



Overview for 1 Kings

Purpose: The Book of 1 Kings recounts significant events in Israel's history from the close of King David's reign through the deaths of Ahab and Jehoshaphat. It also contrasts the lives of those who lived for God and those who failed to do so.

Author: The Jewish Talmud says that Jeremiah wrote the Books of Kings, possibly assisted by other prophets. Some scholars believe that Ezra and the priests compiled the information contained in the books.

Date Written: Sometime after 561 B.C.

Setting: At the beginning of 1 Kings, Israel is one great nation. The Book records the nation's division into Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and Judah (the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the Southern Kingdom). The nation was also divided spiritually, with Israel going into idolatry first under Jeroboam, and Judah following God intermittently, depending on whether or not they had a righteous king.

Key People: David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, the Queen of Sheba, Elijah, Ahab, Jezebel

Summary: It is believed that the Books of 1 and 2 Kings were originally all one Book. It was first separated into two books in the Septuagint, the earliest translation of the Old Testament. The first division in Hebrew Scriptures is found in the Rabbinic Bible of 1517. The time frame of both books together is about 450 years.

The Book of 1 Kings forms a direct continuation of the two Books of Samuel. It recounts events of 119 years, beginning with some final events of King David's reign, and continuing with Solomon's reign, and the building of the temple (1 Kings 1:1–11:43). It then records the division of the kingdom, and the rule of various kings of Judah and Israel (1 Kings 12–22).

On several occasions, kings encounter a prophet or prophets. Chapters 17 through 22 feature the conflict of Elijah the prophet with Ahab and Jezebel, the rulers of Israel. As well as its religious and theocratic lessons, 1 Kings gives invaluable facts as to the character, conduct, and customs of the kings and people during this period. The insight into the religious, military, and civil institutions of the people, their arts and education, their resources, commerce, and exploits is clear and instructive. Their alliances with other people, the causes of their moral degradation, and their downfall from one nation are also documented.

The first portion of this Book contains a study of the end of the reign of King David, who extended the borders of the kingdom. However, it was Solomon, his son and successor, who developed the economic prosperity of Israel (1 Kings 10:23). This book also covers the golden age of the fine arts in Israel. Several of the books of the Old Testament were written during this period—Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The worship of God reached an all-time high during the reigns of David and Solomon, which was never to be attained again in Scripture. This worship, however, began to collapse during Solomon's rule. The seeds of the fall of Israel were sown. 1 Kings 11:1-8 describes the weaknesses of Solomon.

The Book of 1 Kings is a history that was written from a theological viewpoint with a specific purpose in mind. The author understood that Israel's covenant with God went back to the time of Abraham and that Israel was given the privilege to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This, however, carried with it a great responsibility. The kings of Israel and Judah were judged on the basis of whether they obeyed the laws of the covenant.

Timeline

Many of these dates are approximate, as reference materials differ.

David is made king 1010 B.C.		The Temple is finished 959		Asa is made king of Judah 910		Jehoshaphat is made king of Judah 872	Ahab dies 853
	Solomon is made king 970		Shishak invades Jerusalem 925		Ahab is made king of Israel 874		Benhadad attacks Samaria 857
			The kingdom is divided 930		Elijah begins his ministry 875		

Outline

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A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

- I. The reign of Solomon (1:1 — 11:43)
 - A. The ascension of Solomon (1:1 — 2:12)
 - B. The judgments of Solomon (2:13-46)
 - C. The wisdom of Solomon (3:1-28)
 - D. The administration of Solomon (4:1-34)
 - E. The work of Solomon (5:1 — 8:66)
 - F. The splendor of Solomon (9:1 — 10:29)
 - G. The apostasy of Solomon (11:1-40)
 - H. The death of Solomon (11:41-43)
- II. The reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel (12:1 — 22:53)
 - A. The division of the kingdom (12:1-24)
 - B. The reign of Jeroboam of Israel (12:25 — 14:20)
 - C. The reign of Rehoboam (14:21-31)
 - D. The reign of Abijam (15:1-8)
 - E. The reign of Asa (15:9-24)
 - F. The reign of Nadab of Israel (15:25-31)
 - G. The reign of Baasha of Israel (15:32 — 16:7)
 - H. The reign of Elah of Israel (16:8-14)
 - I. The reign of Zimri of Israel (16:15-20)
 - J. The reign of Omri of Israel (16:21-28)
 - K. The reign of Ahab of Israel (16:29 — 22:40)
 - L. The reign of Jehoshaphat (22:41-50)
 - M. The reign of Ahaziah of Israel (22:51-53)