

LOOK AT THE BOOK 1 & 2 KINGS

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AUTHOR

The two books of the kings were originally part of one larger book.

No logical reason presents itself for the division of the book in the middle of Ahaziah's reign.

The scribes may have run out of room on a scroll and started a new paragraph on a new one!

The Talmud presents the traditional Jewish view that Jeremiah was the author of the book.

While the author isn't identified, there is justification for the Jewish point of view.

The author was a contemporary of Jeremiah.

The style and emphases of the book are parallel to those of Jeremiah.

DATE

It was written during a period slightly before and after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

Events described in 1 Kings begin with the death of David and accession of Solomon in 971 B.C.

They conclude at the beginning of the reign of Ahaziah, king of Israel, in 853 B.C.

2 Kings does not end until sometime during the captivity.

BACKGROUND

Although 2 Samuel ends at the conclusion of a period of affliction and degeneration in the life of David and his people, Israel was still at a high point in its historical-political career.

Their enemies have been silenced.

The powers of Mesopotamia are occupied closer to home.

Israel's boundaries have expanded greatly.

The nation is basically united, peaceful and prosperous.

As Solomon assumes the throne, the nation is again carried forward.

His initial dependence on God and request for wisdom produce increased wealth and fame for the king and his people.

As Solomon's power increases, so does temptation to fall into traps which cause a decline.

Lack of national loyalty, added to oppression and corruption, brought increased tribal loyalty.

The tribes returned to their traditional loyalties and the north separated from the south.

In the north, the decline continued until its captivity in 722 B.C. by Assyria.

The south likewise experienced repeated periods of degeneration.

A few good kings delayed total destruction until 586 B.C.

PURPOSE AND THEME

1 & 2 Kings trace Israel's history from its peak under David and Solomon, down the road of depravity.

They trace the cause of its division and its downward history afterwards.

Although it does summarize the period's history, it is not its primary purpose to teach history.

The summary of each king's reign is too short for that.

They attempt to demonstrate the principle of God's dealings with His covenant people.

The author's purpose is to cause God's people to trust Him and obey His commands.

His message is that God blesses the nation when its king and its people follow Him.

When they turn from Him, the results are decline and destruction.

The theme is taught by the positive example of Solomon at the beginning of his reign.

When he turns from God to idols, his example presents a warning of the danger of idolatry and disobedience.

The lesson is taught from the division of the kingdom through the history of both kingdoms.

The positive example of the good kings of Judah teaches that even in the midst of judgment for unfaithfulness to God, if His people will repent and turn back to Him, He will restore them and bless them.

1 & 2 KINGS

God blesses Israel when its king and its people follow Him

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UNITED KINGDOM	DIVIDED KINGDOM	SURVIVING KINGDOM
1 Kings 1-11	1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17	2 Kings 18-25
Accession of Solomon	Division by Jeroboam I	First reform and decline
1:1-2:12	12:1-14:20	18-21
Solidification under Solomon	Evil reign of Rehoboam over Judah	Good reign of Hezekiah 18-20
2:13-3:1	14:21-31	Evil reign of Manasseh 21:1-18
Wisdom of Solomon		Evil reign of Amon 21:19-26
3:2-4:34		Second reform and decline
Building of Solomon	Degeneration of the kings of Israel and Judah	22-25:21
5:1-9:9	i Kings 15-2 Kings 17	Good reign of Josiah 22-23:30
Glory of Solomon		Evil reign of Jehoahaz 23:31-33
9:10-10:29		Evil reign of Jehoiakim 23:34-24:7
Failure of Solomon		Evil reign of Jehoiachin 24:8-16
11		Evil reign of Zedekiah 24:17-25:21
		Historical appendices
		25:22-30
		Story of Gedaliah 25:22-26
		Story of Jehoiachin 25:27-30