

# The Daily Reader

Reading through the Bible together in May

## BOOK Introductions

**2 Samuel** – The two books of Samuel were originally one book. The story of David continues. His reign progresses well, taking Jerusalem as his capital and then seeing the ark of the covenant arrive. Now God's presence could dwell with His people in their capital city! David makes plans to build God a temple in Jerusalem. But God refuses and then, remarkably, makes a very special covenant with David. David's greater son will one day be an eternal ruler over all the world, with an everlasting dynasty (see chapter 7). From the dizzying heights of God's overwhelming promise, however, David soon falls. Just four chapters later, David sins with beautiful Bathsheba, then to cover his tracks he has his faithful friend Uriah killed. Confronted for his sin, David is broken before God and repents. Nevertheless, he reaps what he has sown as his family seems to implode during the subsequent chapters. The book ends with a reflective appendix to the life of David.

**1 Kings** is really only the first half of the book of Kings (like Samuel, it was originally one book). Apart from Saul, every king's reign is covered by these two books, starting with the final days of David. 1 Kings traces David's dynasty through his son, Solomon, and beyond – not only giving a record of history, but also demonstrating God's faithfulness to His promise and demonstrating the results of faithlessness on the part of God's blessed people. Solomon started well (from 971BC), seeking wisdom and building God's temple. But his life is a warning to us all of the dangers of not guarding our hearts and relationships. After Solomon, things seem to go from bad to worse. During the reign of his son Rehoboam, the kingdom is divided by Jeroboam.

Now there were two kingdoms; Judah in the south and the rebellious counterpart, Israel in the north. This northern kingdom, Israel, was less loyal to the LORD, although both nations struggled to be faithful to God. The progress of the two nations is presented through the actions of their kings. As the leaders go, so go the people. Since the kings were mostly unfaithful, God introduced the heavy-hitters, the prophets. Elijah in 1 Kings, then in 2 Kings, Elisha. They confronted the sin of both nations, but the northern kingdom in particular. God affirmed their ministry through many supernatural signs (this cluster of the miraculous is second only to the time of Christ and his apostles).

**2 Kings** – The heavy hitting prophets continued to confront the sin of the two kingdoms. Elijah was replaced by Elisha. The author of the book continues to give the kings their "grades" – either pass ("did what was right in the eyes of the LORD") or fail ("did evil in the sight of the LORD"). Overall the numbers are not impressive: the southern kingdom had only eight good kings out of twenty, the northern kingdom had zero good kings in nineteen! As God had promised back in Deuteronomy, if His people were not faithful to His covenant with them, then they would be disciplined by being removed from the land. In 722BC, the Assyrians came and scattered the northern kingdom of Israel. The southern kingdom lasted just over a century longer, before the Babylonians defeated Judah and took away the Judeans into exile, then burned Jerusalem to rubble (586BC). The glory of the kingdom God had given to David lay in ruins after just four centuries. How sad to see the devastating results of faithlessness and hearts hardened toward God. Now how could God's promises to David be fulfilled? As ever, it would have to be a God thing!

**Where we'll be in May:** 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Luke 8-23

For a reading plan see Andy Jack or the church website [www.oakballchurch.org.uk](http://www.oakballchurch.org.uk)