

**The God Who Must Be Worshipped**  
**Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**By Ryan Perry**

**Scripture:**

**1 Kings 8:22–26**

*[22] Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, [23] and said, “O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart; [24] you have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day. [25] Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.’ [26] Now therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David my father.*

**Pray**

**Introduction:**

Let me begin by sharing with you a short story about one of my favorite childhood companies. This story comes from the website IndigoDigital.com.

*Before the advent of streaming Blockbuster was a popular video rental store where customers could rent their favorite movies on VHS tapes or DVDs and watch them at home. While it’s hard to imagine having to leave the comfort of your home to rent a movie, at one time in the 1990s and the early 2000s Blockbuster was extremely popular. It was the largest video rental company in the world with over 9,000 stores and over 50 million members. Fast forward 20 years and now there is only one Blockbuster store left in Bend Oregon. **So what happened?***

*While there are many factors that led to their downfall, I want to point out one that seems to be one of the biggest miscalculations in the history of business. Blockbuster made a critical error when it walked away from a deal with Netflix. Netflix wanted to sell its company to Blockbuster for \$50 million in 2000, yes this really happened. Netflix was still a young upstart in those days having only launched its business three years earlier. If the deal went through Netflix would have managed Blockbuster’s online business.*

*Three years after Blockbuster turned down Netflix’s offer, Netflix had more than one million subscribers and by 2006 they had six million subscribers. Then in 2008 the CEO of Blockbuster made a statement where he said in a moment of pride, **“I’ve been frankly confused by this fascination that everybody has with Netflix...Netflix doesn’t really have or do anything that we can’t or don’t already do ourselves.”***

*Two short years later, Blockbuster filed for bankruptcy. And as the story said at the beginning, only one blockbuster still exists today.*

Now, as much as I love sharing this story for the sheer nostalgia of my childhood, this story in many ways parallels what happened in the book of 1 Kings.

But before we get to the specifics of what happened in this book, I want to give you a few quick details about it.

- 1 Kings was originally part of one book that contained both 1 and 2 Kings. And many scholars conjecture about whether or not there was one author or multiple authors, but there seems to be no consensus on who or how many people worked on this book.
- However, what scholars do agree on is that this book could not have existed in its final form before 561 B.C. Because that's when Jehoiakim king of Judah was released from prison and that's the last thing written about at the end of 2 Kings.
- The purpose of 1 and 2 Kings was to provide the readers (especially the original readers) with an understanding of the rise and fall of Israel and its kings, and the fact that God was sovereign over and in control of it all.

So this morning, what we are going to get is the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the story in 1 Kings. And as we look at the big picture of this book it divides up in the following ways:

Part 1: David's last days and Solomons Reign (1 King 1-11)

Part 2: The kingdom of Israel is divided (1 Kings 12-22)

**And to show you how the kingdom was divided, here is a slide that gives you all the kings in 1 Kings, the kingdom they ruled over, and for how long.**

**(Explain the slide)**

But what is more important than who the kings were is that 1 Kings teaches us about who our God is and how he deals with his people.

**It teaches us as of first importance that he is a God who must be worshiped.**

And as the one true and living God who must be worshiped, he blesses those who follow him, he condemns and judges false worship, he forgives those who turn away from sin, and he is ultimately faithful to his promises.

So let's begin our journey in 1 Kings this morning on a positive note by looking at how God blesses those who worship and follow him.

### **1. God Blesses Those Who Worship and Follow Him (1 Kings 3:5-14)**

*[5] At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." [6] And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. [7] And now, O LORD my God, you*

*have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. [8] And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. [9] Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"*

*[10] It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. [11] And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, [12] behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. [13] I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. [14] And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."*

So David, Solomon's father had died, and the kingdom has been firmly established in Solomon's hand. And what we learn very quickly about Solomon is that he is a man who loved God. In fact, the author tells us in verse 3 of chapter 3 that **"Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David."**

Because of this, God appears him in a dream and says, **"ask me for anything and I will give it to you."** Can you imagine someone saying to you "ask for anything you want and I will give it to you?" What would you ask for? A new car? A new house? A billion dollars? To live forever? Perfect health? **The kinds of things that Solomon could have asked for were limitless.**

But he doesn't do that. Instead, he recognizes God's faithfulness to his father David and at the same time sees his own inability to lead the people of Israel in the way that would honor God. **So he asks God for an understanding mind to know good and evil so that he is able to rightly govern his people.**

**Solomon's desire was the welfare of God's people, and by extension the glory of the God who called these people to be a witness of who he is to the surrounding nations.**

As a result, God was pleased with Solomon. And he not only gave him what he asked for, but gave him more in abundance. According to verse 12 he gave him so much wisdom that he would become the wisest man in the world.

This is the wisdom that allowed him to settle the dispute of the two prostitutes in 1 Kings 3:16-28. It allowed him to build and dedicate the temple of God so God could dwell with his people in chapters 5-8. And it allowed his fame to spread across the world so far that the queen of Sheba would come to visit him just to ask him questions in chapter 10.

But God doesn't stop there. He also tells him in verse 13 that he is going to give him what he didn't ask for which includes riches, honor, and length of days.

Now, you might be thinking that I'm getting ready to preach some sort of prosperity sermon where I tell you that if you just pray hard enough or have enough faith that God will bless you and give you all the material things you could ever want. **You want that Ferrarri, well you just need more faith. Don't worry, I'm not going to do that.**

But I am going to say without any hesitation that God blesses those who love him and follow him. Look with me at the following verses:

### **Matthew 6:33**

*[33] But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

### **Luke 18:28–30**

*[28] And Peter said, “See, we have left our homes and followed you.” [29] And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, [30] who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”*

God has blessings for us as his children that not only are eternal, meaning that they will come on that day when we see him face to face in eternity, **but he also has blessings that he wants to give us today.**

Now, I’m not saying that if we have enough faith that God will make our life easy. I can’t even say for sure how God will bless one person vs. another. Scripture doesn’t give us that answer.

But what it does tell us is that we are called to seek God’s kingdom as of first importance. That should be our primary desire and our heartbeat.

And if we do, God’s word tells us that he will continually pour his blessings upon us in such a way that it will be for our present and eternal good.

**So my call to all of us is to be like Solomon was in 1 Kings 3. Desire God’s wisdom and his glory more than your own and believe that he will and does reward those who seek him.**

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But as much as I am pointing out the good parts of Solomons life there is also unfortunately the downfall and the ensuing consequences that come with it.

## **2. God Rightly Condemns and Judges False Worship (1 Kings 11:1-11)**

*[1] Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, [2] from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, “You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. [3] He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. [4] For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. [5] For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. [6] So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. [7] Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of*

*Jerusalem. [8] And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.*

*[9] And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice [10] and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded. [11] Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.*

Man, it seemed like Solomon was doing so well doesn't it. He was loving God, he was full of his wisdom, he built God's temple as the place of worship in Israel, and God was blessing him and building a great kingdom through him.

**Solomon and his kingdom were like blockbuster at the peak of their power when they had roughly 9000 stores and over 50 million members.**

And if all we ever knew about 1<sup>st</sup> kings were chapters 1-10 it would be easy to assume that there was no possible way that Solomon and his kingdom would ever fall. **And as a kid, I thought for sure that blockbuster would never fail, but they did and so did Solomon.**

You see, though Solomon started out loving God with all his heart, somewhere along the line his heart was lured away from God by sin. And instead of loving God with his whole heart he gave his love, affection, and desire over to something else. **Women! And lots of them.**

And these women not only took his heart away from God, but they caused him to sin by building altars to the fake gods of the surrounding nations. All of which was in direct violation of God's commands.

Look with me at Deuteronomy 7:3-4 which the author of 1 Kings loosely quotes:

*[3] You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, [4] for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.*

The people of Israel were not to marry the men or women from other nations because they would make the people of Israel turn away from God, which is exactly what happened with Solomon.

Also in the 10 commandments in Exodus 20:3-6 it says:

*[3] “You shall have no other gods before me.*

*[4] “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. [5] You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, [6] but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

But Solomon allowed there to be many false gods and many carved images in Israel. And they would not only lead him away from the Lord, but would also cause the people to sin in the same way.

And it's not like Solomon didn't know these commands because it says in verses 9-10 of 1 Kings 11 that God had told Solomon twice to not go after other gods. **Solomon was well aware of what he was doing, and he did it anyways.**

The resulting consequences were that God's anger was kindled against him, and he tore the kingdom of Israel from Solomon and his descendants, and divided it in two. Most of the tribe of Israel ended up following Jeroboam I (Northern Kingdom) while only the tribe of Judah followed Solomon's son Rehoboam (Southern Kingdom).

This set in motion a succession of kings in the Northern Kingdom and many in the Southern Kingdom, who rejected Yahweh as their God. And instead worshiped the false gods of the surrounding nations.

**And it set in motion years upon years of wars both between the Northern and Southern Kingdom and many of the surrounding nations.**

Now, as important as it is to understand that God has blessings for us when we love and follow him, this story shows us that it is vitally important that we understand that willfully walking in sin has consequences.

And even though we may never feel the consequences of a kingdom being torn apart, the new testament does give us some clues as to what those consequences might be today.

Look at James 4:1-3

**[1] What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? [2] You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. [3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.**

The consequences of walking in sin may be that it causes fights and division within the body of Christ. Your sin, whether you realize it or not has an effect on the people in your life and I can guarantee that it is not a good one.

But also, James makes it clear that walking in sin hinders your prayer life. Meaning that God may not be answering your prayers because of sin. That's huge.

Or in 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 it says:

***[29] For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. [30] That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.***

Walking in unrepentant sin can have physical consequences on our health. **Now, not all health problems are sin related, but some can be.**

And as we saw in Exodus 20:5 sin can also have an effect not just on the people in your life, but on future generations, as it says ***“God visits the iniquity of the fathers on their children to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation.”***

Lastly, 1 John 3:6 says:

***[6] No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.***

The ultimate consequence for willingly living in sin is that it may become clear that we don't know God and we are not his children. And the only thing left for us is to receive the right punishment for our sin which is an eternal separation from the one true and living God.

So as much as we want to rejoice in and get excited about the blessings that come from following God, we need to learn from the example of Solomon that turning away from God and loving sin more than him is something that is detestable in his sight.

**And if we choose to continually walk in sin, there may be very real consequences that God brings about in our lives as a result. And those consequences might not just be present consequences, but if you don't deal with your sin, they may also be eternal.**

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But if that feels heavy there is hope in 1 Kings. And this hope will be seen in my final two points for this morning.

And the 1<sup>st</sup> one is that if you are walking away from God, he is ready and willing to forgive you if you turn away from sin and turn to him in faith.

### **3. God Graciously Forgives Those Who Turn Away from Sin ( 1 Kings 8:33-34)**

***[33] “When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and if they turn again to you and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house, [34] then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to their fathers.***

This is a very fitting prayer that Solomon prayed for the people of Israel isn't it (**He of course prayed this before he turned away from God**). And if you read all of 1 Kings 8 it almost reads like a prophetic prayer where Solomon somehow understands that at some point in Israel's history that God was going to send his people into captivity.

But the important aspect of these verses and much of his prayer in chapter 8 is that Solomon was praying with the understanding that if God's people recognize their wrongdoing, turn away from evil, and turn to God in true repentance and worship, then he will hear them and forgive them.

And if you think through all that we have been through in the 1<sup>st</sup> 10 books of the Bible there are numerous examples that Solomon would be thinking of where this was true.

- In Genesis God blesses Joseph's brothers after they confess to selling him into slavery.
- In Exodus, God's forgives his people after they repent from the golden calf incident.

- All of Leviticus is pointing to the idea that God wants to forgive his people and dwell with them.
- Or Judges where God is always responding to the cries of his people.
- And lastly, Solomon would have understood God's forgiveness as he surely heard about what happened between David and his mother Bathsheba.

But we can also look to the later part of 1 Kings to see God's grace and forgiveness. And it comes to one of the most unlikely people, King Ahab.

Look with me at 1 Kings 21:20-29.

*[20] Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" He answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the LORD. [21] Behold, I will bring disaster upon you. I will utterly burn you up, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel. [22] And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the anger to which you have provoked me, and because you have made Israel to sin. [23] And of Jezebel the LORD also said, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the walls of Jezreel.' [24] Anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs shall eat, and anyone of his who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat."*

*[25] (There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited. [26] He acted very abominably in going after idols, as the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the people of Israel.)*

*[27] And when Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his flesh and fasted and lay in sackcloth and went about dejectedly. [28] And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, [29] "Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the disaster in his days; but in his son's days I will bring the disaster upon his house."*

The author of Kings makes it clear that king Ahab was the worst king in history of Israel. And because he was an evil and terrible king Elijah is telling him that God is going to bring destruction to him, his whole family, and all his descendants.

**But instead of hardening his heart like Pharaoh in Exodus, when Ahab hears these words, he humbles himself before God and repents.**

And God responds by telling Elijah, not that there wouldn't be consequences for his sin, but that disaster wouldn't come upon Ahab and his kingdom during his reign.

**Do you see how glorious this response from God is? God was willing to have compassion on the worst of the worst kings because he repented and humbled himself before God.**

Now, unfortunately Ahab didn't remain humble and didn't continue to follow God which led to him eventually being killed in battle.

But it should be comforting for us to realize that God will forgive anyone who turns away from their sin and turns to him in faith.



And if this was true in the Old Testament, under the Old Covenant, how much more true is it in the New Testament now that Christ has come and brought with him the New Covenant.

As John writes in 1 John 1:9:

***[9] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

I want to encourage you this morning. If you are struggling with sin and if you are living in a way that you know is contrary to the new life that God has for you in Christ, then I want to call you, like John does, to confession and repentance.

Humble yourself before God, turn away from the sin, and turn to Christ who is our faithful redeemer. And not only receive the forgiveness and acceptance that he has for you, but receive the full blessings of a life well lived for him.

And remember, you are not too far gone, because nobody is far too far gone for God. Instead, he will fully and wholly accept you and forgive you, no matter what you have done, if you turn to him in faith and worship him alone.

So if that is our 1<sup>st</sup> point of hope this morning than this is the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **4. God is a Covenant Keeping God (2 Samuel 7:12, 16)**

##### **2 Samuel 7:12, 16**

***“[12] When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.***

***[16] And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. **Your throne shall be established forever.**”***

Just like God made a covenant with Abraham to make him the father of many nations, he also made a covenant with David. And God told David that he would not only raise up a king that would come from his body (Solomon), but that he would establish his throne and kingdom forever.

And despite Solomon’s sin and the splitting of the kingdom of Israel, God continued to be faithful to his promise to David. Look at these words in 1 Kings 11:36:

***[36] Yet to his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name.***

God is in the process of telling Jeroboam that he is going to make him king of all of Israel. But because of the covenant that God had made with David he said, I am going to give Solomon’s son 1 tribe, the tribe of Judah, so that David’s kingdom will always remain in Jerusalem, the city where God has chosen to make his dwelling place.

Despite all that has happened, and all the sin that Solomon committed that led to the splitting of the nation, God is being faithful to his promise to David.

**And though there are many times in 1 Kings, 2 Kings, and throughout the rest of the Old Testament where it get really dark, and it feels like God might fail to keep this covenant. We know the end of the story.**

We know that God not only kept his promise to David, but he fulfilled it for all time in the person and work of his son Jesus Christ who is our Savior and our forever king. The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, from the tribe of Judah, the line of David.

### **Conclusion:**

And because Jesus is our Savior and King, because he is the promised Messiah, God himself in the flesh, **we, as his people, must worship him.**

And if we do, we have the promise of his present and eternal blessings. But if we don't, we must understand that continually walking in sin and failing to worship him can and does have consequences that can be both present and eternal.

However, there is hope for us that if we come to him, if we confess our wrongdoing, and turn away from sin, then he will forgive us.

And he will do this because he is the promise keeping God who has not only made us his people through his death on the cross.

But he has given us rock-solid promises from his word that we will be his forever, and that he is the one who will help us to turn way from sin, and live in in a way that please him.

As Jesus says in John 10:27–28

***[27] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.***

And in Philippians 2:13 Paul writes

***[13] for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.***

So with these promises in mind, I will close by giving you this admonition.

Love God and worship him with all your might, do all that you can to turn away from sin, and joyfully receive the good blessings that God has for you, in Christ, both in this life and in the life to come.

**Let's Pray.**