

Studying 1st Kings

Why study 1st Kings? The narration of the relationship between God and the kings of Judah and Israel contains many lessons on the consequences of obedience and disobedience to God and His covenants. In the pages of 1st Kings we discover that God remains loyal to His covenant promises, specifically the Davidic covenant, but God punishes those who are wicked, who worship other Gods and who walk away from Him.

The books of 1st and 2nd Kings were originally one book but were separated into two when the Greek OT, the Septuagint was produced in approximately 250 BC. Succeeding translations of the OT have kept the division into two books. These books cover the period of Israel's royal history from the death of king David, 971 BC to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the Babylonians in 586 BC. After the record of the death of David, the narration of these books covers the rules of Solomon and then twenty kings each of the divided kingdoms of Judah to the south and Israel to the north. The southern kingdom Judah was destroyed in 586 BC and the northern kingdom Israel was destroyed in 722 BC. Much has been made of the reconciling of the dates of the rules of these kings. But many of these kings ruled concurrently with their sons who would be their heir to the throne. These overlapping years help to reconcile the difficulties in accurately establishing the length in years of each kingly rule. Refer to the chart of the kings below.

The main themes of the books of 1st and 2nd Kings are (1) the consequences of disobedience to God's covenant commands. (2) the sovereignty of God and His loyal love to His covenant promises.

Basic Outline

Rule of Solomon Chapters 1-11

Rulers of the Divided Kingdoms Chapters 12-22

Survey of 1st Kings

The first eleven chapters of the book 1st Kings contains the story of the death of king David and the ascension to the throne of David's son Solomon. Solomon was gifted with great wisdom from God and also great wealth. In the beginning of his reign, Solomon was obedient to God. But the lure of wealth and women soon divided Solomon's heart and the latter days of his rule was wrought with wickedness and idolatry. During Solomon's reign, Israel was a unified nation enjoying peace and great prosperity. Solomon's luxurious and wealthy lifestyle was obtained by his shrewd business dealings with other nations and also by heavy taxation and by forced labor of his own people.

Following the death of Solomon in 931 BC, his son Rehoboam refused the cry of the people to relieve the burden upon them of heavy taxation and forced labor. This led to the people of the ten northern tribes to appoint Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, to be their king. From then on, the nation was divided, Judah in the south and Israel in the north. Rehoboam assembled 180,000 warriors with the desire to fight against the newly established northern kingdom. But God spoke through Shemaiah to tell Rehoboam that this division of the kingdom was from God and the king's army was not to fight against their relatives. Following this account in chapter 12, the remainder of 1st Kings is an account of the acts of the kings both in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

The latter half of chapter 12 to the mid-point of chapter 14 is the account of the wickedness of king Jeroboam of Israel. The latter half of chapter 14 is the account of the wickedness of king Rehoboam, Solomon's son. One consequence of his wickedness is that God allowed the army of Egypt to come to Jerusalem and plunder the treasures of the king's house. Chapter 15 is the account of the reigns of Abijah and Asa in Judah and the reigns of Nadab and Baasha in Israel. Chapter 16 is the account of the reigns of Elah, Zimri, Omri and Ahab in Israel.

Chapters 17 to 19 is the narration of the acts of Elijah the prophet of God. These acts include the well-known stories of the raising from the dead of the son of the widow from Zarephath, the defeat of the prophets of Baal on mount Carmel, the ending of the three-year drought and the calling of Elisha to succeed Elijah as prophet. Chapters 20:1 to 22:40 is an extended account of the rule of wicked king Ahab and his wife Jezebel in Israel.

including Ahab's evil acquisition of the vineyard of Naboth. Chapter 22:41-50 is the short account of the life of king Jehoshaphat of Judah who was one of a very few good kings. The book of 1 Kings ends with the brief account of king Ahaziah, the son of Ahab. The last verse of the book of 1st Kings, regarding Ahaziah could be understood as summary of the whole book, *"He served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the LORD, the God of Israel to anger in every way that his father had done."* 1 Kings 22:53 (ESV).

Chart of kings of Judah and Israel

Kings of Judah			Kings of Israel		
Name	Dates BC	Scripture	Name	Dates BC	Scripture
Rehoboam	931-913	1 Kings 11:42-14:31 2 Chronicles 9:31-12:16	Jeroboam	931-910	1 Kings 11:26-14:20 2 Chronicles 9:29-13:22
Abijah	913-911	1 Kings 14:31-15:8 2 Chronicles 13:1-22	Nadab	910-909	1 Kings 15:25-28
Asa	911-870	1 Kings 15:8-24 2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14	Baasha	909-886	1 Kings 15:27-16:7 2 Chronicles 16:1-6
Jehoshaphat	873-848	1 Kings 22:41-50 2 Chronicles 17:1-20:37	Elah	886-885	1 Kings 16:6-14
Jehoram	853-841	2 Kings 8:16-24 2 Chronicles 21:1-20	Zimri	885	1 Kings 16:9-20
Ahaziah	841	2 Kings 8:24-9:29 2 Chronicles 22:1-9	Tibni	885-880	1 Kings 16:21-22
Athaliah (Queen)	841-835	2 Kings 11:1-20 2 Chronicles 22:1-23:21	Omri	885-874	1 Kings 16:15-28
Joash	835-796	2 Kings 11:1-12:21 2 Chronicles 22:10-24:27	Ahab	874-853	1 Kings 16:28-22:40 2 Chronicles 18:1-34
Amaziah	796-767	2 Kings 14:1-20 2 Chronicles 25:1-28	Ahaziah	853-852	1 Kings 22:40 – 2 Kings 1:18 2 Chronicles 20:35-37
Azariah (Uzziah)	792-739	2 Kings 15:1-7 2 Chronicles 26:1-23	Jehoram	852-841	2 Kings 3:1-9:25 2 Chronicles 22:5-7
Jotham	750-731	2 Kings 15:32-38 2 Chronicles 27:1-9	Jehu	841-814	2 Kings 9:1-10:36 2 Chronicles 22:7-12
Ahaz	735-715	2 Kings 16:1-20 2 Chronicles 28:1-27	Jehoahaz	814-798	2 Kings 13:1-9
Hezekiah	715-686	2 Kings 18:1-20:21 2 Chronicles 29:1-32:33	Jehoash	798-782	2 Kings 13:10-14:16 2 Chronicles 25:17-24
Manasseh	697-642	2 Kings 21:1-18 2 Chronicles 33:1-20	Jeroboam II	793-753	2 Kings 14:23-29
Amon	642-640	2 Kings 21:19-26 2 Chronicles 33:21-25	Zechariah	753	2 Kings 14:29-15:12
Josiah	640-609	2 Kings 22:1-23:30 2 Chronicles 34:1-35:27	Shallum	752	2 Kings 15:10-15
Jehoahaz	609	2 Kings 23:31-33 2 Chronicles 36:1-4	Menahem	752-742	2 Kings 15:14-22
Jehoiakim	609-598	2 Kings 23:34-24:5 2 Chronicles 36:5-7	Pekahiah	742-740	2 Kings 15:22-26
Jehoiachin	598-597	2 Kings 24:6;16 2 Chronicles 36:8-10	Pekah	752-732	2 Kings 15:27-32 2 Chronicles 28:5-8
Zedekiah	597-586	2 Kings 24:17-25:30 2 Chronicles 36:11-21	Hoshea	732-722	2 Kings 15:30-17:6

Verses to memorize from 1st Kings.

3:11-12 God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, 12 behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.

4:29-30 God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, 30 so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

8:10-11 When the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.

8:22-23 Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, 23 and said, "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart.

9:3 The Lord said to him, I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.

11:6 Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done.

Resources for studying the book of 1st Kings.

See the article on how to study the Bible for suggestions on the method of Bible study and recommended resources to obtain. Suggested commentaries and studies are listed below for a more extensive study. Some are available on-line in a pdf format.

One Hour – One Book

Scroll down to video on 1st and 2nd Kings

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSrCJNW5eUWQMyVw_2VqW_w

Commentaries

Constable, Thomas. *Notes on 1 Kings*, latest edition. Online at Plano Bible Chapel.

House, Paul R. *1, 2 Kings*, New American Commentary, Broadman & Holman, 1995.

Hubbard, Robert L. Jr. *First and Second Kings*, Everyman's Bible Commentary, Moody, 1991.

Patterson, R. D. and Hermann J. Austel. *1 & 2 Kings*, Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 4, Zondervan, 1988.

Shields, Harry E. *1 Kings*, The Moody Bible Commentary, Moody Publishers, 2014.

Wiseman, Donald J. *1 and 2 Kings*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, InterVarsity, 1993.

Studies

Allen, Ronald B. *Elijah the Broken Prophet*. Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 22:3 (1979):193-202.

Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. *Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook*. Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis series. Kregel Publications, 2006.

Davis, John J. and John C. Whitcomb. *Israel: From Conquest to Exile*, BMH, 1989.

Hanna, Kenneth G. *From Moses to Malachi: Exploring the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Edited by Roy B. Zuck. CrossBooks, 2014.

Heater, Homer Jr. *A Theology of Samuel and Kings, A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, Moody Publishers, 1991. Pages 115-155.

Howard, David M., Jr. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*. Moody Press, 1993.

Mayhue, Richard L. *False Prophets and the Deceiving Spirit*. Master's Seminary Journal 4:2 (Fall 1993):135-63.

Spencer, James. Messianism in 1 & 2 Kings, *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy*, Moody Publishers, 2019, pages 411-423.

Swindoll, Charles R. *Elijah: A Man of Heroism and Humility*. Word Publishing, 2000.

Thiele, Edwin R. *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Wood, Leon J. *Elijah, Prophet of God*. Regular Baptist Press, 1968.

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