

## ***Intro to the Books of Kings***

Originally one book in Hebrew Bible (as was the case with Samuel and Chronicles), but divided in LXX into two to accommodate the inclusion of vowels in the Greek version. The LXX called the books of Samuel the “First and Second Books of Kingdoms,” and designated 1 and 2 Kings as the “Third and Fourth Books of Kingdoms”). The Latin Vulgate replaced the word “Kingdoms” with “Kings.” The KJV called them *1 & 2 Samuel* and *1 & 2 Kings*.

The Book(s) of Kings covers the entire period from the death of David to the death of the nation—which took place in stages: 1) the division of the kingdom, in Rehoboam’s time; 2) The fall of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) in 722 BC; and 3) The captivity of the Southern Kingdom (Judah) in three waves 605, 597 and 586 BC. Notably, the record begins with the building of the temple, and ends with the burning of the temple. This history largely parallels that of 2 Chronicles.

### ***Purpose of the Books of Kings:***

To teach that Israel’s national fortunes are directly tied to their loyalty or disloyalty to the covenant under which they came into being, and to demonstrate the sovereign providence of God in raising up and bringing down rulers. Thus, prophets of Yahweh (notably Elijah and Elisha) play a role in the fortunes of the nations at least as important (if not more so) as that of the kings themselves.

### ***Authorship and Time of Writing:***

Jewish tradition assigns various portions to Jeremiah. He lived long enough to see the fall of Jerusalem (586 BC), but not long enough to see the return of the exiles (beginning 538 BC). There are near-identical, parallel portions of 2 Kings (24:18—25:30) and the Book of Jeremiah (52:1-34). The author had access to at least three source documents—

1. The Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41)
2. The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (17 references)
3. The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (17 references)

### ***1 Kings is divided exactly in half:***

- A. The reign of Solomon (chs. 1-11)
- B. The divided kingdom (chs. 12-22)

***The main division in 2 Kings*** is at ch.17 (the fall of the Northern Kingdom)

***The Northern Kingdom*** lasted 254 years and had 19 kings (all bad);

***The Southern Kingdom*** survived an additional 135 years and had 20 kings (some good, but mostly bad)

### ***The prominence of the prophets:***

The ministries of Elijah (in 1 Kings) and of Elisha (in 2 Kings) span 20 of the 47 chapters in Kings. In addition: Ahijah, Jehu, Micaiah, Jonah, Isaiah, and four unnamed, a prophetess named Hulda, 100 prophets hidden in caves, and “sons of the prophets” in Bethel, Jericho and Gilgal.

### ***Outline of the two books of Kings:***

- I. The reign of Solomon (1 Kings 1-11)
  - A. Solomon’s established as David’s successor (chs.1-4)
  - B. The temple and other projects constructed (chs.5-9)
  - C. Solomon’s wisdom and wealth celebrated (ch. 10)
  - D. Solomon’s fall (ch.11)
- II. The divided kingdom (1 Kings 12—2 Kings 17)
  - A. Revolt against Rehoboam and the rise of idolatry (1 Kings 12)
  - B. First prophetic warning (1 Kings 13)
  - C. Successive kings in both kingdoms, till Ahab (chs.14-16)
  - D. Elijah (and Micaiah) minister until the death of Ahab (chs.17-22)
  - E. Ahaziah is denounced by Elijah, and dies (2 Kings 1)
  - F. The ministry of Elisha (chs.2-8)
  - G. Jehu’s rebellion and purge of Ahab’s family (chs.9-10)
  - H. The usurping queen Athaliah (ch.11)
  - I. Rotten kings in Israel; some good and some bad in Judah (chs.12-16)
  - J. The fall of the northern kingdom (ch.17)
- III. The surviving kingdom of Judah (2 Kings 18-25)
  - A. Hezekiah’s godly reign (chs.18-20)
  - B. Wicked reigns of Manasseh and Amon (ch.21)
  - C. Josiah’s reforms (ch.22-23:30)
  - D. The final evil rulers of Judah (23:31—ch.24)
  - E. Judah falls to Nebuchadnezzar (ch.25)
- IV. Epilogue (2 Kings 25:22-30)