

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides (January 9th-16th)

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. What is your favorite Bible story? Why?
2. Have you ever read the books of the Bible that we will be covering? (1 & 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther?) If so, what do you remember about them?

Bible Study Questions

1. If you have been reading in 1st Kings, what have you been learning? What do you notice about God? Who do you identify with? What questions do you have?
2. 1st and 2nd King were written to Jewish exiles who were dealing with a sense of hopelessness. What in the world today most fosters and sense of hopelessness?
3. On Sunday, Pastor Michael talked about a reoccurring theme of God's faithfulness in 1 Kings. Why was this message so important to the Jews in exile? What different does God's faithfulness make in your life?

***The following study features another theme in the life of Solomon apart from the Sunday message**

4. Read 1 Kings 10:1-13 (Note that Sheba is not a God following country)
 - a. Why does it say that the Queen of Sheba was interested in meeting Solomon? Why does Solomon's faith attract her?
 - b. What does she say following her visit with Solomon (vs. 6-9) How has her view of God been impacted?

5. God had promised Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that "*all peoples on earth would be blessed through you*" This same promise/purpose would be applied to his descendants. How is this being fulfilled through Solomon/Israel at this point in their story?
6. What does this story say about our mission of pointing others toward Jesus? What can Solomon teach us about sharing out faith?

January 9th
The Old Testament Challenge: Solomon
1 Kings 1-11

Intro: 1st Kings was written to the people of Israel during their time of exile in Babylon. During that time, they were haunted by many questions. Had they angered God beyond the point of no return? Was it worth continuing in their faith? Was there any hope for the future? It is notable then that early in 1st Kings, we find story after story telling of God's faithfulness to fulfill his promises.

I. God's faithfulness demonstrated through three promises

- **God was faithful to give David a ruling dynasty:** Back in 2nd Samuel 7:11, God promises to establish a ruling dynasty for David. In those days, having a ruling dynasty was in no way assured. God decides that Solomon was fulfill that role, but his rule is challenged by his charismatic older brother. In 1 Kings 1-2, Solomon overcomes several obstacles to establish his position as king. Later in 8:20, Solomon looks back and sees God's hand in brining that about.
- **God was faithful to provide for the building of the temple to be built in Jerusalem:** Back in 2nd Samuel 7:12-13, God promises that David will have a son who will build the temple. Once David is on the throne, God provides a brief period in Jewish history where they experience both political peace and access to resources. In 1 Kings 5-8 we find the story of Solomon taking advantage of the situation and building the temple.
- **God was faithful to bring judgment:** God tells Solomon in chapter 9 that if the people follow the covenant, then they will enjoy great prosperity. But if they reject the covenant, then they will be taken from the land and that the temple would be destroyed. Many Jews regarded God's threats as being empty, only to find themselves facing that exact punishment 300 years later.

II. God's past faithfulness gave his people hope for the future. The Israelites in exile needed this message. God had fulfilled his promises both for blessing and for judgment. In 1 Kings 8, Solomon had prayed for God's restoration if the people would repent and God had acknowledged that prayer. They could therefore have hope that God would be faithful to answer that request.

This message is for us. We live in a world which is marked by instability and chaos. It is easy to become discouraged and to lose sight that God is on the throne. He has promised redemption and his return, and we can trust that it will happen. As a result, we can live with peace and hope regardless of what is happening in our world.

Conclusion