

1 Kings

“A Kingdom Divided”

I. Introduction to 1 Kings

- A. Like 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings were originally a single book called Kings
 - 1. The title comes from the fact that it covers the history of the Kings of Judah and Israel
 - 2. 1 & 2 Kings were first divided into two books in the Septuagint.
 - a. This may have been due to length. Both books would not fit on a single scroll.
- B. 1 Kings is primarily historical narrative with frequent quotes from court records and messages from Prophets.
 - 1. We will see the increased ministry of the Prophets throughout 1 Kings.
- C. 1 Kings 6:1 sets the dates for the events
 - 1. 418 years after leaving Egypt
 - a. This sets the date for 1 Kings, beginning about 470 B.C.
 - 2. 1 Kings covers approximately 125 years
 - 3. It tells of the reigns of 13 Kings, 2 nations, and at least 12 Prophets while mentioning 100 more.
- D. Much of what is recorded has been supported by extra-biblical archeological find.
 - 1. Including the “Moabite Stone” (currently housed in the Louvre)
- E. The Bible is silent concerning the author of 1 Kings. Some ancient traditions hold Jeremiah as the author and claim the book was written just after the fall of Judah in 587 B.C.
 - 1. This is conjecture, but certainly fits the timeline of 1 & 2 Kings.
- F. 1 Kings shows the progressive deviation of the people of God away from the Word and ways of Gods.
 - 1. In 1 Kings this will lead to the division of the nation
 - 2. In 2 Kings this will lead to captivity
- G. The primary message of the book is “unrighteousness weakens a nation”
 - 1. Jonathan Falwell, “Evil always causes bondage, suffering, slavery”
 - 2. Key passage in the book is found in 1 Kings 11:11-13 and 1 Kings 11:30-33
 - a. Where the nation is divided

II. Why Study 1 Kings

- A. 1 Kings continues the unbroken storyline of the history of Israel.
 - 1. Without understanding the civil division of 1 Kings, we will be at a loss to understand the remaining history.
- B. During the years of 1 Kings, much of the Old Testament was written.
 - 1. Song of Solomon written early in Solomon’s reign
 - 2. Proverbs and a handful of Psalms (including 72 & 127) were written throughout Solomon’s reign
 - 3. Ecclesiastes was written at the end of Solomon’s reign, perhaps during the events of Chapter 11
- C. 1 Kings teaches the impact unrighteousness has upon a nation.
 - 1. Solomon did not inherit a wicked kingdom; but one established on righteousness

2. The nation had been founded by imperfect but godly men; on godly principles
 3. The center of the nation was the worship of Jehovah
 4. Yet, Solomon wandered from the Word and introduced idolatry to the nation that resulted in immorality
 - a. 1 Kings 15:12-13 speaks of perverted persons and obscene images infiltrating the land
 5. This idolatry and immorality weakened and eventually destroyed the nation.
- D. Finally, 1 Kings teaches us of the dangers of ignoring the Word of God.
1. Solomon's sin was all the more heinous because it could have been avoided
 2. Solomon had:
 - a. The exhortation of David (1 Kings 2:2-4)
 - b. The visitation of God
 - i. 1 Kings 3:14 in his early years
 - ii. 1 Kings 9:4-7 at the height of success
 - c. He also had the example of David
 - i. He saw what sin can do
 - d. Primarily, he had the Word of God (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)
 3. The final indictment against Solomon is found in 1 Kings 11:10 "He did not keep what the Lord commanded."
 4. Perhaps the cause was a matter of priority
 - a. King Saul squandered what God had given him
 - b. King Solomon misused it
 - c. In Ecclesiastics he explains how much time, effort, energy and wealth went into the pursuit of pleasure, fame, possessions. But very little went into the pursuit of God.
 5. Solomon's life could be contrasted with the poor widow in 1 Kings 17:13-16
 - a. Putting God first

III. **Outline of 1 Kings**

- A. First Kings divides naturally into two sections
 1. Section 1 Chapters 1 – 11 Solomon's Reign
 - a. Centers around the reign of Solomon and can be divided into 3 smaller sections
 - i. Chapters 1-4 Solomon's ascension
 - ii. Chapters 5-10 Solomon's success
 - iii. Chapter 11 Solomon's failure
 2. Section 2 Chapter 12 – 22 The Divided Kingdom
- B. Section 1 Chapters 1 -4 Solomon's Ascension
 1. Solomon rose to power in the midst of difficulty.
 - a. His brother Adonijah, supported by Joab and the army, and Abiathar and the priests, attempted to take the throne.
 - b. David, Nathan, Zadok, the Mighty Men and palace guard rush to declare Solomon as rightful King 1 Kings 1:33-34
 - c. An easily missed prayer may have saved the nation 1 Kings 1:36-37
 - i. With 2 kings vying for the throne, a nation was preserved by prayer
 2. Solomon was young and inexperienced
 - a. Eusibius says he was 12
 - b. Josephus says he was 15
 - c. Certainly he was young
 - d. He refers to himself as a little child in 1 Kings 3:7
 - e. David waited to anoint him because lack of experience (1 chronicles 22:5)
 3. The people he was called to serve were misbehaving

- a. 1 Kings 3:2 “Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days.”
 - 4. Solomon himself had personal weaknesses
 - a. 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.”
 - b. There were many things making it difficult for this young king.
 - i. The solution: He cried out to the Lord 1 Kings 3:4
 - 1. God transforms his life
 - 2. The promise of wisdom
 - 5. After the promise of wisdom comes an opportunity
 - a. 1 Kings 3:16
 - i. Two women, one baby and a sword
 - b. Solomon’s solution proves his wisdom which continues to increase
- C. Section 2 Chapters 5-10 Solomon’s Success
 - 1. Chapters 5-10 speak of the great wealth accumulated by Solomon
 - a. His greatest achievement is recorded in Chapters 5-8; The Temple
 - b. Using plans and provisions provided by David, Solomon spared no expense in the seven years project of building the Temple.
 - 2. Chapters 8 Solomon Dedicates the Temple
 - a. Upon the completion of the Temple, Solomon dedicates it to the LORD
 - b. This may have been the grandest celebration in Israel’s history
 - c. In the 7th month during the Feast of Tabernacles the nation gathered and the Ark was brought
 - 1. Learning from his father, David’s, failure, the priests carried the Ark into the Temple
 - 2. Within the Ark were the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments
 - i. Center of the nation - The Temple
 - ii. Center of the Temple - The Ark
 - iii. Center of the Ark - The Word of God
 - 3. 2 Chronicles 5:11-13 Records the worship service
 - 4. As they worshipped the cloud appears
 - 5. Solomon prays and addresses the nation (1 Kings 8:22)
 - 6. Kneeling with his hands raised, Solomon seeks the LORD (1 Kings 8:27)
 - 7. Then exhorts the people (1 Kings 8:61)
- D. Section 3 Chapter 11 Solomon’s Failure
 - 1. 1 Kings 11:4-7 A summary of sin
 - 2. Women turned his heart from God to:
 - a. Astoreshtemenu - the goddess of sexual love
 - b. Chemosh - Moab fertility god
 - c. Milcom - Ammon
 - d. Molech - worship included human sacrifice *
 - 3. Sin started way before it was recorded.
 - a. 1 Kings 3:1 exception became the rule
 - b. Deuteronomy 17:16-17 "But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again. Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.'"
 - i. Solomon failed on all three
 - 1. Gold – 1 Kings 10:14, 16
 - 2. Horses - 1 Kings 10:26,28
 - 3. Wives - 1 Kings 11:3

- c. His excuse, 1 Kings 11:2
 - i. Love: love has been a poor excuse for too many sins.

E. The Great Divide

1. Chapter 11 As a result of Solomon's sin, the nation is divided.
2. Chapter 12 Tells the story
3. From this point, we through the end of the book, we have 12 kings, reigning over 2 kingdoms for about 85 years.
 - a. These kings will play a smaller role in the story as the message of 1 Kings hinges on the words of the prophets.
4. Chapter 13 An unnamed prophet declares judgment on Jeroboam
 - a. Jeroboam had an option similar to David's
 - b. But he turned from the Lord, introduced false gods and priests that led to the downfall of Israel.
5. Chapter 16 After 24 years in power, Baasha is condemned by the prophet Jehu
6. The starring role belongs to Elijah
 - a. 6 chapters are given to his story
 - b. In the midst of Israel's darkest day:
 - i. Ahab and Jezebel are on the throne
 - ii. God calls perhaps the greatest of all Old Testament prophets
 - iii. He was an otherwise unknown man from a remote part of the country
 - iv. He stepped on to the scene to declare the Word of God
 1. Drought
 2. Then disappeared to Sidon , north of Israel
 - v. Upon returning, he defeated the prophets of Baal, prayed for rain and calls a young man to come alongside and learn the ministry.
 - vi. 2 Kings 2 He suddenly disappears
 - vii. His ministry is not over Malachi 4:5-6
 1. Elijah will return
 2. One of the two witnesses in Revelation

IV. **Types of Christ**-John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

A. Solomon as a type of Christ

1. A reign of peace and rest
 - a. No war in Solomon's reign
 - b. Nation will not lift up swords; men will learn war no more
2. A time of great wisdom and knowledge
 - a. Queen of Sheba
 - b. Earth filled with knowledge of the Lord as water covers the sea

Addendum on Solomon's Reign-J.S.B.

"We have said that Solomon's reign typifies the coming reign of Christ on earth. What then were the outstanding characteristics of Solomon's reign? First, throughout his reign there was peace and rest. Not one war or internal disturbance broke the serenity of that forty years. Second, there was surpassing wisdom and knowledge, as we see in 1 Kings 4 and 10. Third, there was wealth and glory - - such as excelled all that had gone before, Fourth, there was fame and honour, Solomon's name being the greatest in all the countries around Israel, and Israel being honoured by all peoples. Fifth, there was joy and safety. In 1 Kings 4:25 we read: 'Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.'" See also verse 20

Now these are certainly the predicted marks of the kingdom which Christ will yet set up among the nations, 'There will be peace and rest' 'Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.' 'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together' and a little child lead them.' There will also be unprecedented wisdom and knowledge; 'for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.'"

So, also, will there be wealth and glory such as never been known before, for 'mountain (i.e. the kingdom) of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains (i.e. kingdoms) and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.' And there will also be such fame and honour, and such empire, as no king has ever been before; for 'He (Christ) shall have dominion, also, from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth; yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.' And there will also be joy and safety for all the privileged subjects in that eventual kingdom; for in Micah 4:4 we read of it that 'they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.' There is no more engrossing study in all the Scripture than the study of those glowing passages in the prophets which describe the glories of the Davidic and Solomonic kingdom of Christ which is yet to be on earth. Well may our prayer be, "Thy kingdom come!" -----J.S.B.

*The image of Moloch was a human figure with a bull's head and outstretched arms, ready to receive the children destined for sacrifice. The image of metal was heated red hot by fire kindles within, and the children, laid on its arms, rolled off into the fiery pit below. In order to drown the cries of the victims, flutes were played, and drums were beaten; and mothers stood by without tears or sobs, to give the impression of the voluntary character of the offering.