

## Overview of 1 Kings

**Theme:** Like the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings are one book in the Hebrew and were divided into two books when translated into the Greek Septuagint between 300 and 200 B.C. The book of 1 Kings describes Israel's pinnacle of glory and influence in the construction of the temple and the famed wisdom of Solomon. This glory however is short lived and starting in chapter 12, the book describes the division of the unified kingdom into two separate kingdoms. covers the transition of the Hebrew kingdom from David to Solomon through part of the reign of king Ahaziah. This corresponds roughly to 971 B.C. to 841 B.C. The book records the glory of Israel in the construction of the temple and the division of Israel into two kingdoms, the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. In a real sense, the book demonstrates the cost of following the Lord with only half of one's heart. The books of Kings seem to record Israel's history more from God's perspective and Chronicles more from man's.

**Authorship & Date:** The author and date of the book are unknown, but it was likely compiled from a number of sources after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

**Historical Context:** 1 Kings covers the transition from King David to King Solomon (c. 971 B.C.) into the reign of Ahazia (c. 841 B.C.)

### Key Passages:

- 1 Kings 2:3-4 David's charge to Solomon "And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; 4 that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, He said, 'you shall never lack a man on the throne of Israel.'
- 1 Kings 3:3 And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.
- 1 Kings 8:22-53 Solomon's prayer dedicating the temple (longest prayer recorded in Scripture) (some verses to note: 25, 27, 43, 46, and 48)
- 1 Kings 11:4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal o the Lord his God, as *was* the heart of his father David.
- 1 Kings 13:2 – prophecy concerning Josiah (who has yet to be born)
- 1 Kings 17-19 The story of Elijah (not including his translation which is in 2 Kings 2)
- 1 Kings 19:18 "Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." (The Lord speaking to a scared Elijah)

### Broad Outline for 1 Kings

- I. The Reign of Solomon (1:1-11:43)
  - A. Transition from David to Solomon (1:1-2:12)
  - B. Solomon Establishes His Authority (2:12-46)
  - C. Solomon's "hearing heart" (chapter 3)
    1. God grants Solomon wisdom (3:1-15)
    2. Solomon demonstrates his wisdom (3:16-28)
  - D. Solomon's Administration (chapter 4)
  - E. Temple Construction (chapters 5-7)
  - F. Temple Dedication (chapter 8)
  - G. Solomon's Wealth and Glory (chapters 9-10)
  - H. Solomon's Decline (His Achilles Heel) (chapter 11)
- II. The Divided Kingdom-Early years (12:1- 16:28)
  - A. Division of the Kingdom, Rehoboam and Jeroboam (12:1-14:31)

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- B. Kings of Judah: Abijah and Asa (15:1-24)
- C. Kings of Israel: Badab, Baashah, Elah, Zimri, and Omri (15:25-16:28)

- III. The Divided Kingdom – Period of Alliance between Judah and Israel (16:29 – 22:53 through 2 Kings 9:37)
  - A. Ahab and Elijah Messages to Israel 16:29-22:40
  - B. King of Judah – Jehoshaphat (22:41-50)
  - C. King of Israel – Ahaziah (1 Kings 22:51-2 Kings 1:18)

### Food for Thought in 1 Kings (part 1)

1. What does God offer to Solomon in 1 Kings 3 and why does he make that offer?
2. What does Solomon ask for and how does God respond? What conditions come with the gift?
3. The story of the two women who come to Solomon (1 Kings 3:16-28) confirms that he has been granted great wisdom. How would you describe the way King Solomon responds to this incident?
4. The crowning achievement of Solomon's reign was construction of the temple in Jerusalem (chapters 5-9). Why do you think this passage contains significant description about the temple, its furnishings and the means of construction?
5. Solomon's dedication prayer in 8:22-53 is the longest written prayer in scripture. Read through this prayer and identify significant thoughts in the prayer for the occasion and general truths we should apply in our own prayer lives.
6. One of the more profound stories in 1 Kings is that of the unnamed prophet in 1 Kings 13.  
  
Why do you think God sent a prophet from Judah into Israel to give king Jeroboam God's prophetic message and why would God command the man not to eat while in Israel?  
  
It seems unfair that the prophet who faithfully delivered God's message was killed while the prophet who lied did not. How does this lesson help us understand the importance of following the Lord's commands and the impact we have in the lives of other believers?
7. The death of a child is always difficult to understand. What insight does the prophecy of Jeroboam's family and particularly his son (14:13) provide to at least some of these tragedies?

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8. Ahab is an interesting character in Scripture. How would you describe Ahab based upon the following passages in 1 Kings (16:29 – 22:40).?
  
9. With the possible exception of Moses, Elijah may be the most prominent of the Prophets and he never wrote a book. The stories of Elijah all occur during the reign of king Ahab. What does the fact that Elijah serves during the reign of Ahab as described in 16:30 and 21:25-29 tell us about God?
  - a. Why did the Lord send Elijah to the widow of Zarephath in the country of Sidon? (1 Kings 17:1-16, Luke 4:24-26)
  - b. How could Elijah be so bold before the 450 prophets of Baal and another 400 prophets of Asherah (18:1, 17-46)? In light of this, why do you think Elijah ran from Jezebel (19:1-10)? How does the picture of Elijah match with your experience in your Christian walk?
  - c. The way God deals with Elijah in 19:11-18 gives insight into how God deals with us during difficult times. List each “event” God used in showing Himself to Elijah and consider what point God was working in this revelation.
  
10. Ahab’s response to Elijah’s rebuke concerning Naboth’s vineyard is surprising (1 Kings 21:25-29). Why do you think God shows mercy to Ahab from this response?

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Kings of Judah (Southern Kingdom)						
King	Good or Evil	Length of Reign	Kings Passages	Chronicles Passages	Prophet(s)	Remarks/Observations
Saul	G-E	42				
David	G+	40				
Solomon	G-	40	1 Ki 1:1-11:43			Solomon's 4 <sup>th</sup> year is 480 years after the exodus (1 Ki 6:1)
Rehoboam	E	17				
Abijah		3				
Asa		41 (3)				
Jehoshaphat		25 (5)				
Jehoram		8				
Ahaziah		1				
Queen Athaliah		6				
Joash		40				
Amaziah		29 (23)				
Azariah		52 (11)				
Jotham		16 (9)				
Ahaz		16 (14)				
Hezekiah		29 (11)				
Manasseh		55				
Amon		2				
Josiah		31				

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Kings of Judah (Southern Kingdom)						
King	Good or Evil	Length of Reign	Kings Passages	Chronicles Passages	Prophet(s)	Remarks/Observations
Jehoahaz		3 mo				
Jehoiakim		11				
Jehoiachin		3 mo				
Zedekiah		11				

Kings of Israel (Northern Kingdom)						
King	Good or Evil	Length of Reign	Kings Passages	Chronicles Passages	Prophet(s)	Remarks/Observations
Jeroboam I	E	22				
Nadab	E	2				
Baasha	E	24				
Elah	E	2				
Zimri	E	7 days				
Tibni	E	6 (6)				
Omri	E	12				
Ahab	E	22				
Ahaziah	E	2				
Jehoram (Joram)	E	12				
Jehu	E	28				
Jehoahaz	E	17				

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Kings of Israel (Northern Kingdom)						
King	Good or Evil	Length of Reign	Kings Passages	Chronicles Passages	Prophet(s)	Remarks/Observations
Jehoash	E	16 (11)				
Jeroboam II	E	41				
Zechariah	E	6 mos.				
Shallum	E	1 mo.				
Menahem	E	10 (10)				
Pekahiah	E	(2)				
Pekah	E	20				
Hoshea	E	9				Israel falls in 722 – pretty solid historic date.