

Some “Big Ideas” from 1 and 2 Kings

The books of 1 and 2 Kings record the history of Israel from the days of Solomon (c. 970 B.C.) until the destruction of Judah by Babylon (586 B.C.). Sometimes overlooked in serious Bible study, the books of 1 and 2 Kings are extremely profitable for Christians to study (cf. Rom. 15:4). Notice some of the “big ideas” that we find repeated in the books of 1 and 2 Kings.

An understanding of history can give us deeper spiritual roots —Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it. The books of 1 and 2 Kings encourage the people of God to, “take root downward and bear fruit upward” (2 Kings 19:30). A study of God’s dealings with His people will instill in us a sense of ***identity, purpose*** and ***destiny***. History gives us insight into our present circumstances and helps us through troublesome times (cf. Mark 4:16-17). How much does Scripture shape your sense of identity, purpose and destiny?

It is not so important how people remember us, but how God remembers us — Every single king that reigned in Israel and Judah received a “theological verdict” from God in the books of 1 and 2 Kings. For example, God’s verdict on Ahab’s rule was that: “Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him” (1 Ki. 16:30). The kings of Israel and Judah tended to be influenced by the forces of wealth, power and public opinion. Some people undoubtedly thought Ahab was a wise and effective king; however, 1 and 2 Kings makes it clear that ultimately it is what God says about us that really matters. Considering that someday we will all stand before the Righteous Judge and give account for our lives, whom should we really be trying to please (Gal. 1:10; Acts 17:30-31)?

God is patient and merciful toward the wicked — Stop and consider the abundant opportunities God gave Ahab to repent. (1) Ahab could have learned from the fates of previous wicked kings. (2) God sent a 3 1/2 year drought in his nation [1 Ki. 17]. (3) Ahab witnessed the contest at Mt. Carmel [1 Ki. 18]. (4) He heard the preaching of Elijah. (5) Ahab was given victories over the Syrians [1 Ki. 20]. (6) He heard the warnings of Micaiah [1 Ki. 22]. God gave Ahab more chances than he deserved — and so He does with us (2 Pet. 3:9). How many opportunities will we squander before we do what is right (2 Cor. 6:2)? We’re sometimes more like Ahab than we are willing to admit!

A nation’s hope lies in prayer and proclamation of God’s word — When the economy started sagging in Judah, God did not send an economist. When enemies threatened Israel, God did not send them a military genius. When the nation suffered through a severe drought that lasted for ***years***, God did not send a meteorologist. When civil war broke out, God did not send the people an Abraham Lincoln. Each time the nations of Israel and Judah faced a crisis, God sent them a preacher. Mark it: God rules in the kingdoms of men, and the true hope of any nation is found in prayer and the

preaching of God's word (Dan. 4:17; 1 Tim. 2:1-4). Centuries ago God said: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). The ultimate reason why Judah and Israel fell was that they did not obey God's word (Hosea 4:6).

When nations and peoples find themselves in times of crisis today, let the people of God remember history and devote themselves to earnest prayer and bold proclamation of the word of God. It is through the preaching of the Gospel that souls are saved, and it is through the preaching of the gospel that some nation might be saved as well.

—**JB**