

### **The Gospel message is for all**

Guided by the Spirit, the disciples learned that the Gospel message was intended for Gentiles too. Through a vision Peter was led to Cornelius, a Gentile whose whole household became believers. The success of the disciples' mission to the non Jewish people caused a dilemma; the problem for the Jewish Christians was not whether Gentiles could be saved but whether they should adhere to the Law of Moses and be circumcised. At a council in Jerusalem (Ch 15) Paul and Barnabas managed to convince them that God had confirmed his acceptance of the Gentiles by anointing them with the Holy Spirit and nothing more was needed. This was a crucial decision for the early church, it avoided a split, and allowed for the Gospel message to spread rapidly throughout the world.

### **Paul**

Acts also describes the story of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus and his missionary adventures taking the gospel out into the Gentile world. Paul, who had once persecuted the early church, faced great danger and suffered much.

Luke ends with a cliff-hanger – Paul is under house arrest waiting to present his case before Caesar - and this has led people to wonder if Luke intended to write a third volume.

### **Key verse**

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (1:8).*

### **The Learning and Growing Team**

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# **Fleet Methodist Church**

## **365**

## **Bible Reading Challenge**

### **WHAT IS IN THE BIBLE READINGS FOR MARCH?**

#### **FIRST BOOK OF KINGS**

##### **Solomon**

Kings begins with the death of King David and the reign of his son Solomon who "excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom", (10:23). His greatest achievement was possibly the construction of the Temple which is seen as his greatest achievement. Unfortunately, Solomon took many pagan wives and concubines who eventually turned his heart away from the Lord to their false gods.

##### **The Kingdom splits in two**

Rehoboam succeeded Solomon and had the opportunity to be a wise, compassionate and just King. Instead he accepted the poor advice of his young friends and attempted to rule with an iron hand. But the people rebelled and the kingdom split with ten tribes in the North (Israel) ruled by Jeroboam and only Judah and Benjamin remaining with Rehoboam. Both kingdoms wove a path through the reigns of corrupt and adulterous kings with only the clear voice of the prophets continuing to call the nation back to God.

## Elijah

Elijah is surely one of the greatest prophets and chapters 17 through 22 feature his conflict with wicked Ahab and Jezebel in Israel. In one of the most dramatic confrontations in history Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel.

### Outline:

1 Kings 1-11 – Solomon becomes King and reigns over a united kingdom.

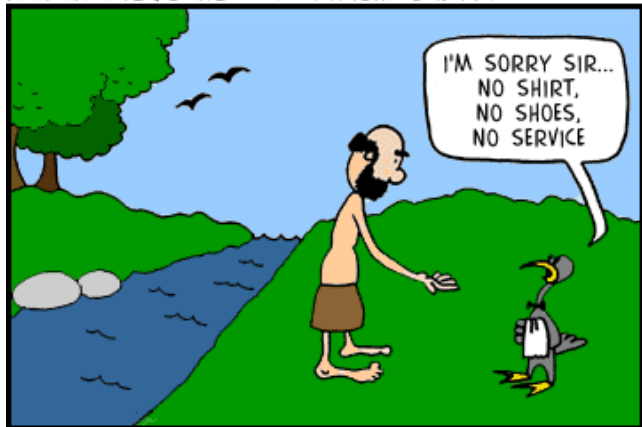
1 Kings 12 – 16 - The Kingdom is divided into North & South

1 Kings 17 -22 – Elijah the prophet

### Key Verse:

*"As for you if you will follow me with integrity and godliness as David your father did, obeying all my commands, decrees and regulations, then I will establish the throne of your dynasty over Israel for ever. For I made this promise to your father, David, "One of your descendents will always sit on the throne of Israel""*

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(See 1Kings 17:4)

07-26-1999

WHEN THE RAVEN BROUGHT ELIJAH FOOD

## THE BOOK OF ACTS

Acts is the longest book of the New Testament and was written by the same person who wrote the gospel of Luke. Although the style, vocabulary and theology of both books are strikingly similar, there is one key difference; in the Gospel Jesus is the central figure whereas in the Book of Acts the church takes centre stage indeed the church is seen as continuing the work begun by Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

### Holy Spirit

The main theme of Acts is the Holy Spirit. The book begins with Jesus' promise of the Spirit, which is fulfilled at Pentecost for the Jews and then later, for the Gentiles. Luke talks about people being filled with the Holy Spirit; (2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, and 52). He equates the Spirit to God; (5:3 and 5:4) and describes how the Holy Spirit directly intervened in Paul's life (16:6-7).



### Peter

The power of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated in the life of Peter. In his Gospel Luke tells us how when Jesus was arrested Peter fled and then returned to find Him. When recognised as one of his followers he denied that he knew him three times, just as Jesus had predicted. In contrast, on the day of Pentecost - filled with the Holy Spirit he runs out into the busy streets of Jerusalem and preaches boldly. 3,000 people believed his message that day and were baptized. By the power of the Spirit he was able to preach, heal and perform many miracles.