

# 1 Kings

**AUTHOR:** Unknown. Possible Jeremiah or a group of prophets.

**TIME WRITTEN:** The majority of 1 Kings was written prior to 586 B.C.

**POSITION IN THE BIBLE:**

- 11th Book in the Bible
- 11th book in the Old Testament
- 6th of 12 books of History
- 10 has preceded it. 55 to follow it.

**CHAPTERS:** 22

**VERSES:** 816

**WORDS:** 24,524

**KEY WORD:** Division of the Kingdom

**TWO KEY PASSAGES:**

1. **1 Kings 9:4-5** - Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'
2. **1 Kings 11:11** – Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.

**KEY CHAPTER:** 1 Kings 12

1. The critical turning point is 1 Kings 12 when the United Kingdom becomes the Divided Kingdom in 931 B.C.
2. Solomon dies, and his son Rehoboam becomes king and unwisely leads the nation into a civil war, which tragically rips the nation into two separate and at times two conflicting nations.
3. Instead of unity, 1 Kings records the history of:
  - a. Two kings.
  - b. Two capitals.
  - c. Two religions.

**OBSERVATIONS ABOUT 1 KINGS:**

1. 1 Kings covers the 120 year period from the beginning of Solomon's reign in 971 B.C. through Ahaziah's reign ending in 851 B.C.
2. 1 Kings traces the twin histories of two sets of kings and two nations of disobedient people who are growing indifferent to God's precepts.

3. The key date is **931 B.C.**, the year the kingdom was divided into the Northern Kingdom of Israel (10 tribes) and the Southern Kingdom of Judah (2 tribes).
4. In the Hebrew Bible, the books of 1 & 2 Kings were originally one book.
5. The first half of 1 Kings traces the life of Solomon.
6. Solomon, the man with a divided heart, leaves behind a divided kingdom.
7. Four major events in 1 Kings.
  - a. David's death
  - b. Solomon's reign
  - c. The division of the kingdom
  - d. Elijah's ministry
8. 1 Kings divides clearly into two major sections:
  - a. The United Kingdom (1-11)
  - b. The Divided Kingdom (12-22)
9. 1 Kings is a record of disobedience, idolatry, and ungodliness which serve as an explanation for the Assyrian Captivity of Israel in 721 B.C. and the Babylonian Captivity of Judah some 135 years later in 586 B.C.

## **SUMMARY OF 1 KINGS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. The first half of 1 Kings concerns the life of one of the most amazing men who ever lived.
1. More than any other man before or since, he knew how to amass and creatively use great wealth.
  2. With the sole exception of Jesus Christ, Solomon is the wisest man in human history.
  3. He brings Israel to the peak of its size and glory, and yet, the kingdom is disrupted soon after his death, torn in two by civil strife.
- B. The book clearly divides into two sections:
1. The United Kingdom. (1-11)
  2. The Divided Kingdom. (12-22)

### **THE UNITED KINGDOM. (1-11)**

- A. These chapters give an account of Solomon's attainment of :
1. The throne.
  2. Wisdom.
  3. Architectural achievement.
  4. Fame.
  5. Wealth.
  6. Tragic unfaithfulness.

- B. Solomon's half-brother, Adonijah attempts to take the throne as David's death is nearing, but Nathan the prophet alerts David, who quickly directs the coronation of Solomon as coregent.
1. Solomon still has to do two things.
    - a. He has to consolidate his power.
    - b. He has to deal with those who oppose his rule.
  2. Only when this is done is the "kingdom established in the hand of Solomon." (2:46)
- C. Solomon's ungodly marriages (3:1) eventually turn his heart from the Lord, but he begins well with a genuine love for Yahweh and a desire for wisdom.
1. This wisdom leads to the expansion of Israel to the zenith of her power.
  2. Solomon's empire stretches from the border of Egypt to the border of Babylon.
  3. Peace prevails throughout his realm.
- D. From a theocratic perspective, Solomon's greatest achievement is the building of the temple in Jerusalem.
1. The Ark is placed in this exquisite building, which is filled with the glory of God.
  2. Solomon offers a magnificent prayer of dedication and binds the people with an oath to remain faithful to Yahweh.
- E. Because God is with him, Solomon continues to grow in fame, power, and wealth.
1. However, his wealth later becomes a source of trouble when he begins to purchase forbidden items.
  2. He acquires many foreign wives who lead him into idolatry.
  3. It is an irony of history that this wisest of men acts as a fool in his old age.
  4. God pronounces judgment and foretells that Solomon's son will rule on a fraction of the kingdom (Judah).

### **THE DIVIDED KINGDOM. (12-22)**

- A. Upon Solomon's death, God's words come to pass..
1. Solomon's son Rehoboam chooses the foolish course of promising more severe taxation.
  2. Jereboam, an officer in Solomon's army, leads the northern tribes in revolt. They make him their king, leaving only Judah and Benjamin in the south under Rehoboam.
    - a. This is the beginning of a chaotic period with two nations and two sets of kings.
    - b. Continual enmity and strife exist between the northern and southern kingdoms.
      1. The north is plagued by apostasy (Jereboam sets up a false system of worship).

2. The south is plagued by idolatry.
  - c. Of all the northern and southern kings listed in 1 Kings, only two do “what is right in the eyes of the Lord” (15:11; 22:43).
    1. Asa.
    2. Jehoshaphat.
  - d. All others are:
    1. Idolaters.
    2. Usurpers.
    3. Murderers.
- B. Ahab brings a measure of cooperation between the northern and southern kingdom, but he reaches new depths of wickedness as a king.
1. He is the man who introduces Jezebel’s Baal worship to Israel.
  2. The prophet Elijah ministers during this low period in Israel’s history, providing:
    - a. A ray of light.
    - b. A witness of the word of God.
    - c. A demonstrator of the power of God.
  3. Ahab’s encounter with Elijah never brings him to turn from his false gods to the true God.
    - a. Ahab’s treachery in the matter of Naboth’s vineyard causes a prophetic rebuke from Elijah. (21)
    - b. Naboth repents (21:27-29) but later dies in battle because of his refusal to heed the words of Micaiah, another prophet of God.