

- 1) Literary Genre: Historical Narrative
  - a) Modeled after monarchical histories used to record the history of successes and successions of various rulers.
  - b) However, though it used the format of these histories, its primary purpose was not one of merely recording history. The author had a theological purpose in mind
  - c) What are some textual clues that indicate this?
  
- 2) Author: Jewish tradition ascribes it to Jeremiah, but we have no evidence of this.
  - a) It is clear from the many references that the author is familiar with Deuteronomy and uses it as the thematic framework of the book
    - i) Deut. 11:13-17; 30:15-20
  
- 3) Date of writing and historical setting:
  - a) likely written during or right at the end of the exile.
  - b) written to answers the question as to why the people were exiled
    - i) Lamentations 1:1-4
    - ii) This setting and purpose tie in with the heavy reliance upon Deuteronomy.

#### 4. Summary of content

### **Chapter 1-10 Success of Solomon**

As the death of David drew near, a brief power struggle erupted with Adonijah, one of David's other sons, but Solomon was made king. Solomon quickly established himself on the throne and destroyed his enemies. After David's death, Solomon's kingship flourished (see map near 1 Kings 2, in the NIV/NASB/KJV or related resources in other Study Bibles.). [See Map 5 in the back of Bible](#)

- 1) Chapter 3: Solomon's Request for wisdom
  - a) 3:2 A hint of things to come
    - i) The "high places" isn't referring to idolatry, but decentralized places of worship – See study note
    - ii) However, it was a hint at things to come.
  - b) 3:9-14
    - i) Ecclesiastes is recording of Solomon's pursuit of all of these gifts that God gave them. Each of these good things turned into vanity and emptiness when sought apart from God.
      - (1) Eccl. 12:13

Solomon married one of Pharaoh's daughters which created a foreign alliance that would prove a contributing factor in Solomon's later downfall.

God gave to Solomon great wisdom and success as his fortune and fame grew steadily around the world. Perhaps his most significant accomplishment related

to the building and dedicating of the temple which had been planned by his father David (see charts near 1 Kings 6, 7 in the NIV/NASB/KJV or related resources in other Study Bibles.). God's "glory" now had a place to reside in Israel. Solomon demonstrated why God "loved him" but God warned him solemnly about obedience and integrity before the Lord. Unfortunately, it was a warning Solomon did not fully heed.

## 1) Ch. 8 – Solomon's Dedication of the Temple

a) See pages 595, 604 Note the imagery of the decorations.

b) The Ark is placed in the finished Temple

i) What does the ark represent?

(1) God's Glorious Presence. 8:10-11

(2) God's Covenant 8:9

c) Solomon's Dedication Speech

i) A recognition of the nature of God 8:27-30

(1) John 2:18-22

(2) Col 2:9 "For in him (Christ) the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily

ii) A foreshadow of rebellion and mercy

(1) 8:46-49

iii) 8:59-60 The "cause" of the King and the People: To proclaim the Holiness and Glory of the Lord.

(1) Note that the King is positioned as a leading representative of the people as a whole.

(a) Deut. 17:18-20 The king was to be lead by the Word and lead the people in obedience.

(2) This was to be a purpose of Israel all along

(a) Genesis 12:1-3 Abrahamic Covenant

(b) Ex 8:10, 9:14, 16 - What was the question that Pharaoh asked at the beginning of Exodus?

(3) This purpose was not lost in the failure of the nation of Israel

(4) Luke 2:30ff.

- 2) How does the building of the Temple, its dedication, and the statement of Solomon of the purpose of the nation thematically set up what is to come in the rest of the book?
  - a) Especially think of it in the historical context of when the book was written.

## **Chapter 11 Sin of Solomon**

God had clearly set forth in **Dt. 17:14-20** what He required of Israel's kings. Solomon violated all of God's standards — he multiplied horses (military power), wealth and wives and did not follow fully God's Word. Specifically, it was Solomon's many foreign wives who "turned his heart away from God" and led him into idolatry and immorality. Notice the striking similarity between **2 Sa. 1-10** and **1 Ki. 1-10** and **2 Sa. 11** and **1 Ki. 11** - "like father like son." Review in manual pgs. 96 & 102

God declared to Solomon that the kingdom would be torn from him after his death. One tribe (composed of Judah, Simeon and part of Benjamin) would be left in the south to carry on the Messianic throne line. The Levites and some people from all the northern tribes supported Judah and Rehoboam (see **2 Ch. 11:5-17**). The price for Solomon's sin was indeed great (see map near 1 Kings 12 in the NIV/NASB/KJV or related resources in other Study Bibles). [See Map 6 in the back of Bible](#)

- 1) Solomon's heart is divided. 11:1-8
  - a) Consequences of his sin 11:9-13
  - b) This marks the turning point of the book, just like chapter 11 did in Samuel

## **Chapter 12-22 Split kingdom after Solomon**

Following the 40 year reign of Solomon, the 10 northern tribes under the leadership of Jeroboam rebelled against Solomon's son Rehoboam who ruled over Judah. God caused the split to occur because of Solomon's sin as Rehoboam followed ungodly advice. Thus a civil war erupted between Israel and Judah. Practically, the breach would not be healed.

- 1) The kingdom of Judah: Comprised of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin
  - a) Judah was the most prominent of the Tribes
    - i) Kingly lineage (Davidic Kings)
  - b) Benjamin was the least of the tribes and came from the youngest son of Jacob.

- i) Lineage of King Saul
- c) Judah and Benjamin have a close link in the story of Joseph.
  - i) Judah offers his life in the place of Benjamin when he thinks Joseph (in disguise) is going to execute him for stealing a cup.

Jeroboam's evil ways in Israel, including the establishment of rival worship centers in Bethel and Dan and a false priesthood led to a downhill spiritual descent for the next 200 years.

### 1) Chapter 12:25-33 Sin of Jeroboam and its ramifications

- a) He sought to establish a different system of worship:
  - i) New Location
  - ii) New priesthood
  - iii) New festivals
  - iv) idols – v. 28 is almost an exact quote from Ex 32:4
- b) This has a ripple effect throughout all of the kings of Israel.

In this section of **1 Kings** the primary focus is on the kings of Israel with a few references to some of the good kings of Judah like Asa and Jehoshaphat (see chart near **1 Kings 14** in the NIV/NASB/KJV or related resources in other Study Bibles). **SHOW CHART**

The sins of Israel's kings continued unabated, culminating in Ahab, Israel's worst king, whose idolatrous, wicked reign lasted 22 years.

It was during the reign of Ahab that God raised up Elijah, the prophet, to confront Ahab with sin and execute judgment against the priests of Baal (see map near **1 Ki. 20** in the NIV/NASB/KJV or related resources in other Study Bibles). Elijah's ministry and message, like that of Moses and Jesus, was confirmed by miraculous signs. Ahab's death by God's judgment did not end the wickedness in the north as his son Ahaziah "walked in the way of his father." **1 Kings** closes after covering about 100 years of Israel's history following the death of Solomon.

### 1) Elijah and the Widow 1 Kings 17

- a) Where was Zephath? [see study note on v.9]
- b) What are some descriptors of this widow in the text?
- c) What is happening in the background of this story?
- d) What is her response? v. 24

- 2) Elijah and the prophets of Baal
- 3) Elijah's moment of weakness after his great victory (Ch. 19)
  - a) James 5:17-18 He is a man with a nature just like ours (in context of sinful nature)
  - a) He is desperate and emotionally defeated to the point of death 19:4
  - b) What is the significance of God's answer in 19:10-12?
  - c) After this lesson, God gives him hope: 1 Kings 19:15-18

5. Theme/purpose/applicational message

Theme/purpose

The author of **1 Kings** wrote to record how God's judgment of a divided kingdom (Israel vs. Judah) resulted from the sin of King Solomon whose heart was not fully devoted to God and who was led astray into idolatry by his foreign wives.

Applicational message

A heart divided between the ways of God and the ways of the world leads to disobedience, sin and a divided life that is not pleasing to God.

6. Key chapters

- |                |                                     |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>1 Ki. 2</b> | David's final charge to Solomon     |
| <b>3</b>       | Wisdom of Solomon                   |
| <b>8</b>       | Dedication of the temple            |
| <b>10</b>      | Visit by Queen of Sheba             |
| <b>11</b>      | Solomon's sins                      |
| <b>12</b>      | Kingdom splits                      |
| <b>17-19</b>   | Ministry of Elijah the prophet      |
| <b>21-22</b>   | Ahab/Naboth's vineyard/Ahab's death |

Note the imagery of division

- This all started with the division with Solomon's heart
- That division led to destruction
- The division of the Kingdom and the eventual fall of each is an outflow of Solomon's sin.

### Summary of content

#### **Chapters 1-16** Split kingdom continues—Israel and Judah

**1 and 2 Kings** were originally one book and **2 Kings** picks up where **1 Kings** ends. The remaining ministry of Elijah is covered, highlighted by his "translation" to God without dying. Elisha succeeds Elijah as God's prophet, pronouncing judgment and performing miracles to authenticate the word of the Lord through him.

The reigns of various kings of Israel and Judah are emphasized in this section with special attention being given to two kings. Jehu was appointed by Elisha in Israel and used by God as an instrument of judgment against Jezebel and the house of Ahab. In Judah there was a partial revival under Joash.

But **all of the kings of Israel were bad and did evil in the sight of the Lord** while a few of the kings of Judah had good reigns. The period of 130 years or so was characterized by sin, civil war and chaos.

- 1) Elisha and the healing of Naaman 2 Kings 5
  - a) Who is Naaman?
  - b) What is the setting of this event?
  - c) Naaman's response – 5:15
- 2) Compare this story to Elijah and the Widow of Zepharath
  - a) Go to Luke 4:24-30
  - b) How do our observations of these two stories help us understand this passage?

#### **Chapter 17** Fall of Israel

The northern kingdom of Israel lasted for 209 years after the split following Solomon's death. **Israel fell to Assyria in 722 BC** as a specific judgment from God because of sin (see map near 2 Kings 17 in the NIV/NASB/KJV or related resources in other Study Bibles). Isaiah was called as a prophet of God c.740 BC and addressed Israel during the period leading up to their exile. The northern tribes of Israel would never again regain any separate identity as a nation. The capital of Samaria was destroyed, some Israelites were taken into captivity and the Assyrians brought their own people into the land and assimilated the remaining Israelites. The Samaritans of New Testament times came out of this intermingling of Hebrews and Assyrians.

Israel was judged by God for

- idolatry
- walking after the customs of heathen nations
- disobedience to God's Word
- immorality
- child sacrifices, astrology, witchcraft.

The Lord indeed “removed Israel from His sight,” leaving only Judah.

## 1) 2 Kings 17:6-13 The fall of Israel

- a) v.21 Note the reference to the effects of Jeroboam's sin.

## Chapters 18 – 23

### Surviving kingdom declines—Judah

In the southern kingdom of Judah it was still possible for the nation to repent and turn back to God in order to avoid a fate similar to that of Israel. Three major kings of Judah are highlighted in this section.

Hezekiah was the king in Judah at the time Israel fell to Assyria in 722 BC. His reign was generally a good one and lasted 29 years. On two occasions Hezekiah trusted the Lord who intervened to protect Jerusalem from invasion by the Assyrians under Sennacherib.

## 1) Ch 18-20 The reign of Hezekiah

- a) Read 18:1-8

- i) What significance do we see in the placement of the story of Hezekiah in this narrative?

Many of the cities south of Jerusalem were taken including Lachish. Finally, a death angel of God killed 185,000 Assyrians which stopped the threat to Judah. Hezekiah generally trusted the Lord and was granted 15 extra years by God after he became ill. He was followed by the most wicked king to reign in Judah.

Manasseh came to the throne in 695 BC and reigned for 55 evil years. Idolatry, immorality and child sacrifice characterized his rule as Baal worship was officially established even in Jerusalem. For Manasseh's sinful reign God irrevocably announced judgment on Judah.

## 21:7-9 Manasseh leads the people astray

The last major king highlighted was Josiah who ruled for 31 years from 640-609 BC. His reign was the last good one and included many reforms, for he

- removed idols
- rebuilt temple

- led a spiritual revival
- renewed the Word of God in the land
- found the book of the Law (Pentateuch) in the temple and read it to the people
- renewed the Passover celebration.

Even so, it was too late to stay God's hand of judgment against Judah.

- 1) Ch 22 – Revival under Josiah
  - a) The word of God leads to repentance 22:10-13
  - b) The word of God leads to revival 23:1-3
  - c) The word of God leads to reform 23:4ff.

What can we observe from the stories of these three kings?

After Josiah's death, four more kings would reign for a total of 22-1/2 years, but all were evil and hastened Judah's fall. Jeremiah prophesied in Judah for God during this time.

## **Chapters 24-25**                      **Fall of Judah**

Babylon began to assert its power over Judah and on three separate occasions deported exiles to Babylon:

- 605 BC Jehoiakim
- 597 BC Jehoichin
- 586 BC Zedekiah

Daniel and other prominent Jews were taken in 605 BC to Babylon. In 597 BC a second group was taken and finally in 586 BC after a 42 month siege, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and took substantially all the people into captivity for 70 years. "Judah was led away into exile from its land" (see map near 2 Kings 24-25 in the NIV/NASB/KJV or related resources in other Study Bibles). God's judgment on Judah was as complete as that on Israel, with one exception — God in mercy and grace and in order to fulfill His promises would preserve a remnant of Judah through the Babylonian captivity and return the remnant to the promised land. The sins of Judah were similar to those of Israel but she should have learned from the example I. Judah had survived for 345 years following the split of the kingdom.

God's Judgment upon his people for their covenant (Mosaic) faithlessness is completed:

Jerusalem finally falls 2 Kings 25:8



## A glimmer of hope: 2 Kings 25:27-30

- Despite his people's faithlessness, God is faithful. Though they broke covenant with him, he will not break his covenant with them. Even in the midst of the darkness, there is hope because of who God is, not who we are.
- There is coming a king, one who will lead his people perfectly in the obedience of the will of the Father.

## The two application messages from the manuals:

A heart divided between the ways of God and the ways of the world leads to disobedience, sin and a divided life that is not pleasing to God.

Unless genuinely repented of, sin always sends forth God's judgment and discipline.

How do we keep our hearts from being divided with everything that is going on in our lives?

Eph. 2:4ff.; Heb. 12:1-2ff.