

FIRST KINGS

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH



Welcome, Teacher

Thank you for investing in the next generation. These notes will help you teach the book of 1 Kings to middle school students in thirteen 45-minute sessions. Every session is built around one question: **What kind of heart does God admire, and what kind of heart does He oppose?**

First Kings is the story of kings, but it is really the story of hearts. Again and again the writer measures people by one standard: was their heart *loyal* to the LORD? God admires men and women who love like Christ, who defend the weak, who speak up for what is right, and who encourage others. Meanwhile, God does not look away from the proud, greedy, and disobedient leaders whose choices hurt people and led a nation away from Him. We study both, because history teaches us, and because every page points forward to Jesus, the King who never fails.

Series Memory Verse. *“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.” — 2 Chronicles 16:9*

How to Use These Notes

Each session in this guide includes the following, in the same order, so you can prepare quickly:

- **Big Idea, Key Verse, and Theme** — the one thing you want students to remember.
- **45-Minute Lesson Plan** — a simple flow of seven segments.
- **Hook** — an opening question or activity.
- **Teaching Content** — the full lesson, written in plain language you can teach from or read aloud.
- **Heart Check** — a chart of the godly and ungodly hearts in the passage.
- **Pointing to Jesus** — how the passage leads us to Christ.
- **Discussion, Activity, and Think · Feel · Do** — the interactive part of the session.
- **Teacher Background** — dates, setting, culture, cautions, and answer hints.

Companion Materials

This guide goes with a **Student Handouts PDF** (one page per session), a **companion web app** where students can read each session, listen to the podcast, and complete a three-question Think · Feel · Do reflection, and **13 podcast episodes** (MP3) in which a man and a woman talk through each lesson at a fifth-to-seventh-grade level. The podcasts are great for students who miss a week, for car rides, or for review.

The Big Picture of 1 Kings

First Kings and Second Kings were originally one book. Together they trace about 400 years, from Solomon’s throne to the exile in Babylon. First Kings covers roughly 120 years in three movements:

Movement	Chapters	Sessions	Main Story
The United Kingdom	1–11	1–7	David’s final days, Solomon’s wisdom, the temple, and Solomon’s drift from God
The Divided Kingdom	12–16	8–9	The kingdom splits; one good king (Asa) and a parade of bad ones
The Elijah Era	17–22	10–13	Elijah confronts Ahab and Jezebel; Naboth’s vineyard; Micaiah the truth-teller

Thread that runs through the whole book

A heart loyal to the LORD. Listen for these phrases in every session: “his heart was not loyal” (11:4), “as did his father David” (15:11), “walked in the way of Jeroboam” (15:34), and “something good toward the LORD” (14:13). Kings invites students to ask: *Whose way am I walking in? Does my heart belong fully to God?*

Qualities God Admires (Hearts to Imitate)

- **Servant leadership** — leading by serving (the elders’ advice, 12:7).
- **Courage to speak up** — Nathan, Bathsheba, Obadiah, Elijah, Micaiah.
- **Defending the weak** — Solomon with the two mothers, Elijah and the widow, Obadiah and the hidden prophets, Naboth’s family inheritance.
- **Humility** — Solomon’s request, the queen of Sheba, Ahab’s repentance and God’s mercy.
- **Faith and generosity** — the widow of Zarephath and Hiram’s craftsman.
- **Encouragement and mentoring** — God’s care for Elijah; Elijah and Elisha.

Attitudes and Actions God Opposes (Hearts to Avoid)

- **Self-exaltation and grabbing power** — Adonijah, Baasha, Zimri.
- **Pride and harshness** — Rehoboam.
- **Man-made religion and idols** — Jeroboam’s calves, Solomon’s high places, Ahab and Jezebel’s Baal.
- **Greed and abuse of power** — Ahab and Jezebel with Naboth.
- **Flattery and telling leaders what they want to hear** — the 400 prophets.
- **Compromise and the slow drift** — Solomon’s wives and the high places.

Series at a Glance

#	Passage	Title	Big Idea (short)
1	1 Kings 1–2	Two Hearts, One Throne	God honors servants who speak up, and opposes self-exalting grabbers.
2	1 Kings 3	The Heart That Asked for Wisdom	Ask God for a heart to serve; wisdom protects the weak.
3	1 Kings 4–5	Peace for Every Family	Wisdom brings peace for everyone; watch warning lights.
4	1 Kings 6–7	A House for God, and the Hands That Built It	Obedient hearts matter more than beautiful buildings.
5	1 Kings 8	A Prayer for Everyone	The God no building can hold hears and forgives all who turn to Him.
6	1 Kings 9–10	A Warning and a Queen Who Came to See	God warns in love; the humble seeker finds Him.
7	1 Kings 11	The Slow Drift	Small compromises add up; God stays faithful.
8	1 Kings 12–14	The Servant, the Bully, and the Split	Servant leaders win hearts; pride splits nations.
9	1 Kings 15–16	One Good King and a Parade of Bad Ones	A loyal heart is rare and costly; God notices.
10	1 Kings 17	Ravens, a Widow, and a Boy	God provides for the poor and gives life to the hurting.
11	1 Kings 18	Fire on Mount Carmel	No middle ground: the LORD alone is God.
12	1 Kings 19	When the Brave Get Tired	God gently encourages discouraged servants.
13	1 Kings 20–22	Naboth, Micaiah, and the King We Need	Stand for truth and justice; look to the perfect King.

Kings of 1 Kings at a Glance

Dates are approximate (BC); scholars differ by a few years, partly because of overlapping co-regencies. Use this chart as a quick reference when students ask, “Who was this king?”

Kingdom	King	Reigned	Verdict	Note
United	David → Solomon	971–931	Mixed	Wise, then drifted (1 Kings 1–11)
Judah	Rehoboam	931–913	Evil	Rejected the elders; kingdom split
Judah	Abijam	913–911	Evil	Heart not loyal (15:3)
Judah	Asa	911–870	Good	Did right like David (15:11)
Judah	Jehoshaphat	873–848	Good	Sought God’s word (22:43)
Israel	Jeroboam I	931–910	Evil	Golden calves at Bethel and Dan
Israel	Nadab	910–909	Evil	Killed by Baasha
Israel	Baasha	909–886	Evil	Seized the throne by murder
Israel	Elah	886–885	Evil	Killed while drunk
Israel	Zimri	885	Evil	Reigned seven days
Israel	Omri	885–874	Evil	Built Samaria; worse than before
Israel	Ahab	874–853	Evil	Married Jezebel; served Baal
Israel	Ahaziah	853–852	Evil	Walked in his parents’ ways (22:52)

Prophets and Truth-Tellers

Prophet	Session	What stands out
Nathan	Sessions 1	Spoke up to protect Solomon and Bathsheba
Ahijah	Sessions 7, 8	Told Jeroboam the truth; faithful when old and blind
Shemaiah	Session 8	Stopped a civil war with God’s word
Man of God from Judah	Session 8	Confronted a king, but later disobeyed
Jehu son of Hanani	Session 9	Told King Baasha plainly
Elijah	Sessions 10–13	Boldly stood for the LORD; prayed; encouraged
Micaiah	Session 13	Spoke truth when 400 others flattered

Teaching Tips for This Study

- **Keep Jesus central.** Every session has a “Pointing to Jesus” section. First Kings shows us what we need: a faithful King, a true Temple, a perfect Prophet, and a Savior who forgives. Help students see Him.
- **Use the Bible.** Have students open their Bibles and read from the NKJV. Verse-by-verse reading builds confidence and helps students see that these are real events.
- **Handle hard passages honestly and gently.** First Kings contains violence, idolatry, and death. Teach what the Bible says without graphic detail. The Teacher Background section in each session suggests how to explain difficult events such as the executions in chapter 2 and chapter 18, the lion in chapter 13, and the death of the widow’s son.
- **Care for hurting students.** Session 12 includes Elijah’s lowest moment. If a student shares that they are very sad or wish to hurt themselves, stay calm, listen, do not promise secrecy, and immediately involve a pastor, your church’s child-safety leader, and the student’s parents or guardians. In the U.S., the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available by call or text at 988.
- **Celebrate the quiet heroes.** Obadiah, Hiram, Naboth, and the widow are not kings, but God honored them. Middle schoolers need to hear that ordinary, faithful people matter to God.
- **Make it interactive.** Each session offers an activity. Choose what fits your group’s size and energy. Use the podcast as a review tool.
- **Pray for your students by name.** You are shaping hearts. The Lord who found “something good” in a boy in Jeroboam’s house sees the good in each of your students.

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SESSION 1 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 1–2

Two Hearts, One Throne

*Servant hearts speak up and serve; self-promoting hearts grab and scheme.***BIG IDEA**

God honors the leader who serves and the friends who bravely speak up for what is right, but He opposes the person who exalts himself.

KEY VERSE

“I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies.”

1 Kings 2:2–3

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Cut-in-Line / Serve-in-Line.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “Have you ever seen someone cut in line, or claim a spot that wasn’t theirs? How did it feel?” Let two or three students answer. Then say: “Today we meet a prince who tried to cut in line for a kingdom, and the brave people who stopped him.”

Teaching Content

Welcome to 1 Kings

First Kings picks up the story right where Second Samuel stops. The Bible was first written without chapter breaks, and 1 and 2 Kings were originally ONE book. Together they tell about 400 years of Israel's kings. First Kings covers about 120 of those years: from the last days of King David to the death of wicked King Ahab.

Here is the big picture. Chapters 1–11 are the golden age of King Solomon. Chapters 12–16 are the sad split of the nation into two kingdoms. Chapters 17–22 are the thrilling days of the prophet Elijah. As we travel through, we will keep asking one question: What kind of person does God admire? The answer is a person with a heart that is loyal to the LORD. We will see that phrase again and again.

A prince who grabs

King David is old and weak. He can't even stay warm. His oldest living son, Adonijah, is handsome and used to getting his own way. Look at what the Bible says: "Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, 'I will be king'" (1 Kings 1:5). Notice who does the exalting: Adonijah lifts up Adonijah. He gets chariots, horsemen, and fifty men to run in front of him. Then he throws a big feast and invites his friends. He does not invite Nathan the prophet, the mighty men, or his brother Solomon.

Why was Adonijah this way? The Bible hints that no one had ever corrected him. David was a great king but, at home, he let his sons do what they wanted. A person who is never taught to hear "no" often grows up believing the world belongs to him.

People who speak up

Nathan the prophet notices what is happening. He knows God had promised the throne to Solomon. Nathan could have stayed quiet and kept himself safe. Instead he goes straight to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and makes a plan. She goes into the king's room and bows before David. Then Nathan comes in right after and backs up her words.

This is real courage. They were not trying to get something for themselves. They were protecting Solomon and Bathsheba, who would have been in danger if Adonijah took the throne, and protecting what God had said. Sometimes loving people means speaking up when it is hard.

Solomon is crowned

David acts fast. He commands that Solomon ride the king's own mule down to a spring called Gihon, where Zadok the priest anoints him with oil. The trumpet sounds, and all the people shout, "Long live King Solomon!" The Bible says they rejoiced so loudly "that the earth seemed to split with their sound" (1 Kings 1:40).

When Adonijah hears the shouting, his guests scatter and he runs to the altar, terrified. Solomon shows mercy: if Adonijah proves himself a worthy man, not one hair on his head will fall. Mercy came first. But Adonijah was not done scheming.

A father's last words

In chapter 2, David gives his son his final charge. He doesn't talk about gold or armies. He talks about the heart: "Be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man" (1 Kings 2:2). A real man or woman of God, David says, keeps God's Word. Real strength is not muscles or power. Real strength is walking in God's ways even when it is hard.

David also says to remember kindness. The family of an old friend, Barzillai, had been generous to David when he was running for his life, and David tells Solomon to take care of them. Godly leaders remember people who were kind to them, and they repay that kindness.

The rest of chapter 2 is serious. Adonijah kept scheming for power and it cost him everything. Joab, David's hard-hearted commander, had killed two innocent men and had joined Adonijah's plot. Shimei, who had cursed David, broke his promise to stay in Jerusalem. Solomon dealt with each of them. When a person refuses to humble himself, trouble finds him. The chapter ends with this sentence: "Thus the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon" (1 Kings 2:46).

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
Nathan the prophet 1 Kings 1:11–14, 22–27	Courage to speak up. He risked his safety to protect Solomon and Bathsheba and to stand for what God had said.
Bathsheba 1 Kings 1:15–21	Bravery for her family. She walked into the king's room and made her case clearly and respectfully, to protect her son.
Zadok, Benaiah, and the loyal men 1 Kings 1:8, 32–40	Loyalty. They refused to join Adonijah's party and stayed faithful to God's choice.
King David 1 Kings 2:1–4, 7	Passing on faith and remembering kindness. His last words pointed his son to God's ways and to caring for people who had helped him.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
Adonijah 1 Kings 1:5–10; 2:13–25	Exalting yourself. He said, "I will be king," and went after power his own way. He ended up losing everything.
Joab 1 Kings 1:7; 2:5, 28–34	Violence and shifting loyalty. He used his strength to harm others and backed the wrong side.
Shimei 1 Kings 2:8–9, 36–46	Disrespect and broken promises. He cursed David and later broke his word to the king.

Pointing to Jesus: A King Who Did Not Grab

Adonijah grabbed for a crown that was not his. Jesus is the opposite. He is the true King of Kings, and yet He did not grab at His rights. On Palm Sunday He entered Jerusalem on a donkey while the crowds shouted for joy, just as the people shouted for Solomon on the king's mule. Instead of grabbing a throne, Jesus took the way of a servant, all the way to the cross. And God exalted Him. If you want to be great in God's eyes, follow the One who lowered Himself to lift us up.

"Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly."

Matthew 21:5

“Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant.”

Philippians 2:6–7

Discussion Questions

1. What did Adonijah want, and how did he try to get it? What was wrong with his way?
2. Nathan and Bathsheba spoke up even though it was scary. When is it hard to speak up for what is right, or for someone else?
3. David told Solomon that real strength means walking in God’s ways. How is that different from the way the world measures strength?
4. What might have been different if someone had corrected Adonijah when he was young? Why is it a gift to be corrected?
5. How is Jesus different from Adonijah? What does it look like for you to follow His example this week?

Activity: Cut-in-Line / Serve-in-Line

Run a short game. In round one, line up for a snack and let one volunteer ‘grab’ the front spot. Ask how the rest of the line felt. In round two, have each student let the person behind them go first. Compare the feeling. Connect: the first round is Adonijah’s way, the second is Jesus’ way.

Think · Feel · Do

THINK: What is the main difference between Adonijah’s heart and the hearts of Nathan and Bathsheba?

FEEL: How do you feel when you see someone being pushed aside or treated unfairly? What does that tell you about God’s heart?

DO: Name one person you can stand up for or encourage this week, and one thing you will do or say.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for being the humble King who served us. Give us hearts that don’t grab for attention or power, but that serve others and speak up bravely for what is right. Help us walk in Your ways. In Your name, amen.

Memory verse: 1 Kings 2:3. **This week’s challenge:** Look for one person who is being left out this week and invite them in. Pray for courage to speak up when you see something unfair.

Session 1 Teacher Background: Two Hearts, One Throne

DATES

About 971 BC. David's death and Solomon's accession; Solomon reigns about 971–931 BC (dates approximate, scholars differ by a few years).

Setting and Background

Authorship and purpose. The author of 1 and 2 Kings is not named. Jewish tradition suggests the prophet Jeremiah, but we cannot be sure. The books were likely put in final form during the Babylonian exile (about 560 BC) using older sources such as “the book of the acts of Solomon” (1 Kings 11:41) and “the book of the chronicles of the kings.” The author is not writing a simple history; he is writing prophetic history, explaining to exiles WHY the kingdom fell: they did not keep a loyal heart toward the LORD. Kings is measured again and again against David's heart (1 Kings 15:3, 11).

Structure. Think of 1 Kings in three movements: the United Kingdom (1–11), the Divided Kingdom (12–16), and the Elijah Era (17–22). Use the phrase “a heart loyal to the LORD” as the thread through all 13 sessions. See also 2 Chronicles 16:9.

Succession. In ancient kingdoms, succession was often settled by who controlled the army and palace. Adonijah (Haggith's son, likely David's fourth son, now the oldest surviving) had the support of Joab and the priest Abiathar. God, however, had promised Solomon (see 1 Chronicles 22:9–10). The en Rogel feast was a coronation attempt. Gihon was a spring right in Jerusalem, so Solomon's anointing was in the city's heart where all could hear the trumpet.

Cultural Notes

- Riding the king's mule. A king's own mule was reserved for him; anyone riding it was publicly claiming royal authority. David's command that Solomon ride it was a public sign of the king's choice.
- Taking hold of the altar's horns (1:50). The altar was a place of asylum for the accused in Israel (see Exodus 21:13–14). Adonijah's flight there shows how afraid he was.
- Abishag (2:13–25). Taking a former king's concubine was in the ancient Near East a claim to the throne. Adonijah's request, through Bathsheba, was a disguised second attempt at power. Keep this lightly handled with middle schoolers: simply say Adonijah kept scheming for the throne.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- Chapter 2 includes executions carried out by King Solomon. Be ready for questions. Explain that these were judgments within Israel's legal system for murder and treason (Genesis 9:6; Numbers 35:33), carried out by the king as God's appointed civil authority and also to protect a young kingdom from civil war. It is NOT a model for personal revenge. Jesus taught us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44) and to leave judgment to God.
- Bathsheba. Students who know 2 Samuel 11 may ask. A short, honest answer: David and Bathsheba's earlier sin was serious, David repented, and God forgave and still used them. The Bible even names

Bathsheba in Jesus' family line (Matthew 1:6). Highlight grace, not details.

- Calvary Chapel emphasis: lead students through the text verse by verse where possible; read aloud from the NKJV; keep the focus on Jesus as the true and better King.
- Answer hints. Q1: Adonijah wanted the throne and grabbed it with show and parties; it was selfish and ignored God's choice. Q2: Let students share real examples (school, social media, friends). Q3: Strength = faithfulness to God's Word. Q4: A loving correction early in life helps a person learn humility. Q5: Jesus gave Himself; we can serve, include, and speak up.

SESSION 2 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 3

The Heart That Asked for Wisdom

A humble heart asks God for help to serve others well.

BIG IDEA

God is pleased when we ask for a heart that can serve other people well, and true wisdom protects the weak.

KEY VERSE

“Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?”

1 Kings 3:9

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Wisdom Ask List.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “If a genie (or God) said, ‘Ask for anything you want,’ what would you ask for?” Let students shout out answers. Then say: “Today a young king got that exact offer from the real God. Listen to what he asked for.”

Teaching Content

A young king at an altar

Solomon is a young man, probably in his late teens or early twenties, and suddenly he is king of a whole nation. The Bible says, “Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David” (1 Kings 3:3). That is a wonderful sentence. But the verse has one small word that matters: “except.” Solomon loved the LORD, “except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.” High places were hilltop altars, often used for pagan worship. God had asked His people to worship at the place He chose. Solomon’s heart was good, but he had a small crack. Keep your eye on that crack. We will see it again.

Solomon goes to Gibeon, where the old tabernacle stood, and offers a thousand burnt offerings. That night God appears to him in a dream and says, “Ask! What shall I give you?” (1 Kings 3:5). Can you imagine?

What Solomon asked for

Solomon could have asked for riches, a long life, or the defeat of his enemies. Instead he begins with humility. “I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in” (1 Kings 3:7). He means, “Lord, I don’t know how to do this job.” He admits he needs help. Notice also that he thinks about the PEOPLE: so many they cannot be counted. He is not asking for wisdom to look smart. He asks for wisdom to serve.

So he asks for “an understanding heart.” In Hebrew the phrase is literally a “hearing heart”, a heart that listens to God and to people. This is not just brains. It is a listening, caring heart that can tell right from wrong.

God is delighted: “The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing” (1 Kings 3:10). Because Solomon did not ask for riches or revenge, God gives him wisdom AND the riches and honor he did not ask for. God also adds a promise: if Solomon walks in God’s ways as David did, he will have a long life. A person who puts God first and others second is never poorer for it.

Two mothers and one baby

Soon a hard case comes to the king. Two women who lived in the same house both had newborn babies. One baby died in the night. Each woman now says the living baby is hers. There are no witnesses. Who is telling the truth?

Notice who these women were. The Bible calls them harlots, women with little money, little power, and no one to speak up for them. In many kingdoms, nobody would have even listened to them. But Solomon does. Wise leaders listen to the people others ignore.

Solomon calls for a sword and says, “Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other.” One woman says, “Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him.” The other woman cries out, “Please, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!” Solomon knew right away. The woman who loves the child more than herself, the one willing to lose him to save his life, is the true mother.

Wisdom from God

“And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice” (1 Kings 3:28). The people respected Solomon not because of his sword or his palace but because his wisdom protected a baby and a poor mother.

Real wisdom is not just being smart or winning arguments. Real wisdom listens carefully, loves people, protects the weak, and tells the truth. And look at the true mother. Her love was willing to give up what she wanted so that her child could live. That is the kind of love God admires, and it points straight to Jesus.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
Solomon 1 Kings 3:5–15	Humility and a servant’s heart. He admitted, “I am a little child,” and asked for wisdom to serve God’s people instead of asking for riches.
Solomon (as judge) 1 Kings 3:16–28	Defending the weak. He gave two poor women a fair hearing and protected a helpless baby.
The true mother 1 Kings 3:26	Sacrificial love. She was willing to lose her child to save his life. Real love puts another’s life first.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
The false mother 1 Kings 3:16–27	Jealousy and lying. She was willing to see a baby cut in two rather than see someone else have what she wanted.
Solomon’s early compromise 1 Kings 3:1–3	Small cracks. He made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh’s daughter and worshiped at high places. These small “excepts” would later become big problems.

Pointing to Jesus: A Greater Than Solomon

Solomon’s wisdom was a gift from God, but Jesus IS the wisdom of God. The Bible says that in Christ “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Solomon protected a baby from being killed; Jesus came to save every one of us. The true mother was willing to give up her child so he could live. Jesus, the Son of God, was willing to give up His own life so we could live. When you ask Jesus for wisdom, you are asking the One who is wiser than Solomon, and He promises to give it generously.

“...in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Colossians 2:3

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

James 1:5

Discussion Questions

1. Why was God so pleased with what Solomon asked for? What did Solomon NOT ask for?
2. Solomon said, “I am a little child.” Why is it good to admit that we don’t know everything?
3. The two women had little power, but Solomon listened carefully to them. Who are the people in your school or neighborhood that nobody listens to? How can you listen?
4. What did the true mother’s love look like? Where have you seen love like that?
5. Solomon had a small “except” in his heart (high places). What small compromises can grow into big problems for a young person today?

Activity: Wisdom Ask List

Hand out index cards. Have each student write one situation in which they need God's wisdom (a friendship, a choice, a hard class, a family issue). Have them fold the card and pray over it silently while you read James 1:5. Encourage them to take the card home and pray over it all week.

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: What did Solomon ask God for, and why did that please God?

FEEL: How do you feel when you have a decision to make and you don't know the right answer? What would it feel like to know God would help?

DO: What is one situation this week where you will ask God for wisdom (James 1:5)?

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You that You give wisdom generously to anyone who asks. Give us understanding hearts, hearts that listen to You and care about people who are overlooked. Help us love like the true mother and like Jesus, who gave His life for us. Amen.

Memory verse: 1 Kings 3:9. **This week's challenge:** Memorize James 1:5 and ask God for wisdom every morning this week. Listen to someone who is usually overlooked.

Session 2 Teacher Background: The Heart That Asked for Wisdom

DATES

About 970 BC. Early in Solomon's reign (he is a young man; see 3:7).

Setting and Background

The “high places” (3:2–3). Under Moses' law, sacrifice was to be offered at the place God would choose (Deuteronomy 12:5–14). While the tabernacle and ark were separated (the ark in Jerusalem, the tabernacle at Gibeon, see 2 Chronicles 1:3–4), the people used local high places. Solomon's offerings at Gibeon, at the tabernacle's altar, were more proper than at random hilltops, but the author already points to a pattern of partial obedience.

Pharaoh's daughter (3:1). A political marriage alliance with Egypt. Nothing in the text says it is evil at this point, but Deuteronomy 17:17 warned kings not to multiply wives, and later Solomon's wives are the cause of his fall (ch. 11). Read 3:1 as a quiet warning signal.

“Understanding heart” (3:9). The Hebrew is *lev shomea*, a “hearing heart.” Wisdom (*hokmah*) in Israel was not just intelligence but skill in living rightly before God. Solomon's request echoes Proverbs 2:1–6 and 9:10: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.”

Cultural Notes

- Harlots (3:16). These women were among the lowest in the social order, with no male protector. That Solomon gave them a public hearing is a significant picture of justice for the vulnerable (compare Proverbs 31:8–9).
- Courts. The king was the highest court of appeal. Typically elders at the city gate heard cases, but difficult ones came to the king. This case had no witnesses, so Solomon needed discernment into human hearts.
- The sword test. It is a vivid story, not a command to imitate. Solomon likely never intended to carry out the order; the point is his insight into maternal love. Reassure younger students: no baby was harmed.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- Some students may ask about Solomon's dream: God communicated to him in a dream, as He did to Jacob and Joseph. Don't make it a pattern that every person should expect dreams, but emphasize that God hears prayer.
- The 3:1–3 “except” is a teaching moment. Ask, “What small habit or friendship can look harmless but slowly pull our heart away?” Keep it general and not shaming.
- Note the Prosperity Gospel trap: God gave Solomon riches because he did NOT ask for them, and Solomon's later story shows wealth did not protect his heart. Seek God first (Matthew 6:33).
- Answer hints. Q1: Solomon asked for a heart to serve others rather than for himself. Q2: Humility opens the door for God to help. Q3: Let students name real examples; emphasize listening. Q4: Sacrifice, putting the child's life above her own; Jesus. Q5: Gossip, cheating “just once,” entertainment that lowers our

standards, hidden habits.

SESSION 3 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 4–5

Peace for Every Family

*A wise leader builds peace so ordinary people can live safely, and welcomes friends who honor God.***BIG IDEA**

God gives wisdom to bring peace and fairness to everyone, not just to the leader, and He warns us when power starts to take more than it gives.

KEY VERSE

“And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.”

1 Kings 4:25

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Fig Tree Peace Map.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “What makes a place feel safe? Home? School? A friend’s house? What would a whole country that felt safe look like?” Let students describe it. Say: “Today we see the closest thing to a ‘safe country’ in the Old Testament.”

Teaching Content

A kingdom at peace

Chapter 4 opens with a long list of Solomon's officials: priests, secretaries, a commander, and twelve district officers. Lists like this can seem boring, but they tell us something important: Solomon didn't try to do everything himself. He shared the work. Each of the twelve officers was in charge of bringing food for the king's household for one month of the year. That meant no single region carried the whole burden. Fair sharing is a mark of a wise leader.

Then comes one of the happiest descriptions in the Old Testament: "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing" (1 Kings 4:20). Families were growing. The nation was well fed. And verse 25 says that everyone, from the northern edge to the southern edge, lived safely "each man under his vine and his fig tree." In plain language: an ordinary person could sit in his own backyard, eat from his own garden, and not be afraid. That is what peace looks like.

Wisdom that was bigger than a palace

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore" (1 Kings 4:29). Solomon's wisdom was not just about courts. He spoke 3,000 proverbs and wrote more than 1,000 songs. He could talk about trees, from the tall cedar of Lebanon to the little hyssop growing from a wall. He could talk about animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. Kings and visitors came from all nations to hear him. Many of his proverbs are in the book of Proverbs.

Think about what this means. All of creation teaches about God. Solomon was a scientist and a songwriter, and he loved to learn. God made your brain to enjoy learning too.

A friend named Hiram

Chapter 5 introduces Hiram, the king of Tyre, a Gentile (non-Israelite) king and a longtime friend of David. When Solomon becomes king, Hiram sends servants to congratulate him. Solomon sends a letter back. He explains that his father David was too busy fighting wars to build a house for God. Now God has given peace on every side. "But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor evil occurrence" (1 Kings 5:4). So Solomon says, "I propose to build a temple for the name of the LORD my God."

Hiram's response is lovely: "Blessed be the LORD this day, for He has given David a wise son over this great people!" (1 Kings 5:7). A foreign king praises the God of Israel. Hiram sends cedar and cypress logs floated down the Mediterranean Sea, and Solomon sends wheat and olive oil in return. They sign a peace treaty. Good friends who respect God can help build something great together.

A warning light on the dashboard

There are also quiet warning lights in these chapters. Solomon needed thousands of workers to build, so "King Solomon raised up a labor force out of all Israel; and the labor force was thirty thousand men" (1 Kings 5:13). They worked in shifts: one month in Lebanon, two months at home. That was probably fair at first. But chapter 4 also says Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots. God's law for kings (Deuteronomy 17:16–17) said a king must not multiply horses for himself, nor many wives, nor too much silver and gold. Those were the very things that could pull a king's heart from trusting God.

The lesson: a wise start doesn't guarantee a wise finish. Power and wealth are not evil, but they are heavy. Great leaders keep checking their hearts to make sure what they are building still serves people. Later in this book we'll see what happens when the weight of the workload becomes unfair.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
Solomon (the organizer) 1 Kings 4:1–19	Fair sharing of work. He used twelve officers so that no one region had to carry the whole load.
Solomon (the teacher) 1 Kings 4:29–34	Using wisdom to learn and teach. He loved God’s creation and shared what he knew with people from every nation.
Hiram, king of Tyre 1 Kings 5:1, 7–12	Friendship and generosity. He honored David’s God, gave generously, and made peace.
The people of Israel 1 Kings 4:20–25	Contentment and joy. They enjoyed God’s blessings in peace, safe under their own vine and fig tree.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
Piling up horses 1 Kings 4:26; Deuteronomy 17:16	Trusting in strength instead of God. A king with thousands of chariots can forget to trust God. This is a quiet warning for the future.
The growing labor force 1 Kings 5:13–16	Power that starts to weigh on people. When projects get bigger than the people’s freedom, trouble is coming. We will see this explode in chapter 12.

Pointing to Jesus: The Prince of Peace

Peace under Solomon was wonderful but fragile. His name even means “peace.” Jesus is the true and lasting Prince of Peace. He does not just make a safe kingdom for a few years; He makes peace between us and God by dying on the cross, and He brings together people who were enemies, like Jews and Gentiles. One day He will rule, and the prophets say that “everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid.” Hiram, a foreign king who praised the LORD, reminds us that God’s plan was always to bring people from every nation to Him.

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:6

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.”

Ephesians 2:14

Discussion Questions

1. What did “each man under his vine and his fig tree” mean? Why is that a picture of real peace?
2. Why was it wise for Solomon to share the work among twelve officers instead of doing it all himself? Where do you see sharing work fairly (family, sports, group projects)?
3. Hiram was not an Israelite, but he praised the LORD and helped build God’s house. What does that teach you about friends who are not like us?
4. Deuteronomy 17 warned kings about horses, wives, and wealth. Why might “too much” of a good thing be dangerous?
5. How is Jesus the Prince of Peace? What peace does He give you that nothing else can?

Activity: Fig Tree Peace Map

Give each student a sheet of paper. Have them draw a ‘vine and fig tree’ spot where they feel safest. Then ask them to write one way they could help someone else feel safe at school or home. Share a few. Connect: God’s peace is meant to flow through us.

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: Why is sharing the work fairly a sign of wise leadership?

FEEL: When have you felt truly safe and at peace? What does that tell you about the peace God offers?

DO: Name one way you will help bring peace in your family, school, or friendships this week.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are our peace. Thank You for the peace You made by Your cross. Help us bring peace and fairness wherever we go, and make us friends to all kinds of people. Keep our hearts from trusting in power or things instead of You. Amen.

Memory verse: Isaiah 9:6. **This week’s challenge:** Be a peacemaker this week. When two people are arguing, calm things down. Make friends with someone who is different from you.

Session 3 Teacher Background: Peace for Every Family

DATES

About 970–966 BC. Early Solomon, the peak of Israel’s peace; the temple project is planned (construction begins in Solomon’s 4th year, 6:1).

Setting and Background

Geography. At its largest, Solomon’s influence stretched from the Euphrates River to Egypt’s border (4:21, fulfilling Genesis 15:18). “From Dan to Beersheba” (4:25) is the standard expression for the whole nation, from the far north to the far south.

Solomon’s officials (4:1–19). Compare with David’s officials (2 Samuel 8:15–18, 20:23–26). Solomon divided the land into twelve districts that did not exactly follow tribal boundaries. Some scholars see this as an efficiency; others note it began to loosen tribal identity and set up tension (chapter 12).

Hiram of Tyre. Tyre (in modern Lebanon) was the leading maritime power of the day. Its cedar and skilled craftsmen were famous. Hiram’s praise of the LORD (5:7) may reflect polite diplomacy, but the text lets us hear it as real respect. God’s promise in Genesis 12:3 that Abraham’s family would bless all nations is glimpsed here.

Cultural Notes

- Vine and fig tree (4:25). These were symbols of secure, settled agriculture. Possessing your own land and enjoying its fruit meant freedom and safety. The prophets (Micah 4:4; Zechariah 3:10) later used this phrase for the Messianic kingdom.
- Solomon’s wisdom (4:29–34). Ancient Near Eastern courts valued wisdom literature. Solomon’s fame as a sage drew visitors from Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Arabia (see the Queen of Sheba, ch. 10). The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Psalms 72 and 127 are linked to him.
- Labor (5:13–18; 9:15–22). Israelites were conscripted on a rotating schedule (about one month in three) for the temple project; non-Israelite Canaanites became long-term forced labor (9:20–22). The text takes care to say Solomon did not make slaves of Israelites (9:22), but by the end of his reign the burden felt heavy (12:4). Be honest with students: even good projects can become heavy when leaders don’t listen to people.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- Some students find lists boring. Make it a game: have them find the three most surprising things in chapter 4 (e.g., 40,000 stalls of horses, 12,000 horsemen, 3,000 proverbs).
- Horses. Deuteronomy 17:16–17 is the key background. A teacher can say simply: God told kings not to pile up horses, wives, or gold because those things tempt a leader to trust himself instead of God.
- Hiram is one of the many Gentiles in the Old Testament who honor God (Rahab, Ruth, Naaman, the Queen of Sheba, Nineveh). It’s a good time to talk about welcoming people of other backgrounds.

- Answer hints. Q1: Safe, secure, and content in your own home and land. Q2: It prevents unfair burden and keeps leaders humble. Q3: God wants all nations to know Him. Q4: Because they can pull our hearts toward ourselves and away from trusting God. Q5: He made peace with God by His blood and gives rest to our consciences (Romans 5:1).

SESSION 4 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 6–7

A House for God, and the Hands That Built It

God dwells with people whose hearts obey Him; every gift matters in His work.

BIG IDEA

A beautiful building cannot replace an obedient heart. God wants to live with His people, and He uses everyone's gifts, even the quiet ones, to build His house.

KEY VERSE

“Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel.”

1 Kings 6:12–13

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Living Stones Wall.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “If you could design a house for the most important person in the world, what would you put in it?” Take a few ideas. Then say: “King Solomon is about to build a house for the King of the whole universe. And God Himself had something to say about it.”

Teaching Content

Building begins

First Kings 6:1 gives a date: Solomon began to build in the fourth year of his reign, 480 years after Israel left Egypt. The temple was about 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet tall: not huge compared to a modern church, but dazzling in its time. The walls were covered with cedar from Lebanon. The cedar was carved with flowers and gourds and then covered with pure gold. Inside was a special inner room called the Most Holy Place, where the Ark of the Covenant would rest. In that room stood two giant carved angels called cherubim, each about 15 feet tall, with their wings stretched out to touch.

The temple took seven years to finish. And here is a wonderful detail: the stones were cut and shaped at the quarry, far away, so that “no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built” (1 Kings 6:7). Imagine thousands of workers each doing their own part so that when the pieces came together, the building rose in quiet. God’s house was built with preparation, teamwork, and reverence.

God speaks in the middle of the building

Right in the middle of all the descriptions of cedar and gold, God interrupts. He speaks to Solomon: “Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes ... then I will perform My word with you ... And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel” (1 Kings 6:12–13).

Do you notice the word “if”? The temple was not a magic box. God didn’t say, “If you finish this building, I will live here.” He said, “If you walk with Me, I will live among you.” What God wanted most was not a perfect building, but a loyal heart. A beautiful building is wonderful, but a loving, obedient heart is what He is looking for. This is the heartbeat of the whole book of Kings.

A man named Hiram

In chapter 7 we meet one of the unsung heroes of the Bible. King Hiram of Tyre sent a bronze craftsman, also named Hiram (or Hiram). Look at what the Bible says about him: “He was the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre.” His dad was from Tyre and his mom was an Israelite widow. He was “filled with wisdom and understanding and skill” (1 Kings 7:14).

This man was a widow’s son, probably from a family with few resources. But God gave him a gift, and God used it for the temple. He made two enormous bronze pillars, named Jachin and Boaz, each about 27 feet tall. He made a giant bronze basin called “the Sea,” which held thousands of gallons of water for the priests to wash, and ten smaller bronze washing carts with wheels. Think about it: some of the most important pieces in God’s house were made by the son of a widow. God notices people others overlook, and He loves to put their gifts to work.

Whose house took longer?

Here is a small detail with a big question. The temple took seven years. Then chapter 7 begins: “But Solomon took thirteen years to build his own house” (1 Kings 7:1). Solomon’s palace, the House of the Forest of Lebanon, and the hall for his throne took almost twice as long as God’s house, and they were also huge.

The Bible doesn’t scold Solomon here. It just states the facts and lets us think. But it is a good question for all of us: Where do we spend the most time and energy? On God’s kingdom, or on our own? It’s okay to have a nice home. But it is a sign of a healthy heart to put God first.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
Solomon 1 Kings 6:1–38	Putting God’s house first. He built a beautiful temple with careful planning, and he listened when God spoke.
Huram (Hiram) the bronze worker 1 Kings 7:13–47	Using his gift faithfully. A widow’s son who used God-given skill to serve God’s people, even though he was an outsider and likely poor.
The workers at the quarry 1 Kings 5:17–18; 6:7	Quiet, faithful teamwork. Their names are not given, but their careful work made the temple possible.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
Trusting the building 1 Kings 6:12–13; Jeremiah 7:4	Relying on religion instead of relationship. Later, Israel believed, “The temple of the LORD is here, so we are safe!” while they lived in disobedience. God said that was a lie.
Solomon’s palace 1 Kings 7:1–12	Priorities. He spent thirteen years on his own house and seven on God’s. Where we spend our time shows what we love.

Pointing to Jesus: The True Temple

The temple was a picture of something greater. It showed that God wants to live with His people, but only Jesus makes that possible. When the religious leaders asked Jesus for a sign, He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” John tells us He was talking about His own body. Jesus is God’s house in human form: “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” When Jesus died, the thick curtain in the temple that separated people from the Most Holy Place was torn in two from top to bottom. Now everyone who trusts in Jesus can come near to God, and we become “living stones” being built into God’s house.

“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

John 2:19

“You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood.”

1 Peter 2:5

Discussion Questions

1. God said, “If you walk in My statutes, then I will dwell among you.” Why do you think God cared more about Solomon’s heart than about the beauty of the temple?
2. The workers cut the stones at the quarry so there was no noise at the temple. What does that teach about preparation and teamwork?
3. Hiram, the widow’s son, used his talent to serve God. What gifts or talents has God given you? How could you use them for Him?
4. Solomon’s palace took thirteen years and God’s house seven. What are some ways we can put God first with our time?

5. How did Jesus become the true temple? What changed when the curtain tore?

Activity: Living Stones Wall

Give each student a paper ‘brick’ (cut from construction paper). Have them write one gift or strength God has given them (drawing, listening, music, encouraging, making people laugh, organizing). Tape the bricks together on a wall to form a temple shape. Say: ‘We are living stones, and no stone is too small.’

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: Why did God say “if you walk in My statutes” right in the middle of the temple’s construction?

FEEL: How does it feel to know that God can use people nobody else notices, like a widow’s son?

DO: What gift or talent will you use this week to serve God or someone else?

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for wanting to live with us. Thank You that Jesus is our true temple and that He opened the way for us to come near to You. Make our hearts obedient, and show us how to use our gifts for You. Amen.

Memory verse: 1 Kings 6:12–13 (or 1 Peter 2:5). **This week’s challenge:** Find one gift God gave you and use it to bless someone. Thank someone who works behind the scenes (a custodian, a lunch worker, a volunteer).

Session 4 Teacher Background: A House for God, and the Hands That Built It

DATES

Construction about 966–959 BC (started in Solomon’s 4th year, ended in his 11th year, 6:1, 38). 1 Kings 6:1 gives “the four hundred and eightieth year” after the Exodus, which supports an Exodus date around 1446 BC.

Setting and Background

Layout. The temple followed the pattern of the tabernacle but was twice as large: a porch (ulam), a main hall (hekal, the Holy Place), and the inner sanctuary (debir, the Most Holy Place), a perfect cube of 20 cubits. A cubit is about 18 inches. The cherubim in the debir overshadowed the Ark. The interior was cedar overlaid with gold; carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers recalled Eden (compare Genesis 2–3). The temple was a small Eden, a place where God and people meet.

Huram. In 1 Kings 7:14 he is a son of a widow of Naphtali and a Tyrian father; 2 Chronicles 2:13–14 says his mother was from Dan. Danites were also in the north; Naphtali and Dan were adjacent. Tradition handles this as a family-tribal connection. Either way, he was a half-Israelite. His craft is an echo of Bezalel and Oholiab (Exodus 31:1–6), who built the tabernacle by Spirit-given skill.

Jachin and Boaz (7:21). The pillars’ names mean “He establishes” and “in Him is strength.” They stood at the entrance as reminders that God Himself would establish and strengthen His people.

Cultural Notes

- The Sea and basins (7:23–39). The priests needed a lot of water for washing before service (Exodus 30:17–21). The bronze “Sea” held about 2,000 baths (12,000–13,000 gallons by most estimates). These speak of cleansing, a picture of our need to be washed (Titus 3:5).
- Cedar and gold. Cedar was rare and costly in Israel, carried by sea rafts from Lebanon. Gold overlaid everything. For people entering from outside, the interior would have glittered like a jewel box. The experience reminded worshipers that God is glorious and holy.
- The palace (7:1–12). Archaeologists have found large Iron Age administrative buildings in Jerusalem, Megiddo, Hazor, and Gezer, often credited to Solomon’s building program (9:15), though scholars debate details.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- Don’t skip the “if” in 6:12–13. It is the theological hinge of the book of Kings. God’s presence is not a guarantee we control; it is a relationship.
- Students may ask why a God who is everywhere needs a house. Solomon asks the same thing in chapter 8, and we will talk about it next session. The short answer: the temple was where God chose to meet His people on His terms, pointing forward to Jesus.
- The 7-year/13-year contrast is a gentle application point. Avoid shaming; ask, “Where does my time go?”

- Answer hints. Q1: God wants hearts, not just buildings. Q2: Preparation and teamwork make work run smoothly and peacefully. Q3: Let students share; affirm every kind of gift. Q4: Prayer, church, serving, family time, reading the Bible, before entertainment. Q5: Jesus' body is the true temple; the curtain tore (Matthew 27:51) so everyone can come to God.

SESSION 5 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 8

A Prayer for Everyone

*A godly leader prays for the people, including the stranger, and asks God to forgive.***BIG IDEA**

The God who is too big for any building chooses to hear and forgive anyone who turns to Him, and He draws people from every nation.

KEY VERSE

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!”

1 Kings 8:27

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Prayer Circles.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “Where is God? Is He in a church building? In your room? Everywhere?” Take answers. Then say: “Today the wisest king in the world prays a prayer about exactly this question, and about something just as amazing: who God wants to hear.”

Teaching Content

The Ark comes home

The temple is finished. Now comes the biggest day in Israel's history so far. The priests and the elders carry the Ark of the Covenant up from the city of David and place it in the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the carved cherubim. Thousands of sheep and oxen are sacrificed. Then something amazing happens: "the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD" (1 Kings 8:10–11). God's glory, like a bright cloud, came down. Everyone could see that God was truly there.

God's presence is not something we control. The priests could not even stand up. When the Holy God shows up, people fall silent.

Solomon blesses the people

Then Solomon turns around and faces the whole crowd and blesses them. He doesn't give a speech about himself. He remembers God's promises. "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled it" (1 Kings 8:15). A good leader gives credit to God and encourages the people. Then Solomon kneels, spreads his hands toward heaven, and prays in front of everyone.

The great prayer

Solomon's prayer begins with praise: "LORD God of Israel, there is no God in heaven above or on earth beneath like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts" (1 Kings 8:23). Then he asks the big question: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27). Solomon knows God is far too big for any building. Yet God has chosen to put His name there, so people can know where to turn.

Then Solomon prays for the people in seven different situations. He asks God to hear when someone is accused unfairly, when the nation loses a battle, when there is no rain, when famine or sickness comes, and when the people are captured and taken away. Each time his prayer follows the same pattern: "hear in heaven ... and forgive." Solomon knows that "there is no one who does not sin" (1 Kings 8:46), so he keeps asking God to forgive. He wasn't pretending that Israel was perfect. He prayed for mercy for sinners, which is all of us.

The stranger

Right in the middle of the prayer, something surprising: Solomon prays for a foreigner, someone who is not part of Israel. He asks God to hear that person when he comes from a far country because he has heard of God's great name: "that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You" (1 Kings 8:41–43). Solomon prays for the outsider. He wants the temple to be a place where anyone, from any nation, can come and find God.

This was never only for Israel. God told Abraham, "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." A godly leader prays for people who are different, far away, and not yet part of the family.

A closing charge

When he finishes, Solomon stands and blesses the people again: “May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us” (1 Kings 8:57). And then he says, “Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments” (1 Kings 8:61).

The celebration lasts fourteen days. At the end, the people go home “joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done” (1 Kings 8:66). This is the high point of the book. Keep it in your heart as we go forward, because things are about to change.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
Solomon 1 Kings 8:22–53	Praying for the people. He stood in front of everyone and prayed for forgiveness and help for others, not for himself.
Solomon (for the stranger) 1 Kings 8:41–43	A heart for outsiders. He asked God to hear the foreigner so that all peoples would know God’s name.
The priests and Levites 1 Kings 8:3–11	Reverence. They carried the Ark carefully and stepped back when God’s glory filled the house.
The people of Israel 1 Kings 8:65–66	Joyful thankfulness. They feasted for fourteen days and went home glad.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
A building-bound faith 1 Kings 8:27	Thinking God lives only in a place. Solomon knew better, but later generations would treat the temple like a good-luck charm.
Sin Solomon warned about 1 Kings 8:46	“There is no one who does not sin.” He foresaw that Israel would sin, and he prayed ahead of time for forgiveness. Sin is real, and hiding it never helps.

Pointing to Jesus: God Dwelling With Us

Solomon asked, “Will God indeed dwell on the earth?” The answer is YES, in Jesus Christ. John says, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” God did not stay in a building; He came all the way down. And every one of Solomon’s requests about “hear and forgive” finds its answer in Jesus. He is our Mediator, our go-between, who lets us come to God with confidence. Solomon prayed for foreigners to find God; Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” And He promises, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 4:16

Discussion Questions

1. When God’s glory filled the temple, the priests could not even stand. What does that tell us about who God is?
2. Solomon said heaven cannot contain God. What does it mean that God is bigger than any place, and yet He is also close to us?
3. Why do you think Solomon prayed for the foreigner? Who are people in your school or town that you could pray for, who don’t know God?
4. Solomon kept asking God to “hear and forgive.” Why is forgiveness so important? How does Jesus make it possible?
5. What does it mean to have a “loyal heart” toward the LORD (8:61)? What helps you stay loyal?

Activity: Prayer Circles

Set up four prayer stations: Praise (thank God for who He is), Forgive (quietly confess), Others (pray for a friend or family member), and Stranger (pray for someone who has not heard about Jesus, such as missionaries or another country). Let students rotate for 2 minutes each. Close by reading 1 Kings 8:61 together.

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: What did Solomon mean when he said heaven cannot contain God, and yet God chose to put His name in the temple?

FEEL: How does it feel to know that God hears and forgives, even for people far away or people who are very different from you?

DO: Who are two people you will pray for this week, one close to you and one far away?

Closing Prayer

Lord God, You are bigger than heaven itself, and yet You hear us. Thank You for Jesus, who came to dwell with us and to forgive us. Give us hearts that pray for others, even people who don’t yet know You. Make our hearts loyal to You. Amen.

Memory verse: 1 Kings 8:61. **This week’s challenge:** Pray every day for one person who does not know Jesus. Read 1 Kings 8:61 each morning.

Session 5 Teacher Background: A Prayer for Everyone

DATES

About 959 BC. The dedication of the temple (Solomon's 11th–12th year). The feast was at the Feast of Tabernacles (month of Ethanim, 8:2), a fitting time for “God dwelling with His people.”

Setting and Background

The Ark. 8:9 says there was nothing in the Ark except the two tablets of stone, which Moses placed there at Horeb. Hebrews 9:4 notes that the Ark had once also held the golden pot with manna and Aaron's rod; by Solomon's day those had apparently been placed beside it. It is a small difference that has sparked questions. The point: the law of God was at the center of Israel's worship.

The cloud (8:10–11). This is the shekinah glory, the same glory that filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34–35). It marks God's approval of the temple, but not unconditional residence, as chapter 6 and chapter 9 make clear.

Seven petitions (8:31–51). Each follows a “when ... then hear and forgive” structure and mirrors the covenant curses of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Solomon is praying the covenant back to God. Verses 46–51 anticipate the exile, which the author's audience was experiencing. The hope: if exiles turn their hearts and pray toward the temple, God will hear.

Cultural Notes

- Posture. Standing, with hands spread toward heaven (8:22), was a normal prayer posture. Solomon later kneels (8:54; see 2 Chronicles 6:13). Don't assume only one posture is spiritual.
- The foreigner (8:41–43). Israel's law welcomed “sojourners” who joined themselves to the LORD (Exodus 12:48–49; Isaiah 56:3–7). Jesus quoted Isaiah 56:7, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations,” when He cleansed the temple (Mark 11:17).
- The sacrifices (8:63). 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep over 14 days. These were mostly fellowship (peace) offerings, shared meals eaten by the people. Thus the feast fed the nation. A joyful, generous celebration, not just a religious show.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- Keep the focus on Solomon's humility and mercy. The most beautiful thing in the chapter is a powerful king praying for forgiveness for others and for outsiders.
- Questions on God's presence. Say simply: God is everywhere (omnipresent), yet He reveals Himself in special ways. In Jesus, God lived among us. Now His Spirit lives in believers (1 Corinthians 6:19).
- If a student shares that they struggle with guilt, point to 1 John 1:9, and encourage them to talk with a trusted adult.
- Answer hints. Q1: He is holy and awesome. Q2: God is not limited by space but chooses to be near. Q3: God cares about all peoples; pray and be kind. Q4: Sin separates us from God; Jesus died to forgive. Q5:

Obedience, love for God, staying close to His Word and His people.

SESSION 6 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 9–10

A Warning and a Queen Who Came to See

God warns because He loves; a humble seeker finds Him.

BIG IDEA

God gives gracious warnings to those He loves, and He honors the humble seeker who travels far to find the truth, while wealth and power can quietly pull a heart away.

KEY VERSE

“Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to execute justice and righteousness.”

1 Kings 10:9

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Hard Questions Box.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “Have you ever traveled a really long way to see something or someone? How far? Was it worth it?” Then say: “Today a queen travels more than a thousand miles by camel to see if the stories she has heard are true.”

Teaching Content

God appears again

Solomon has now finished the temple and his palace, a total of twenty years of building. Then, “the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon” (1 Kings 9:2). God says that He has heard Solomon’s prayer and has made the temple holy. “My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually” (1 Kings 9:3). What a promise! God’s heart is in this place.

Then God gives Solomon a promise and a warning. The promise: “If you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness ... then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever” (1 Kings 9:4–5). The warning: if Solomon or his children turn away and worship other gods, Israel will be cut off from the land, and the temple that now sparkles will become a ruin. People passing by will ask, “Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?” and the answer will be, “Because they forsook the LORD their God” (1 Kings 9:6–9).

Why would God warn Solomon? Because He loves him. A warning is not meanness. If a friend sees you about to step off a cliff, you would shout at him. God’s warnings are like that. He gives them ahead of time so people can choose life.

Busy building

The rest of chapter 9 lists Solomon’s big projects: cities for chariots, storage towns, the walls of Jerusalem, and a fleet of ships in the Red Sea. Hiram helps with sailors. The ships bring back huge amounts of gold from a land called Ophir. Notice that Solomon is very, very successful. He is rich, powerful, and respected. But God has just warned him that success can quietly steal a heart.

A queen with hard questions

In chapter 10, the queen of Sheba, from a land probably in the south of Arabia, more than a thousand miles away, hears about Solomon’s fame “concerning the name of the LORD” (1 Kings 10:1). She doesn’t just believe the rumors. She decides to test them “with hard questions.” She travels across the desert with a very large caravan of camels carrying spices, gold, and precious stones.

Think about how brave and humble that is. She is a ruler herself, yet she goes to learn from someone else. When she arrives, she asks Solomon everything on her heart, and Solomon explains every question. Nothing was too hard for him. She sees his wisdom, his palace, the food on his table, his servants, and the burnt offerings he offered at the temple, and “there was no more spirit in her” (1 Kings 10:5). She is speechless.

Then she says something honest: “However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me” (1 Kings 10:7). She admits she had doubted. But she went to see for herself, and she found the truth was even greater than the report.

A queen who praised God

Her words are wonderful: “Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to execute justice and righteousness” (1 Kings 10:9). She gives God the glory, and she names the king’s real job: justice and righteousness, which means protecting people and doing what is right. She gives Solomon gold, spices, and jewels, and Solomon gives her “all she desired.” She goes home with gifts and, we hope, with faith in the God of Israel.

Warning lights again

The end of chapter 10 shows Solomon's glory: a throne of ivory overlaid with gold, shields of gold, and so much silver that it was not considered worth much in his days. But it also mentions that Solomon imported horses and chariots from Egypt. Remember Deuteronomy 17: kings must not multiply horses, wives, or gold. The chapter is full of beauty, but the cracks are widening.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
The queen of Sheba 1 Kings 10:1–13	Humble seeking. She traveled far, asked hard questions, admitted her doubts, and gave God the glory. Jesus Himself praised her.
Solomon (as host) 1 Kings 10:3, 13	Welcome and generosity. He answered every question patiently and gave her “all she desired.”
The LORD 1 Kings 9:1–9	Loving warnings. He showed Solomon what would happen if he turned away, so he could choose well.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
The slide into excess 1 Kings 10:14–29; Deut. 17:16–17	Gold, horses, and power. Solomon gathered everything God had told kings not to pile up. Warnings are for hearts that feel strong.
Forgetting the warning 1 Kings 9:6–9	Ignoring God's “if”. God said what would happen if Israel forsook Him. Sadly, Israel would one day hear the people say, “Because they forsook the LORD.”

Pointing to Jesus: One Greater Than Solomon

Jesus Himself talked about the queen of Sheba. He said she “came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.” In other words, if a queen traveled 1,200 miles to hear Solomon, how much more should we listen to Jesus, who is right here with us? Solomon's wisdom was a gift; Jesus is Wisdom itself. When Jesus was born, wise men came from the east carrying gold and gifts, just like the queen. And Jesus invites everyone: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He does not make us travel across the desert; He comes to us.

“The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.”

Matthew 12:42

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28

Discussion Questions

1. Why does God warn people? Is a warning a sign of anger or of love? Give an example from your own life.
2. The queen of Sheba traveled over a thousand miles to find truth. What would you be willing to do to find out if something is true about God?
3. She said, “I did not believe the words until I came and saw.” Is it okay to have doubts? How can we bring our questions to God?
4. The queen said God made Solomon king “to execute justice and righteousness.” What does a leader do who values justice? (Think about protecting the weak.)
5. Jesus said, “A greater than Solomon is here.” What does He offer that Solomon could not?

Activity: Hard Questions Box

Set out a box and slips of paper. Invite students to write anonymous hard questions about God and the Bible. Read a few aloud, answer what you can, and say honestly, ‘I will look that up this week,’ for the rest. Connect to the queen: God welcomes honest questions.

Think · Feel · Do

THINK: Why did God give Solomon a warning right after the temple was finished?

FEEL: How do you feel when someone gives you a warning or correction because they care about you?

DO: What question about God or the Bible will you ask a trusted adult this week?

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for warning us because You love us. Give us humble hearts like the queen of Sheba, who traveled far to find the truth. We want to come to Jesus, the One greater than Solomon, and listen to Him. Keep our hearts from falling in love with money or power. Amen.

Memory verse: Matthew 11:28. **This week’s challenge:** Write down a question you have about God and find the answer with a pastor or teacher. Say thank you to someone who has warned or corrected you in love.

Session 6 Teacher Background: A Warning and a Queen Who Came to See

DATES

About 959–950 BC. Solomon at the height of power; the building program of about 20 years ends (9:10).

Setting and Background

God’s second appearance (9:2). The first at Gibeon (3:5) centered on wisdom; this one centers on covenant faithfulness. The shift from “Ask what you want” to “If you walk ... if you turn away” is deliberate. The language echoes Deuteronomy 28–30 and Leviticus 26. The author is writing to exiles who had seen the ruin of the temple (9:8) happen.

Sheba. The most common view locates Sheba in southwest Arabia (modern Yemen), a land famed for spices, frankincense, and gold, about 1,200–1,500 miles from Jerusalem. Trade routes (the incense road) made such a trip realistic. Ethiopian tradition places her in Africa. Either way, she came “from the ends of the earth” (Matthew 12:42).

Ophir (9:26–28). The location is debated (Arabia, East Africa, or India). The 420 talents of gold came by Solomon’s Red Sea fleet at Ezion Geber, using Hiram’s experienced sailors.

Cultural Notes

- Hard questions (10:1). The Hebrew word is *chidot*, “riddles” or enigmas. Royal courts in the ancient Near East tested each other’s wisdom with riddles and diplomacy. It was a way of building trust and trade.
- Gifts (10:10). She gave about 120 talents of gold (roughly four tons), a huge amount of spices, and precious stones. These gifts were also a trade agreement. Note the similarity to the Magi’s gifts in Matthew 2:11 and the prophecy in Isaiah 60:6.
- Forced labor (9:15–23). The remaining Canaanites became state laborers. The author notes that Israelites were not made slaves (9:22), but by 1 Kings 12:4 the people say the yoke was “heavy.” Stay honest: even efficient governments can overuse power.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- The “if” in 9:4–9 is vital. Students may ask, “Doesn’t God promise forever?” Explain: God’s promise to David’s line is forever (2 Samuel 7), fulfilled in Jesus, but each king’s personal blessing depended on faithfulness.
- Don’t be dismissive of doubts. The queen said she did not believe until she saw. Encourage honest seeking, while pointing to Jesus as the one to “come and see” (John 1:39).
- Some commentators and students ask whether the queen became a believer. The text shows her praising the LORD (10:9). Jesus’ high praise in Matthew 12:42 shows He regarded her seeking as a model.
- Answer hints. Q1: A warning shows love. Q2: Personal examples. Q3: Yes; God can handle questions. Q4: Protect the poor, listen, tell the truth, punish no one wrongly. Q5: Forgiveness, eternal life, a relationship with God, rest for the soul.

SESSION 7 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 11

The Slow Drift

*A heart that drifts a little at a time can end far from God.***BIG IDEA**

Guard your heart: small compromises add up, but God remains faithful, speaks truth through His prophets, and keeps His promises to David.

KEY VERSE

“For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.”

1 Kings 11:4

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Drift Check.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Hold up a small boat or draw one on the board. Ask: “What happens to a boat with no anchor if you stop paddling? Does it stay where it is?” Take answers. Then say: “Today we see a king drift, a little at a time, so far from where he began that no one could believe it.”

Teaching Content

Solomon's heart begins to drift

Chapter 11 begins with a word that makes our hearts sink: “But.” “But King Solomon loved many foreign women” (1 Kings 11:1). Solomon had been given everything: wisdom, riches, peace, honor. But he gathered foreign wives from the nations around, women from countries that worshiped other gods. God had warned him: “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods” (1 Kings 11:2).

Remember Deuteronomy 17? Don’t multiply horses, don’t multiply wives, don’t multiply gold. Solomon had piled up all three. He had 700 wives who were princesses and 300 more. The Bible says that “his wives turned away his heart” (1 Kings 11:3). It didn’t happen in one day. A little compromise here and a little compromise there, and one day his heart was somewhere else.

“For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David” (1 Kings 11:4). Notice the word “loyal” again. Solomon had a head full of wisdom, but his heart was not loyal.

Idols on the hill

What did this drifting look like? Solomon built high places for the gods of his wives: Ashtoreth of the Sidonians, Chemosh of the Moabites, and Milcom or Molech of the Ammonites, on the hill right across from the temple of the LORD. Molech was a false god associated with terrible child sacrifice. Think about that. The wise king who once protected a baby from a sword was now building a place for a god who harmed children. Idols never stay small. They always hurt the weakest people.

God’s anger was serious: “the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice” (1 Kings 11:9). God had appeared to Solomon two times, and Solomon still turned away. Knowing God’s Word is not the same as keeping it.

God's warning and God's mercy

God told Solomon what would happen: because he did not keep the covenant, God would tear the kingdom away from him and give it to his servant. But here is something beautiful about God’s character. Even in judgment, God was merciful: “Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David” (1 Kings 11:12). The punishment would fall on Solomon’s son. And God would leave one tribe for David’s sake and for Jerusalem’s sake. God was still keeping His promise to David, even when Solomon failed.

Then God allowed enemies to rise up: Hadad the Edomite from the south and Rezon of Damascus to the north. For years Solomon had peace. Now enemies began to appear. Sin steals peace.

A prophet and a torn cloak

A man named Jeroboam, a hard-working young official over the labor force, was out walking when the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh met him. Ahijah took off his new cloak, tore it into twelve pieces, and said, “Take ten pieces for yourself.” Ten tribes would be given to Jeroboam. God promised Jeroboam: if he obeyed, God would build him an enduring house “as I built for David.”

Ahijah was brave. It is hard to bring a message like this, and Jeroboam had to hear it. Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, who ran away to Egypt. Solomon reigned forty years and died. His son Rehoboam became king. A gifted man with a loyal start finished with a heart that had wandered. Yet we should not forget that the same man wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, which ends with the words, “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all.”

Guard your heart

Solomon's story is a warning to every one of us. The biggest danger for Solomon was not an army. It was a slow drift. Proverbs, which Solomon himself wrote, says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Guard your heart. Choose friends who point you toward God. Don't say, "It's only a small thing." Small things add up.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
King David (the standard) 1 Kings 11:4, 6, 12–13, 32–36	A loyal heart. David's heart was the measuring stick. God kept His promise for David's sake.
Ahijah the prophet 1 Kings 11:29–39	Courage to deliver God's message. He told Jeroboam the truth, no matter how unpopular. Prophets help God's people see clearly.
God Himself 1 Kings 11:12–13, 34–36	Mercy in judgment. Even in punishing, He spared Solomon in his lifetime and kept one tribe for David's sake.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
Solomon 1 Kings 11:1–10	Drifting hearts and compromise. He loved the very things God warned about, built altars to idols, and his heart was not loyal.
The idols 1 Kings 11:5–8	Idolatry hurts the vulnerable. Molech worship was linked to child sacrifice. Rejecting God leads to hurting people.
Hadad and Rezon 1 Kings 11:14–25	Enemies that grow when sin grows. God allowed adversaries when Solomon turned away. Sin brings unrest.

Pointing to Jesus: The Son of David Who Never Drifted

Solomon's heart drifted. David's heart wandered at times, but he always came back to God. Every king in Israel eventually failed. Jesus, the Son of David, is the One King whose heart never drifted, even for a moment. The angel told Mary that God would give Jesus "the throne of His father David," and "of His kingdom there will be no end." Jesus "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." That means He can help us when our hearts feel pulled away. Jesus gives us the power to be loyal.

"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Luke 1:32–33

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

Hebrews 4:15

Discussion Questions

1. What small choices do you think led Solomon from a loyal heart to a heart that was not loyal?
2. Why might God have warned kings about marrying people who worshiped other gods? What does this teach about who influences us?
3. What are some “idols” kids your age sometimes serve (things that take God’s place)? How can idols hurt other people?
4. Even in judgment, God was merciful for David’s sake. What does this tell you about God’s character?
5. What can you do this week to “keep your heart with all diligence”?

Activity: Drift Check

Stand students in a line facing one wall. Ask them to close their eyes and walk straight to the opposite wall. Most will drift to one side. Discuss: we drift without a fixed point. Name some ‘fixed points’ for the heart: Bible reading, prayer, church, godly friends, honest accountability. Pass out cards for them to write a daily fixed point.

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: What was the difference between Solomon’s wisdom and his heart? Why did wisdom alone not keep him loyal?

FEEL: How does it feel to know that even the wisest person in the world can drift? How does it feel to know God stays faithful?

DO: What is one ‘fixed point’ (habit, friend, or practice) you will use this week to guard your heart?

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for being faithful when we are not. Keep our hearts loyal to You. Help us choose friends who lead us to You, and help us notice when we begin to drift. Thank You for Jesus, the Son of David, whose heart never failed. Amen.

Memory verse: Proverbs 4:23. **This week’s challenge:** Each night this week, pray, “Lord, show me if my heart is drifting.” Choose one friend who encourages you toward God and thank them.

Session 7 Teacher Background: The Slow Drift

DATES

About 950–931 BC. The final years of Solomon, who died around 931 BC after a 40-year reign.

Setting and Background

The pattern. 1 Kings 11 is the climax of the first section of the book. It fulfills the warnings of Deuteronomy 17:17 (wives) and 7:1–4 (intermarriage that leads to idolatry). Nehemiah 13:26 later cites Solomon as the great example: “Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by marrying such women?”

The numbers. 700 wives and 300 concubines. Many were diplomatic marriages sealing treaties, a common ancient practice. The text emphasizes their effect, not just the number. For middle schoolers, simply say “a huge number of wives from many nations.”

The gods. Ashtoreth (Astarte), Canaanite fertility goddess; Chemosh, god of Moab; Milcom/Molech, god of the Ammonites. Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2–5 explicitly forbid giving children to Molech. The “hill east of Jerusalem” is traditionally the Mount of Olives (compare 2 Kings 23:13, where it is called the “mount of corruption”).

Jeroboam. “An industrious man” (11:28), probably an Ephraimite from Zeredah, he supervised the labor of the house of Joseph. Ahijah’s torn garment is a classic prophetic sign-act. Ten pieces to Jeroboam, one tribe (Judah, with Benjamin) left to David’s house. Note the conditional promise in 11:38; Jeroboam will fail it in chapter 12.

Cultural Notes

- Prophets. In Israel a prophet was God’s spokesman, often confronting kings (Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah). They risked their lives to speak truth.
- Sign-acts. Prophets often used visible actions (a torn garment, a broken jar) to make a message memorable. It helps to act it out with a real piece of cloth in class.
- Treaty marriages. In the ancient world kings sealed alliances with marriages, and brides brought their own gods. Rulers often allowed their wives’ religions. That is exactly what God’s law forbade for Israel’s king.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- Handle the topic of many wives with maturity. Focus on loyalty of heart and influence of friends. Don’t dwell on details.
- Molech and child sacrifice are mentioned in Scripture and in the text’s background. Tell students briefly and calmly that idol worship in some cultures harmed children, and that is why God hates idolatry. Be ready for sensitive responses.
- Hope matters. Many students feel they can’t recover from mistakes. Ecclesiastes 12:13 suggests Solomon reflected and returned to the fear of God, though the Bible doesn’t narrate it. God’s mercy to David’s line and the promise of Jesus show that grace is bigger than failure.

- Answer hints. Q1: Marrying foreign wives, high places, collecting what God warned about, ignoring warnings. Q2: Close friends shape our hearts (1 Corinthians 15:33). Q3: Money, popularity, phones, sports, approval, relationships; any of these can hurt others if worshiped. Q4: He is faithful to promises. Q5: Daily Word, prayer, godly friends, church.

SESSION 8 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 12–14

The Servant, the Bully, and the Split

A leader who serves wins hearts; a leader who bullies loses a kingdom.

BIG IDEA

Real leaders serve people and listen to wise counsel. Pride, harshness, and man-made religion tear things apart, but even a young person can please God in a godless house.

KEY VERSE

“If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.”

1 Kings 12:7

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Two Voices.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “Think of the best coach, teacher, or leader you ever had. What made them good? Now think of the worst. What made them bad?” Write answers in two columns. Then say: “Today we see two kinds of leaders, and what happens to a whole nation because of one bad choice.”

Teaching Content

A heavy yoke

Solomon is dead, and his son Rehoboam goes to a city called Shechem to be crowned. The people of Israel are waiting. They bring Jeroboam, who had returned from Egypt, to speak for them. They make a fair request: “Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you” (1 Kings 12:4). A yoke is the wooden bar placed on oxen to pull a load. The people were saying, “The work and taxes are too heavy. Ease up, and we will gladly follow you.”

Rehoboam says, “Come back in three days.” He asks for advice from two groups.

Two kinds of advice

First, he asks the elders who had served his father Solomon. These older, experienced men give wise counsel: “If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever” (1 Kings 12:7). Do you hear that? The way to lead is to serve. The way to get loyalty is to give it first.

But Rehoboam rejects this. He asks the young men he grew up with, who say, tell them, “My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s waist!” Make it even harder. Rehoboam listens to the friends who tell him what he wants to hear. Three days later he answers the people “roughly”: “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!” (1 Kings 12:14).

What a tragic choice. A kind word would have united the nation. A harsh word split it forever.

The kingdom splits

The ten northern tribes shout, “What share have we in David?” and say, “To your tents, O Israel!” (1 Kings 12:16). They make Jeroboam their king. Rehoboam sends an official to bring them back, but the people stone him, and Rehoboam flees to Jerusalem in his chariot. The nation is now two kingdoms: Israel in the north, with Jeroboam, and Judah in the south, with Rehoboam. This is exactly what Ahijah had said (1 Kings 11).

Rehoboam gathers an army of 180,000 to fight his brothers, but a prophet named Shemaiah delivers God’s word: “You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel” (1 Kings 12:24). And the best part: “Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back.” Obeying God’s Word saved thousands of lives. Notice that listening to a prophet worked here when Rehoboam would not listen to the elders.

Jeroboam’s man-made religion

Jeroboam has been given a kingdom and a promise (1 Kings 11:38). But he is afraid. Jerusalem, with the temple, is in Judah. He worries that when his people go there to worship, their hearts will return to Rehoboam. So he decides to make his own religion. He makes two golden calves, puts one in Bethel and one in Dan, and says, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!” (1 Kings 12:28).

That should sound familiar. Aaron used the exact same words with the golden calf in the wilderness. Jeroboam also made new priests from any family, and he made up a new feast day. Instead of trusting God to keep His promise, he built a religion that was convenient and safe for himself. Again and again the Bible will say that kings “walked in the way of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin.”

The man who started well

In chapter 13 God sends a man of God from Judah to Bethel. As Jeroboam stands at the altar, the man cries out against it, and the altar splits apart. Jeroboam stretches out his hand to arrest him, and his hand dries up. Jeroboam begs the man to pray for him, and the man does, and his hand is restored. The king offers him a gift, but the man refuses: “If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you” (1 Kings 13:8). He cannot be bought.

Sadly, the man did not finish well. God had told him not to eat or drink there. An old prophet in Bethel lied to him, saying an angel told him to bring the man home for dinner. The man believed the lie and was killed by a lion on the road. The lesson is serious: if God has spoken clearly, never let someone else’s story talk you out of it.

Some good in a godless house

Chapter 14 has two sad judgments and one bright spot. Jeroboam’s son Abijah becomes sick. Jeroboam sends his wife in disguise to the old prophet Ahijah, who is now blind, to ask what will happen. God tells Ahijah that she is coming, and Ahijah says, “Why do you pretend to be another person?” God’s judgment is coming on Jeroboam’s family for leading Israel into idols.

But look at what God says about the boy: “he is the only one of Jeroboam’s family who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel” (1 Kings 14:13). In a house full of idols and pride, one young person had “something good toward the LORD.” God saw it. You might be the only person in your family or friend group who loves God. God sees you.

Rehoboam’s end

Rehoboam reigned 17 years, and Judah also drifted into idols and shrines. In the fifth year, King Shishak of Egypt invaded, took the temple’s gold treasures, and even took Solomon’s golden shields. Rehoboam replaced them with bronze shields. Gold became bronze. That is what happens when a nation ignores God: the glory fades.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
The elders 1 Kings 12:6–7	Wise, servant-hearted counsel. They told the young king to serve the people and speak good words, the key to real leadership.
Shemaiah the prophet 1 Kings 12:22–24	Speaking God’s word to prevent war. He stopped a civil war, and the people obeyed. Peacemakers save lives.
The man of God from Judah 1 Kings 13:1–10	Boldness and integrity. He confronted a king and refused a bribe. (He later failed by disobeying, a warning to us all.)
Ahijah the prophet 1 Kings 14:4–18	Faithfulness even when old and blind. He continued to speak truth to the end of his life.
Abijah, Jeroboam’s son 1 Kings 14:12–13	“Something good toward the LORD.” God noticed him in a house of idols. A young person’s heart matters to God.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
Rehoboam 1 Kings 12:8–15; 14:21–31	Pride and harshness. He ignored wise elders, bullied the people, and lost most of his kingdom.
The young advisers 1 Kings 12:8–11	Flattering friends. They told the king what he wanted to hear, not what he needed to hear.
Jeroboam 1 Kings 12:25–33; 13:33–34	Fear and man-made religion. He didn't trust God's promise, so he made golden calves and a convenient religion that made Israel sin.
The old prophet of Bethel 1 Kings 13:11–32	Lying in God's name. He deceived the man of God and caused his death. Lying about God is serious.

Pointing to Jesus: The King Who Serves and the Gentle Yoke

Rehoboam threatened a heavy yoke. Jesus offers the opposite. He says, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” The elders said that a king who serves will win lasting loyalty. Jesus is the King who did exactly that: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” He washed His disciples’ feet and said, “I have given you an example.” And unlike Jeroboam’s man-made gods, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” There is no need to invent a religion. We can simply follow Him.

“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Matthew 11:29–30

“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Matthew 20:28

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Rehoboam listened to the young men instead of the elders? Who gives you advice, and do you listen?
2. What does it mean to be a servant leader? Where can you lead by serving (a team, group project, siblings)?
3. Jeroboam was afraid and made up his own religion. What are some ways people today make up their own version of God?
4. The man of God obeyed at first and then listened to the wrong voice. How can we know if advice agrees with what God has said in the Bible?
5. Abijah had “something good toward the LORD” even in a bad home. How can a young person shine for God in a difficult place?

Activity: Two Voices

Pick a scenario (a student is being left out at lunch). Have three volunteers play Rehoboam, an elder, and a young friend. The elder says serve; the friend says push around. Let the class vote and discuss. Then read Matthew 20:28 and talk about how Jesus would respond.

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: What is the difference between the advice of the elders and the advice of the young men?

FEEL: How do you feel when a leader listens to you and serves you? How do you feel when one doesn't?

DO: Name one place this week where you will lead by serving, and one wise person whose advice you will ask for.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for being a King who serves. Teach us to listen to wise people and to speak good words. Keep us from pride and from making our own version of You. Help us be like Abijah, a young person with something good toward the LORD. Amen.

Memory verse: 1 Kings 12:7. **This week's challenge:** Choose one wise adult to ask for advice this week. Do one act of service for someone without being asked.

Session 8 Teacher Background: The Servant, the Bully, and the Split

DATES

About 931–910 BC. The division of the kingdom (about 931/930 BC); Rehoboam reigned 17 years; Jeroboam about 22 years (931–910 BC). Shishak’s invasion about 925 BC.

Setting and Background

Shechem. A central city in the territory of Ephraim, rich in history (Abraham, Jacob, Joshua’s covenant renewal in Joshua 24). Choosing Shechem for the coronation was a sign that the northern tribes wanted their voices heard. Notice Rehoboam went to them; he needed their consent.

The “yoke.” Solomon’s building projects, taxes, and the labor levy (5:13; 9:15) created resentment, especially in the north. The request in 12:4 was reasonable. The text says plainly: “the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the LORD” (12:15). God used human pride to carry out the prophecy of 11:29–39. This is not God causing evil; He allows and directs human choices. Both truths hold: Rehoboam is responsible, and God’s plan prevails.

Bethel and Dan. Bethel in the south of the northern kingdom and Dan in the far north made worship convenient for the whole nation. Bull and calf images were common in the ancient Near East (the bull symbolized strength and fertility, as with Baal). Jeroboam may have intended the calves as pedestals for the LORD, but it still violated the second commandment (Exodus 20:4). His quote in 12:28 deliberately echoes Aaron’s in Exodus 32:4.

Shishak (Egyptian Sheshonq I). His campaign is recorded on the walls of the temple of Karnak in Egypt, one of the few Bible kings events backed by an outside inscription. The shields of gold (10:16–17) replaced with bronze (14:27) is a vivid picture of decline.

Cultural Notes

- Elders and counselors. In ancient societies elders were respected because they had wisdom from experience. Proverbs 11:14 says, “In the multitude of counselors there is safety.”
- The scourge (12:11). “Scourges” are whips with barbs or knots, a symbol of brutal discipline. Rehoboam’s threat was shocking. The people’s chant (“To your tents!”) echoes the rebel cry of Sheba in 2 Samuel 20:1.
- The man of God (13). The story of chapters 13 is hard for students. Present it simply: God gave clear instructions; the prophet obeyed until someone presented a more convenient message, and he didn’t check it against what God had said. Hebrews 3:12–13 and Galatians 1:8 teach us to test every message against God’s Word.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- Students can easily connect with “listening to friends versus wise elders.” Make it personal and don’t shame.

- Chapter 13 includes a lion attack; keep it short. The key lesson: obey God’s clear word.
- God’s sovereignty and human responsibility. If a student asks, “Did God make Rehoboam do it?” answer: God knew and used Rehoboam’s pride, but Rehoboam chose it freely and was responsible.
- Answer hints. Q1: He wanted to look strong; flattery feels good. Q2: Putting others first, listening, encouraging. Q3: Making God fit what we want rather than what He said. Q4: Compare with Scripture, ask pastors and parents, pray. Q5: Be kind, pray, stay faithful, don’t blend in.

SESSION 9 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 15–16

One Good King and a Parade of Bad Ones

A loyal heart is rare, costly, and noticed by God.

BIG IDEA

God notices the leader who stands for what is right even when it costs him, and He holds responsible the leaders who copy sin and use power for themselves.

KEY VERSE

“Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did his father David.”

1 Kings 15:11

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Kings Chart.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Draw a quick timeline on the board and have students call out the name of the current president, a former one, and so on. Ask: “How many of you could name five of the last ten?” Then say: “In today’s lesson, in about fifty years, Israel has seven kings. Most are gone before you can learn their names. Why? Let’s find out.”

Teaching Content

Fast kings, slow hearts

After the split, the two kingdoms have very different stories. Judah in the south is ruled by descendants of David. Israel in the north changes families again and again. Chapters 15 and 16 move quickly through about 50 years and many kings. There is one phrase that keeps coming up in the north: he “walked in the way of Jeroboam ... who made Israel sin.” It is like a bad habit passed from one king to the next.

The first king of Judah in our chapter is Abijam. The Bible says “his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David” (1 Kings 15:3). Yet God showed mercy: “for David’s sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son after him” (1 Kings 15:4). A lamp is a picture of a family line that keeps burning. God kept the line of David alive, because He had a plan to bring a Light into the world.

Asa, the king who cleaned house

Then comes a bright spot: Asa, who reigned 41 years. “Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did his father David” (1 Kings 15:11). That is the highest praise a king could get in Kings.

What did Asa do? He got rid of the idols his fathers had made. And he did something that took courage: he removed Maachah, the queen mother, from her position “because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. And Asa cut down her obscene image and burned it by the Brook Kidron” (1 Kings 15:13). The queen mother was one of the most powerful people in the palace, and she was his own family. Asa put God ahead of his family’s idols. Doing what is right is easy when everyone agrees. It is hard when your own family is the problem.

A good heart with a weak spot

But Asa was not perfect. When King Baasha of Israel built a fort at Ramah to cut off Judah, Asa took silver and gold from the LORD’s own temple treasury and sent it to the king of Syria, asking him to break his peace with Baasha. The plan worked, but it came from fear, not faith. Later in the Bible, a prophet tells Asa he should have relied on the LORD. Even good people sometimes trust in the wrong thing.

The Bible still summarizes: “But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless Asa’s heart was loyal to the LORD all his days” (1 Kings 15:14). Asa was not perfect, but his heart pointed toward God. That’s encouraging. God wants a loyal heart, not a flawless record.

The kings of the north

Now look at the north. Nadab, Jeroboam’s son, is king for two years, and he does evil. Then Baasha murders him and takes the throne, wiping out Jeroboam’s whole family, just as the prophet Ahijah had said. Baasha rules 24 years, but he also does evil. God sends the prophet Jehu to tell him so. Baasha’s son Elah rules two years until he is killed while getting drunk. His murderer Zimri lasts seven days before he sets his own palace on fire. Then Omri wins a civil war and builds a new capital called Samaria.

Notice the pattern: they got power by violence, so they lost it by violence. They cared about the throne, not about the people. These kings were not protecting the weak. They were protecting themselves.

The worst yet: Ahab and Jezebel

Then comes Ahab, Omri’s son. “Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him” (1 Kings 16:30). Look at how the Bible describes it: it was as if it were “a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam,” so he took a wife named Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon, and “went and served Baal and worshiped him” (1 Kings 16:31). Ahab built a temple for Baal in Samaria and set up a wooden idol. “Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him” (1 Kings 16:33).

Baal was believed to be the god of storms and rain. Jezebel was a strong, determined woman with a mission to make her god the god of Israel. She would become one of the most wicked people in the Bible. And at the very end of the chapter, we read about a man named Hiel who rebuilt Jericho and lost two of his sons, exactly

as Joshua had warned centuries before. That sentence shows how far people had drifted: they did not even fear God’s word anymore.

The chapter feels dark. But remember, the writer is setting the stage. The darker the night, the more we need a light. In chapter 17, God will send one.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
Asa, king of Judah 1 Kings 15:9–15	Doing right even when it costs. He removed idols and even his grandmother’s power because she worshiped an idol.
Jehu son of Hanani 1 Kings 16:1–7	Speaking truth to a king. He told Baasha plainly that his evil would bring judgment.
God (the faithful Lamp-keeper) 1 Kings 15:4–5	Faithfulness to His promises. For David’s sake God kept David’s line burning in Jerusalem.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
Abijam, Nadab, Elah 1 Kings 15:1–8, 25–26; 16:8–14	Copying the sins of the past. They walked in the sins of their fathers. Habits pass down from one generation to the next.
Baasha and Zimri 1 Kings 15:27–30; 16:9–20	Seizing power through violence. They murdered to gain a throne and lost it the same way.
Omri 1 Kings 16:21–28	Doing worse than those before. He built a powerful capital but led the nation deeper into sin.
Ahab and Jezebel 1 Kings 16:29–33	Promoting a false god. They led the whole nation to worship Baal. Ahab did more evil than all the kings before him.
Hiel of Bethel 1 Kings 16:34	Ignoring God’s Word. He rebuilt Jericho despite Joshua’s warning and paid a heavy price.

Pointing to Jesus: The King With a Perfectly Loyal Heart

Asa’s heart was loyal, but he was not perfect. Even the best kings of Israel had weak spots. Jesus is the King whose heart was perfectly loyal. He never trusted the wrong thing. The writer of Hebrews says we have a High Priest who is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” God promised David a lamp that would never go out, and Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” In a dark chapter filled with evil kings, God’s plan was already moving toward the true King, Jesus.

“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

John 8:12

“For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens.”

Hebrews 7:26

Discussion Questions

1. Asa removed his own grandmother’s idol. Why is it hard to do what is right when family or close friends are involved?
2. How can a person have a loyal heart and still make mistakes, like Asa did with Syria? What should we do when we notice our own mistake?
3. What do you think the writer of Kings means by “walked in the way of Jeroboam”? What habits or attitudes get passed from one person to another?
4. Most of the northern kings gained power by violence. How does a leader who truly cares for people use power differently?
5. Why do you think God kept “a lamp” for David? How does this connect to Jesus?

Activity: Kings Chart

On a long strip of paper or the board, build a quick timeline of the kings from Rehoboam to Ahab. Use green for those who did right (Asa) and red for those who did evil (almost all the rest). Count together: how many green vs. red? Ask: What does this say about how rare a loyal heart is? How can we be ‘green’ in our school?

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: What made Asa different from most of the other kings in these chapters?

FEEL: How does it feel to stand up for what is right when the people closest to you do not?

DO: What is one thing in your life (a habit, a friendship, a website, a game) that you need to ‘clean out’ like Asa?

Closing Prayer

Lord, give us a loyal heart like Asa’s, and a perfectly loyal King in Jesus. Give us courage to do what is right even when it is hard, even when it involves people we love. Forgive us when we trust in the wrong things. Be the Light of our lives. Amen.

Memory verse: 1 Kings 15:11. **This week’s challenge:** Identify one thing you need to ‘clean out.’ Do it this week. Ask God to give you courage to do what is right even when it is hard.

Session 9 Teacher Background: One Good King and a Parade of Bad Ones

DATES

About 913–853 BC. Abijam (913–911), Asa (911–870) in Judah. In Israel: Nadab (910–909), Baasha (909–886), Elah (886–885), Zimri (885, seven days), Omri (885–874), Ahab (874–853). Dates are approximate; scholars differ by a few years, partly because of overlapping co-regencies.

Setting and Background

The pattern of Kings. The writer uses a formula for each king: his accession date, length of reign, evaluation (“he did evil in the sight of the LORD” or “he did what was right”), and death. The standard is always David (15:3, 11) for Judah and Jeroboam (15:34, 16:19) for Israel. Both are measures of the heart’s loyalty.

Asa’s reform (15:9–15). The “perverted persons” (v. 12) are male cult prostitutes in Canaanite worship. Teachers need only say “he removed the corrupt practices.” Maachah was likely his grandmother (daughter of Abishalom/Absalom) who held the title Queen Mother (gebirah). 2 Chronicles 14–16 adds that Asa won a great victory over Zerah the Ethiopian by crying out to the LORD (14:9–12). Later, Hanani the seer rebuked him for relying on Syria (16:7–9), and Asa angrily imprisoned him. This shows even a good heart can resist correction, which Asa’s later foot disease (15:23) may have illustrated.

Omri and Samaria. Omri is a key figure in the secular records. The Assyrians called Israel “the land of Omri” for a century after, and the Moabite Stone (Mesha Stele) refers to him. Samaria stood on a strategic hill and became the northern capital for 150 years.

Jezebel and Baal. Ethbaal (Ittobaal) ruled Tyre and Sidon, and Phoenician kings often served as priests of their gods, so Jezebel grew up in devoted Baal worship. Baal Melqart was the god of Tyre. Baal worship was tied to storms, fertility, and rain, which is the very thing Elijah will challenge in chapter 17.

Hiel (16:34). Joshua’s curse (Joshua 6:26) said whoever rebuilt Jericho would lose his firstborn and youngest. Hiel’s sons died as the cost of rebuilding. It illustrates that God’s word is true, whether people honor it or not.

Cultural Notes

- Lamp (15:4). The “lamp” in Kings is a continuing family line (see also 11:36; 2 Kings 8:19). Ancient homes kept a lamp lit in the house as a sign of life. A lamp that goes out means the house has ended.
- Queen mother. In Judah the queen mother often held real influence and sat beside the king. Removing her was a bold political move.
- Coups. The northern kingdom had a dozen dynasty changes in about 200 years, many by assassination. Judah, by contrast, kept David’s line for about 400 years. This helps students see the value of promise and faithfulness.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- This is a dense, name-heavy session. Don’t let students get lost in names. Use the Kings chart and keep returning to the big idea: a loyal heart is rare.

- Keep violence descriptions short. The point is that those who lived by violence lost by violence (compare Matthew 26:52).
- Asa's mistake (Syria and the temple treasure) is helpful for students who feel they must be perfect. Highlight grace: Kings still says his heart was loyal.
- Answer hints. Q1: Family loyalty and fear of conflict. Q2: Confess, correct, and trust God again. Q3: Habits, attitudes, and sins that others copy. Q4: Serves, protects, listens, is honest. Q5: God keeps promises; the line leads to Jesus.

SESSION 10 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 17

Ravens, a Widow, and a Boy

*God provides for those who trust Him, and He cares about the poor and the hurting.***BIG IDEA**

God sends help to a fearless prophet and to a poor widow, shows that no one is too small for Him to notice, and gives life where there was death.

KEY VERSE

“The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.”

1 Kings 17:16

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Just Enough.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “Have you ever run out of something you really needed? What did you do? Who helped you?” Let a few students share. Then say: “Today we meet a man and a woman who both ran out, and they each learned that God supplies exactly what we need, one day at a time.”

Teaching Content

A prophet who stood before the King

After the dark days of Ahab and Jezebel, God sends a surprise. A rugged man from the hills of Gilead walks into the palace. His name is Elijah the Tishbite. He says to Ahab: “As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word” (1 Kings 17:1). Elijah is not afraid of the king because he knows whom he stands before: the King of kings.

Why no rain? Baal was supposed to be the god of storms and rain. Ahab and Jezebel had led Israel to worship him. Elijah’s message was a direct challenge: your god cannot even give you rain. The LORD is the One who sends rain. God’s law had said that if Israel turned from Him, the rain would stop (Deuteronomy 11:16–17). It was a loving warning: come back.

Fed by ravens

Then God tells Elijah to hide at the Brook Cherith, east of the Jordan River. “And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there” (1 Kings 17:4). Ravens are not known for sharing. Yet every morning and every evening, they brought him bread and meat. God can use anything to provide for His people.

Then the brook dried up. Elijah did not do anything wrong; the brook dried up because there was no rain. Sometimes God’s provision runs out in one place so that we will move to the next place He has prepared. Elijah had to trust God again and ask, “What now?”

A widow with a handful of flour

God’s next instruction is surprising: “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you” (1 Kings 17:9). Sidon was Jezebel’s home country. God was sending Elijah into the very heart of Baal’s territory, to a poor widow! In that day, a widow had no income, no husband to protect her, and no one to defend her. She had a young son and almost nothing else.

Elijah meets her at the gate, gathering sticks. He asks for a drink of water, and then a piece of bread. She answers honestly: “As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks, that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die” (1 Kings 17:12). She is making her last meal.

Elijah says, “Do not fear.” Then he gives God’s promise: “The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth” (1 Kings 17:14). The widow believes and obeys. And “The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD” (1 Kings 17:16). Every day there was enough. Not extra for a year, but enough for each day, just like the manna in the wilderness.

A son who stopped breathing

Then something awful happens. The widow’s son becomes very sick, and there is no breath left in him. The widow cries out in grief, and she even blames Elijah. Instead of arguing, Elijah says, “Give me your son.” He carries the boy upstairs to his own room and lays him on his bed. Then he cries out to God honestly: “O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?” (1 Kings 17:20). He does not hide his hurt. God welcomes honest prayers.

Three times Elijah stretches himself over the boy and prays: “O LORD my God, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him” (1 Kings 17:21). God hears. The boy breathes again. Elijah carries him downstairs and says, “See, your son lives!” (1 Kings 17:23). This is the first time in the Bible someone is raised from the

dead.

The widow answers: “Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth” (1 Kings 17:24). A poor foreign woman, in the land of Baal, recognizes the truth about God. God cared for her when no one else did.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
Elijah 1 Kings 17:1–24	Boldness and compassion. He stood before a wicked king, trusted God for daily food, and tenderly carried a dead child to God in prayer.
The widow of Zarephath 1 Kings 17:8–16	Faith and generosity from little. She shared her last meal and trusted God’s word. Jesus later praised this woman.
God’s ravens 1 Kings 17:4–6	God’s creative provision. God uses anything and anyone to take care of His own.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
Ahab and Jezebel 1 Kings 16:29–33; 17:1	Leading a nation to a false god. Their idolatry brought the drought. Leaders’ choices affect everyone, especially the poor.
The worship of Baal 1 Kings 17:1	A god who can’t answer. The ‘storm god’ could not stop the drought. False gods cannot help when we need them most.

Pointing to Jesus: The Bread of Life Who Raises the Dead

Jesus Himself talked about the widow of Zarephath in a sermon in His hometown, pointing out that God sent Elijah to a foreigner and a widow, not to any of the many widows in Israel. Jesus loves the people others overlook. Elijah’s story points to Jesus in two big ways. First, the bin of flour that never ran out: Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger.” Second, Elijah raised a widow’s son, and one day Jesus did the same. When He met a widow in the town of Nain whose only son had died, He touched the coffin and said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” And the son sat up. Jesus is greater than Elijah. He does not need to pray three times. His word has power over death.

“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”

John 6:35

“Young man, I say to you, arise.”

Luke 7:14

Discussion Questions

1. Why might God have sent Elijah to a brook with ravens and then to a poor widow, instead of to a palace?
2. The widow had very little but still shared. What can we learn from her about giving and trusting God?
3. Elijah prayed honestly when he was hurting. How honest can we be with God? What do you do when you don't understand something that is happening?
4. Why is it important that God cared for a widow and her son? Who are the people today that are easy to overlook?
5. How do the stories of the bread that didn't run out and the widow's son help us understand who Jesus is?

Activity: Just Enough

Hold up a small jar with a spoonful of flour. Ask: 'How many people could eat from this?' Then tell the story again, adding a small cup of flour every time you say 'and it did not run out.' Next, hand out index cards for students to write one need they have, and one need someone else has. Pray for those together. Challenge them to meet one need for someone else this week.

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: What did God teach Elijah and the widow about depending on Him one day at a time?

FEEL: How do you feel when you don't have enough? How does it feel to know God cares about even the smallest need?

DO: What is one way you can help someone who has a need (a widow, an elderly neighbor, a hurting friend) this week?

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for taking care of Elijah with ravens and with a poor widow. Thank You that You see people no one else sees. Help us trust You for our daily bread and be generous to others. Thank You for Jesus, the Bread of Life, who gives life to us. Amen.

Memory verse: John 6:35. **This week's challenge:** Do one thing for a person in need: a note, a visit, or help with yard work. Say thank you to God for your meals each day this week, and mean it.

Session 10 Teacher Background: Ravens, a Widow, and a Boy

DATES

About 874–870 BC. The early part of Ahab’s reign and the beginning of the three-and-a-half-year drought (Luke 4:25; James 5:17).

Setting and Background

Elijah (“My God is the LORD”). Elijah appears with no introduction, from Tishbe in Gilead (east of the Jordan), a rugged region. The abruptness fits his message: God breaks into a dark time. He will not die but be taken to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2) and will appear with Jesus on the mount (Matthew 17:3).

The drought and Baal. Baal Hadad was the Canaanite storm god, said to ride the clouds, send lightning, and bring rain and fertility. The drought was a direct theological contest. Elijah’s oath “before whom I stand” signals a servant standing before his Master.

Cherith and Zarephath. The location of Cherith is uncertain (probably a wadi east of the Jordan). Zarephath lay on the Mediterranean coast between Tyre and Sidon, Jezebel’s home territory. Baal’s own region was suffering the famine too. God sent His prophet there, and a Gentile widow became the first person in Scripture to see a resurrection.

The raising of the boy (17:17–24). This is the first recorded resurrection in the Bible. Elijah’s stretching over the child is a prayerful, physical act of intercession. Elisha does the same later (2 Kings 4:34–35). The widow’s statement in 17:18 reflects the ancient assumption that tragedy followed sin; Elijah’s honest prayer shows he understands that God is not cruel.

Cultural Notes

- Widows. In the ancient world widows lacked inheritance rights and protection. God’s law commanded special care for widows and orphans (Exodus 22:22; Deuteronomy 10:18; James 1:27).
- Ravens. The Hebrew word (*orebim*) can mean ravens. They were considered unclean (Leviticus 11:15), which makes God’s provision more surprising. Some ancient Jewish interpreters suggested the word could mean “Arabians” or people from a nearby town; the text clearly intends a miracle through ravens.
- Hospitality. Offering water to a traveler was normal; offering bread from her last meal was a significant sacrifice. Elijah’s request is not a model for taking from the poor; it was a specific test where God gave a specific promise.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- Some students may feel uncomfortable with Elijah asking a poor woman for food first. Explain: God had told him He had commanded the widow to provide, and God gave a promise that she and her son would not run out. We should never pressure poor people; we should help them (Proverbs 19:17).
- The death of the boy is hard. Be gentle with students who have experienced loss. Assure them God cares about grieving families.

- Pastoral note: Some students may ask why God doesn't always raise the dead today. Answer honestly: this was a sign pointing to Jesus' power, and one day God will raise all who believe in Him (John 11:25–26).
- Answer hints. Q1: To teach daily trust and to show Baal's powerlessness. Q2: Faith means acting on God's promise even when we have little. Q3: Honest prayer is welcome (Psalm 62:8). Q4: The poor, the lonely, immigrants, the elderly. Q5: Jesus provides what we truly need and has power over death.

SESSION 11 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 18

Fire on Mount Carmel

*Choose who you will follow; the true God answers.***BIG IDEA**

There is no middle ground. The LORD alone is God, and He honors both the bold prophet who stands for Him and the quiet servant who secretly protects God's people.

KEY VERSE

“How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.”

1 Kings 18:21

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Choose a Side.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “Have you ever had a hard time choosing between two things (two teams, two flavors, two friends)? What about when one choice was right and the other wrong, but both felt tempting?” Say: “Today, a whole nation has to decide, and the answer comes with fire.”

Teaching Content

A hidden hero in the palace

After three long years without rain, the land is dry and the people are starving. God tells Elijah, “Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth” (1 Kings 18:1). Before Elijah arrives, we meet a man named Obadiah. He is the manager of King Ahab’s palace, working for the very king who worships Baal. But the Bible says, “Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly” (1 Kings 18:3).

What did Obadiah do? When Queen Jezebel was killing God’s prophets, Obadiah “had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water” (1 Kings 18:4). He risked his life, working inside the palace, to protect people who were being hunted. Nobody was clapping for him. But God saw. You do not have to be Elijah on a mountain to be a hero. Sometimes God’s heroes are the quiet protectors who take care of the weak.

Who is the troublemaker?

Obadiah finds Elijah and is terrified. He is afraid Ahab will kill him if he reports that Elijah is back. Elijah promises, “I will surely show myself to him today.” When Ahab meets Elijah, he says, “Is that you, O troubler of Israel?” (1 Kings 18:17). Elijah answers, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals” (1 Kings 18:18). It is a common thing for wrongdoers to blame the person who tells the truth. Truth-tellers are often called troublemakers.

How long will you waver?

Elijah calls everyone to Mount Carmel, a mountain by the sea. Hundreds of Baal’s prophets are there. Then Elijah stands in front of the people and says, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” And the people answered “not a word” (1 Kings 18:21). They wanted to keep both. Elijah calls that wavering, and it will not work. You cannot serve two masters.

Elijah proposes a test: two bulls, two altars, no fire. The god who answers by fire is the true God. The people agree: “It is well spoken.”

Baal does not answer

The prophets of Baal go first. From morning until noon they shout, “O Baal, hear us!” But “there was no voice; no one answered” (1 Kings 18:26). They dance around the altar. Elijah teases them: “Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened” (1 Kings 18:27). They shout louder, and hurt themselves, but “there was no voice, no one answered, no one paid attention” (1 Kings 18:29). Hours go by. Nothing.

This is what false gods are like. They promise help but cannot give it. Some people work hard to please things that cannot love them back: popularity, money, appearances. They shout and shout, and nothing answers.

The LORD answers by fire

Now it is Elijah’s turn. First he repairs the broken altar of the LORD, using twelve stones for the twelve tribes. He digs a trench, arranges the wood and the bull, and then does something strange: he has people pour four large jars of water over everything, three times. Twelve jars of water, in the middle of a drought. He makes it impossible to say it was a trick.

Then he prays a short prayer, only a few lines: “LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have

turned their hearts back to You again” (1 Kings 18:36–37). Notice how his prayer is not about himself. He wants people to know God and to turn their hearts back.

“Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench” (1 Kings 18:38). All the people fell on their faces and said, “The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!” (1 Kings 18:39). Elijah then had the false prophets seized at the Brook Kishon. Under the law God gave Israel as a nation, leading the people into idol worship was punished with death. That was for Israel’s special situation. Jesus teaches us today to love our enemies and pray for them.

The sound of rain

Elijah tells Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain.” There was no cloud in the sky, but Elijah believed God’s promise. He climbs to the top of Carmel and bows down with his face between his knees, praying. He tells his servant to look toward the sea. Nothing. Seven times he prays and sends his servant to look. At last the servant says, “There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea” (1 Kings 18:44). Soon the sky is black, and a great rain falls.

James later wrote, “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain ... And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain.” Elijah was an ordinary man with an extraordinary God. Persistent prayer, even for a small cloud, can bring big rain.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
Obadiah 1 Kings 18:3–4, 7–16	Quietly protecting God’s people. He feared the LORD greatly and hid 100 prophets, feeding them at great risk. Defending the hunted is what God’s people do.
Elijah 1 Kings 18:17–46	Courage and persistent prayer. He stood alone for the LORD, prayed for God’s glory and the people’s hearts, and kept praying for the rain.
The people of Israel 1 Kings 18:39	A return to the LORD. They fell on their faces and said, “The LORD, He is God!” They stopped wavering.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
Ahab 1 Kings 18:16–20	Blaming the truth-teller. He called Elijah the troublemaker instead of facing his own sin.
Jezebel 1 Kings 18:4, 13, 19	Persecuting God’s people. She tried to wipe out God’s prophets and fed hundreds of false prophets from her own table.
The prophets of Baal 1 Kings 18:19–29	Following a god who cannot answer. They shouted, danced, and hurt themselves for hours, and no one answered.
The wavering people 1 Kings 18:21	Trying to serve two masters. They wanted to follow the LORD and Baal at the same time.

Pointing to Jesus: The Lamb on the Altar

On Mount Carmel, God’s fire fell on the sacrifice. When Jesus came, the Bible says He is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” The fire of God’s judgment against our sin fell on Him on the cross, so it does not have to fall on us. Elijah was a man who stood between God and the people, but Jesus is the one true Mediator: “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” And Jesus echoes Elijah’s question about wavering: “No one can serve two masters ... You cannot serve God and mammon.” Choose Him. He will not disappoint you.

“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

John 1:29

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Matthew 6:24

Discussion Questions

1. Obadiah worked in a wicked palace but secretly protected God’s prophets. Where might you be in a place where it’s hard to follow God, and how can you quietly help others?
2. Elijah asked, “How long will you falter between two opinions?” What are some ways people today try to follow God and something else at the same time?
3. Why did Elijah pour so much water on the altar? What does that teach about trusting God to prove Himself?
4. Look at Elijah’s prayer. What was he asking for? How is it different from the Baal prophets’ shouting?
5. How does the fire falling on the sacrifice point to Jesus?

Activity: Choose a Side

Put a piece of tape on the floor. One side is labeled “LORD,” the other “Baal/Other.” Read scenario cards (a friend invites you to cheat, a game is rated for older kids, your friends mock your faith) and have students stand on the side they would choose. Then discuss: ‘What makes it hard? What helps?’ Close with Matthew 6:24.

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: Why does Elijah say there is no middle ground between the LORD and Baal?

FEEL: How does it feel to stand up for what is right when you are the only one? What does it feel like to know God is with you?

DO: What is one place this week where you will choose to follow Jesus clearly, and one person you will quietly help like Obadiah?

Closing Prayer

Lord, You are God, and You alone. Help us stop wavering and follow You with all our hearts. Make us brave like Elijah and faithful like Obadiah, quiet protectors of people in need. Thank You, Jesus, for being the Lamb who took our judgment. Amen.

Memory verse: 1 Kings 18:21. **This week's challenge:** Take a clear stand for Jesus once this week. Quietly help someone who is being picked on or left out. Pray for something small and keep praying until you see the cloud.

Session 11 Teacher Background: Fire on Mount Carmel

DATES

About 870–867 BC. The end of the drought (three and a half years by Luke 4:25; James 5:17).

Setting and Background

Mount Carmel. A coastal mountain range in northern Israel, near Phoenician territory (Baal's home turf), overlooking the Mediterranean. Carmel was thought to be a holy place for Baal. Elijah fought on Baal's own ground. The 'altar of the LORD that was broken down' (18:30) shows that Israel's true worship had been neglected.

The prophets. 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah, supported by Jezebel. The Asherah prophets did not appear at Carmel (18:19 summons them, but the narrative mentions only Baal's prophets afterward). The contest is a classic 'power encounter.' The fire was expected to come from Baal, the storm and lightning god, which made the contest fair and decisive.

Twelve stones (18:31). A reminder that Israel was one people of twelve tribes, though divided into two kingdoms. Elijah acts for all Israel.

The execution of Baal's prophets (18:40). In the Law of Moses, a prophet who led Israel to worship other gods was to be put to death (Deuteronomy 13:1–5; 18:20). This was covenant justice in the unique situation of Israel as a nation under God's direct rule. It is not a model for how Christians treat people today. Jesus said, "Love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44), and the New Testament makes clear that our battle is not against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12).

Elijah running (18:46). He ran about 17 miles to Jezreel ahead of Ahab's chariot because "the hand of the LORD was on Elijah." The sign was a symbol that God's prophet would walk ahead of the king.

Cultural Notes

- Ba'al's worship. The shouting, limping dance, and self-cutting were common in ancient Canaanite ritual, trying to arouse the god's attention. The Bible's irony is that the true God needs no such display.
- Mocking (18:27). Elijah's sarcasm points out that a god who must be awakened is no god. It is a cousin of the prophetic mockery of idols in Isaiah 44 and Psalm 115. Use caution: it does not teach us to mock people.
- Time of the evening offering (18:36). Elijah prayed at the time of the regular daily offering, linking his prayer to Israel's covenant worship. He is not inventing a new religion but calling the nation back to the old.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- Obadiah is often overlooked. He fits your series theme, defending the weak (the persecuted prophets). Make sure students see that not every hero is loud. Some serve quietly.

- Handle verse 40 briefly and truthfully. Say that in ancient Israel, God's law required that those who led the nation into idolatry be removed. Remind students that today we do not use violence for religion, and that Jesus teaches us to love enemies and pray for them.
- Some students may think of the story as only about miracles. Highlight Elijah's prayer: it was for God's glory and for the people's hearts.
- Answer hints. Q1: Let students share. Quiet kindness, praying, being a friend. Q2: Following God on Sunday and the world on Monday; popularity, money, entertainment as idols. Q3: To make it impossible to say it was a trick and to show confidence in God. Q4: He asked God to show He is God and turn people's hearts back; Baal's prophets tried to force a response. Q5: The fire consumed the sacrifice; Jesus took God's judgment as our sacrifice.

SESSION 12 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 19

When the Brave Get Tired

*God gently cares for discouraged people, and He gives them a friend and a purpose.***BIG IDEA**

Even great servants of God get tired, scared, and lonely. God does not scold them; He feeds them, whispers to them, tells them the truth, and gives them someone to encourage.

KEY VERSE

“And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.”

1 Kings 19:12

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Care Package Cards.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “Have you ever felt so tired or discouraged that you just wanted to hide under a blanket? What helped?” Give students a moment, let a few share. Then say: “The man who called down fire from heaven in the last chapter ended up feeling exactly like that. God’s response shows us His heart.”

Teaching Content

From the mountaintop to the valley

What a day Elijah had on Mount Carmel! Fire fell from heaven. The people shouted, “The LORD, He is God!” Rain came. You would expect Elijah to feel on top of the world. But when Ahab tells Jezebel what happened, she sends a messenger with a threat: “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time” (1 Kings 19:2). Her message: “By tomorrow you will be dead.”

And Elijah, the bold prophet, becomes afraid. “And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life” (1 Kings 19:3). He runs about a hundred miles south to Beersheba, leaves his servant, and walks a whole day into the wilderness. He sits under a bush and prays, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!” (1 Kings 19:4). He is exhausted and discouraged. He feels like he is failing.

Notice that Elijah did not stay a brave hero all the time. Even great servants of God have times of weakness. This does not make them fake or faithless; it makes them human. Bad feelings do not disqualify us from God’s love.

God feeds and lets him rest

What does God do? He does not say, “Where is your faith?” He does not give a long lecture. First He lets Elijah sleep. Then an angel touches him and says, “Arise and eat.” Elijah looks, and there is a cake baked on hot coals and a jar of water by his head. He eats, drinks, and goes back to sleep. The angel comes a second time: “Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you” (1 Kings 19:7).

Look how tender that is. God sees that Elijah is hungry and tired, and He takes care of his body first. Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do when we’re discouraged is to eat, drink, sleep, and get a hug. God made us with bodies, and He cares for them.

A whisper on the mountain

Strengthened by the food, Elijah walks forty days to Mount Horeb, the mountain where God met Moses. He goes into a cave. Then God asks a simple question: “What are you doing here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:9). Elijah pours out his heart: “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts ... I alone am left; and they seek to take my life” (1 Kings 19:10). He feels completely alone.

God tells him to stand on the mountain, and the LORD passes by. First a great wind tears the rocks apart, but God is not in the wind. Then an earthquake. God is not in the earthquake. Then a fire. God is not in the fire. “And after the fire a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12). God spoke in a gentle whisper. After a day of fire from heaven, God did not need to shout. He speaks gently to a discouraged friend.

God asks the same question again, and Elijah gives the same answer. God does not argue. Instead He gives Elijah three things.

Three gifts for a tired prophet

First, a job. God tells Elijah what to do next: anoint Hazael and Jehu as kings, and Elisha as a prophet in his place. When we are discouraged, God often gives us something small to do next.

Second, the truth. Elijah said, “I alone am left.” God said, “Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him” (1 Kings 19:18). He was not alone. There were seven thousand faithful people. When we feel alone, we usually do not see the whole picture. God does.

Third, a friend. Elijah goes and finds Elisha plowing a field with twelve yoke of oxen. Elijah throws his cloak over him, a sign that he is to become Elijah's helper and successor. Elisha asks to say goodbye to his parents. Then he does something dramatic. He burns his plowing gear and cooks the oxen, feeding the people. There is no going back. "Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant" (1 Kings 19:21). Elijah, who thought he was alone, now has a younger friend to mentor.

Why this matters for you

This story is for anyone who has felt tired, afraid, or alone. God's heart toward you is not anger but care. He does not turn away from the discouraged. He feeds them, whispers to them, tells them the truth, and gives them people. Elijah's story did not end under a bush. Hundreds of years later he stood on a mountain with Jesus Himself.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
God (and His angel) 1 Kings 19:5–8, 11–18	Tender care. He fed Elijah, let him rest, and spoke in a gentle whisper. Encouragers can learn from Him.
Elijah 1 Kings 19:4–14	Honesty with God. He did not hide his feelings. He told God exactly how he felt and kept listening.
Elisha 1 Kings 19:19–21	Willing commitment. He left his farm, family comfort, and plow to serve God and encourage Elijah.
The 7,000 1 Kings 19:18	Hidden faithfulness. Thousands who had not bowed to Baal. Faithful people are often more numerous than we think.
Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
Jezebel 1 Kings 19:1–2	Bullying and threats. She used fear to silence God's prophet. Bullies still use fear to silence truth.
The worshipers of Baal 1 Kings 19:18	Bowing to a false god. Most of Israel still had not returned to the LORD. God's judgment would come on those who stayed with Baal.
Isolation and fear 1 Kings 19:3–4, 10, 14	"I alone am left". Fear and loneliness told Elijah a half-truth. We need God and other believers to see the whole picture.

Pointing to Jesus: The Gentle Savior Who Strengthens the Weary

Elijah was weary and God sent bread. Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." After Jesus rose from the dead, He cooked breakfast for His tired disciples on a fire of coals by the lake, just as the angel cooked for Elijah, and said, "Come and eat breakfast." Jesus knows what it is to be exhausted and sorrowful, too. In the Garden of Gethsemane He said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death," and an angel appeared to strengthen Him. He understands. And He promises, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Even better, Elijah later stood with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, talking with Him. The story did not end in the cave.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

“For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

Hebrews 13:5

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Elijah felt so low right after such a great victory? Have you ever felt that way after something exciting?
2. God first gave Elijah food and sleep. What does that teach you about taking care of your body when you are discouraged?
3. God spoke in a gentle whisper instead of in a big show. How can you listen for God’s quiet voice?
4. Elijah felt “I alone am left.” How can friends and church family help when someone feels alone?
5. God gave Elijah a younger friend (Elisha) to mentor. Who is someone you can encourage this week? Who encourages you?

Activity: Care Package Cards

Give each student two index cards. On the first card, have them write an encouraging note to someone who might be discouraged (a friend, teacher, family member), with a verse like Hebrews 13:5. On the second, have them write one thing they will do for their body when they are discouraged (sleep, a snack, a walk, a prayer). Encourage them to deliver the first card this week.

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: What three things did God give Elijah when he was discouraged?

FEEL: When have you felt tired, afraid, or alone? What would it mean to know that God cares for you gently?

DO: Who can you encourage this week? What will you say or do? Also, who is one trusted adult you can talk to when you feel down?

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for being so gentle with us when we are tired, afraid, or alone. Thank You for sending Jesus to give us rest. Help us to listen for Your still small voice, to be honest with You, and to encourage others the way You encouraged Elijah. Amen.

Memory verse: Hebrews 13:5. **This week’s challenge:** Encourage one person by sending or giving a note or kind word. Spend five quiet minutes this week listening for God. If you feel very down, tell a parent, pastor, or trusted adult right away.

Session 12 Teacher Background: When the Brave Get Tired

DATES

About 867–865 BC. Immediately after Carmel; Elisha’s call begins a ministry that will last about 55 years (2 Kings 2–13).

Setting and Background

Beersheba and Horeb. Beersheba is at the southern edge of Judah (about 100 miles from Jezreel). Mount Horeb (Sinai) is another 40 days’ journey. Elijah retraces Moses’ steps, going back to where Israel first received the covenant. God’s question, “What are you doing here?”, is a pastoral invitation.

Wind, earthquake, fire, whisper (19:11–12). These match the signs at Sinai (Exodus 19:16–19). Baal was a storm and fire god. God shows He is not like Baal; He is not merely a force of nature. His word comes through a gentle voice. The Hebrew (*qol demamah daqqah*) can be rendered “a sound of thin silence.”

The commission (19:15–17). Hazael would become king of Syria and Jehu king of Israel (2 Kings 8–10), executing God’s judgment on Ahab’s house. Elisha would continue Elijah’s work. Elijah himself anoints only Elisha (the others are carried out later by Elisha and his messengers).

The seven thousand (19:18). “Seven” signifies completeness; the number represents a large faithful remnant. Paul quotes this verse in Romans 11:2–5 to show God always preserves a remnant by grace.

Elisha’s call (19:19–21). Twelve yoke of oxen means Elisha’s family was well-off, and Elisha was driving the twelfth. Throwing a cloak (mantle) symbolized transferring authority. Burning the plowing equipment and feeding the people was a clear break from his old life.

Cultural Notes

- Broom tree (juniper). A desert shrub that can grow up to 10 feet high and provides one of the few patches of shade in the wilderness.
- Bread baked on hot stones. Flat bread cooked on heated rocks or coals was a common field food. God’s provision is practical and warm.
- Kissing Baal (19:18). A sign of homage to idols (compare Hosea 13:2). Not bowing and not kissing = refusing to give honor to Baal.

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- IMPORTANT care note. Elijah’s prayer in 19:4 is a prayer to die. Do not skip it, but do not dwell. Say: “Elijah was so tired and afraid he wished it were over. God didn’t scold him; He cared for him.” If any student mentions wanting to die or to hurt themselves, stay calm and caring, do not promise secrecy, and immediately involve a pastor, your church’s safe-sanctuary leader, and the student’s parents or guardians according to your church’s policy. In the U.S., the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available by call or text at 988.

- Be careful not to suggest that depression is only a spiritual problem. God cares for the body, the heart, and community. Encourage students to talk with trusted adults, doctors, and counselors when needed.
- Teachers can model honesty: share a time you felt discouraged and how God (and people) helped.
- Answer hints. Q1: Exhaustion after emotional highs, fear of Jezebel, feeling alone. Q2: Rest, food, and care are good gifts from God. Q3: Quiet time, prayer, Scripture, fewer distractions. Q4: Visit, text, sit together, remind them of God's truth. Q5: Let students name people; emphasize older and younger relationships.

SESSION 13 OF 13 · 1 KINGS 20–22

Naboth, Micaiah, and the King We Need

Stand for truth and for the weak, even alone, and look to the perfect King.

BIG IDEA

God sees injustice and hears the cry of the weak. He honors people who stand firm for what is right, even when they stand alone, and He shows mercy to anyone who humbles himself. Every earthly king fails, so we look to Jesus, the perfect King.

KEY VERSE

“As the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak.”

1 Kings 22:14

45-Minute Lesson Plan

Time	Segment	What to do
5 min	Welcome & Hook	Greet students and use the opening question to get everyone thinking.
5 min	Read the Passage	Read the key verses aloud from the NKJV. Let students follow along in their Bibles.
15 min	Teach the Story	Teach from the Teaching Content section. Keep it conversational and ask questions as you go.
7 min	Heart Check	Use the “Hearts God Admires / Hearts God Opposes” chart. Ask: which heart do I want?
5 min	Pointing to Jesus	Show how this story points to Christ. Read the Jesus verses.
6 min	Discuss & Activity	Choose 2–3 discussion questions. Activity: Hall of Loyal Hearts.
2 min	Think · Feel · Do & Prayer	Have students complete the handout reflection and close in prayer.

Hook

Ask: “Have you ever wanted something that belonged to someone else? What did you do about it?” Let a few share. Then say: “Today we see what happens when a king with everything wants one more thing, and the man who said no.”

Teaching Content

A king who spared the wrong man

In chapter 20 the king of Syria, Ben-Hadad, surrounds Samaria with a huge army and demands Ahab's silver, gold, wives, and children. Ahab refuses when the demands become impossible. God sends a prophet to Ahab, saying, "Behold, I will deliver this great multitude into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the LORD" (1 Kings 20:13). Israel wins, even though the Syrian army is much bigger. When Syria comes back the next year, thinking God is only a god of the hills, God gives another victory to show He rules the valleys too.

But then Ahab makes a terrible choice. God had said Ben-Hadad must be defeated, and Ahab spares him, calls him "my brother," and makes a treaty. A prophet, disguised with a bandage over his eyes, tells Ahab a story and then reveals who he is: because Ahab let go of a man God had marked for judgment, Ahab's life would be taken in his place. Ahab goes home "sullen and displeased" (1 Kings 20:43). He knows he's in the wrong but does not repent.

The vineyard Ahab wanted

In chapter 21 we meet a man named Naboth. His small vineyard sits right next to King Ahab's palace in Jezreel. Ahab wants it for a vegetable garden. He offers a better vineyard or a fair price. That seems reasonable. But Naboth says, "The LORD forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!" (1 Kings 21:3).

Why would Naboth say no to a king? In God's law, land in Israel belonged to families, given by God through Joshua. It was not to be sold away permanently (Leviticus 25:23). Naboth was not being stubborn. He was being faithful. He knew that obeying God mattered more than pleasing a king, even if it cost him.

Ahab, the most powerful man in the nation, goes home, lies on his bed with his face to the wall, and refuses to eat. He is pouting like a little child because he can't get his way.

The queen's wicked plan

His wife Jezebel says, "You now exercise authority over Israel! Arise, eat food, and let your heart be glad; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite" (1 Kings 21:7). She writes letters in Ahab's name, using the king's seal, to the leaders of Jezreel. She tells them to hold a public gathering, put Naboth at the head, and hire two worthless men to lie and say, "You have blasphemed God and the king." Then they were to stone him.

And the elders do it. Nobody stops it. Naboth, an honest man who simply wanted to keep his family's land, is killed by lying witnesses. When Jezebel hears, she tells Ahab to go take the vineyard. This is a deep, dark picture of what happens when power is used for greed. The people who should have protected Naboth, the elders and judges, helped destroy him. Remember what the queen of Sheba said about a king's job: to execute justice and righteousness. Ahab did the opposite.

God sees

But God sees. He sends Elijah to meet Ahab in the vineyard itself. Elijah says, "Have you murdered and also taken possession?" (1 Kings 21:19). God's judgment on Ahab and Jezebel is announced. Ahab's family will be wiped out, and Jezebel will meet a terrible end.

Then something beautiful happens. Ahab tears his clothes, puts on sackcloth, fasts, and walks about quietly. He humbles himself. And God says to Elijah, "Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days" (1 Kings 21:29). God's

mercy is so great that even the worst king who humbled himself got a delay in judgment. That does not erase what he did, but it shows that God is quick to show mercy. If God is that willing to forgive, how much more will He forgive us when we come to Him?

Four hundred yes-men and one honest man

In chapter 22, three years of peace pass. Ahab asks King Jehoshaphat of Judah, a godly king, to join him to take back a city called Ramoth Gilead. Jehoshaphat agrees, but he says, “Please inquire for the word of the LORD today” (1 Kings 22:5). Ahab brings out 400 prophets, and they all say, “Go up, for the LORD will deliver it into the hand of the king.” Every one says the same thing: what Ahab wants to hear.

Jehoshaphat senses something is wrong: “Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?” (1 Kings 22:7). Ahab answers, “There is still one man ... Micaiah the son of Imlah; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil” (1 Kings 22:8). Ahab hates the one honest voice.

A messenger tells Micaiah, “All the prophets are saying good things. Please agree.” Micaiah answers, “As the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak” (1 Kings 22:14). When he finally speaks, he tells the truth: “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd” (1 Kings 22:17). He says the battle will fail and the king will die. One of the false prophets slaps Micaiah in the face. Ahab orders him to prison with only bread and water until he returns safely. Micaiah says, “If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me” (1 Kings 22:28). Micaiah stood alone, and he did not bend.

The end of Ahab

Ahab goes to battle anyway, disguising himself so no one will recognize him. But “a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor” (1 Kings 22:34). Ahab dies that evening. His blood is licked up by dogs, just as Elijah had said. No disguise can hide anyone from God’s word.

The book of First Kings ends with a short list of kings. Jehoshaphat of Judah “walked in all the ways of his father Asa ... doing what was right in the eyes of the LORD” (1 Kings 22:43). Ahab’s son Ahaziah becomes king of Israel and “did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother” (1 Kings 22:52). The story will continue in 2 Kings.

Looking back

Let’s look back over the whole book. God admired Nathan and Bathsheba for speaking up. He admired Solomon’s humble request for wisdom, and his protection of two poor women. He admired Hiram’s friendship, the widow’s sacrifice, Obadiah’s hidden care, Asa’s courage, Elijah’s prayers, Elisha’s willingness, Naboth’s conviction, and Micaiah’s honesty. These are people with loyal hearts. God opposed the proud who grabbed power, bullied the weak, and led others from Him: Adonijah, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Ahab, and Jezebel. Every earthly king fell short. We need a better King.

Heart Check: Hearts God Admires and Hearts God Opposes

Hearts God Admires	
Naboth 1 Kings 21:1–3, 13–16	Conviction and courage. He refused to sell his family’s land because of God’s law, even to a king. He paid with his life for doing right.
Elijah 1 Kings 21:17–24	Confronting injustice. He walked into the stolen vineyard and told the truth to the king who did it.
Micaiah 1 Kings 22:8–28	Truth-telling alone. He refused to join four hundred flatterers, even when it meant a slap and prison.
Jehoshaphat 1 Kings 22:5–7, 41–43	Seeking God’s word. He insisted on asking for God’s word. (He also made mistakes by allying with Ahab.)
Ahab (when he humbled himself) 1 Kings 21:27–29	Humility, and God’s mercy. God showed mercy when he humbled himself, showing how quick God is to forgive.

Hearts God Opposes (Warnings)	
Ahab 1 Kings 20:34–43; 21:1–16; 22:8	Greed, pouting, and hating the truth. He sulked over a vineyard, let others do evil for him, spared God’s enemy, and hated the honest prophet.
Jezebel 1 Kings 21:5–16	Abusing power and false witnesses. She used the king’s seal and two liars to have an innocent man killed for his land.
The elders and the false witnesses 1 Kings 21:8–14	Going along with evil. They obeyed a wicked order rather than protecting an innocent man.
The 400 prophets and Zedekiah 1 Kings 22:6, 11–12, 24	Flattery and telling leaders what they want to hear. They said ‘go up’ because it pleased the king. Zedekiah even slapped the honest prophet.

Pointing to Jesus: The King We Have Been Looking For

First Kings shows kings who were wise, weak, proud, cruel, or loyal, but none were perfect. Jesus is the perfect King. Like Naboth, Jesus was falsely accused by lying witnesses. Like Micaiah, He told the truth even though He was struck in the face. And unlike every king in this book, He did not use His power to take, but to give: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Jesus told Pilate, “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” He is Wisdom greater than Solomon, the true Temple, the Prince of Peace, the Servant-King, the Light, the Bread of Life, the Lamb, the gentle Savior who gives rest. And one day every knee will bow to Him. The Bible says that He has a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

“You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

John 18:37

“And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Revelation 19:16

Discussion Questions

1. Naboth said no to a king because of what God said about his family’s land. When have you had to say no to someone because of what is right?
2. Why do you think the elders of Jezreel obeyed Jezebel’s evil order? What should they have done? How can we avoid just “going along” with wrong?
3. Why did Ahab hate Micaiah? Why is it hard to listen to honest people? How can we be honest in a loving way?
4. God showed mercy when Ahab humbled himself. What does this tell you about God? What does it tell you about coming to Him when you’ve done wrong?
5. Look back over 1 Kings. Which person do you admire most? What quality of their heart do you want God to grow in you?

Activity: Hall of Loyal Hearts

Place pictures or name cards for the people God admired in 1 Kings (Nathan, Bathsheba, Solomon asking for wisdom, Hiram’s craftsman, Asa, Obadiah, Elijah, the widow, Elisha, Naboth, Micaiah). Have each student choose one and write the quality of heart God admired. Then have students pick one quality to pray for in themselves. Post the finished hall on a wall.

Think • Feel • Do

THINK: What did Naboth and Micaiah have in common?

FEEL: How does it feel to know that God sees when people are treated unfairly? How does it feel to know He forgives when we humble ourselves?

DO: What is one way you will stand up for someone who is being treated unfairly, or tell the truth in love, this week?

Closing Prayer

Lord God, thank You for people like Naboth and Micaiah who stood for what is right. Give us courage to say no to wrong and to tell the truth in love. Help us defend people who are weak. Forgive us when we are proud or greedy. Thank You, Jesus, for being the perfect King who serves us and gives us life. Amen.

Memory verse: 1 Kings 22:14. **This week’s challenge:** Find someone who is being treated unfairly and stand with them. Tell one hard truth kindly this week. Review all 13 sessions and thank God for the Savior-King.

Session 13 Teacher Background: Naboth, Micaiah, and the King We Need

DATES

About 860–850 BC. Ahab’s last years; Ahab dies about 853 BC at Ramoth Gilead; Jehoshaphat reigns 873–848 BC.

Setting and Background

Syria (Aram). Ben-Hadad (probably Ben-Hadad II) ruled Damascus. Assyrian records mention that “Ahab the Israelite” contributed 2,000 chariots and 10,000 soldiers to a coalition against Shalmaneser III at the battle of Qarqar (853 BC). The Bible is selective, focusing on the spiritual story.

Naboth’s vineyard. Jezreel was the royal summer residence in the Jezreel Valley. Under Mosaic law, land was a family inheritance (Numbers 36:7–9; Leviticus 25:23). Jezebel’s plot used a false religious accusation (blasphemy) and two witnesses, the legal minimum (Deuteronomy 17:6), to twist the law for greed. Notice that Naboth’s sons were killed too (2 Kings 9:26), which is why the land was fully taken.

The heavenly council (22:19–23). Micaiah describes a vision in which God permits a ‘lying spirit’ in the mouths of the false prophets, since Ahab wanted to be deceived. This is a difficult passage. The main point for students: God is sovereign over even evil messengers, He gave Ahab clear warning through Micaiah, and Ahab chose not to listen. God did not tempt Ahab; Ahab’s own heart wanted flattery (compare 2 Thessalonians 2:10–12). Don’t go deeper than needed with middle schoolers.

Jehoshaphat. A good king of Judah (22:41–43), who strengthened the land and sent teachers of the law (2 Chronicles 17:7–9). But he allied with Ahab, even marrying his son to Ahab’s daughter (2 Kings 8:18), a decision with serious consequences. The prophet Jehu rebuked him (2 Chronicles 19:2).

The end of the book. 1 Kings ends with the Elijah era unresolved and Ahab’s son on the throne. The story continues in 2 Kings with Elijah’s departure, Elisha’s ministry, the fall of Israel (722 BC), and Judah (586 BC). The main theme remains the same: loyal hearts blessed, disloyal hearts judged, and a promise that points to a King who will not fail (2 Samuel 7:16).

Cultural Notes

- Sackcloth. A rough cloth worn as a sign of grief or repentance. Ahab’s humbling is real enough that God noticed (21:29), though the rest of his life shows it did not become lasting change. Some commentators see this as ‘temporary repentance’ yet still an example of God’s mercy.
- Bread and water of affliction (22:27). A diet of prison, meant to humiliate.
- Court prophets. Kings often kept paid prophets, who tended to say what pleased the king. Micaiah was a ‘free’ prophet answerable only to God. The Bible warns about leaders who surround themselves with yes-men (Proverbs 29:5, 12).

Teaching Tips and Answer Hints

- This is the last session. Give time for a review of the whole book. Use the Hall of Loyal Hearts activity and invite students to share what they learned.
- The murder of Naboth is serious. Describe it simply: wicked leaders arranged lies so an innocent man could be killed. Remind students that God hears the cry of the oppressed and judges the wicked (Psalm 10:14–18).
- This session offers a chance to talk about integrity and bullying: encourage students to stand with the person being picked on and to tell trusted adults.
- Give an invitation. Many students may be ready to trust Jesus as their King and Savior. Provide a quiet moment and an opportunity to talk with a leader.
- Answer hints. Q1: Let students share. Standing for faith, refusing to cheat or gossip. Q2: Fear of Jezebel; they should have refused and told the truth. Q3: Truth exposes sin; honest love speaks with kindness and humility. Q4: God is merciful, quick to forgive. Q5: Let students pick; celebrate each.

After the Series

When you finish 1 Kings, celebrate! Invite students to share what they learned. Remind them of the series verse: *“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.”* (2 Chronicles 16:9). The story continues in 2 Kings with Elisha, the fall of Israel and Judah, and a God who still keeps His promise to David.

Suggested next steps

- Invite students who want to trust Jesus as King and Savior to talk with a leader.
- Ask students to share one “loyal heart” they admire from the study and why.
- Give each student a card with 2 Chronicles 16:9 to keep in their Bible.
- Move on to 2 Kings, or choose a New Testament book that shows Jesus as the King.

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