



**Meeting With God Bible Reading Notes**

*"This extract from Meeting With God published by Inter-Varsity Press, is used with permission"*

**13<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

**Week 20: Kings & Chronicles 1 (A historical study)**

The books of Kings and Chronicles cover the often tragic story of four centuries of Israel's history from the Judges to the exile. Under David and then Solomon, the kingdom had some stability. But it is gradually eroded as a consequence of the ungodliness of the kings who followed.

In Chronicles, the author concentrates on two major themes: those of true worship, and true kingship. Kings is more comprehensive, recording the history of both Kingdoms.

These books were originally compiled for those returning from the exile to rebuild Jerusalem, many years later. Their generation needed to know the mistakes of the past, if history were not to repeat itself. Like them we study these books to remind ourselves that peace and stability depend on our relationship with the Lord of history, not on our efforts.

For this type of study, it is necessary to read fairly long sections of the Bible.

**Day 1. David recaptures the ark**

**1 Chronicles 15:1 - 29**

Israel had begged God to give them a king! (1 Samuel 8). God warned them no earthly leader could be as benevolent as he, but they wanted to be like all other nations. After a promising start Saul, the first King, died because he disobeyed God.

Then David, Israel's most famous King, ascended to the throne. One of his many deeds was recapturing the Ark from the Philistines (the symbol of God's presence with his people) and returning it to Jerusalem, the capital of David's Kingdom.

1 Chronicles 13 describes David's first attempt to restore the Ark to Jerusalem, which was a painful failure. However, David succeeds at the second attempt, and today's reading describes his preparation and approach this second time.

1. Note down reasons David gives for their initial failure. (15:13) What would the people learn about God from his judgment on Uzzah? (13:7-11) What does David overlook when he gets angry with God?
2. What does David's preparations and his celebrations in chapter 15 reveal about him, and also about his wife, Michal?

## **Day 2. A thwarted ambition**

### **1 Chronicles 17**

It has been usual for the Israelites to erect a tent in which to perform their sacrifices. But David laments the lack of a permanent central shrine to act as a focus in their worship of God, and prepares to build a temple.

1. What desires has God given David? In what ways does God modify them? To what extent should one trust feelings for guidance?
2. From David's speech, note down those things God has taught him throughout his reign.
3. If you have time, read **1 Chronicles 28**. The sum of David's hard earned wisdom goes into the charges given to Solomon. List the duties Solomon is to perform, and the priorities he should have.

Pray that you will give God an opportunity to guide your actions rather than just following your own ideas or ambitions.

Look up 'Temple' in a Bible Dictionary and find out about its importance to Israel.

## **Day 3. The temple is dedicated**

### **2 Chronicles 6:14 - 42 & 7:1 - 10**

Solomon becomes King and carries out the charges David gave him. The temple is built and its dedication is one of Solomon's greatest days.

1. What guide-lines can we find in Solomon's prayer which might help in our own prayer life (6:14-42)?
2. If you were present when Solomon had finished praying what effect might it have had on you?

Pray that God will cleanse you of motives of personal gain in the things you do for him and that He would help you to face up to your responsibilities in prayer.

## **Day 4. Wisdom and foolishness**

### **1 Kings 10:1 – 11:13**

Not all was well with Solomon beneath the prosperous exterior. Today's study shows the two sides to his character - his godly wisdom and his weak will.

1. God fulfilled all his promises to Solomon. Read through 3:5-15 noting down all the ways God was true to his word.

**Note:** 11:5-7 Worship of these gods was perverted and cruel. 11:13 Judah and Benjamin comprised the Southern Kingdom after the division.

2. Imagine the extent of Solomon's fame for a neighbouring queen to have made such a long, arduous trip to visit him. In what way is the queen of Sheba an example to us?

3. God sees a man's heart. What did God have against Solomon? Trace the action God takes as a consequence of this.

The queen suffered great inconvenience to seek out Solomon. Rarely do we find someone so earnest to find Christ today. Pray for your friends and ask God to give them this sort of thirst for truth.

## **Day 5. A kingdom divided**

### **1 Kings 12**

The twelve tribes of Israel often suffered internal tensions. Their unity and power lay in their worship of God and when he wasn't central the bonds weakened. Rehoboam officially succeeds Solomon but the 10 Northern tribes make Jeroboam their leader. A split occurs creating Israel in the North and Judah in the South.

1. Compare the characteristics of Rehoboam and Jeroboam. How do they make a bad situation worse?
2. What was the purpose of Jeroboam's actions in chapter 12:25- 32? Secularly, they were clever, but why did they ultimately fail?

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. In the light of this passage, consider the foundations of your own life. Are you building truly on Christ? Pray that your 'work' will prove to be permanent.

## **Weekend**

1. Thinking of King Solomon, why might a close relationship with God go sour? Are any of these obstacles beginning to creep into your life? Meditate on Proverbs 4:20-27 to help direct your thoughts. Perhaps memorize these verses.
2. A succession of bad kings continued until Ahab came to power. During his 22 years reign an 'all-time low' was reached. Read the story in 1 Kings 16:29 - 22:40. What does it teach us about eternal values and the standards by which God judges?