

The importance of the whole of Scripture - 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 Romans 15:4

LITERARY OVERVIEW

Title: 1 Kings, originally one book together with 2 Kings. In the Septuagint, they were titled “3rd and 4th Kingdoms” (together with 1 and 2 Samuel).

Author: Unknown for certain, traditionally Jeremiah.

Period Covered: From the reign of the sons of Ahab (in a divided kingdom) to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Purpose/Plot: To answer the question “what happened?” for those in exile of Israel (in Assyria) and Judah (in Babylon). There is clearly a spiritual agenda to point to the reasons for which the people of God are in such trouble. Yet, it is also to give hope that in the midst of such a difficult history that God is sovereign, is working, and is keeping His promise to eventually give a Davidic King.

The book of Kings is ultimately answering the question, “In light of God’s covenant with Abraham [the land] and with David [an everlasting throne], how did all of this happen to us?” The answer: God has not failed his people; his people, led by their kings, have failed their God. – Gordon Fee

Main Characters: The kings of Judah and Israel, the prophet Elisha, the three great reformers Joash, Hezekiah and Josiah. It is important to understand that many of the prophetic writings were written during this time period, and are evidence of God’s ongoing engagement with His people in warning them.

Form/Genre: Historical narrative with a full array of stories from poetic justice, child savior, stories of war, etc.

Challenges: Not getting swallowed up with the overwhelming amount of kings listed. Not allowing oneself to become numb to the repetition of phrases such as “_____ did evil in the sight of the Lord.”

Lessons: The influence for good or ill of leadership established by God. The faithfulness of God to His Word (of blessing and cursing) and to His promise (to David in Christ). The unpredictable nature of God’s responses to human circumstances. The “wildness” of God’s working.

OUTLINE¹

- I. The Death of **Ahaziah** [king of Israel, son of Ahab] (1:1–18)
- II. **Elisha** and Israel (2:1–10:36) [*clearly, this size of this section is for narrational emphasis*]
 - A. Elijah gives way to Elisha (2:1–25)
 - B. Elisha and the conquest of Moab (3:1–27)
 - C. Elisha’s miracles (4:1–44)
 - D. A Syrian [Naaman] is healed (5:1–27)
 - E. Elisha and Syria (6:1–23)
 - F. The siege of Samaria (6:24–7:20)
 - G. The Shunammite’s land restored (8:1–6)
 - H. Hazael murders Ben-hadad (8:7–15)
 - I. Jehoram and Ahaziah (8:16–29)
 - J. The end of Ahab’s house (9:1–10:17)
 - K. Jehu destroys Baal worship (10:18–36)
- III. **Joash** (11:1–12:21)
- IV. Jehoahaz and Jehoash (13:1–25)
- V. Amaziah, Jeroboam II, and Azariah (14:1–15:7)
- VI. Israel’s Last Days (15:8–31)
- VII. Jotham and Ahaz (15:32–16:20)
- VIII. The End of Israel (17:1–41) [*extended commentary on the reason for God’s judgment*]
- IX. **Hezekiah** (18:1–20:21)
- X. Manasseh and Amon (21:1–26)
- XI. **Josiah** (22:1–23:30)
- XII. The End of Judah (23:31–25:30)

Good	Bad	Mixture of good and bad
Kings of Israel		
Kings of Judah		
Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:25–33)		Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:21–31)
Nadab (1 Kings 15:25–31)		Abijam (1 Kings 15:1–8)
Baasha (1 Kings 15:33–16:7)		Asa (1 Kings 15:9–24)
Elah (1 Kings 16:8–14)		Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:41–50)
Zimri (1 Kings 16:15–20)		Jehoram (2 Kings 8:16–23)
Omri (1 Kings 16:21–27)		Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:25–29; 9:29)
Ahab (1 Kings 16:29–33)		Athaliah (2 Kings 11) queen
Ahaziah (1 Kings 22:51–53; 2 Kings 1)		Joash (2 Kings 12)
Joram (Jehoram) (2 Kings 1:17; 3:1–9)		Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1–22)
Jehu (2 Kings 9:30–10:36)		Azariah (Uzziah) (2 Kings 15:1–7)
Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:1–9)		Jotham (2 Kings 15:32–38)
Jehoash (2 Kings 13:10–25)		Ahaz (2 Kings 16)
Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:23–29)		Hezekiah (2 Kings 18–20)
Zechariah (2 Kings 15:8–12)		Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1–18)
Shallum (2 Kings 15:13–16)		Amon (2 Kings 21:19–26)
Menahem (2 Kings 15:17–22)		Josiah (2 Kings 22:1–23:30)
Pekahiah (2 Kings 15:23–26)		Jehoahaz (Shallum) (2 Kings 23:31–35)
Pekah (2 Kings 15:27–31)		Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:36–24:7)
Hoshea (2 Kings 17)		Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:8–17; 25:27–30)
		Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:18–25:26)

¹ Outline and chart adapted from ESV Study Bible, Crossway Publishers.