

1 Kings

"From United to Divided"

Background Information

1st and 2nd Kings were originally one book. Since the first word in the Hebrew of 1:1 is "king," the books were given the name "Kings." When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the books were divided. Seemingly, the reason for the division was simply due to the length of scrolls.

The author is unknown. Some Jews think Jeremiah wrote it, but some of 2nd Kings occurs after his time. Ezra seems to be the logical author, though the text makes it clear that he used many historical sources to compile these inspired records. (examples: 11:41; 14:19; 14:29)

1-2 Kings were most likely written during the time of exile (mid-500s BC).

Time Covered and Outline

Of the two books of the Kings, 1 Kings covers the least amount of time, but from the close of David's reign to the death of King Jehoshaphat, about 120 years elapse.

Outline

- I. Rise and Splendor of Solomon's Kingdom (1-10)
- II. Solomon's Apostasy; the Kingdom Divided (11-12)
- III. Beginning of Divided Kingdom (13-25)

Five Well-Known Accounts from 1 Kings

Solomon's Temple Prayer (8)
The Queen of Sheba (10)
Rehoboam's Foolishness (12)
Elijah's Victory on Mt. Carmel (17-18)
Naboth's Vineyard (21-22)

Major Themes

God's judgment of sinful nations
Fulfilled prophecies
God's faithfulness to David

The Kings of First Kings

United Kingdom

David (1:1-2:9; 1 Chron. 11:1-29:30)
Solomon (2:10-11:43; 2 Chron. 1:1-9:31)

Northern Kingdom (Israel)

Jeroboam (12:25-14:20)
Nadab (15:25-31)
Baasha (15:32-16:7)
Elah (16:8-14)
Zimri (16:15-20)
Tibni (16:21-22)
Omri (16:21-28)
Ahab (16:29-22:40)
Ahaziah (22:51-53; 2 Kings 1:1-18)

Southern Kingdom (Judah)

Rehoboam (12:1-14:31; 2 Chron. 10:1-12:16)
Abijah (15:1-8; 2 Chron. 13:1-22)
Asa (15:9-24; 2 Chron. 14:1-16:14)
Jehoshaphat (22:41-50; 2 Chron. 17:1-20:37)

God's Character in 1 Kings

Glorious (8:11)

Merciful (8:23)

Awesome (8:27)

Faithful to promises (8:56)

Providence (21:19)

Jesus in 1 Kings

Solomon's wisdom symbolizes Jesus, who "became the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:30). However, Solomon fell into apostasy, while Jesus was able to declare that one "greater than Solomon" was present (Matthew 12:42).

When the Kingdom was glorious and faithful to the Lord, it prefigured the wonderful kingdom of Christ—the Church—to come.

Key Words in 1 Kings

Baal; Canaanite god of fertility and storms; 16:31; 18:19; 19:18; 22:53

Supplication (Hebrew *techinnah*); petitioning God for a specific person or favor; 8:28; 8:33; 8:45; 8:47; 8:52; 8:54; 8:59; 9:3

Name (Hebrew *shem*); literally "to mark;" 1:47; 3:2; 5:5; 7:21; 8:17; 9:3; 11:36; 18:24

Gold (Hebrew *zahab*); 6:21; 6:28; 7:49; 9:28; 10:14; 12:28; 15:15; 20:3

Elsewhere in the World...

At about the time the kingdom divided, the city of Sparta was founded, and Celtic migration found its way to the part of the world we today call Scotland.

Elsewhere in Scripture...

With Solomon dominating this book, many other Old Testament books overlap with 1 Kings. Here are a few:

David's Psalm of Salvation (Psalm 37)	1 Kings 2
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A Psalm for Solomon (Palm 72)	
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Temple furnishings (2 Chronicles 2-7)	1 Kings 9
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Solomon's Psalms (135, 136, 127)	
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Proverbs	
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Song of Solomon	
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Ecclesiastes	
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Further, 2 Chronicles and 1 Kings overlap a tremendous amount (through 2 Chronicles 21).

Obadiah likely gave his prophecy about the time 1 Kings is ending and 2 Kings is beginning