

I. 1 Kings

- a. Purpose: We will look at the authorship, purpose and other aspects of the book of 1 Kings so we would be more familiar with this part of the Bible and yearn to study it for ourselves.
- b. Most scholars and books surveying the Old Testament group **1 and 2 Kings** together. That is because we need to understand the reason why **1 and 2 Kings** are divided into two books is because it is easier to fit what is written in two smaller scrolls rather than one long one with both **1 and 2 Kings** being about equal lengths.¹ Thus most works concerning the purpose of **1 and 2 Kings** will often give what is the authorship and purpose of **1 and 2 Kings** together.
- c. Authorship
 - i. The book of **1 and 2 Kings** does not explicitly say who the author is.
 - ii. According to Jewish Tradition that was recorded in the Talmud: "Jeremiah wrote the book which bears his name, the Book of Kings, and Lamentations." (Baba Bathra 15a)²→We see **1 and 2 Kings** being attributed to Jeremiah's authorship.
 - iii. There are other considerations in support of the Jewish tradition³
 1. Jeremiah lived after most of the events recorded in the book so he would have hindsight to write a history.
 2. Jeremiah had the motivation to write the books of **1-2 Kings**: Having lived after the Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish exile Jeremiah would want to provide a historical account of what led up to those events.
- d. Purpose
 - i. According to Thomas Constable on the purpose of **1 and 2 Kings**: "The author's chief historical concern was to preserve a record of the kings of both Israel and Judah. The emphasis in this record is on the royal actions and also on the actions of selected prophets that bear on the period in which they ministered. More importantly the author sought to evaluate the monarchy by the standard of the Mosaic Law. Besides tracing the decline of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, he pointed out the reason for their decline in general and the fate of each king in particular."⁴
 - ii. According to Keith Essex the purpose of **1 and 2 Kings** is the following: "The human monarchy, including the Davidic house, failed to follow Yahweh with the result that Israel and Judah were taken from the Land in fulfillment of the prophetic Word."⁵
 - iii. According to Richard Mayhue: "**1 Kings** brings the kingdom from the height of its glory to a sudden abyss of division and decline. **1 Kings**

¹ Thomas Constable, "1 Kings" in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 483.

² Source: https://www.sefaria.org/Bava_Batra.15a.8?lang=bi.

³ Reasons from Eugene Merrill, "The Books of 1 and 2 Kings" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 11550-11570.

⁴ Thomas Constable, "1 Kings" in *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor), 484.

⁵ Keith Essex, *OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES I Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published Thesis for The Master's Seminary), 37.

records the division of the united kingdom of Saul, David and Solomon into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah.”⁶

- iv. In my own words: 1 Kings covers the time of the last days of King David, the split of the kingdom of Israel after the death of his Solomon all the way to the reign of Ahaziah the son of Ahab ruling in Israel in which the kings were unfaithful but God kept on being faithful to Israel.

e. Structure

- i. There are different ways people have outlined the book.
- ii. The most easiest to remember is Richard Mayhue’s outline⁷
 - 1. Kingdom United/Solomon (1 Kings 1-11)
 - a. Establishment of Solomon (1 Kings 1-2)
 - b. The Rise of Solomon (1 Kings 3-10)
 - c. The Failure of Solomon (1 Kings 11)
 - 2. Kingdom Divided/Many Kings (1 Kings 12-22)
 - a. The Kingdom splits into Two (1 Kings 12-14)
 - b. Kings of Israel and Judah (1 Kings 15-16:28)
 - c. King Ahab and the Prophet Elijah (1 Kings 16:29-22)

f. Key chapters in 1 Kings⁸

- i. 1 Solomon is appointed King
- ii. 2 David dies and Solomon secures his Kingship
- iii. 3 Solomon chooses wisdom and wisely judges
- iv. 8 Solomon's temple dedicated
- v. 9 God's promises and warnings to Solomon
- vi. 11 Solomon's demise, difficulties and death
- vii. 17 Elijah predicts drought and raises the dead
- viii. 18 Elijah on Mount Carmel
- ix. 19 Elijah's flight to Horeb/Appointment of Elisha
- x. 21 Naboth's vineyard taken by Jezebel and Ahab

g. Key characters in 1 Kings⁹

- i. Solomon: Son of King David through Bathsheba; vast empire; wisest man who ever lived (next to our Lord); intermarriage led to disobedience and judgment
- ii. Jeroboam: The first king of divided Israel
- iii. Rehoboam: First king of Judah; son of Solomon
- iv. Elijah: The prophet of God from Tishbeh; defeated the prophets of Baal on Carmel.
- v. Jezebel: Evil wife of King Ahab; worshipper of Baal, eventually eaten by dogs as prophesied.

h. Closer look at 1 Kings

⁶ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master’s Seminary), 63.

⁷ What follows below is quoted verbatim from Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master’s Seminary), 63.

⁸ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master’s Seminary), 63.

⁹ Taken word for word from Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master’s Seminary), 63.

- i. **1 Kings 1-11** is described as the golden age of Israel.¹⁰
- ii. However from **1 Kings 11** onwards the account gets bleak with Solomon's own sins and the sins of other kings with the consequences that followed for their sins.
- iii. From the second half of 1 Kings onward we see two different kingdom: Israel in the North and Judah in the South.
- iv. We also see in the second half **1 Kings** the rise of prophets such as Elijah.
- i. Place of this book in the Canon
 - i. Without 1 Kings the rest of the Old Testament would not make sense: There is no two separate kingdom: Israel and Judah.
 - ii. These words from God explains a lot of Old Testament history following Solomon: *"But if you or your sons indeed turn away from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, 7 then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will [d]cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 8 And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astonished and hiss and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?' 9 And they will say, 'Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them, therefore the Lord has brought all this adversity on them.'"* (**1 Kings 9:6-9**)
 - iii. Yet as we see the lines of David sinning, realize there is still God's grace: The fact that God's Word is giving details of the kings from David's line means God still cares for the line of David since the Messiah will come from David's lineage. God is still faithful with bringing forward the hope of the Messiah!

¹⁰ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 129.