

November 26 | Sunday

God's Grand Story: Guard Your Heart

Read [Proverbs 4:23](#)



27 | Mon – Bad kings, good kings | Read [2 Chronicles 16:9](#)

Israel had split into two kingdoms. This era is recorded in 1 Kings 15-22, 2 Kings 1-14 and 2 Chronicles 13-34. Israel (northern 10 tribes) was ruled by 19 kings, all who encouraged idol worship. Judah (southern 2 tribes) had 20 kings and 8 of them were good men who led the people back to God. But no matter who the king was, each person could make the choice to follow the true God. If you have made that decision, how do you guard your heart?

28 | Tue – Prophets | Read [1 Kings 18:17-40](#)

During the time of the divided kingdom, God sent prophets to both with the same message: repent and turn back to God. Elijah was one such prophet. His dramatic confrontation with the priests of Baal was a show stopper! Read the results when the people saw God's power unleashed. One takeaway from the story is God can get anyone's attention, no matter how far away from Him they have gone. Do you know someone like that? Don't give up praying!

29 | Wed – Captivity | Read [2 Chronicles 36:15-16](#)

About 200 years after Solomon, the northern kingdom was conquered by the Assyrians who deported most of the Jews and settled their own people there. (Intermarriage with the few remaining Jews resulted in a "mixed breed" called the Samaritans.) A century later, Judah was conquered by the Babylonians who destroyed Jerusalem and killed or exiled much of the population. Willful sin ultimately brings painful discipline. Have you experienced that in your life? How did it change you?

30 | Thu – The first exiles return - Zerubbabel | Read [Ezra 1:1-11](#) and [Matthew 6:33](#)

For God's people, no setback is final. God had a plan and after 70 years of discipline (as Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied) the Jewish people were allowed to return to their homeland. The first group was led by Zerubbabel. The top priority was to rebuild the temple, saying by their actions that worshipping God was the most important thing to restore. In what ways do you prioritize making time for worship?

01 | Fri – More exiles return - Ezra and Nehemiah | Read [Ezra 6:15-16](#) and [8:1-17](#)

Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple but 58 years later the city walls were still in ruins and people had given up. Unprotected physically and also spiritually. God sent Ezra to restore the people by reteaching them God's truths and Nehemiah to rebuild the walls providing protection from their enemies. Once again, God's people were restored to their home and their hearts were filled with joy. Have you ever had an Ezra or an Nehemiah in your life?

02 | Sat – Hard hearts | Read [Ezekiel 36:26](#) and [Matthew 1:20-21](#)

No matter how many times God rescued His people, they kept falling back into sin. It was a heart problem, because all humans are born with a bent, a sinful tendency toward Self being most important than God. The only cure for the sin problem was a self-sacrifice, a totally sinless person paying the death penalty, due to each of us, once and for all. Everything that happened in the Old Testament points to that person, calling him the Messiah. How can the Old Testament set the stage for you to better understand the New Testament?