**Survey Old Testament**

**1 Kings 2 David’s last counsels.**

1. David emphasized the spiritual before the political, for he wanted his son to walk in the ways of the Lord. He admonished him to study and obey the Law of Moses. God had made wonderful promises concerning Solomon (2 Sam. 7:8–17), but He could not fulfill them apart from Solomon’s faith and obedience. David also reminded Solomon of the enemies that would oppose him and the friends that would assist him.
2. Had Adonijah remained in his proper place, he would have lived, but he stubbornly refused to yield. In asking for the hand of Abishag, Adonijah was making a rash claim; for everything of David’s had been turned over to Solomon. Solomon realized the treacherous implications of his brother’s request and made it clear that he knew also the treachery of Abiathar and Joab (v. 22). Adonijah had gone too far; now he had to die.
3. Solomon honored the priest’s office by not slaying Abiathar, but he banished him from service. This fulfilled 1 Sam. 2:30–36. When Joab heard of his friend’s exile, he knew that judgment would soon come to him; so he, like Adonijah, fled to the altar for protection. Joab was guilty of murdering several men and he had to pay for his sins. Benaiah became the new general of the army, and Zadok was made the high priest. It’s interesting to note that Benaiah was a priest (1 Chron. 27:5) who turned general.
4. Shimei was the man who so cruelly cursed David when he was fleeing from Absalom (2 Sam. 16:5). Solomon ordered him to remain in Jerusalem where he could be watched. However, Shimei disobeyed the king’s order, and it cost him his life.

**1 Kings 3 Solomon Receives God’s Wisdom**

1. When God gave Solomon the privilege of asking for anything he wanted, he asked for wisdom and an understanding heart; and God answered his prayer. Furthermore, God gave him all the other blessings too (Matt. 6:33). Of course, if Solomon wanted to enjoy these blessings, he would have to walk in obedience to the Word.
2. The account of the two mothers is but one of many illustrations of the wisdom of Solomon. The fact that these two women had access to the king’s throne shows how much young Solomon loved his people and wanted to serve them.

**1 Kings 4 Solomon Enjoys God’s Wealth**

1. It appears that the material prosperity of the nation was not matched by a spiritual prosperity, for in a few years the kingdom would be divided and Solomon’s splendor would fade away. The people were “eating, drinking, and making merry” (4:20), but we do not read of their interest in the Law of the Lord. It is possible for a person to enjoy material prosperity and still be spiritual, as in the case of Abraham, but some people cannot handle much wealth.

**1 Kings 5-8 Building the Temple**

1. These chapters record the fulfillment of God’s promise that Solomon would build a temple to the glory of God (2 Sam. 7:12–16; and see 1 Kings 8:15–21). This was a gigantic undertaking for a young king, but the Lord had given him assurance, and Solomon trusted the Lord.
2. God filled the temple with His glory when the ark was brought in. Then Solomon prayed to the Lord on behalf of his family (vv. 22–30), citizens who sinned (vv. 31–40), Gentile strangers (vv. 41–43), and the nation in future exile (vv. 44–53). The key thought of his prayer is that God would hear their cries and be merciful to them in spite of their sins. Solomon makes it clear in his prayer that the condition of Israel’s heart was more important than the presence of the temple. He knew that sin would bring chastening, but that repentance would bring forgiveness and blessing. It was more important to dedicate the people than the building. After the prayer, Solomon blessed the people (vv. 54–61) and exhorted them to have their hearts right with God.

**1 Kings 9–11 Solomon’s Spiritual Decline**

1. These chapters cover Solomon’s life after the great building programs had been completed. They show how this wise and godly king gradually declined spiritually and brought about the division of the kingdom.
2. Solomon received a message from the Lord, this time to admonish him to obey God’s Word. We often face our greatest temptations after a period of successful ministry. God reaffirmed his covenant with David and reminded Solomon of his responsibility to “keep his heart with all diligence” (Prov. 4:23) and walk in obedience to the Word.
3. “Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare,” warns 1 Tim. 6:9; and this came true in Solomon’s life. He was not content with the abundance of blessings God had given him; he had to send away for even greater luxuries to satisfy his heart. No doubt the latter years of Solomon’s life are revealed in Ecclesiastes, a book that reveals the emptiness of living for material pleasures. Yes, Solomon lived in glory and luxury, but Jesus said that even Solomon in all his glory was not as beautiful as one of God’s simple lilies (Matt. 6:28–29).
4. Read Deut. 17:16–20 for God’s instructions to the king, and note how Solomon disobeyed these instructions. He multiplied horses and chariots, he multiplied money, and he multiplied wives.
5. Solomon promoted Jeroboam into a good position because of his bravery and industry. But God chose this young man to be the king over ten tribes. The one tribe remaining would be Judah, but this southern kingdom would include “little Benjamin” (12:21). When Solomon heard that he had a rival, he tried to kill him. Solomon’s death left his son Rehoboam to reign in his place. Had Solomon remained true to the Lord, his later years would have been filled with blessing and victory instead of chastening and defeat.

**1 Kings 12-16 These chapters record “the beginning of the end.”**

1. With the death of Solomon, the nation’s glory begins to fade. First Kings covers about 125 years of history, 40 years of Solomon’s reign, and about 85 years for the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah. Only five kings reigned in Judah during that period, while eight kings reigned in Israel, and all of the northern kings were wicked.
2. Solomon’s vast program of building had brought fame and glory to the nation, but the taxes were heavy upon the people and they were hoping for some relief from the burden. In his later years, Solomon’s values had changed and he was more interested in material wealth than spiritual blessing (see Ecclesiastes 1:12–2:26).
3. God had already chosen Jeroboam to be the king of the ten tribes because of Solomon’s sins. Only Judah and Benjamin were left to Rehoboam, and God did this for David’s sake.
4. Jeroboam failed to live up to his opportunities, for he led the ten tribes into idolatry. He was afraid that the people of his kingdom would go up to Jerusalem for the annual feasts, and there revolt against him, so he made it “convenient” for them to worship in their own territory. He repeated Aaron’s sin (Ex. 32:1–6) and made calves of gold, putting one in Dan and the other in Bethel. He also consecrated places of worship and organized his own priesthood. It was a man-made religion, designed for the convenience of the people; therefore, it had nothing of the power of God or the blessing of God. Of course, God could not permit such apostasy to continue, so He sent a message of warning and judgment to the king (chap. 13). Note that the king was burning incense at the altar, acting like a priest.
5. The mysterious man of God announced the birth of the future king Josiah, and also warned that the king’s man-made religion would be judged and destroyed. When Jeroboam tried to arrest the prophet, the king’s extended hand was dried up and the altar broke open, just as the prophet had predicted. The king begged to be healed, and the man prayed for him. It is unfortunate that the man of God listened to the lies of a fellow prophet and lost his life. If there is one lesson to be learned from 13:11–34, it is this: don’t let other people determine the will of God for your life.
6. Abijah was a young man when he became fatally ill, the king was concerned lest there be no son to succeed him on the throne. Jeroboam could not turn to his false gods for help; he had to turn to the prophet Ahijah for guidance. This was the prophet who first told Jeroboam that he would be the new king. The king dared not go himself; he sent his wife in a disguise. But the blind prophet could see more with his spiritual eyes than Jeroboam could see with his physical eyes. Ahijah exposed the disguise and sent the wicked king a message of judgment.
7. The Decline of Judah. For seventeen years Rehoboam, this evil son of Solomon led the people into terrible sins. Instead of walking in the laws of the Lord, he patterned himself after the wicked nations Israel had defeated. God punished him by bringing Egypt up to defeat the nation. The people had lost their spiritual values: the expensive gold shields were now replaced with cheaper bronze shields. “Like father, like son.” God allowed Abijam to reign only three short years. He declared war on Jeroboam (read 2 Chron. 13), and God gave him victory for David’s sake. The victory was purely military; there was no spiritual revival in the nation. Asa was a good king, a welcome change after years of evil rulers. He tried to take away the sins established by Rehoboam (14:24). He even deposed his own mother because she was an idol worshiper (2 Chron. 15:16). Sad to say, his reign did not end as well as it began, for he trusted in men for protection and failed to trust in the Lord. He used the temple wealth to hire Syria to fight for him; and this ungodly alliance cost him much personally. See also 22:41–50 and 2 Chron. 17:1–21:3. The writer here does not give the history of  Jehoshaphat who purged out the idolatry and who sought to teach the people the Word of God. God gave him many victories, because he “sought the Lord with all his heart”
8. The Decay of Israel. Six kings are listed here, starting with Nadab and ending with Ahab, and all of them were evil.  You will note that it was when the nation was moving into idolatry that God called His prophets forth to preach to the people. We have met an anonymous prophet in chapter 13, and we will yet meet Elijah and Elisha. Of course, Jehu and Ahijah should also be mentioned. When God’s people sin, it is only the Word of God proclaimed by the servants of God that can call them back and save them.

**1 Kings 17-18 “Go hide yourself,” and “Go show yourself.”**

1. Elijah the Tishbite, a “man subject to like passions as we are” (James 5:17), yet was a man with great courage and faith. In these two chapters we see Elijah obeying two commandments from the Lord: “Go hide yourself,” and “Go show yourself.”
2. “Go Hide Yourself”. Ahab and his wicked heathen wife Jezebel had led the people into Baal worship, a religion so vile we dare not describe it. The three years of drought was an answer to Elijah’s prayer (James 5:17). Having delivered his message, the prophet retired from public ministry for three years, and during this time, the Lord graciously cared for him.
3. God told Elijah exactly where to go and what to do. God withdrew Elijah’s ministry from Israel as another punishment for their sins (Ps. 74:7–9). The Lord permitted Elijah to drink of the brook, and He provided bread and meat daily, delivered to the prophet by ravens. The raven is the first bird named in the Bible (Gen. 8:7); it was an unclean bird, yet God used it to help His servant. When the brook dried up God told a Elijah, “Go to Gentile territory where a widow will feed you.” Luke 4:22–26. “Zarephath” means “refining”. Imagine Elijah’s feelings when he discovered how poor the widow was, and that she was about to prepare her last meal. But God’s commands are never wrong; for when the widow put God first (by obeying Elijah’s commands), God provided for her, her son, and her guest. The widow’s son dies so Elijah tells her “Give me the boy” for he knew God could raise the dead boy to life again.
4. “Go show yourself”. Elijah returned in the third year of the drought. God instructed Elijah to return to Samaria and confront Ahab again. However, he presented himself first to Obadiah, the chief steward of the royal palace. This man, a worshipper of Yahweh from his youth, had remained loyal to his God. Ahab and Elijah met and exchanged insults. Ahab’s turning from Yahweh to the Baals has changed Israel’s king into Israel’s troubler. Elijah called for an assembly of the foreign prophets on Mt Carmel.
5. Not only the foreign prophets but people from all over Israel were assembled on Carmel. Elijah did not accuse the people of outright apostasy but of hesitating between two opinions. This suggests they had been trying to worship both Baal and Yahweh! The people must make a decision: Yahweh or Baal.
6. The prophets of Baal had the first turn. Elijah allowed them the best part of a day, from morning until the time of the evening sacrifice. At midday Elijah made some crude mockery. Elijah prepared his own sacrifice from scratch using a second bull. Taking twelve stones to symbolize all Israel, he repaired a ruined altar of the Lord. By the time of the evening sacrifice (three o’clock in the afternoon), it was obvious to all that Baal was a false god and could not answer. The prophet prayed a simple prayer of faith, and the fire of God consumed the wood, the sacrifice, the water, and the altar.  But Elijah still had work to do. To begin with, the false prophets had to be slain. It is not enough for us to acknowledge that “the Lord, He is God”; we must also hate that which is evil and remove it from our lives.
7. Then the prophet told the king to get back home, for rain was on the way. Baal was the “rain god,” but he could neither send fire nor bring rain! As the king started on his way, Elijah began to pray for rain, just as three years before he had prayed for drought (James 5:17). Before long, the sky was black with clouds, the wind began to blow, and the rains came. God gave Elijah superhuman strength to run ahead of the king as his chariot raced toward Jezreel.

**1 Kings 19 Elijah Flees**

1. What a contrast we have here to the scene of victory in chapter 18! How often our greatest trials follow our greatest blessings. Here the man of faith gets his eyes off the Lord and becomes a man of fear. But the main cause for Elijah’s failure was spiritual: he saw Jezebel and failed to see the Lord; he listened to Jezebel’s threats and forgot to wait for God’s promises. In every step he had taken, Elijah had waited for God’s command, but now his fear led to impatience, and impatience led to disobedience.
2. Wanting to be alone, Elijah left his servant and traveled into the wastelands. Elijah lay down to sleep, and his “bedtime prayer” was, “Take away my life!” Moses had prayed this prayer at a time of great discouragement (Num. 11:15).
3. How graciously God refreshed His servant. The Lord knew that Elijah needed food and rest, as well as spiritual quickening. Elijah ate the meal and then went back to sleep. So, God fed him the second time, and this time Elijah got up and started his journey again. The hand of the Lord guided him to Mt. Sinai, where Moses had received his call from God (Ex. 3) and where the Law had been given. It is encouraging to know that even when the child of God is discouraged, God cares for him.
4. The word of God came to him in the cave. “Go, return!” was God’s word to the prophet. God would give him another chance to serve by anointing Hazael as the new king of Syria, Jehu as the new king of Israel, and Elisha as the new prophet. God was saying to Elijah: “Stop complaining and grieving over your seeming failures. Get back to work.” This is certainly good counsel. It is wonderful the way God encouraged Elijah by assuring him that there were 7,000 faithful believers yet in the land.
5. Elijah’s first step was to appoint Elisha as his successor. This he did by casting his mantle about Elisha as Elisha was plowing in the fields. This act symbolized the fact that Elisha would now be a prophet with the same power and authority of Elijah. The fact that Elisha slew the oxen and used the tools for his firewood indicates how definitely he was breaking with the past. Elijah did not anoint Hazael; Elisha did this later on (2 Kings 8:8–15). It was also Elisha who anointed Jehu (2 Kings 9:1–10). However, inasmuch as Elijah anointed Elisha, he indirectly anointed the others.

**1 Kings 20–22 Ahab Judgement**

1. Ahab has gone down in history as the wickedest king Israel ever had. His heathen wife, Jezebel, ruled him from behind the scenes and saw to it that Baal worship was made the official religion of the land. Ahab had “sold himself to work evil”. In these chapters we see his sins and his final judgment from God.