

ev/youth



KINGS

Wonder. Wickedness. Warning.
and
The One to Come

KINGS: WONDER. WICKEDNESS. WARNING

TERM 3	PASSAGE	TITLE
Week 1	1 Kings 1-4	The Wise King
Week 2	1 Kings 5-11	God is With Us
Week 3	1 Kings 12-16	A Kingdom Divided
Week 4	1 Kings 17-19	The Lord is God, Follow Him!
Week 5	1 Kings 20-22	The Lord Sees
Week 6	2 Kings 1-4	Is there no God in Israel?
Week 7	2 Kings 5-7	The Humble Healed
Week 8	2 Kings 8-17	The Lord Will Judge
Week 9	2 Kings 18-20	Trust in the Lord
Week 10	2 Kings 21-25	The Lord Who Shows Mercy

We want to encourage each other to be on mission to our non-Christian friends, family and contacts.

Who are you on mission to?

Make a list and start praying for them (and yourself).

Pray for three friends, once a week, for one minute (3-1-1).

List the names of your family and friends here:

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:

1. Personal reading

- Use this guide to help you read your Bible every day.
- Scribble down your thoughts and questions each day, and remember to pray and ask God to speak to you by his Spirit, through his Word.

2. Growth Groups

- Take this guide with you to your G-Teams each week so you can write down prayer points that come from the study that week and prayer requests from the members of your group.
- Let your group know who you are on mission to.

3. EV Youth

- Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to Youth.

INTRODUCTION: KINGS

Jesus, the Christ

Christianity is about Jesus – the “Christ”. This title is rich with meaning. “Christ” means King, a particular kind of king. One whose coming is the culmination of centuries of anticipation and revelation in the Old Testament. “Christ” comes from the Greek word for “anointed one”, an allusion to the practice of Israel’s kings being anointed to show they were chosen by God. The word “Messiah” carries the same weight but comes from the equivalent Hebrew word. The expectation of a coming messiah became increasingly central to the hope of Israel. A hope which Jesus comes to fulfill. Much of this expectation develops through the period of Kings.

From Exodus to Kings

Over the past two years at EV Church, we’ve covered the Old Testament books of Genesis and Exodus. These books brought us from the creation of the world, through the fall into sin, and the choosing of a family (the descendents of Abraham) through whom God promised to bless the world. Exodus saw the rescue of this family (now a large nation) from slavery in Egypt, displaying God’s compassion, power and justice.

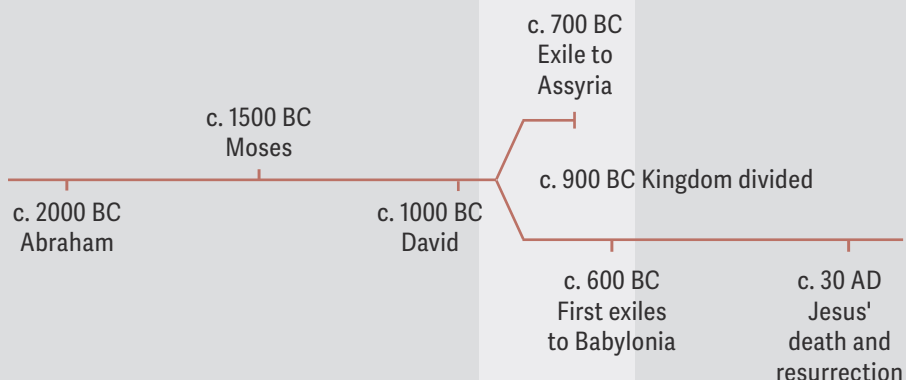
INTRODUCTION: KINGS

At Mount Sinai, God gives them his law, but they demonstrate how wayward they will be by worshipping a golden calf. Exodus ends with the cloud of God's glory descending over the tabernacle they had just built – a sinful people, able, by grace, to live in the presence of a holy, saving God. The rest of the Pentateuch (Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) recounts the journey towards the land God had promised in Genesis, as well as further laws for sacrifices and instructions for life in the new land.

Deuteronomy provides a particularly significant background for Kings. Deuteronomy contains the laws that the kings were to uphold, including specific laws for kings (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). It also warns that disobedience in the land will result in Israel being expelled, yet not without hope of God's mercy (4:25-31). Deuteronomy climaxes with a long list of blessings and curses that God would bring on his people for either obedience or disobedience respectively. Kings, then, recounts the unfolding of these things in history: The blessing for obedience under David and Solomon (the Wonder), the evil with which kings led their people into disobedience (the Wickedness), and, therefore, the rightness of God's action as he judges (the Warning). Yet, in all of this, God's patient character continues to shine as he bears with a rebellious people, repeatedly delaying judgement, and reiterating his commitment to his promises.

Timeline 1: Kings in Context

KINGS



What to expect?

There are a couple of key turning points that help mark out the shape of Kings. Chapters 1-11 recount the height of the kingdom as it transitions from David to Solomon, his son. Then, in 1 Kings 12, the kingdom is split in two as an act of Judgment for the sin of Solomon's later life. This leaves us with two kingdoms: ten northern tribes (known as "Israel" – yes a little confusing!), and the southern kingdom (including Benjamin) known as "Judah" (where we get the term "Jew"). From chapter 12 on, the narrator recounts the history of the northern and southern tribes in parallel, jumping from north to south as he goes, or sometimes, talking about both simultaneously.

In 1 Kings 17, the prophet Elijah comes to the fore and dominates the rest of 1 Kings. The book of 2 Kings is marked by the transition from Elijah to Elisha. A final key landmark is the destruction of the northern kingdom in 2 Kings 17, leaving the remaining chapters relating the final years of Judah until they too are taken into exile.

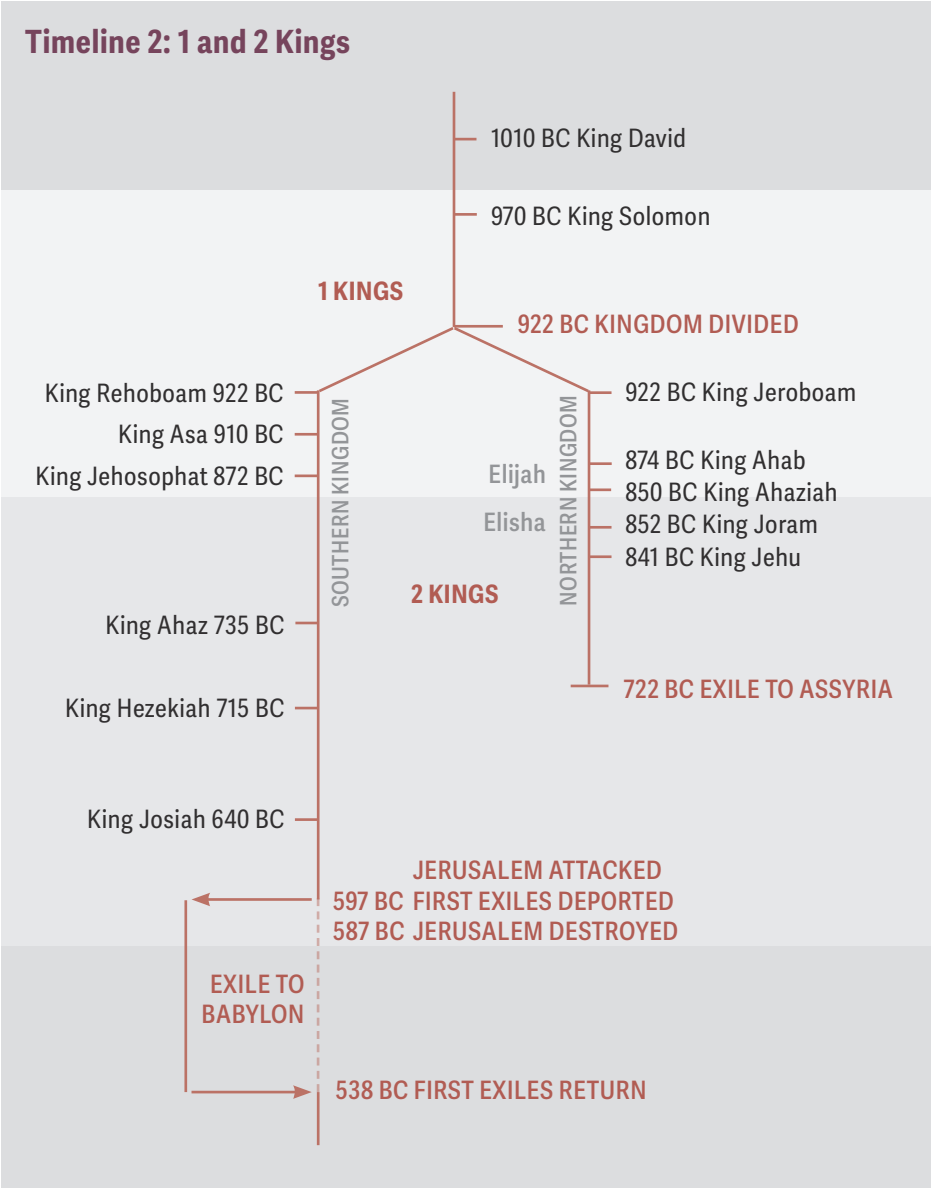
Much of the content of Kings relates to Israel's and Judah's interactions with their neighbours Edom, Aram (capital Damascus), Assyria (capital Nineveh) and Babylon (both a city and an empire) – see map on page 13. But Kings sees all these interactions as the outworking of the will of Yahweh – the God of all nations. He is the God of justice who wields the nations as an instrument to discipline his people. But he is also the merciful saviour who is quick to relent and deliver his people from their enemies. He is also the God who is concerned for the individual. He sees the private failures of kings, and the desperate need of a nobody widow. We see in Kings glimpses of what a messiah could be – a ruler who will lead and rescue a people in righteousness and compassion. We also see the outworking of the same gracious character that will be revealed in the cross of the Messiah Jesus – the king who fights and dies to save his people.

Tools for the journey

Daily Reading – most of the daily questions this term engage with one shorter passage of the Bible, and then provide a longer section for those who want to do a bit more reading. If you follow the longer sections you'll read through the whole of Kings this term!

INTRODUCTION: KINGS

Timeline 2: 1 and 2 Kings



Map: Divided Kingdom and Surrounding Regions



WEEK 1: 1 KINGS 1-4

DAY 1: A House for David

Read: 2 Samuel 7:1-17

The books of Samuel and Kings are closely tied together with a seamless transition between them. In Jewish tradition they were known together under the title, "Reigns". Today's passage is a key moment in 2 Samuel and a critical moment for understanding Kings. It's also critical for understanding God's plan to bring about a kingdom under his Messiah, Jesus, the son of David.

1. When does this interaction take place? (See verse 1, you may want to consult the timeline on page 12)
2. What is the logic of David's plan? What does God think of this? (See verses 2-7)
3. What does God promise David in verses 8-16?
4. How does this promise set up our expectations for the line of David? How do you see these things fulfilled in Christ? How does Jesus both disrupt and expand these expectations?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is gracious and makes promises beyond what his people deserve or imagine. Give thanks for Jesus, the son of David, who was perfect yet suffered at the hands of men so that God's love could be with us forever.

Want to keep reading? Read Psalm 2, and consider: How does this psalm about the "Son" / "King" / "Messiah" further add to the profile of what the Messiah will be like? What will he do? What is his relationship to God and his rule?

THE WISE KING

DAY 2: Who Will Reign?

Kings starts out with an old king and a shaky succession plan hanging in the balance.

Read: 1 Kings 1:1-13

1. How is David portrayed in verses 1, 4,¹ 6, (see also verses 17-18)?
2. What should we think about Adonijah's character if he tries to make himself king before his father has died? What should we think about David's wisdom and effort if he didn't make clearer plans for who would rule after him?
3. What is the significance of the uncertainty around succession in light of yesterday's passage in 2 Samuel 7?
4. What might it have been like to be an Israelite when the king is close to death and there is confusion over who will reign next? How can the Christian have greater security and confidence about the future than the people of Israel?

Prayer: Give thanks that the Lord Jesus is the unchanging, steady ruler of the universe. Give thanks for his mercy and justice as king. Ask that he would help us to rely on his plan and walk in wisdom.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 1 Kings 1, and consider: How do you see God's gracious character modelled in Solomon's treatment of Adonijah? What does he deserve from Solomon?

¹This is a bizarre and confronting solution to David's problem in verse 4. The lack of sexual intimacy may point to either how "past it" David is, or his integrity in not taking advantage of the young woman. Either way, the narrative does not endorse the treatment of the woman. If anything, there are unflattering echoes of David's treatment of Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). This opening paragraph adds to the unflattering portrayal of David in this chapter as one who is not taking responsibility for the kingdom in his old age. In God's sovereignty, it is a woman, Bathsheba, who sets things right.

WEEK 1: 1 KINGS 1-4

DAY 3: The King's Charge

Read: 1 Kings 2:1-4

1. What concerns are on David's heart to pass on to his son? List them below.

2. What are these warnings and promises based on? (See 2 Samuel 7:11-16, and Deuteronomy 6:1-3)

3. How does living after the death and resurrection of Jesus change the promises we cling to? (For example, Ephesians 1:3-7, John 5:24, 10:9-13)

4. Cast your mind forward to the end of your own life...
 - a. What would you want to pass on to those you love with these verses in mind?

 - b. What might you do today to impress these same concerns on the ones you love? How can you model these concerns yourself?

Prayer: Give thanks to God for the sure promises we have in Jesus. Ask God to give you each day the kind of clarity that David has on his deathbed. Ask that he would sustain you in faith, love and obedience your whole life. Ask that he would raise up Godly leaders for his people.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 1 Kings 2, and consider: What do you make of Solomon's wisdom in this chapter? What do you think of his justice?

THE WISE KING

DAY 4: Messy Guy, Good Request

Read: 1 Kings 3:1-15

Solomon is praised for asking for the right thing (3:11-13), but the set-up to this moment is important.

1. Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter in verse 1. In light of the following passages, what do you think we are to make of this decision?
 - a. Deuteronomy 17:15-17
 - b. 1 Kings 11:1-8
2. In verses 2-4, what do we make of worshipping at the high places? How does this shape our understanding of God's willingness to appear to Solomon as he worships at a high place?
3. What is good in Solomon's prayer in verses 6-9? (See also Matthew 18:2-4)
4. How do you see God's grace revealed in this passage? How does it challenge your values and your posture before God?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is gracious and reaches out to us despite our sin and disobedience. Ask that he gives you a humble and dependent heart that values wisdom over wealth. Give thanks that Jesus bore our sin so that we can be forgiven and walk in his wisdom.

WEEK 1: 1 KINGS 1-4

DAY 5: The Blessing of Wisdom

Read: 1 Kings 3:16-28

1. Take a moment to recall the context. What was Solomon's prayer about in 3:8-9, and what was God's promise in 3:10-14?
2. What is the problem presented to Solomon?
3. How does this incident relate to God's promise? (See verse 28)
4. We will soon find out that Solomon's wisdom will have its limits. Read Matthew 12:18-21. What is the scope of the justice of the promised Messiah?

Prayer: Give thanks for God's faithfulness to his promises and for the blessing of wise rule. Give thanks for God's wisdom, compassion and justice revealed in Jesus whose wisdom and riches are even greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42, 1 Corinthians 1:29-31). Pray that he will return and bring perfect peace and justice.

Want to keep reading? Read 4:1-29, and consider: How do you see God's promise in 3:10-13 playing out here? What echoes do you see of God's promises to Abraham? (See Genesis 12:2-3, 15:4, 22:17-18)

THE WISE KING

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 2: 1 KINGS 5-11

DAY 1: The Wise Builder

Read: 1 Kings 5:1-12

1. Summarise the events of this section.

2. What do we learn about the nature of Solomon's rule from this passage?

3. Re-read verses 4-6.
 - a. What kind of rest has God given Solomon? What does this enable him to do?

 - b. What kind of rest does God give us in Jesus? What does this enable us to do?
(See Hebrews 4:9-11, Luke 1:74, Colossians 2:15)

Prayer: Give thanks that God has given us rest from our spiritual enemies of sin and Satan. Ask that we might worship and serve him in holiness, and have wisdom to live well in his world.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 1 Kings 5-6, and consider: What other links to Jesus can you see? What encouragement is there to grow, serve, obey?

GOD IS WITH US

DAY 2: Cracks in the Building

Read: 1 Kings 6:37-7:12

1. What do you notice about the contrast between 6:37 and 7:1? What does this suggest about Solomon's priorities?
2. Compare the dimensions of the temple (6:2) with the dimensions of the first (of multiple) palace buildings (7:2). What does this suggest?
3. Notice, the narrator has interrupted the account of the temple completion (to be continued in chapter 8) with the account of the palace construction. What does this suggest about the narrator's perspective on the scope of Solomon's "wisdom"? What is he prioritising?
4. How might you be prone to prioritise the temporary and the physical over concerns of God, his kingdom and his glory?

Prayer: Give thanks that God has given us an eternal home and eternal inheritance through faith in Jesus. Ask that he keep our hearts fixed on things that last, and on things that matter to him.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 1 Kings 7 and consider: What is similar and different to the description of the tabernacle in Exodus 25-27?

WEEK 2: 1 KINGS 5-11

DAY 3: Glory Fills the Temple

Read: 1 Kings 8:1-11

1. What factors in this account point to the significance of this moment? (See also 1 Kings 6:1)
2. How do the following verses further flesh out the significance of this event?
 - a. Deuteronomy 12:5–7, 11, 13-14
 - b. Exodus 40:33-38
 - c. 2 Samuel 7:12-13
3. Compare the reverence and care of the treatment of the Ark with the treatment of Jesus – God in the flesh – when he comes to Jerusalem in Matthew 27:27-31.
4. What does this contrast suggest about the human heart?

Prayer: Give thanks that God fulfills his promises. Give thanks that God graciously chooses to dwell with his people. Give thanks that he has given us an even greater promise of our access to him, and of his presence with us in Jesus. May we have reverent and humble hearts before him.

Want to keep reading? Read 8:12-21 and consider: What does Solomon emphasise about God's character here?

GOD IS WITH US

DAY 4: "Hear and Forgive"

Read: 1 Kings 8:22-30

1. What aspects of God's character does Solomon draw our attention to?
2. What is the connection between the Israelites' obedience and confidence that their prayers are heard? (See verses 23, 25)
3. In Solomon's time, God's people are to pray "toward this place" and be heard. How is the Christian's prayer different? "Where" do we pray to? What is our confidence that we are heard? (See also John 16:26-27, Ephesians 3:12, 1 John 5:13-15)

Prayer: Give thanks that God has given his Son, so that through him we can draw near to our Heavenly Father, and have full assurance of forgiveness and access to him in prayer at any time. Ask that more and more people might know the blessing of forgiveness and relationship with God in Christ.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 1 Kings 8 and consider: How does this frame our expectations for: i) The rest of the narrative of 1-2 Kings?; and ii) How God relates to his people?

WEEK 2: 1 KINGS 5-11

DAY 5: "A Heap of Rubble"

Read: 1 Kings 9:1-9

1. Where do you see God's mercy or kindness in this passage?

2. Where do you see his justice and holiness? What warning is there for us in these words?

3. Read Hebrews 10:1-4, 11-14, 19-26.
 - a. How is Christ greater than the worship facilitated by the temple and the priesthood?

 - b. How should we respond?

Prayer: Give thanks that God's eyes and heart are with his people in Christ. Give thanks that we have a great confidence to draw near our Holy God in Him. Ask for his mercy on us in our sin. Ask that he would help us grow in purity and obedience.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 1 Kings 9-10. How does God's blessings of Israel under Solomon foreshadow God's blessing of his people in Christ?

GOD IS WITH US

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 3: 1 KINGS 12-16

DAY 1: Division Anticipated

Read: 1 Kings 11:1-13

1. What wrong things does Solomon do in verses 1-8? Why are they offensive?
2. Why was God angry with Solomon? What does he say he will do?
3. What is merciful about the promised punishment? Why the mercy? (See also 2 Samuel 7:12-14)
4. What does this incident show us about God's mercy and justice? How do you see these things come together in the cross of Jesus?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is just and consistent, and faithful to his words. Give thanks that Jesus, the Son of David, was punished "with the rod of men" (2 Samuel 7:14) though he was sinless. Ask that we would grow in humble obedience and reverence before our just, merciful God.

Want to keep reading? Read 11:14-25 and consider: How is this connected to the first half of the chapter? What does this reveal about: i) God's word and his actions? and ii) His sovereignty over human affairs?

A KINGDOM DIVIDED

DAY 2: Cloak and Kingdom Torn

Read: 1 Kings 11:26-40

1. Why do you think verse 26 starts with “also” in the NIV? (See also 11:14, 23)
2. Who is Jeroboam, and what is communicated to him by Ahijah?
3. How do these verses set our expectations for the rest of Kings? What are we expecting to see?
4. What do you make of Solomon’s response in verse 40? What does this suggest about his heart before God (see also 11:11)? What can we learn?

Prayer: Honour God as a just and gracious king. Ask that he would give us humility to accept his wisdom and justice (unlike Solomon). Ask that he would save many on the Coast from his just wrath.

WEEK 3: 1 KINGS 12-16

DAY 3: Tyranny or Service?

Read: 1 Kings 11:41-12:14

1. What is Rehoboam's relationship to David? (See 11:43, 11:12)
2. Why have the people gathered at Shechem? What's their request?
3. What are the two kinds of replies that Rehoboam is given?
4. How do you see the wisdom and beauty of verse 7 played out in the life of Jesus? How should we respond to him based on his "service"?

Prayer: Give thanks for the Son of Man, who came to serve and gave his life as a ransom. Ask that God would give us humble hearts to serve and not to gain at the expense of others.

Want to keep reading? Read 1 Kings 12:14-24, and consider: How do human decisions fit in with the will of God and his sovereignty over history? (See 11:11)

A KINGDOM DIVIDED

DAY 4: The Rise and Fall of Altars

Read: 1 Kings 12:25-13:6

1. Why does Jeroboam build the calves (see verse 26)? What is significant about their locations (notice where they are on a map relative to Jerusalem)?
2. What event in Israel's history is this reminiscent of (especially verse 28b, also see Exodus 32:4)? What does this suggest about Israel's future?
3. What is striking about verse 6? What does this reveal about God's character?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is merciful, slow to anger, quick to relent from punishing. Give thanks for his mercy in not punishing sin as quickly as he might. Pray that his patience might lead to the salvation of many.

Want to keep reading? Read 1 Kings 13:7-34, and consider: Why might the man of God from Judah have been told not to eat or drink until returning from Bethel? (See 1 Corinthians 5:11)

WEEK 3: 1 KINGS 12-16

DAY 5: Disaster on Jeroboam

Read: 1 Kings 14:1-13

1. What have we just heard about Jeroboam (13:33-34)?
2. What makes Jeroboam's sin so offensive (especially verse 7-9)?
3. How does Jeroboam compare to David? Was David sinless? What do you make of this judgement? (See also 2 Samuel 12:7-14)
4. What does this passage reveal about God's character? How can we be right with him? (See also Romans 3:21-26)

Prayer: Humble yourself before God, the righteous judge. Give thanks that he accepts those who are repentant and seek his forgiveness. Give thanks for the promise of grace in Jesus that we can be forgiven in light of his death in our place.

Want to keep reading? Read 1 Kings 14:14-16:27, and consider: How does God's word come to fulfilment? What does this reveal about God's character and his word?

A KINGDOM DIVIDED

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 4: 1 KINGS 17-19

DAY 1: Judgement Pronounced

Read: 1 Kings 16:29-17:6

Today we meet Ahab and Elijah, two figures who will dominate the rest of 1 Kings.

1. How is Ahab described here? What has he done in general, and in particular?
2. We saw in Solomon's experience, the spiritual danger of interfaith marriages (1 Kings 11:1-4). Here a similar thing takes place with Ahab and Jezebel. What lessons are there for adults in our day and age here?
3. In 17:1, there is no explanation for the drought that is announced by God through Elijah. What is the likely reason for the drought given the context (16:30-33)?²
4. Why might Elijah need to flee (see also 18:4)? What does this suggest about the experience of the one who delivers God's confronting word? What does God's provision for Elijah reveal about his character?

Prayer: Give thanks that God graciously bears with rebellious sinners and offers warnings. Ask that God would protect his church, the faith of his people, especially those who are living with a spouse who is not Christian. Ask that God would give us courage to speak his word, and that he would provide for our needs.

² Note, Baal was thought to be responsible for bringing rain.

THE LORD IS GOD, FOLLOW HIM!

DAY 2: God of the Whole Earth

Read: 1 Kings 17:7-16

1. Why had there been no rain? (See 17:1, 16:33)
2. Why might God have sent Elijah to the region of the Sidonians for this miracle (see 16:32)? What does it show about which god is in control there?
3. How would you describe the situation of the widow and her son in verse 12? How is their situation transformed by God's action in her life?

Prayer: Honor God as the Lord of the whole earth, who gives life and sustains life in all places. Ask for God's mercy so that people from all nations would know that he is the Lord who gives life now and life eternal in Christ.

Want to keep reading? Read 1 Kings 17:17-18:15, and consider: What do you learn about God's power and his character?

WEEK 4: 1 KINGS 17-19

DAY 3: The Lord, He is God!

Read: 1 Kings 18:36-39

1. Skim over 18:16-35 and briefly summarise the events that lead up to this moment.
2. What does Elijah ask for in his prayer (verses 36-37)?
3. How are people's hearts turned back to him?
4. What means (instruments, methods etc) does God use to turn back the people's hearts? How should this shape our prayers, and our actions?

Prayer: Give thanks that God turns people's hearts. Ask that he would have mercy and do the miracle of changing people from living for other gods, to seeing him alone as God. Ask that he would give us the courage and wisdom to see and do our part in turning people's hearts to him.

Want to keep reading? Read 1 Kings 18:40-46, and consider: What is the significance of the rain returning? Why did God bring rain at this time? (See 17:1, 7, 18:1)

THE LORD IS GOD, FOLLOW HIM!

DAY 4: The God who Provides

Read: 1 Kings 19:1-9

1. Why would Jezebel be concerned about the killing of the prophets of Baal?
(See 16:30-32, 18:40)
2. Put yourself in Elijah's shoes for a moment. What is he thinking and feeling?
3. What does this story reveal about:
 - a. The experience of God's faithful servant in the world?
 - b. God's gracious provision for his faithful people?
4. How do you see these things (Question 3) reflected in the life and work of Jesus?

Prayer: Give thanks that God knows and sees the suffering and loneliness of his people. Give thanks that he provides, ultimately through the work of the lonely man, Jesus. Ask that he gives us courage to be his faithful people, to trust in his provision, especially to pray for those who are suffering and are persecuted.

Want to keep reading? Read 19:9-21, and consider: What similarities do you see in this chapter with the experience of Moses and the Israelites in Exodus? What significance could this have?

WEEK 4: 1 KINGS 17-19

DAY 5: Alone?

Read: 1 Kings 19:10-18

1. Where is Elijah, and why is he there? (See 19:1-9)
2. How truthful is Elijah's answer in verse 10? What is he leaving out? What is he exaggerating? (See 38-40, 19:2)
3. What does this reveal about the human heart? How is this a challenge to you?
4. Despite Elijah's portrayal that all is hopeless in Israel, verses 12-18, show that God clearly isn't finished with his people. What does this teach us about God's ability to work without us seeing his action and plans? What might this suggest is the meaning behind the gentle whisper after the wind, earthquake and fire?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is patient with us in the ups and downs of our experience, that he knows and understands our hearts. Give thanks that he is working whether we see it or not. Ask that we might be able to trust his work and take our part in it.

Want to keep reading? Read 19:19-21, and consider: How does this relate to the rest of chapter 19 both to God's instruction in 19:17 and to Elijah's complaint in 19:10?

THE LORD IS GOD, FOLLOW HIM!

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 5: 1 KINGS 20-22

DAY 1: The Gracious Lord

Read: 1 Kings 20:13-21

1. Skim over verses 1-12 and get a sense of the context – who is Israel up against, and why?
2. Sum up in your own words what in verses 13-21.
3. Ahab was a really bad dude (16:33). What is surprising about the way God treats him in verse 13?
4. What does this teach us about God's character?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is merciful and doesn't treat us as our sin deserves. Give thanks that in the gospel we are forgiven and secure in his blessing.

Want to keep reading? Read 20:22-43, and consider: What seemed right about Ahab's treatment of Ben Hadad? What was wrong about it? (See also Exodus 21:32)

THE LORD SEES

DAY 2: The King who Takes

Read: 1 Kings 21:1-9

1. Why didn't Naboth want to give Ahaz his vineyard? (verse 3. If you want to read more, see Leviticus 25:23-28).
2. What does Ahab's anger and sulking suggest about his heart?
3. How do you respond when you don't get what you want? How can you guard against entitlement and greed?
4. How is Jesus different from Ahab in this scene? (See, for example, Philippians 2:5-11.) How does that make you want to live?

Prayer: Bring before God your response to Question 3. Ask for God's forgiveness. Give thanks that Jesus humbly did the thing he didn't want to do - going to the cross for our sins. Ask God to help you be like Jesus - humble and selfless.

Want to keep reading? Read 21:8-16, and consider: What do you learn about Ahab's character here?

WEEK 5: 1 KINGS 20-22

DAY 3: Justice and Mercy

Read: 1 Kings 21:17-29

1. Re-read verses 17-19a to get familiar with the context (these verses effectively summarise 8-16).
2. What will be the penalty for Ahab's evil (verses 19b-22)? How do you feel about this?
3. What strikes you about verses 28-29? What does this reveal about God's heart?
4. How is the mercy we are shown in the gospel greater than the mercy Ahab is shown?

Prayer: Humble yourself before the just, holy God of the universe. Bring to him any sin that is on your heart. Ask for his mercy and forgiveness. Give thanks for the assurance we can have in the finished work of Christ that our judgement is not just delayed, but is paid in full in him.

Want to keep reading? Read Ezekiel 18, and consider: How are God's justice and mercy fair and consistent? What do you make of the sentence to Ahab in light of this? What does God expect of his descendents?

THE LORD SEES

DAY 4: The Uncomfortable Word

Read: 1 Kings 22:1-9

1. Before agreeing to help, what does King Jehoshaphat suggest to King Ahab?
2. In verses 6-9, why might Micaiah only have bad things to say about Ahab (see also 21:25-26)?
3. What does this passage suggest about Ahab's heart before God and his word? How would you know if you had a similar attitude toward God?
4. What does this passage suggest about Ahab's heart before God and his word? How are you at risk of having a similar attitude towards God's word?

Prayer: Ask that God would give you and our church humble hearts before his word, to listen to it, even when it is uncomfortable and exposes sin. Give thanks for the work of Jesus who covers over our sin and gives us his Spirit to grow and change us.

Want to keep reading? Read 22:10-28, and consider: What more do you learn about the heart of Ahab? What do you make of the means and the justice of God's activity here?

WEEK 5: 1 KINGS 20-22

DAY 5: The Unavoidable Word of the Lord

Read: 1 Kings 22:29-40

1. Why did Ahab disguise himself in battle? (See 22:28))
2. What do verses 34-37 reveal about the power of God's word? (look back to 21:19 and 22:17)
3. What should this passage do for our reverence and humility before God and his word? Do you have this kind of posture before God and his word? How can you express it this week?
4. God's Word repeatedly warns us about God's coming judgement on sin. What might it look like for you to take this warning seriously, even this week?

Prayer: Thank God for his powerful, life-giving word. Ask that he would be patient and bring many to salvation before his Son returns. Ask that God would give you an attitude of reverent expectancy before his word and an urgency to see the lost saved.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 1 Kings 22 and consider: How would you summarise the story of Kings so far?

THE LORD SEES

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 6: 2 KINGS 1-4

DAY 1: Is There No God in Israel?

Read: 1 Kings 22:51-53 and 2 Kings 1:1-9

1. If Ahaziah is anything like his dad, what should we expect of him?
2. What is wrong with Ahaziah's action in verse 2? What does Elijah say it involves?
3. What are some ways you are tempted to act as though there is no God in your life? Are there things or people you are prone to rely on in God's place? What would it look like to trust God in these moments?

Prayer: Bring before the Lord your response to Question 3. Ask for his forgiveness. Give thanks for his grace in Christ Jesus, and ask for help to honour and remember him in all things.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 1:10-18, and consider: What is different about the third captain's attitude that means he is spared? How can you learn from this posture? (See also Luke 18:9-14)

IS THERE NO GOD IN ISRAEL?

DAY 2: Where is the God of Elijah?

Read: 2 Kings 2:1-15

1. Summarise what happened in your own words.
2. What is the answer to Elisha's question in verse 14? What do you think this miracle symbolises?
3. What might the miracle in verse 14 symbolise?
4. In a season of change or difficulty, where do you look for confidence that God is active in your life? (see also Matthew 28:20)

Prayer: Give thanks that God has promised to be always with his people. Give thanks for those he has given to lead his people.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 2:15-25, and consider: How does the rest of this story establish the transition from the ministry of Elijah to Elisha?

WEEK 6: 2 KINGS 1-4

DAY 3: Water in the Desert

Read: 2 Kings 3:5-11, 15, 20-24

1. Summarise the scenes of the narrative – who, where, what?
2. What does this story reveal about the limits of human effort and God's power? (See Proverbs 21:31)
3. Can you think of other times in the Bible when God miraculously provided for his people in the wilderness? (see Deuteronomy 2:7, John 6:49-54).

Prayer: Give thanks that God gives us victory over sin, Satan and death through the blood of his Son. Ask that God would give you deep dependence on him for salvation, and for everything we need.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 3, and consider: What insights do you have as to whether God is for or against this mission?

IS THERE NO GOD IN ISRAEL?

DAY 4: Oil for Life

Read: 2 Kings 4:1-7

1. What is the woman's problem? How might this circumstance play out for her?
2. What is Elisha's solution? Why does it help?
3. In the midst of the rise and fall of kings, what does this story show us about God's compassionate concern for his people as individuals (see also Matthew 6:31-33, 1 Peter 5:7)?

Prayer: Give thanks that in Christ we can come to God as our Father who knows our needs. Bring before him what is on your heart at the moment. Ask for his help to share his generous compassion with those around you.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 4:8-37, and consider: What does this reveal about God's power over life and death?

WEEK 6: 2 KINGS 1-4

DAY 5: Feeding the... Hundred

Read: 2 Kings 4:38-44

1. For each of these stories, note down:
 - a. Who is involved?
 - b. What is the problem?
 - c. What is the solution?
 - d. What might it reveal about God's character and power?
2. Jesus performed a similar, but far greater miracle in John 6. What does this show us about God's care for us too?
 - b. How is Jesus' miracle greater?
 - c. What does Jesus say his miracle points to that is even greater still?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is both generous and powerful, that in a fallen broken world he provides for his people. Give thanks for the eternal provision of life in Jesus. Ask Him to grow your faith in his infinite compassion and power.

Want to keep reading? Scan back over 1 and 2 Kings so far and make note of your stand-out reflections.

IS THERE NO GOD IN ISRAEL?

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 7: 2 KINGS 5-7

DAY 1: Love of Enemies

Read: 2 Kings 5:1-10

1. Aram was enemies with God's people, the Israelites. What does this tell us about Naamaan?
2. What does verse 2 show us about this nameless girl's story? What do you think her opinion would be of Naaman and his people?
3. With that in mind, what does verse 3 show about her character?
4. How is this story a glimpse of the love shown to us in Christ (see Romans 5:10)? Who do you find hard to love? How might you be more like Jesus to this person?

Prayer: Praise God for the love he showed in sending his Son while we were his enemies. Ask him to change our hearts to be people of love - even to those who are hard to love.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 5:11-27, and consider: What is revealed about Naaman's heart in these verses?

THE HUMBLE HEALED

DAY 2: The Proud Humbled

Read: 2 Kings 5:4-15

1. What do verses 7 and 8 show us about the King's view of God?
2. What do verses 9-14 reveal about Naaman's heart? What does he need to learn?
3. How is this an insight into the humility required to come to God for salvation? (See also Ephesians 2:8-10)

Prayer: Give thanks that God is powerful to change and save those who come to him with humility. Ask that he would give you a humble heart to come and receive his grace in Christ.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 5:15-27, and consider: What did Gehazi get wrong? How might you be at risk of a similar misstep?

WEEK 7: 2 KINGS 5-7

DAY 3: A Life Redeemed

Read: 2 Kings 6:1-7

1. In the midst of war, what was happening in Elisha's community? What does this show about the importance of God's work?
2. Why is the man in verse 5 so upset?
3. Iron tools were quite expensive at this time in history - to lose it would have been devastating for this man. What does Elisha's miracle show us about God's care for people?
4. How is this same compassion shown to us in Jesus? (See Mark 10:45))

Prayer: Give thanks for God's compassion and his power to turn around people's lives. Ask that more and more people may know the liberating, saving grace of God for eternal life in Jesus. Ask that you might trust him in the details of your life at the moment.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 6:8-23, and consider: How is God's compassion for his enemies evident here? (See also Romans 12:17-21)

THE HUMBLE HEALED

DAY 4: Feast in Place of Famine

Read: 2 Kings 6:24-31

1. How would you describe the situation in Samaria?
2. The King should have been crying out to the LORD for help. What was he doing instead?
3. Where do you go when things are desperate and hopeless? How does this passage teach us what NOT to do?
4. Where do you go when things are desperate and hopeless? How is this passage a critique of that attitude?

Prayer: Ask God's forgiveness for the times you haven't cried out to him. Ask that he would grow in you a heart of trust, and an instinct to turn to him first. Give thanks that in Christ he hears our prayers.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 7:1-8:6, and consider: What does this passage show about God's ability to do the apparently impossible?

WEEK 7: 2 KINGS 5-7

DAY 5: The Horror of Judgement

Read: 2 Kings 8:7-15

1. Why does Elisha weep?
2. Verse 12 is awful to hear. What does this verse teach us about human sin?
3. Verse 12 is confronting. What does this verse reveal about the nature of human sin such that this is God's response to it?
4. Elisha's tears remind us of Jesus' tears when he wept over Jerusalem, the city he knew would be judged by God (Luke 19:41-44). What does this reveal about God's justice and compassion?

Prayer: Ask for God's help to see the goodness and rightness of his justice. Give thanks for the cross that the penalty for our sin is borne on Jesus and not on us. Ask that God gives us humble, obedient hearts to live as his forgiven, holy people.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 8, and consider: What do we learn about these kings? What do we learn about God's ongoing commitment to his people?

THE HUMBLE HEALED

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 8: 2 KINGS 8-17

DAY 1: The Word Fulfilled

Read: 2 Kings 9:1-10

1. What does the young prophet say Jehu will do?
2. Why did God plan to judge Ahab's descendants? (see 1 Kings 21:20-26)
3. God delayed his judgement on Ahab's family, but now it will come about (2 Kings 21:27-29) What does this show about how God judges? (see also 2 Peter 3:8-9)
4. God delayed his judgement on Ahab's family, but now it will come about. What does this reveal about how God judges (see also 2 Peter 3:8-9)?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is gracious and has mercy on those who repent. Pray that in his patience he would bring many to salvation and that he would use us to see people saved.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 9:11-10:35, and consider: How does 9:1-10 hold this whole section together? What do you learn about the word of the Lord?

THE LORD WILL JUDGE

DAY 2: David's Line Preserved

Read: 2 Kings 11:1-12

1. What does Jehosheba do, and what is courageous about her actions?
4. Through the actions of Jehosheba and Jehoiada, David's line is preserved and God's promise is upheld (2 Samuel 7:12-16). What does this show us about how God's promises are fulfilled? What part do the actions of humans play?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is faithful to his promises. Ask that he continues to build his church, save the lost and give us wisdom to live as his people. Ask that at the same time he would help us be courageous, wise and faithful as we participate in his plans.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 11:13-13:25, and consider: What do we learn about each of these kings? What are they commended for? What are they condemned for? How is God at work in the life of each one?

WEEK 8: 2 KINGS 8-17

DAY 3: Good and Evil

Read: 2 Kings 15:1-12

1. What do we learn about each of these kings? What are they commended for? What are they condemned for?
2. What do we learn about what God cares about?

Prayer: Praise God for his patience with sinful humanity. Ask that he gives us hearts that long to be humbly obedient to his word. Praise him for his grace in Jesus whose blood cleanses us from all sin.

THE LORD WILL JUDGE

DAY 4: A New Low

Read: 2 Kings 16:1-9

1. After three kings of Judah did what was right (Joah, Amaziah and Azariah), we're shocked to meet a wicked king in Jerusalem. What makes him evil?
2. Child sacrifice was a common practice in the ancient world as a way to appease the "gods" and gain their favour. How does the true and Living God feel about this?
3. God the Son willingly gave up his own life to save us. How is this different to the awful practice of child sacrifice practised by Ahaz?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is good, and that what he asks of us is good. Confess your failure to do what is right in his eyes and praise him for his incredible mercy, that the Son would be sacrificed in our place.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 2 Kings 16, and consider: How do things continue to worsen for Judah under Ahaz?

WEEK 8: 2 KINGS 8-17

DAY 5: The End of Israel

Read: 2 Kings 17:1-11

1. What does Hoshea do to upset Shalmaneser? What does he do to Hoshea and the people of Samaria?
2. Shalmaneser seems to act on his own. But what do verses 7-11 show about God's involvement?
3. What do these verses reveal about God's justice and the problem of sin?
4. What do these verses reveal about God's justice and the problem of sin? How is this problem resolved in the gospel?

Prayer: Give thanks that God is able to work in and through all things, even human decisions, for his own purposes. Give thanks that even in the greatest human evil - the murder of Jesus on the cross, God worked for our good.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 2 Kings 17, and consider: What else do we learn about God's part in the destruction of Israel? What glimpses of grace do you see?

THE LORD WILL JUDGE

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 9: 2 KINGS 18-20

DAY 1: A New High

Read: 2 Kings 18:1-13

1. What seems different about Hezekiah compared to his father Ahaz?
2. How does God reward this faithfulness? (verses 7-8)
3. Despite Hezekiah being a really good king, his righteousness is not enough to undo the damage of generations of sin and evil. How does this prepare us for the need for Jesus?

Prayer: Give thanks for Jesus, the perfect King for his people. Give thanks for the only one who can turn the tide of sin, bear its penalty, and give us eternal life.

Want to keep reading? Read 18:13-16, and consider: Is this a moment of wisdom, or a lapse of judgement for Hezekiah?

TRUST IN THE LORD

DAY 2: A False Promise

Read: 2 Kings 18:17-25, 31-35

1. What is happening in Jerusalem, and how would the people be feeling?
2. What is the commander tempting the Israelites to do?
3. Where do you see claims like this being made today - promising the good life apart from God?
4. WHow are God's promises in Jesus better than these things?

Prayer: Praise God for his good promises in Jesus. Ask God to help you trust in Him alone..

Want to keep reading? Go back and read all of 2 Kings 18 for a full picture of this scene.

WEEK 9: 2 KINGS 18-20

DAY 3: Where to Run

Read: 2 Kings 19:1-7

1. Why is Hezekiah distressed? (See 2 Kings 18:17, 28-35)
2. What is his response? What does it reveal about his faith?
3. How would Hezekiah be feeling after hearing Isaiah's message?
4. How does God's grace and power bring you comfort today?

Prayer: Pray in light of your answer to Question 4.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 19:8-13, and consider: How does God's word to Hezekiah play out?

TRUST IN THE LORD

DAY 4: Who is God?

Read: 2 Kings 19:14-19

1. What does Hezekiah believe about God?
2. Why does this give him confidence to pray what he prays?
3. What can you learn from Hezekiah's example? Where do you turn when you are anxious and afraid?

Prayer: Give thanks to God that he is the one we can cry out to and cast our burdens on (1 Peter 5:7). Ask that he would grow in us an impulse to seek him first and a longing for his glory above all other things.

Want to keep reading? Read 2 Kings 19:20-37, and consider: How does God's loving protection of Jerusalem point you to his protection of his people in Christ?

WEEK 9: 2 KINGS 18-20

DAY 5: God who Heals

Read: 2 Kings 20:1-7

1. What does Hezekiah point to so that God might have mercy on him?
2. How does God respond? (verse 6)
3. What kind of confidence can we have that God hears a prayer like Hezekiah's? What is the same in the prayer of a Christian, and what is different? (See 1 John 5:14)
4. How does Hezekiah's healing on the third day point us forward to Jesus?

Prayer: Give thanks for the confidence we can have in Christ that God hears our prayers. Ask that he grows in us an impulse to run to him in prayer with our tears, fears and pleas. Give thanks that in Christ's resurrection we are healed and find new life.

Want to keep reading? Read 20:8-21, and consider: What do you think we are to make of Hezekiah's decision to welcome the envoys of Babylon in this way?

TRUST IN THE LORD

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 10: 2 KINGS 21-25

DAY 1: Disaster is Coming

Read: 2 Kings 21:1-12

1. How does Manasseh rank among the kings of Judah? What is particularly offensive about his behaviour?
2. What do verses 7-9 show us about the conditions of God's people being allowed to be in the land?
3. The Amorites (verse 11) were one of the peoples living in the land before Israel. Genesis 15:16 makes clear that God's plan was for Israel's entry into the promised land to coincide with the peak of the Amorites' sin. This meant that being driven out of the land would be an act of God's judgement against them. If Judah had now become worse than the Amorites, what does this mean for their future in the land?
5. If Judah, who had God's law, the temple, the prophets and the promises, have come to deserve God's judgement, what hope is there for anyone to be right with God?

Prayer: Humble yourself before the righteous God of the universe and praise him for his holiness and justice. Give thanks for his incredible mercy in sending Jesus that there might be a way for people to be saved.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 2 Kings 21, and consider: What are the various ways Manasseh's and Amon's sin is described?

THE LORD WHO SHOWS MERCY

DAY 2: Tears and Tearing

Read: 2 Kings 22:1-11

1. What is good about Josiah as a King?
2. Re-read verses 8-9. What is the connection between Israel not reading God's Word and their sin as a nation?
3. What do these verses show us about the place of God's word in the life of his people? What does Josiah's response show to us about hearing and responding to God's word (see also verse 19)?

Prayer: Give thanks for God's word, that he has revealed his character and his will for us. Ask that we would have humble, soft hearts before his word and be devoted to it. Ask that he would preserve the teaching of his word in our church for many generations.

Want to keep reading? Read all of 2 Kings 22, and consider: How is God's grace shown to Josiah?

WEEK 10: 2 KINGS 21-25

DAY 3: Whole-Hearted Obedience

Read: 2 Kings 23:1-4, 21-26

1. What changes does Josiah bring about?
2. What stands out to you about the description of Josiah in verses 24-25?
3. What does verse 26 reveal about the limits of Josiah's leadership, great though it was? How is the work of Jesus so much greater? (See 1 Thessalonians 1:10)
4. How is the work of Jesus so much better than the work of Josiah?

Prayer: Give thanks for godly leadership then and now. Thank God that Jesus is everything we need in a King.

Want to keep reading? Read all of 2 Kings 23, and consider: What are the different spheres of life that Josiah's reforms sought to impact?

THE LORD WHO SHOWS MERCY

DAY 4: The End of the Monarchy

Read: 2 Kings 23:36-24:7

1. Summarise what we learn about Jehoiakim and the events of his reign.
2. How does the narrator see God's hand in these events?
3. Israel and Judah are often criticised for their false worship but what's emphasised in the description of Manasseh's sin here? What does this emphasis show us about what matters to God?
4. Read Revelation 5:9-10. What is the most striking difference between Jesus (the Lamb), and Manasseh?

Prayer: Give thanks that we have a God who would shed his own blood to forgive sinners, his enemies. Give thanks that it is his good, just, compassionate rule that will last for all eternity. Ask him to shape your heart to be like him in purity, compassion and justice.

Want to keep reading? Read the rest of 2 Kings 24, and consider: How does the author continue to highlight God's agency in the history being related?

WEEK 10: 2 KINGS 21-25

DAY 5: A Seat at the Table

Read: 2 Kings 25:1-5, 8-10, 27-30

1. Summarise the features of the destruction that happens in verses 1-10.
2. What do verses 1-10 reveal about the word of the Lord, and his power to do what he has warned will happen?
3. Where does this leave God's promises about the line of David? What glimpse of hope is given at the end of the book?
4. Read Romans 1:1-6. As you read these verses anchored in the Old Testament, what new clarity or weight do they have since spending this term in Kings?

Prayer: Give thanks to God that he has kept his promise that his Son will rule as King, in righteousness and that his gracious character will lead to blessing for all people, for eternity.

Want to keep reading? Read all of 2 Kings 25, and consider: What further insight do you get into Questions 1 and 2 above?

THE LORD WHO SHOWS MERCY

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

