

1 Kings: The Kingdom of God

Explore what it means to have God as the ruler of our lives.

By Philip Ryken, with Kyle Wright

We all want to be kings. We want to rule our lives according to what we think is best. The problem with building our own little kingdoms is that we never find our rightful place in the true kingdom of God. This central issue of the Christian life is also the central issue in 1 and 2 Kings. Who will be king? Will we accept the kingship that God has established, or will we always insist on having our own way? This study is based on the first three chapters of 1 Kings.

Session One - Building God's Kingdom God's Way

By submitting to the kingdom of Christ, we put Jesus on his rightful throne.

1 Kings 1:1-10

The question of kingship arises right from the beginning of 1 Kings. King David is dying, throwing the kingship of Israel into question. This shows, by way of contrast, the superior kingship that we have in Jesus Christ, who is the true Son of David and the only Son of God. Jesus also died, suffering crucifixion for our sins. But on the third day he was raised again to reign forever in kingly majesty. Jesus Christ is the immortal King of all ages (1 Tim. 1:17). This is the kingdom we need, with a king who will never die again, but will always live to rule and defend us.

Session Two - Taking the Side of the Kingdom

If we believe in the kingdom of God, we will work for its fulfillment.

1 Kings 1:11-31

We all face a choice when it comes to the kingdom of God. Will we honor God's true and rightful King, or will we try to seize the crown for ourselves? Which kingdom will we choose? How much will we sacrifice to see it established?

Session Three - Advancing the Kingdom

By supporting God's anointed king, we advance his everlasting kingdom.

1 Kings 1:32-53

Bathsheba hoped for David's eternal life and everlasting kingdom, and her hopes were not misplaced. The king still lives, as does his dynasty, to the everlasting joy of all God's people. We can advance God's kingdom by bowing to the anointed King.

Session Four - Kingdom Citizens Obey God's Word

We cannot waste our lives if we obey the Word of God.

1 Kings 2:1-11

By the grace of God, even a life that is almost totally wasted can still be redeemed. As the Scottish theologian Thomas Boston once said, our present existence is only "a short preface to a long eternity." If that is true, then the man's life was not wasted after all; he was only just beginning an eternal life of endless praise. But why wait when life with God is so much better? This was the wisdom David gave to his son Solomon.

Session Five - Money, Sex, and Power Under God's Kingship

This world is passing; use God's good gifts for his kingdom.

1 Kings 2:12-46

One day soon, we will see this kingdom in all its glory, at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. But in the meantime, each human heart must struggle to establish his kingdom, with each decision we make about money, sex, and power. The same battle was fought when Solomon established his kingdom in Israel, and if we look carefully at the choices people made either for or against his kingship, we may be able to see ourselves and our own need for a Savior.

Session Six - Seeking the Kingdom First

The wisdom of God is our greatest gift.

1 Kings 3:1-15

What if your biggest wish could come true? What if the person asking what you wanted had infinite resources? What if you were King Solomon, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you"? What wish would you make from the heart?