Sheba. This may actually be First Kings 10 May be the pinnacle of Israel's in entire Old Testament history, Jerusalem has been established. The Throne has been passed along successfully from one good king to another good king. The temple is built the palace is built, the land is at peace. Foreign rulers are coming in to marvel at their wealth and at Solomon's wisdom. That's like as good as it gets. And then, like his father, David before him, Solomon lets his sexual appetites get twisted and everything starts falling to pieces, which is what we see when we get to first Kings chapter 11, where Solomon begins his wife collection, of all things. Collecting things just fine. Collecting wives, not a good idea. He starts collecting wives, he ends up with 700 of them plus, 700 plus, 300 concubines. What's a concubine? Well, basically, it's personal sex partners that aren't wives. There's just no other way to, you can't put a pleasant shine on that it's just what it is. And then just like his father, David taking Bathsheba, this marks a turning point for Solomon as well. Before this chapter, there's more good than bad. After this chapter, there's more bad than good. This is the turning point. That's why I say chapter 10 is probably the pinnacle because everything is getting better, better, better.

We hit chapter 10. It's awesome. And then chapter 11, it starts collapsing, collapsing. And before the chapter is over, God has sent enemies and Solomon is dead. After 40 years, Solomon is dead at that point in chapters 12 through 16 of First Kings, the Kingdom splits, Solomon dies. And then there are extended battles about who should be the king. Loyalties are split between the tribes, and one nation becomes two nations as it will remain for the rest of the entire Old Testament. At that point, you then have the nation of Israel, which is just 10 tribes,

and also called the northern kingdom. And you have the tribe, the nation of Judah, which is two tribes in the south. So be aware of this is part of the challenge.

When you're reading through the Bible, we get used to the name Israel attached to a person, then we get used to the name of Israel as attached to the entire nation. But from this point on, whenever we hear the word Israel in the Old Testament, it doesn't refer to the entire nation. It refers only to the 10 tribes in the north that have kept the name Israel. And anytime we hear the name, Judah, it's not referring just to the tribe of Judah, it's referring to the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, that are also called the southern kingdom. So it's a little bit of remembering it may be something for you even write down as you continue to read from this point on. Israel refers to 10 tribes, also called the northern kingdom, Judah refers to two tribes, Judah, and Benjamin, also called the southern kingdom, and the northern kingdom, Israel is one nation, and the southern kingdom of Judah is a separate nation.

Judah is where Jerusalem is, and Jerusalem remains the capital of Judah, in Israel to the northwest Sumeria becomes their new capital. And this is the first time in the Bible that we hear about this region, and the city names some area. We'll get into more of that next week. Because Sumeria, of course, becomes a huge part of the story, and especially even the stories that Jesus told, which we'll reference next week will give you an idea why some Mariya matters so much. Then after that, we meet a man named Elijah, in first Kings 7 to 18. We just begin to be introduced to him this week. And then we get more into his story. The following week.

Elijah is the first of two great prophets who have very similar names, and very weird stories. It starts with one of the favorite preacher stories that preachers love to speak from, and justifiably so. In chapter 17. And 18. We have the story of the the altar on Mount Carmel, where there's a God contest and the pagan priests pray to their gods to set the altar and the sacrifice on fire. And that doesn't go well for them, including some mocking from Elijah. And then Elijah does call out to God and God answers his prayer in a spectacular fashion, which I won't spoil for you if you haven't read it before. After that, they seek his life. So he runs to a cave where he waits to hear from God feeling bad about himself. We'll also meet the Prophet Obadiah in chapter 18. Yes, he is the prophet who will write the tiny little book that we'll see in week 39. Tiny book, but a big profit at the time. And we will also be from this point on we're going to be talking about three different types of people. We're going to hear about Levites. We're going to hear about priests, and we're going to hear about prophets.

So let me give you a quick overview of that, because you'll hear just like we're going to hear about Israel and Judah from now on. We're also going to hear about Levites priests and prophets. They are three distinct types of people that have some overlap, but not entirely. The Levites is a tribal designation one of the tribes is called the tribe of Levi. And both men and women are in that tribe, of course, they are descended from Levi. And they are the ones who are put in charge of the temple and the worship, the Levites. Then you have the priests and the priests is not what they are. Levites is what you are, you're born a Levite. Priest is what you do. And in that day, the priests could only be men. And they were the ones who did the ministry in the temple, to act as a go between between God and humanity. So Levites are the entire tribe of

men and women that they're born into. Priests are the people within the tribe of Levi, that actually perform the duties in the temple, to help people communicate with God.

And then prophets can be anyone male or female, of any tribe, even non Jews like Balem, who we already read about, who are designated by God for a certain period of time to speak God's word to the people, usually, because the people are really misbehaving. And God needs to get their attention. So Levites, priests, prophets. Three different types of people, we'll hear about them a lot going forward. That's another thing you may want to take a note on to remember when you hear them designated from this point on what each of those words mean.

So to close out two times in a row now we've seen great kings who have been done in by they're out of control sexual appetites, David, and then his son, Solomon, the same thing. But around that I want you to this week, take take note of two things in particular, first of all, take note of the generational debt, generational blessing that happens when one generation feeds into the next. And then when the new generation picks up with the previous generation set down as a foundation for them. This is an amazing opportunity. And then note how quickly all of that can unravel. generations worth of work can unravel so fast when we don't follow God's ways. So let's do it the right way. And let's not fall into the same problems that David and Solomon had. Those are the lessons for this week, but you're just going to enjoy this is one of those weeks with tons of stories, all kinds of fun stuff. You are going to enjoy it and hopefully we'll see you next week. Thanks.

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