



KINGS



KINGS

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Introduction

Hey Riv,

Last fall, we embarked on a spiritual journey through the book of Acts. We looked at how the early church grew through the obedience and faithfulness of a small group of believers, fueled by the Holy Spirit, that expanded into an unstoppable movement—all for the sake of sharing the Gospel with one more person.

In One More, we challenged ourselves to take one more step of faith—to trust God one more time, love one more person, have one more conversation, and believe that small acts of obedience can have an eternal impact. This year, we build on that foundation by asking a different question: What happens after that decision? As we walk through Kings, we'll see that spiritual growth isn't defined by one dramatic moment but by a lifetime of choices.

The kings of Israel and Judah remind us that the direction of our lives is shaped by the daily decision to follow God or to drift from Him. Together, these two years form one spiritual journey: first taking the step of faith, then learning what it looks like to keep walking faithfully over the long haul.

Onward we stumble!

Pastor Noel

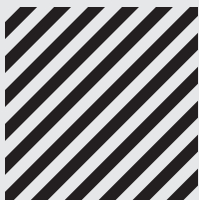
August 2026

1 & 2 Kings: An Overview

In the Hebrew Bible, 1 and 2 Kings are a single scroll—one continuous story running from the last days of David to the burning of Jerusalem four centuries later. It opens with a king dying in his bed and closes with a king eating at a foreign table in exile. In between, a temple is built and looted, a kingdom becomes united and then split, prophets confront thrones, and forty-plus rulers are measured against one standard.

Kings is not a royal chronicle written to flatter those who carried a title. It is a theological history, written to explain how the covenant people ended up in Babylon—and to reveal that God was not absent when they did.

Four themes carry the story, and our teaching series follows them in order.



The throne behind the throne

*Movement One:
The Rise of the King (1 Kings 1–10)*

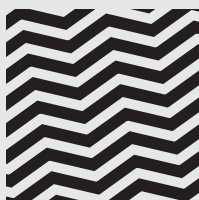
Solomon's reign is genuinely magnificent—wisdom, wealth, a temple filling with glory. But the grandeur keeps pointing past itself. Solomon says so at the dedication: “Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain you, much less this temple I have built” (1 Kings 8:27). Israel has kings. Israel is not ruled by them.



Divided worship divides a kingdom

*Movement Two:
The Kingdom Divided (1 Kings 11–16)*

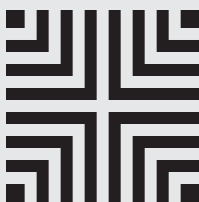
The fracture starts in the heart before it shows up on a map. Solomon's foreign altars (1 Kings 11:7) give way to Jeroboam's golden calves (1 Kings 12:28–30), and the pattern is set: not the rejection of God, but the refusal to worship Him alone. The warning is spoken before the split ever happens (1 Kings 9:6–7).



The word of the Lord accomplishes what it says

*Movement Three:
Prophets of Fire and Whisper
(1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 7)*

Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah—prophets are the real power brokers here. They anoint, rebuke, and outlast the men on the throne. God speaks in fire on Carmel and in a soft whisper on Horeb (1 Kings 19:11–12), and what He announces, happens: “*the LORD’s word from your mouth is true*” (1 Kings 17:24).



Covenant carries consequence — and mercy

*Movement Four:
The Last Kings (2 Kings 8–25)*

Every king gets the same verdict: good or evil, in the eyes of the Lord. When the north falls, the narrator names why (2 Kings 17:7). Judah follows. And still the book ends with an exiled king lifted from prison and seated at a foreign table (2 Kings 25:27–30). A flicker is enough to keep watching for the King who is still coming.

Bible Reading Plans

One-Year Bible Reading Plan

Scan this QR code for a PDF version of a one-year Bible reading plan.



Two-Year Bible Reading Plan

Scan this QR code for a PDF version of a two-year Bible reading plan.



Prayer Resources

24-Hour Prayer Wheel

Scan this QR code for a PDF version of a prayer wheel.



Daily Prayer Text Signup

Sign up to receive daily prayer reminders by text at rivchurch.com/prayer.



How to Have Intentional Spiritual Conversations

Jesus' instruction to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20) is both an invitation and a promise. He invites us to join Him in leading others toward eternal life, assuring us of His presence and support.

For many people, however, initiating spiritual conversations can often feel intimidating, especially in a culture that is resistant to talking about faith. The key is intentionality coupled with genuine relationship-building. A simple way to do this is to think about moving conversations through the framework of “Good, God, Gospel.”

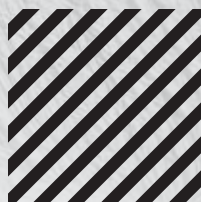
Here's what that looks like practically:

- **Good:** Begin by being open to natural, genuine conversations. You'd be surprised how far showing real interest in people's lives without immediately pushing a spiritual agenda can get you.
- **God:** Stay attentive for natural openings in conversations where spiritual topics arise, and be willing to step into these moments. An easy way to do this is to share stories about how your faith relates to similar situations and challenges.
- **Gospel:** As you share your story, it becomes easier to guide the conversation intentionally toward the Gospel, clearly sharing the transformative message of Jesus Christ.
- **Trust God with the Outcome:** Understand that your role may sometimes be just to plant or water seeds, trusting God for the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6-8).

Jesus exemplified this approach, intentionally placing Himself among those who needed Him most, earning the nickname “friend of sinners.” He genuinely befriended tax collectors and sinners without ulterior motives, allowing authentic relationships to open doors for deeper spiritual truths.

It's crucial to remember that people aren't projects or trophies; they're friends worth loving regardless of their response to the Gospel. Authentic friendships provide safe spaces for honest spiritual discussions. Sometimes a conversation might not progress beyond spiritual curiosity, and that's okay—trust God for growth.

Practicing intentional spiritual conversations requires stepping out of comfort zones. Engage with others naturally, remain sensitive to conversational openings, and courageously steer interactions toward Jesus. Our mission is simple yet profound: invite everyone to know and enjoy Jesus as we stumble together in our pursuit to love like Him.



Movement One: The Rise of the King

(1 KINGS 1–10)

PEOPLE AND THEMES:

David, Bathsheba, Solomon, Zadok, kings, priests, promises, anointing oil, God's plan, remembering the life and impact of David

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

The king swore an oath and said, “As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life from every difficulty, just as I swore to you by the Lord God of Israel: Your son Solomon is to become king after me, and he is the one who is to sit on my throne in my place, that is exactly what I will do this very day.” (1 Kings 1:29-30)

IN COMMUNITY:

We all have a bit of Adonijah in us. We want to exalt ourselves and assume the position of “king” in our own lives and in the eyes of others, and we’ll go to great lengths to make that happen. What change in your thinking or actions could you consider this week to best honor our true King Jesus and exalt Him in your life and in the eyes of others?

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Psalms

PASSAGE:

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Handwriting practice area with a grid of dots.



VERSE TO REMEMBER:

IN COMMUNITY:

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Solomon, Judah, Israel, Tyre, diplomacy, leadership, prosperity, building God's temple

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

“So I plan to build a temple for the name of the Lord my God, according to what the Lord promised my father David: ‘I will put your son on your throne in your place, and he will build the temple for my name.’” (1 Kings 5:5)

IN COMMUNITY:

Solomon knew about the promise God had made to his father David that he would be the one to lead the way for the building of the temple. As a result, he reoriented his life completely around the assumption that God would keep His promises.

Find a promise in the Scripture that you'd like to remember and spend some time this week considering how to orient your life around trusting that promise.

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Solomon, temple construction, God's precision, God's creation, worship

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

The word of the Lord came to Solomon: “As for this temple you are building—if you walk in my statutes, observe my ordinances, and keep all my commands by walking in them, I will fulfill my promise to you, which I made to your father David. I will dwell among the Israelites and not abandon my people Israel.” (1 Kings 6:11-13)

IN COMMUNITY:

The Lord's temple was expertly and precisely constructed with massive bronze pillars, ornamental gourds, golden lampstands, and dozens of additional elaborate and expensive decorative structures. What are some things God created that cause you to be thankful and to glorify Him? How can we avoid the temptation to worship created things rather than the One who created them?

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Solomon, Jerusalem, the ark of the covenant, priests, Levites

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

When the priests came out of the holy place, the cloud filled the Lord’s temple, and because of the cloud, the priests were not able to continue ministering, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple. (1 Kings 8:10-11)

IN COMMUNITY:

In the days of Solomon, the presence of the Lord was uniquely manifested in His temple. How does God reveal Himself in our world today? Consider 1 Corinthians 3:16, which says, “Don’t you yourselves know that you are God’s temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you?”

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Solomon, God's faithfulness, covenant, blessing, worship, community, promises

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

“Lord God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below, who keeps the gracious covenant with your servants who walk before you with all their heart.” (1 Kings 8:23)

IN COMMUNITY:

Solomon first encourages the entire congregation of Israel by remembering God's track record of faithfulness; then, he leads the community in a lengthy prayer of worship, blessing, protection, and forgiveness. Take a few minutes with your community to pray the Lord's Prayer together (see Matthew 6:9-13), stopping along the way to worship God, profess your trust in Him, and ask for forgiveness.

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Prayer, Solomon, promises, sacrifice, offerings, community

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

"May all the peoples of the earth know that the Lord is God. There is no other!" (1 Kings 8:60)

IN COMMUNITY:

God's desire is for everyone to know Him, and to know that He is the Lord.

Read 1 Kings 18:37, 1 Samuel 17:46-47, and John 17:23. Our community (God's modern "temple") of saints exists to make God known to the world. What specific opportunities will you have this week to make God known to others?

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Solomon, Hiram, David, faithfulness, idolatry, disobedience, building, offerings

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

“If you or your sons turn away from following me and do not keep my commands—my statutes that I have set before you—and if you go and serve other gods and bow in worship to them, I will cut off Israel from the land I gave them, and I will reject the temple I have sanctified for my name. Israel will become an object of scorn and ridicule among all the peoples.” (1 Kings 9:6-7)

IN COMMUNITY:

God warns Solomon not to “serve other gods and bow in worship to them,” which is called “idolatry.” What are some idols in our culture that people worship ahead of God? How about in your own life? What earthly thing sometimes captures your heart ahead of God?

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Solomon, Queen of Sheba, wisdom, wealth, Jerusalem

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the world in riches and in wisdom. The whole world wanted an audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom that God had put in his heart. (1 Kings 10:23-24)

IN COMMUNITY:

Imagine being Solomon, objectively the wealthiest and wisest king in the entire world. How might that affect your relationship with God? What temptations would you be faced with? Do you think Solomon had a community of fellow believers to help him navigate the potential pitfalls of being in such a lofty earthly position?

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Movement Two: The Kingdom Divided

(1 KINGS 11–16)



PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Solomon, adultery, idolatry, unfaithfulness, Jeroboam, the ripple effects of sin

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women from the nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, and they must not intermarry with you, because they will turn your heart away to follow their gods." (1 Kings 11:1-2)

IN COMMUNITY:

One of the great tragedies in the Bible is Solomon's fall. He was highly favored and chosen by God, but he couldn't resist the temptation to get sexually involved with women from other nations in violation of God's clear instructions, and this created a path for Solomon to worship foreign gods as well. What are ways we can intentionally remember that our sin almost always has an impact that's wider than the sin itself?

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Rehoboam, Jeroboam, divided kingdom, idolatry, laziness, lack of wisdom

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

But he rejected the advice of the elders who had advised him and consulted with the young men who had grown up with him and attended him. (1 Kings 12:8)

IN COMMUNITY:

Who you surround yourself with makes all the difference in your walk with God. Rehoboam received sound, godly advice from wise elders in the community, but he chose to ignore that advice in favor of the opinions of his “crew” of childhood friends. Who are you listening to?

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Jeroboam, Rehoboam, divided kingdom, Abijah, God's kind warnings, prophets, wickedness, consequences

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Even after this, Jeroboam did not repent of his evil way but again made priests for the high places from the ranks of the people. He ordained whoever so desired it, and they became priests of the high places. (1 Kings 13:33)

IN COMMUNITY:

Repentance happens when we change our hearts and minds about our sin and adjust our actions accordingly. Have you been stubborn and slow to repent in any area of your life, ignoring God's repeated warnings?

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1 KINGS 15-16

PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Jeroboam, Abijam, Asa, Baasha, Omri, Zimri, Ahab and Jezebel,
divided kingdom, confronting idols, wickedness

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Asa did what was right in the Lord's sight, as his ancestor David had done. He banished the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed all of the idols that his ancestors had made. (1 Kings 15:11-12)

IN COMMUNITY:

In the midst of a string of wicked and unfaithful kings, Asa stood out because he took action against the cultural idols that had infiltrated the faith community. Have you ever been in a situation where it felt like you were the only one who was committed to following God?

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Psalms

PASSAGE:

A large rectangular area with a light gray dot grid pattern, intended for writing or drawing.



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Handwriting practice grid consisting of 20 rows of dotted lines on a light gray background.





Advent



2 SAMUEL 7, ISAIAH 9

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ISAIAH 11

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LUKE 1

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Psalms

PASSAGE:

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Handwriting practice grid consisting of 20 rows and 30 columns of dots.





Movement Three: Prophets of Fire and Whisper

(1 KINGS 17 – 2 KINGS 7)



1 KINGS 17

PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Elijah, Ahab, drought, God's provision

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Now Elijah the Tishbite, from the Gilead settlers, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, in whose presence I stand, there will be no dew or rain during these years except by my command!" (1 Kings 17:1)

IN COMMUNITY:

In 1 Kings 16:33 it says, “Ahab did more to anger the Lord God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him.” Now, at the beginning of 1 Kings 17, Elijah the prophet of God confronts the wicked king. Have you ever been called upon to speak up against ungodly or unjust actions or attitudes?

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WEEK 18

1 KINGS 18

PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Elijah, Ahab and Jezebel, Obadiah, famine, God's preeminence

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Then Elijah approached all the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him. But if Baal, follow him." But the people didn't answer him a word. (1 Kings 18:21)

IN COMMUNITY:

How do you handle moments when you're faced with a choice between following God's clear instruction versus pursuing an earthly idol? It's wise to have a strategy that includes leaning into the wisdom of God's Word and the community of God's people to help you navigate those moments without falling into sin.

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Handwriting practice area with dotted lines for notes.

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Ahab and Jezebel, Elijah, rest, healthy rhythms, God's voice,
the destructiveness of sin, the riches of God's grace

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite: “Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? I will not bring the disaster during his lifetime, because he has humbled himself before me.” (1 Kings 21:28-29a)

IN COMMUNITY:

Given the history of abject wickedness displayed in the heart and actions of Ahab (who “devoted himself to do what is evil in the Lord’s sight”), it’s incredible to see God showing him mercy. Be reminded today that the blood shed by Jesus on the cross washes away the stain of all sin, even our worst moments.

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1 KINGS 22-2 KINGS 2

PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Jehoshaphat, Micaiah, prophets, kings, fire, the Holy Spirit,
Elijah, Elisha, Bethel, Jericho, the Jordan River

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

As they [Elijah and Elisha] continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire with horses of fire suddenly appeared and separated the two of them. Then Elijah went up into heaven in the whirlwind. (2 Kings 2:11)

IN COMMUNITY:

Elijah never experienced earthly death. Why do you suppose God chose to take Elijah directly to heaven? How would you have reacted if you were in Elisha's shoes? What can we learn from the fact that Elisha immediately picked up the "mantle" of Elijah and followed in his footsteps?

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Psalms

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Joram, Moab, legacy, Elisha, judgment and justice, Gehazi, care, healing, God's repeated provision

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

He [King Joram] did what was evil in the Lord's sight, but not like his father and mother, for he removed the sacred pillar of Baal his father had made. Nevertheless, Joram clung to the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. He did not turn away from them. (2 Kings 3:2-3)

IN COMMUNITY:

When Joram took over as king he did some things that were pleasing to God, including removing the sacred pillar of Baal from the community. At the same time, Joram also “clung to the sins” of his father, and “did not turn away from them.” Have you ever been tempted to justify the sin in your life by thinking (or saying), “At least I’m not as bad as THAT person?” We’re always better off comparing ourselves to God’s standard than trying to be “better” than the people around us.

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2 KINGS 5

PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Naaman, Gehazi, Elisha, Aram, healing, God's grace

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Naaman responded, “If not, please let your servant be given as much soil as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will no longer offer a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other god but the Lord.” (2 Kings 5:17)

IN COMMUNITY:

Once Naaman was healed, he promised to never sacrifice to anyone but the Lord, but then a few verses later he reversed his intentions because of cultural expectations. Have you ever experienced God's healing, care, or presence in your life in such a powerful way that you became convinced you'd never worship anyone or anything other than Him? How do you handle the discouragement that comes when you realize you've drifted from God due to cultural forces?

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2 KINGS 6-7

PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Aram, Elisha, famine, blindness, disease, war, Samaria, dove's dung

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Elisha said, “Don’t be afraid, for those who are with us outnumber those who are with them.” (2 Kings 6:16)

IN COMMUNITY:

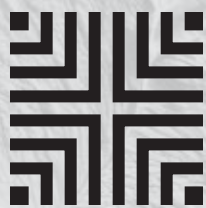
From a human perspective, Elisha's servant was completely surrounded by the enemy. When Elisha asked God to open the eyes of his servant, his servant realized God's protection and plan had always been there. Pray to God today to give you eyes to see your life through the lens of God's protective hand.

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Movement Four: The Last Kings

(2 KINGS 8–25)



2 KINGS 8-13

PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Elisha, Aram, Gehazi, Edom, anointing oil, succession of kings, peace, famine, war, division, prophets, Ben-hadad

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Then Elisha died and was buried. (2 Kings 13:20a)

IN COMMUNITY:

Consider the tumultuous journey of Elisha, who served tirelessly and faithfully in the midst of a perverse generation of kings. Pray today for a legacy like the one Elisha left, of a person who loved and honored God through the very end of his life.

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Many unfaithful kings, Hezekiah, rise of Assyria, Sennacherib, Eliakim, Isaiah, prophets, Babylon, siege of Jerusalem

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Hezekiah relied on the Lord God of Israel; not one of the kings of Judah was like him, either before him or after him. He remained faithful to the Lord and did not turn from following him but kept the commands the Lord had commanded Moses. The Lord was with him, and wherever he went he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. (2 Kings 18:5–7)

IN COMMUNITY:

How do you define success as you aim to follow God? Hezekiah was considered to be a uniquely faithful king in his time, and yet in the end his people still fell to the powerful Assyrians. It is enough to live faithfully and trust God with whatever outcome He wills.

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2 KINGS 21-23

PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Manasseh, Josiah, young kings, Baal and Asherah, idols, high places, Eliakim, Jerusalem in peril

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

He [Manasseh] rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed and reestablished the altars for Baal. He made an Asherah, as King Ahab of Israel had done; he also bowed in worship to all the stars in the sky and served them. (2 Kings 21:3)

IN COMMUNITY:

Manasseh's dad was a man of faith, but the legacy of faith skipped a generation. If you are a parent and/or grandparent, pray for God to work in the life of your children and grandchildren as only He can, that they may love God and follow Him.

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PEOPLE AND THEMES:

Babylonian siege, Nebuchadnezzar, fall of Jerusalem, temple destroyed, exile, captivity, God's judgment for repeated sin

VERSE TO REMEMBER:

At that time the servants of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. (2 Kings 24:10)

IN COMMUNITY:

One of the most tragic moments in the entire Bible is the fall of Jerusalem and God's temple into the hands of the Babylonians. In spite of God's repeated warnings to His people, they were stubbornly unwilling to stop worshiping idols and ultimately God removed His hand of protection from His people and their land. Pray today for faithfulness in our church and for your own heart, that we would heed God's Word and turn away from sin.

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EASTER

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Additional Resources

GotQuestions.org summary of 1 & 2 Kings

gotquestions.org/Book-of-1-Kings.html

gotquestions.org/Book-of-2-Kings.html

BibleProject summary of 1 & 2 Kings

bibleproject.com/videos/kings

Precept Austin Resources for 1 & 2 Kings

preceptaustin.org/1_kings_commentaries

preceptaustin.org/2-kings-2-resources

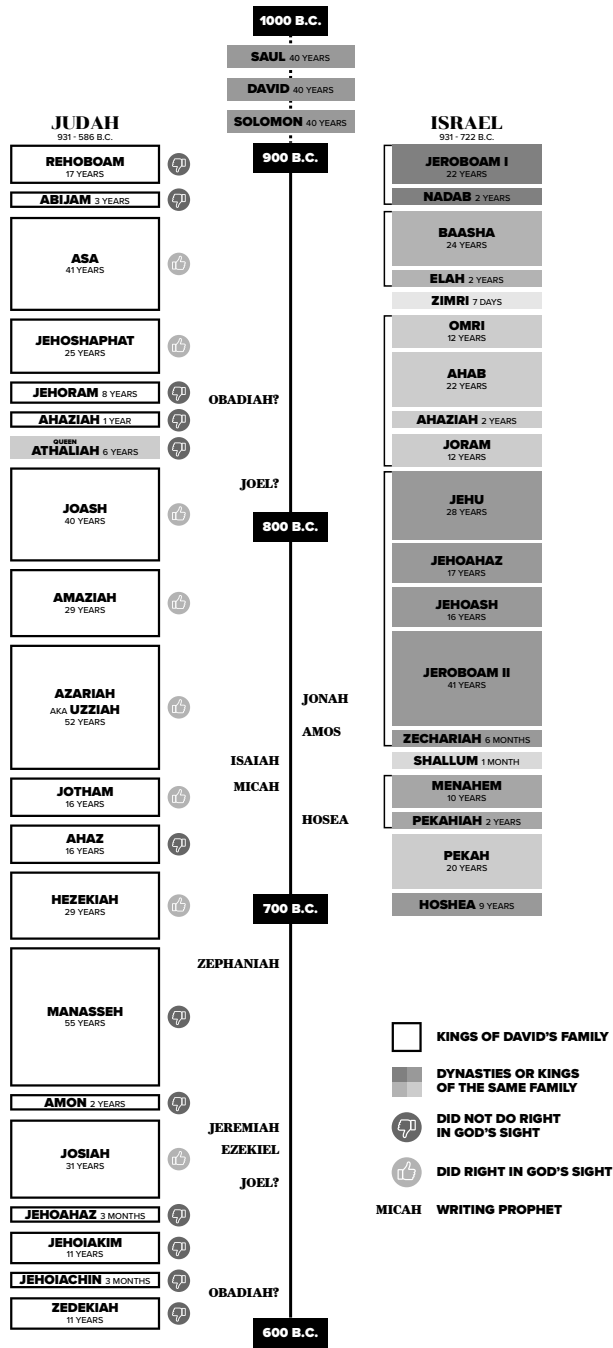
For companion messages visit:

rivchurch.com/messages

For a PDF version of this journal visit:

rivchurch.com/kingsjournal

KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH



The Kingdom of Solomon

1 Kings 1-11

- Kingdom of Israel
- Conquered kingdoms of influence



The Divided Kingdom

1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17

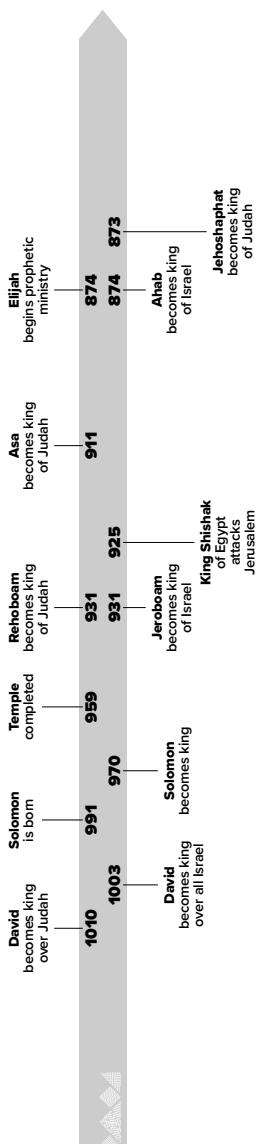


The Assyrian Empire

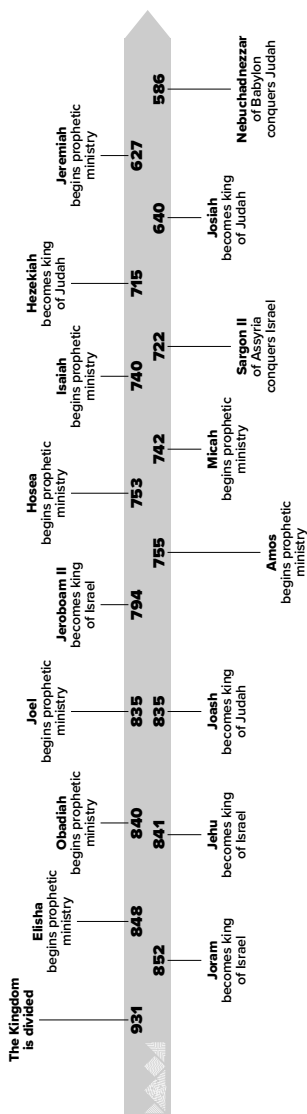
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Timeline of 1 Kings



Timeline of 2 Kings



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At Riv, we invite everyone to know and enjoy Jesus as we stumble together in our pursuit to love like Him.

As a church, we meet at four venues throughout the Lansing area.

In addition, we meet as smaller groups in what we call RivCommunities throughout the week.

We'd love for you to join us. Visit rivchurch.com/visit for service times.

Holt Venue

3585 Willoughby Rd.
Holt, MI 48842

MSU Venue

Meeting on campus
in East Lansing

REO Town Venue

1115 S. Washington Ave.
Lansing, MI 48910

Westside Venue

7533 W. St. Joseph Hwy.
Lansing, MI 48917

If this journal was passed along to you by a friend, we hope you find it useful as you work through the books of 1 & 2 Kings.

If you have questions, we'd love to be a resource for you as you explore your faith. Contact us at hello@rivchurch.com.

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The books of 1 and 2 Kings tell the story of Israel's rise, division, and collapse as God's people repeatedly give their hearts to lesser kings. From Solomon's wisdom to the nation's exile, we see the cost of divided allegiance and the faithfulness of God to His promises. During this journey we will confront the idols that compete for our hearts and grow our longing for the true King Jesus, whose kingdom will not fall and whose resurrection we celebrate at Easter.