

1 Kings

Authorship: Unknown, perhaps Jeremiah (see 2 Kings: Author). The author probably made use of court records such as *The Book of the Acts of Solomon* (11:41), *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel* (14:19), and *The Book of the History of Judah* (14:29).

Date: The statement in both 1 and 2 Kings that a nationwide lack of righteousness had existed “to this day” (12:19; 2 Kings 17:23, 34, 41) suggests that most of the events of these books were recorded in the final years of the southern kingdom, c. 630-600 B.C.

Location: Probably Jerusalem, considering the author’s use of court records. *The History of the Kings of Israel* must have been brought to Jerusalem after the fall of the north.

Overview and Background: 1 Kings tells the history of Israel from 971 to 852 B.C. Beginning with the final days of David’s reign, it records Israel’s glory days during the reign of Solomon, then the tragic civil strife that resulted in a separation between the 10 northern and two southern tribes in 931 (12). It ends with the reign of the northern king Ahaziah, where 2 Kings takes up the story. 1 and 2 Kings, originally one document, interprets the history it reports, showing how Israel’s spiritual decline led to a decline in its political fortunes (see Purpose).

Purpose: (1) Israel’s kings needed to be reminded of the “prophetic” interpretation of their nation’s history: Obedience to God brings reward; disobedience brings punishment. This is illustrated repeatedly through the lives of Solomon and his royal successors; (2) The prophetic principle applied to all Israelites as well, with the lives of the kings serving as examples; (3) With its many reports of the fulfillment of specific prophecies, 1 and 2 Kings has reminded believers down through the ages of the power and truth of God’s Word.

Outline:

I. The Tranquil Years: The Spiritual Welfare of Israel (1:1-11:25)

- A. Solomon’s coronation and early triumphs (1-2)
 - 1. Solomon’s triumph over Adonijah his brother (1; 2:13-25)
 - 2. David’s charge to Solomon; his death (2:1-12)
 - 3. Solomon’s triumph over Abithar the priest (2:26-27)
 - 4. Solomon’s triumph over Joab the general (2:28-35)
 - 5. Solomon’s triumph over Shimei the troublemaker (2:36-46)
- B. Solomon’s talent, treasure, territory, and team (3-4)
- C. Solomon’s Temple (5-8)
 - 1. Preparation (5)
 - 2. Construction (6-7)
 - 3. Dedication (8)
- D. Solomon’s further triumphs and treasures (9-10)
 - 1. Triumphs and treasures described (9)
 - 2. Treasures admired by the Queen of Sheba (10:1-13)
 - 3. Treasures described (10:14-29)
- E. Solomon’s transgressions and decline (11:1-25)

II. The Turbulent Years: The Civil War of Israel (11:26-22:53)

- A. Jeroboam, first northern king (11:26-14:20)
- B. Rehoboam, first southern king (14:21-31)
- C. Abijam (Abijah), second southern king (15:1-8)
- D. Asa, third southern king (15:9-24)
- E. Nanab, Baasha, second, third northern kings (15:25-16:7)
- F. Elah, Zimrin, fourth, fifth northern kings (16:8-20)
- G. Omri, sixth northern king (16:21-28)
- H. Ahab, seventh northern king (16:29-22:40)
 - 1. Apostasy (16:29-34)
 - 2. Association with Elijah (17-19)
 - 3. Association with Ben-hadad (20)
 - 4. Association with Naboth (21)
 - 5. Association with Jehoshaphat (22:1-40)
- I. Jehoshaphat, fourth southern king (22:41-50)
- J. Ahaziah, eighth northern king (22:51-53)

Sources:

Journeying with God: A Survey of the Old Testament, Purposeful Design Publications. Wilmington, Harold L. *Wilmington’s Bible Handbook*, Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale, 1997.

Key Verse

“And keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn,”
(1 Kings 2:3 ESV).

Peaks and Valleys of Historical Books

	Kingdom		
	1 & 2 Samuel		
Conquest	1 Kings 1-11	Judah	Return
Joshua	1 Chronicles	2 Kings 18-24	Ezra
	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 29-35	Nehemiah

Chaos	Division	Exile
Judges	1 Kings 12-22	2 Kings 25
Ruth	2 Kings 1-17	2 Chronicles 36
	2 Chronicles 10-28	Esther