

1 Kings

IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

Welcome

“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, ... the Word of God has been approaching you.”

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the First Book of the Kings using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to the Historical Books* will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don't miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church's criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God's unified plan.



Read Scripture in light of the Church's living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit's guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you'll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself,[†] taking the form of a servant,[‡] being born in the likeness of men.[§] And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.[¶] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,^{||} that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,^{|||} and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure.
14 Do all thi tioning,¹⁵ that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

2:7 emptied himself: The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

2:8 death on a cross: The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

2:9 exalted him: By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

2:10 every knee should bow: An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven ... earth ... under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

2:11 confess: I.e., acknowledge. Included in this open dec

serious that we pur sense of awe at ser the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God's g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu **2:15 pervers** • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

A Thing to Harpagmos (G in the Greek O Occurrences of “robbery”. Its considerable d the leading vi (1) Some, like “something sel

Prepare

Read the Introduction to 1 Kings, paying particular attention to the *Genre and Purpose* of the book, its *Content and Themes* and the *Christian Perspective* on it. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of 1 Kings to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of 1 Kings, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.

Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on 1 Kings as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

For understanding

1. **1:5.** Who is Adonijah? Why is he widely expected to rule as his father's successor? How does Adonijah follow in the footsteps of Absalom in his attempt to gain power? For what does the prominence of these parallels hint that Adonijah is destined?
2. **1:34.** What does anointing involve for the candidate, and who are anointed? Of what is it a sign? Aside from this official rite of installation, in what other contexts does the Bible speak about anointing?
3. **1:37.** To what kind of relationship does Benaiah's statement to David point? What is its foundation? Where else is the same language used?
4. **1:38–40.** How is Solomon's accession to the throne made known to the public? How does the event foreshadow Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday?

For application

1. **1:5.** What has been your highest ambition in life? How much of your mental and spiritual resources have you devoted to it? What have you done in practice to achieve it? How successful have your efforts been?
2. **1:6–8.** What effect have your ambitions had on your family? For example, how have your desires and plans for yourself served either to unite your relatives behind you or to divide them in opposition to you?
3. **1:11–27.** Have you ever had to remind an important person in your life of a significant but unfulfilled promise made to you? How did you try to persuade this person to act on the promise?
4. **1:41–53.** Has someone else's success ever impeded or thwarted your own? How did you choose to respond? How genuine was your response?

Chapter 2

For understanding

1. **2:4.** What is Yahweh's oath to David? In what respect is the Davidic covenant conditional?
2. **2:5.** What relation is Joab to David? How does Joab on several occasions defy the wishes of the king? How do these assassinations dishonor David?
3. **2:17.** What do Adonijah's words to Bathsheba indicate about the queen mother? To what does his request (that Solomon give him Abishag) really amount? In Israel, as in the Near East, what did the passing of the harem of the king to his successor normally mean? What does Solomon detect behind Adonijah's simple request?
4. **Essay: The Queen Mother.** Who is the figure known in Hebrew as the *gebirah*, or "Great Lady"? In Israel, who held the office of queenship, and what were some reasons for that practice? What five considerations give shape and substance to our knowledge of this ancient institution, specifically in the Davidic monarchy? How does the role of the queen mother in the Old Testament lay the groundwork for Mary's role in the New Testament?
5. **2:26.** Who is Abiathar? Why, since he has remained loyal to David for many years, does Solomon strip him of priestly privileges and banish him from Jerusalem? Theologically, of what oracle are these actions a fulfillment?

For application

1. **2:1–4.** Why does David encourage Solomon to be faithful to the covenant? What result does he think Solomon will achieve by doing so? Why should you remain a committed Catholic? What result will occur if you do?
2. **2:5–9.** David wants Solomon to reward those who supported him (Barzillai) but punish those who compromised his reputation (Joab) or who cursed him (Shimei). Why do you think he commissions Solomon to do this rather than doing it himself? Why would you allow a condition to exist without intervening but have someone else deal with it for you later?
3. **2:19–20.** Read the essay "The Queen Mother". How does it influence your relation with Mary, Mother of Jesus? For example, how do you envision Mary: as a young woman, as a maternal personality, as an intercessor on your behalf, as a queen who can command obedience? How does this view affect your relationship with her?

Chapter 3

For understanding

1. **3:2.** What are the “high places”, and what is Israel commanded to do with them? What actually happens to them? For what does this compromise over the strict demands of the Mosaic Law pave the way?
2. **3:4.** What is located at Gibeon at this time? What is the hyperbolic phrase “a thousand burnt offerings” meant to heighten in the reader? If this hyperbole does not mean that the details of the story are legendary, what does it mean? What are some other possible instances of hyperbole?
3. **3:9.** What does the expression “an understanding mind” mean literally? What kind of wisdom does Solomon desire?
4. **3:16–28.** What does Solomon’s brilliant solution to the case of the two harlots confirm? According to St. Augustine, what do the dead child and the living child signify in relation to the Church?
5. **Word Study: Wisdom (3:28).** In reference to men, what does *hokmah* mean? In the moral and spiritual realm, what is wisdom? To whom does wisdom ultimately belong, and how do men come to possess it? Among those endowed with wisdom in the OT, how does Solomon demonstrate wisdom? How do Moses and Solomon compare in the ways they impart wisdom?

For application

1. **3:7.** Have you ever succeeded someone else in a job carrying responsibility? If so, did you feel any unease about your ability to handle it? What did you do to reassure yourself? What part did prayer play in your efforts toward self-confidence?
2. **3:9.** What kind of good and evil do you think Solomon has in mind in his prayer to God? If you are in a position of responsibility, what kinds of good and evil would be important to you?
3. **3:12–14.** Why is the word “if” in v. 14 important? Why would God impose a condition like this on a promise he makes? How do such if-conditions apply to you in the practice of your faith?
4. **3:12.** In Solomon’s dream, God says, “Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind.” How will Solomon later come to know that he has such a mind? How does one acquire the sort of wisdom Solomon has in mind?

Chapter 4

For understanding

1. **4:6.** In what capacity does Ahishar seem to have served the king, and what would it make him in Solomon’s kingdom? For what purpose is forced labor used?
2. **4:7–19.** How does Solomon organize his kingdom? Why do these districts not align with the tribal territories delineated in Josh 12–21? Who is prefigured, according to St. Ephrem, by the 12 district officers appointed by Solomon?
3. **4:21.** Over what does Solomon sit enthroned? Where does its geographical reach extend, and what does it represent?
4. **4:32.** In which ways does Solomon manifest his wisdom? To which biblical writings is his name attached?

For application

1. **4:1–19.** What do you know about the organization of the company for which you work, of the state and nation in which you live, or of the Church to which you belong? As a Christian, what do you think you should know about these things? What are some of the advantages of having a working knowledge of these organizations and some of the disadvantages of being ignorant about them?
2. **4:20–21.** What do you know of Catholic Church history, of the spread of Christianity, of the persecutions it has endured, of the growth and decline of Christendom, and the trials and triumphs arising from the Reformation and the Enlightenment? How can such knowledge be of service to you as you consider the state of the Church today and her prospects for the future? How might it influence your prayer?
3. **4:26.** Read the note for this verse. Why would Solomon be concerned about building up his military during peacetime? What does the Church teach about the accumulation of arms and their production and sale (see CCC 2315–17)?
4. **4:34.** To whom do people of our generation come to learn wisdom? If not to individuals or personalities, what are our sources of wisdom? How is wisdom different from scientific or technological knowledge?

Chapter 5

For understanding

1. **5:1.** Who is Hiram? What does the author indicate about Hiram in saying that he loved David?
2. **5:3.** What made David unsuitable for the task of building the Temple? What does the expression “under the soles of his feet” recall?
3. **5:6.** What makes the cedars of Lebanon ideally suited for monumental construction projects? What are the peoples of Sidon known for being? According to St. Thomas Aquinas, what do the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon signify, and why?
4. **5:13–16.** Whom is Solomon conscripting as laborers? What did the prophet Samuel forewarn would happen if Israel set a king over itself? What does Solomon’s levy of state workers cause to build up?

For application

1. **5:5.** Solomon proposes to do something great for God. What is the greatest thing you can do for him? How would you discern whether your desire is what *he* wants you to do for him?
2. **5:10–12.** What are some of the social benefits of working with others to complete a project? What role might such work play in building up personal friendships?
3. **5:13–18.** When you are asked to participate in a diocesan fundraising campaign (say, to build or repair a church or support ongoing diocesan projects), how do you respond? What is your attitude toward the money you are asked to contribute toward the financial support of the Church?

Chapter 6

For understanding

1. **6:1–38.** Where is Solomon’s Temple built? On what are its main features modeled? What are its architectural characteristics? Historically, how long does Solomon’s Temple stand? Archaeologically, what remains of it, and why is the lack of artifactual confirmation not a sufficient reason to question its historical existence?
2. **6:1.** What considerations make the “four hundred and eightieth year” an important benchmark of biblical chronology? How does it give a fixed point of reference for dating the early history of Israel? How do the perceived conflicts between the biblical timeline and archaeological findings affect scholars’ view of the period between the Exodus and the building of the Temple? To what does the month of Ziv correspond in our calendar?
3. **6:7.** Why are building blocks prefabricated at the quarry? According to St. Thomas Aquinas, what do the Tabernacle and the Temple signify about life?
4. **6:23.** What are the two cherubim? In the view of most scholars, what do they resemble? What is their function here?
5. **6:38.** What is the “month of Bul”? What is the time span of the Temple’s construction? What is the importance of the seven time units mentioned here?

For application

1. **6:11–13.** How would you paraphrase God’s promise to Solomon so that it applies to your own life? What does it mean for God to “dwell” with you? Compare this promise with Jn 15:4–11.
2. **6:14–22.** Note the size and ornamentation of the main Temple building (“the house”), and compare that with a major basilica such as St. Peter’s in Rome. What spiritual values are size and ornamentation meant to symbolize? For example, what might the great height of the ceiling be intended to communicate?
3. **6:23–28.** Read the note for v. 23. What is the function of icons and images of angelic figures in Christian art? How are angels usually represented in Christian art? What do such representations communicate to you?
4. **6:31–35.** What is the natural function of a door? Spiritually speaking, what may a door signify? How may the human heart be compared to a door?

Chapter 7

For understanding

1. **7:1–12.** What does Solomon construct directly south of the Temple, and what public and private buildings does it include? In terms of elevation, what is the relation between the Temple and the royal buildings adjacent to it?

2. **7:14.** How are the craftsman Hiram's wisdom, understanding, and skill similar to those of Bezalel in Exodus 31?
3. **7:15.** What are the pillars of bronze, and what does their function appear to be? What are their names, and how might they have been derived? What is the symbolism of these uprights? Why do some scholars call them stylized trees?
4. **7:49.** What are the lampstands? What does each lampstand look like?

For application

1. **7:14.** What is it that you most admire about a skilled craft worker? What virtues must that person have in addition to "wisdom, understanding, and skill" while working? According to the note for this verse, how might such virtues be considered gifts of the Holy Spirit?
2. **7:23–44.** How is the church you attend both furnished and decorated? What are some of the liturgical implements used there? What are some of the symbolic representations shown there, and what are their meanings? What is the purpose of all these furnishings, decorations, implements, and symbols?
3. **7:48–51.** Why is it appropriate for the house of the Lord to be richly furnished, or at least to *look* well furnished? How would you answer someone who thought that it would be better to sell all these furnishings and give the money to the poor?
4. **7:49.** Read the note for this verse. How many different kinds of candles are used in your church? What is their purpose? What is the function of the sanctuary lamp near the tabernacle?

Chapter 8

For understanding

1. **8:1–66.** How does Solomon stage the events of the dedication of the Temple, and how long after its completion? What highlights does the ceremony include?
2. **8:4.** Where did the Ark of the Covenant reside before being brought into the Temple? Where is the tent of meeting at that point? What does storage of the tent inside Solomon's sanctuary indicate?
3. **8:14–26.** What two themes in Solomon's opening address celebrate the fulfillment of God's word?
4. **8:25–53.** What seven petitions does Solomon make to the Lord in his dedication prayer? In several cases, from what is Solomon requesting deliverance?
5. **8:41.** What does Solomon's prayer envision individual Gentiles doing? Theologically, what spirit does the Temple embody? What is Yahweh being asked to do here, and with what result?
6. **8:63.** What part does Solomon play, as his father, David, did? What do his priestly actions include? How is this in stark contrast to King Saul? In what is the difference rooted, and how is Melchizedek involved?

For application

1. **8:2.** According to the note for this verse, the seventh month is the holiest month in the Israelite calendar. What is the holiest time of the Christian calendar? Why do Christians celebrate feasts in a cycle called the "liturgical year"?
2. **8:9.** This verse says that there was "nothing in the ark except the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the sons of Israel." What do the tabernacles of Catholic churches usually contain? How do those contents reflect the New Covenant that Jesus made with us?
3. **8:27.** What is the response to Solomon's question: Does God dwell on earth, and if so, where? Where is the most fitting place on earth for him to dwell?
4. **8:30–53.** Note how often Solomon asks the Lord to forgive the sins of those who ask for forgiveness. How many requests for God's forgiveness and mercy do we make during a typical celebration of Mass? What is the point of this repetition? How often in your personal prayer do you pray for forgiveness and mercy?

Chapter 9

For understanding

1. **9:4–9.** Of what does the Lord remind Solomon in this second divine encounter? What will faithfulness and apostasy each bring? Theologically, in what sense is the Davidic covenant unconditional and at the same time conditional?
2. **9:11.** Where are the twenty cities that Solomon gives King Hiram of Tyre presumably located? What is unclear about this transaction? How is this gesture taken when compared to Hiram's abundant contributions to Solomon's building projects?

3. **9:15.** To what does the name Millo point? In what two ways do people identify the Millo? What are Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer? What has archaeology revealed about them?
4. **9:28.** Where are possible locations for Ophir? For what was it renowned in biblical times?

For application

1. **9:4–5.** How might the “if” statement in the Lord’s renewed promise to Solomon apply to you? As a Christian, to what promises from God do you look forward? What conditions are attached to them?
2. **9:6–9.** Note that the Lord’s warning of exile and disaster will fall upon the nation if Solomon or his children engage in idolatry. Why would the consequences not fall upon Solomon personally? What consequences do you personally face when you commit serious sin (e.g., sexual or substance-abuse sins)? What consequences are likely to fall upon your family when you commit them?
3. **9:13.** What point is Hiram making by addressing Solomon as “my brother” in his complaint? If you were in Hiram’s position, how would you have spoken? How would 1 Cor 6:1–8 help your relationships with those who cheat, defraud, or simply shortchange you?

Chapter 10

For understanding

1. **10:1.** Where is Sheba, and what kind of empire is it? What may have been the purpose of the queen’s historic visit? How is it clear in the prophecies of Isaiah that the visit serves as a paradigm of Israel’s hopes for the future? How does the queen’s visit figure in the teaching of Jesus?
2. **10:14—11:8.** How do these verses represent a turning point in the Solomon story from both a political and economical viewpoint? Morally, how has Solomon transgressed the three limits placed on kingship by Deuteronomy?
3. **10:14.** If each talent weighs roughly 75 pounds, what does the annual influx of 666 talents equal? What does this figure not include? How does the number 666 appear in the Book of Revelation? How does an allusion to Solomon and his gold and his wisdom seem likely?
4. **10:22.** What are the “ships of Tarshish”? Where is Tarshish?

For application

1. **10:5.** Read the note for this verse about the meaning of “no more spirit”. When something “takes your breath away” (for example, a financial windfall or a “golden opportunity” for fame), are you more or less likely to want to engage with it? How willing, at that moment, are you to consider the ethical, financial, legal, or personal implications of engaging with what you admire?
2. **10:14–15.** How concerned are you about your level of income? How comfortable are you with it, how detached or how desirous of more? How close are you to St. Paul’s attitude in Phil 4:12?
3. **10:16–22.** How have you decorated your home? What message do you communicate to others about yourself in the way your home is decorated? What message do you *want* to communicate?
4. **10:26–29.** Would you consider yourself a spender or a saver? a giver or a hoarder? an investor or a conserver? a showman or a recluse? How do the things you give away or collect describe your character? What do you think is the attitude that God wants you to have toward your possessions, and how well do you reflect it?

Chapter 11

For understanding

1. **11:2.** To what prohibition does this verse refer? What is the rationale for this law? How is Solomon the foremost example of this danger?
2. **11:3.** To what do the numbers seven hundred and three hundred refer? How reliable are these numbers? What kind of marriages were these unions presumed to be? Along the path of salvation history, what does polygamy represent in relation to God’s original design for marriage and to the Old Testament practice? According to St. Augustine, how did Solomon lose the wisdom he desired?
3. **11:5–7.** Who are the foreign gods venerated by Solomon?

4. **11:30.** Why does the prophet Ahijah tear his cloak into 12 pieces? Why did prophets often perform dramatic and symbolic actions? According to St. Cyprian, why can the people of Christ not be torn apart?
5. **11:36.** What does the lamp signify? On what is its signification grounded?

For application

1. **11:2.** Are there relationships to which you cling, even though you know they are not good for you? Why do you cling to them? What might your persistence in those relationships be doing to your faith?
2. **11:8.** According to CCC 1633–37, what is the Catholic Church’s teaching on mixed marriages and marriages involving “disparity of cult”? Under what circumstances may a Catholic enter into such marriages? What is the danger for the Catholic partner in such marriages?
3. **11:9–13.** What do you think might have happened if Solomon had listened to the Lord’s verdict and repented? What might repentance have led him to do? What does Mt 16:25–26 say to you in this context?
4. **11:36.** Read the note for this verse. According to Rev 1:20, what do the lampstands of the seven churches signify? What happens if a lampstand is removed (see Rev 2–3)? How might these images apply to the Church today?

Chapter 12

For understanding

1. **12:1–33.** What do these verses describe? What do the northern tribes of Israel do? Historically, how long will the Northern Kingdom of Israel survive, and how long will the Southern Kingdom of Judah last?
2. **12:15.** Though the division of Solomon’s kingdom is a historical disaster, with what is it in accord? How is Yahweh the helmsman of history? What does the remark by the author of Kings indicate about how God acts in these events?
3. **12:25–33.** What does Jeroboam devise, and by what are his efforts guided? What rival religious elements does he establish? Ironically, to what secular philosophy does Jeroboam bow?
4. **12:28–33.** Whose apostasy does Jeroboam reenact? What are seven parallels between both men? What is the point of the parallels?
5. **Chart: Kings of the Divided Monarchy.** What factors make the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah difficult to reconstruct? What is clear about the two kingdoms from the data in the chart?

For application

1. **12:7.** In your experience, what makes someone a good leader? How does an attitude of service make one a good leader?
2. **12:8–15.** What kind of people should a good leader recruit as advisors? What often happens when a leader recruits advisors who tell him only what he wants to hear? What are some of the moral issues facing advisors who do that?
3. **12:16.** How justified do you think Israel was to break away from the authority of its king and establish its own kingdom? On what grounds? How would you evaluate the conduct of the Israelite rebels in the light of St. Paul’s command in Rom 13:1–3?
4. **12:26–33.** What goal does Jeroboam have in mind by creating places of worship and celebratory feasts? Can you think of any examples from the history of the last hundred years or so where leaders have employed the same strategy?

Chapter 13

For understanding

1. **13:1.** What is a “man of God”? As the following account shows, what is a prophet also responsible for doing?
2. **13:6.** How is the divine authority of the prophet revealed? What does restoring the withered hand of Jeroboam anticipate?
3. **13:19.** How does the prophet fare in his test of obedience? Having delivered the word of God faithfully, in what way is he mistaken?
4. **13:34.** How many kings does the house of Jeroboam produce?

For application

1. **13:7–9.** In this story, the “man of God” utters a prophecy that is validated by two miracles. In addition to the explanation given in the note for v. 8, why else might it have been imprudent for him to accept the king’s invitation and promised reward afterward? What trust would you accord the invitation of a mobster you had criticized?

2. **13:18–19.** What credence should you give a theologian who cites biblical texts and other theologians' opinions for a belief that appears to contradict what you have been taught? How should you form your conscience in such matters?
3. **13:30–32.** Even though he ensnared the “man of God” through a lie and caused his death, the prophet from Bethel honors him in burial. Why? What honor do you owe to an authority figure whose beliefs or practices you oppose?
4. **13:33.** When people continue a pattern of wrongdoing even though they know they risk divine judgment, what motivates them to persist in it? What hinders them from turning away from it?

Chapter 14

For understanding

1. **14:7–16.** According to Ahijah's oracle of judgment, what three forms will the Lord's judgment take? Why will all of this take place?
2. **14:15.** What kind of language are the words “root up” and “scatter”? What does the prophet foresee, and how far in the future is it? What are Asherim?
3. **14:19.** What are the books of the Chronicles? What did scribes record in them?
4. **14:21.** Who is Rehoboam? What facts are noted in the standardized formula used for introducing kings of Judah?
5. **14:23–24.** What activities does the degeneration of religious practice in Judah involve? What does Deuteronomy call for with respect to them?

For application

1. **14:12–13.** Have you lost a child in infancy, or do you know anyone who has? How difficult was the grieving process? Although the death of a child is grievous, why might there be cause for comfort in it?
2. **14:16.** Does God ever give up on you because of your sin? What kind of sin can God not forgive (see CCC 1864)? Even though God forgives the most heinous of sins, why does he still allow the consequences of those sins to play out?
3. **14:22.** This verse indicates a cultural shift away from right religion to its corruption. How do such changes happen over a relatively short period of time? For example, how does the culture reflect the attitudes of its leaders, and how does it in turn shape their attitudes?
4. **14:25–26.** Suppose that an enemy were to raid Vatican City and burn or take away all the treasures in the Vatican library. What do you think would be the long-term effect on the Church's life? Of what do the riches of the Church consist?

Chapter 15

For understanding

1. **15:3.** For what is the “heart of David” the standard? What is the point about David? For the author of Kings, what is it that made David the model king by which his successors are judged?
2. **15:13.** Who is Asherah? What is the brook Kidron? What does Asa's burning of the cult objects at this location anticipate?
3. **15:17.** Where is Ramah? Why does Baasha think there is an advantage to fortifying Ramah? What does the effort to block southbound traffic imply?
4. **15:18.** Who is Ben-hadad? What does his name declare him to be? What is he being bribed to do here? Judging from 1 and 2 Kings, what does the name Ben-hadad appear to be? What is clear and what is questionable about others named Ben-hadad in 1 and 2 Kings?
5. **15:26.** What does the expression “in the way of his father” mean in reference to Nadab? Just as the southern kings of Judah are measured against David's cultic fidelity, how are the northern kings of Israel judged? What is the author's chief interest in this regard?

For application

1. **15:3.** Read the note for this verse. What is the standard by which we should measure our bishops? What about ourselves?
2. **15:13.** Jesus says that he did not come to bring peace, but a sword (Mt 10:34). What does he mean? Has your commitment to his gospel ever caused division in your family? Why might some go so far as to disown their parents (or be disowned by them)?

3. **15:27–29.** Scripture speaks of how the iniquity of the fathers is visited on their children (see Ex 34:7). How do you see that happening in our culture? What are some of the reasons it happens, even though the children are innocent of their ancestors' crimes? How can such a cycle be broken?

Chapter 16

For understanding

1. **Word Study: Over the Household (16:9).** For whom does the expression “one who is over the house” serve as a title? How does it apply to Joseph in the house of Pharaoh or to the monarchies of ancient Israel? What roles do prime ministers play in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah? How may the office possibly have developed over time, and how can an instance of this development be seen in Isaiah? What has archaeology turned up? In the NT, what role does Jesus assign Peter?
2. **16:16.** Who is Omri? What is he like? With what is his memory mainly linked? How is Omri referenced outside the Bible?
3. **16:28.** Who is Ahab? By what are memories of Ahab scarred? How does Scripture judge him? What about him is visible in the end? How is Ahab mentioned outside the Bible?
4. **16:31.** Who is Jezebel, and of what does she make herself the official sponsor? Of whom is she likewise the official enemy, and how is that evidenced? What is one of the main reasons for her downfall? Who is Ethbaal, and what does his daughter's marriage to Ahab suggest? What is Baal, and what do his devotees believe about him?

For application

1. **16:4.** What makes the prophet Jehu's prediction so horrifying to readers of Scripture? Why in most cultures are proper burials so important? How do you wish to be buried, and why?
2. **16:9.** What is Elah doing in this verse, and what does the description of his behavior suggest about his character? What are some of the warning signs that consumption of alcohol has become a problem? What kinds of problems does alcoholism cause in the alcoholic person, in families, and in society at large?
3. **16:31.** Read this verse carefully. Looking back at chap. 12, what were the sins of Jeroboam? Why does the author of Kings imply that Ahab's sins are worse? According to CCC 1868–69, how does one's personal sin make accomplices of others? How does that apply to a country such as ours?

Chapter 17

For understanding

1. **17:1—21:29.** With what do these chapters deal? With what is the narrative punctuated? Where do the high points of his ministry occur? What do many scholars believe about these prophetic traditions? Of whom is Elijah a type? How do his life and ministry anticipate that of Jesus?
2. **17:1.** What does the name Elijah mean? Where is Tishbe? How do drought and famine weigh heavily on Israel? What will the drought show about Baal?
3. **17:14.** What does Elijah promise the widow? According to St. Augustine, why did the miracle happen, and of what was it a sign?
4. **17:21.** What kind of miracle does Elijah perform? What features does it combine? Who else performs nearly identical miracles?

For application

1. **17:13–14.** According to Elijah's instruction to the widow of Zarephath about providing food for him, when was she supposed to feed herself and her child? What kind of faith did that demand of her? How does the Lord test your own faith?
2. **17:18.** Although the widow knew that her son died of an illness, why did she blame the prophet for his death? Why do people sometimes blame God for diseases or deaths in the family? What is their image of God?
3. **17:20.** Is it ever appropriate to get angry with God? If not, why do so many of the prophets and psalms express displeasure with him (e.g., Jer 15:10–18; Ps 89:38–46)? Why does anger at God not necessarily indicate a lack of faith? Ultimately, what should our attitude toward God be in the face of trouble?

Chapter 18

For understanding

1. **18:20–40.** Against whom does Elijah face off? What is the contest staged to determine? Why does Elijah appear to be outmatched and disadvantaged? In what respect is the standoff successful? How does St. Ambrose reason from this event that the words of Christ have power to change the Eucharistic elements?
2. **18:21.** What does Elijah think about Israel's religious convictions? What does he urge the people to do about them?
3. **18:24.** What is Elijah's challenge for Baal as the lord of the storm? What has been known about Yahweh?
4. **18:42.** What happens when Elijah humbles himself before the Lord and prays? According to James, why is the prayer of Elijah effective? What lesson is to be learned from this?

For application

1. **18:21.** What is a "divided heart"? Why is it important not to pray with one (see Sir 2:12, Jas 1:7–8)? What sort of prayer do you think God is most likely to answer?
2. **18:28.** Read the note for this verse. Many saints have beaten themselves with whips and chains to the point of drawing blood. What are some of the differences between their behavior and that of the priests of Baal? Why are the saints not violating Lev 19:28? What forms of self-discipline or mortification does the Church recommend for most people?
3. **18:37–39.** Jesus promises that signs and wonders will confirm the message of the gospel (Mk 16:15–18). What signs and wonders have you seen that confirm his promise? If none, for what kinds of signs and wonders are you looking?
4. **18:42.** Bodily positions are often helpful in prayer. What is the significance of prostrating oneself in prayer, of kneeling, of placing the palms of the hands together, or of praying with the arms in the form of a cross? What posture do you customarily take when you pray?

Chapter 19

For understanding

1. **19:8–18.** In his travel to Mt. Horeb, what parallels indicate that Elijah is following in the steps of Moses? How does the outlook of Deuteronomy shape the author's portrayal of Elijah?
2. **Word Study: Voice (19:12).** What kinds of sounds are indicated by the Hebrew term *qol*? To what voices can it refer? While the voice that Elijah encounters on Horeb is somewhat difficult to interpret, on what adjectives is the traditional understanding based? What is another possible interpretation? How would this latter reading enhance the parallelism between Elijah and Moses?
3. **19:18.** Why is the number seven thousand a surprise to Elijah? How does Paul see this scenario played out in his own day? What does the expression "has not kissed him" mean?
4. **19:19–21.** As an apprentice-in-training to Elijah, what is Elisha doing in bidding farewell to his parents and boiling his oxen and burning their yokes? What is Jesus' purpose in alluding to the calling of Elisha?

For application

1. **19:3.** After his miraculous victory over the priests of Baal, why should Elijah have been afraid of Jezebel and run for his life? What could cause his loss of confidence in God? If you have ever had a similar experience of great success followed by fear of failure, what was behind the latter?
2. **19:4–5.** What is the closest you have come to giving up on God or wishing no longer to live? What happened to renew your confidence in both?
3. **19:8.** Why would Elijah choose Horeb for his destination; in other words, what would the significance of Horeb have been for him? How do you seek to renew your faith when it seems to flag (e.g., through pilgrimages, retreats, conferences, books)?
4. **19:11–13.** How do you discern the voice of the Lord in your life? What characteristics convince you that it is the Lord you are hearing?
5. **19:19–21.** Read the note for these verses. Why would Elijah object to Elisha's going to "kiss my father and my mother", and why would Jesus raise a similar objection to burying one's parents? How long might such delays take? How prompt should your response to God's invitation be?

Chapter 20

For understanding

1. **20:1.** Who is the Ben-hadad referred to here? Without known provocation, what does he do, and how do his aggressive moves against the Northern Kingdom end?
2. **20:23.** In the polytheistic thinking of the ancient world, what influence do local gods have? What do the Syrians assume, and as what does their crushing defeat serve? What tactical consideration is behind getting Israel out of the highlands onto the plain?
3. **20:32.** How does Ben-hadad approach Ahab, and how does Ahab treat him? Why do some consider this an astute political move on Ahab's part?
4. **20:35.** Who are the sons of the prophets? Why does the prophet want someone to strike him?

For application

1. **20:11.** Read the note for this verse. How often do you tend to “count your chickens before they hatch”? Has a “sure thing” ever failed to materialize in your life? Why is trust in God's providence important even when good prospects seem certain?
2. **20:16.** Why do you think the writer of Kings adds the note about Ben-hadad's “drinking himself drunk” at this point in the narrative? How does drink or other substance abuse make a person overconfident?
3. **20:43.** How do you respond when someone corrects you for a lapse of judgment? If you made a much-desired arrangement, and someone warned that it was wrong or sinful, what would you tend to do? How would you respond if that “someone” were God, either directly or through his word?

Chapter 21

For understanding

1. **21:1–16.** With what do these verses deal, and how is Ahab's treachery with Naboth parallel to David's with Bathsheba?
2. **21:3.** In ancient Israel, to whom did ancestral lands belong? What did that mean for the sale of land to one outside one's tribe?
3. **21:7.** What does Jezebel's rhetorical question imply? What model of kingship does Jezebel know? How does the Israelite model of kingship contrast with it?
4. **21:14.** Why would the heirs to Naboth's estate have to be wiped out?

For application

1. **21:1–4.** What is “lust of the eyes”, and what does it have to do with the tenth commandment (see 1 Jn 2:16; CCC 2514)? How does the virtue of purity help to overcome such lusts?
2. **21:11–14.** How guilty of Jezebel's sin are the elders who do as she instructs? Moral theology distinguishes between direct and indirect cooperation in evil (see CCC 1868). How do you understand the difference? What examples can you think of for each?
3. **21:20b.** According to Elijah, to what (or whom) did Ahab sell himself to do evil? When one decides to sin, how is that decision like a choice to sell oneself?

Chapter 22

For understanding

1. **22:3.** Where is Ramoth-gilead? To which tribe does it belong? When might the Syrian conquest of Ramoth have occurred? Who appears to be the king of Syria?
2. **22:8.** Though imprisoned on suspicion of false prophecy, what makes Micaiah the only true prophet among the 400 others? With whom is Micaiah not to be confused?
3. **22:19–23.** Of what does Micaiah describe a vision? Who has access to the divine council? What does Micaiah's vision reveal is happening to Ahab's prophets, and why?
4. **22:41–50.** What kinds of reviews does Jehoshaphat receive in 1 Kings? What is to his credit, and what to his blame?

For application

1. **22:7.** The note for v. 6 suggests why the reliability of the 400 prophets was doubtful, but why do you think *Jehoshaphat* doubted it? What might be some of the warning signs that nearly universal agitation in favor of a course of action should be questioned?
2. **22:13–14.** Of the four cardinal virtues, which does Micaiah demonstrate in resisting pressure to conform? What are some examples of pressures that our society places on Christians to conform to its demands? What should Christians do in response?
3. **22:19–23.** Who is the lying spirit that Micaiah envisions? How is he active in the world today?
4. **22:28.** St. Paul urges Christians not to despise prophecy but to test it. What standard of evaluation is Micaiah using? How else should prophecy be tested?