

BIG WORD: 1 Kings

INTRODUCTION

Just like 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings were originally one book. The four actually go together with Kings being a continuation of Samuel. The Septuagint (early Greek translations of the Old Testament) divided them into separate books not because of content (as evidenced by the abrupt endings of each), but simply for convenience. Smaller books meant lighter, more manageable scrolls. The stories all thread together, but the book and chapter breaks make for more bite-size studies.

“Judah’s nineteen kings were all descendants of David and reigned 345 years. Israel had nineteen kings of nine dynasties, reigning 210 years, eight of whom were either slain or committed suicide. Judah had frequent revivals; the divided Israel, none.” – C.I.Scofield

Author: Unknown, though many believe it to be Jeremiah

Date: The events detailed within 1 Kings cover a span of about 130 years, from the death of King David (971 B.C.) to the end of Ahaziah’s reign. The books were written circa 550 B.C.

Key Characters: Several characters fill the pages of Kings, but some receive a bit more stage.

- Solomon: the last king to reign over a united Israeli kingdom
- Rehoboam, a king of Judah
- Jeroboam, a king of Israel
- Ahab, a king of Israel
- Elijah, a prophet in the time of Ahab

Key Events:

- King David dies and Solomon becomes king.
- Solomon builds the temple.
- The Kingdom divides, ten tribes to the north (Israel) and two to the south (Judah).
- Ahab institutes worship of Baal.
- Elijah confronts over 400 prophets of Baal.

Themes: Several themes can be found in these books, but two stand out more than the others.

1. A king with a divided heart will produce a divided kingdom.
2. God is the only King that matters; His kingdom, the only one that stands.