



Introduction to 1 & 2 Kings

Author: Anonymous, but probably someone who was alive at the time of captivity. Traditionally, Jeremiah is frequently named as the author.

Date: 6th Century B.C.

Theme: This is the history of the kingdom period of Israel and Judah, since the nation is divided after the time of Solomon. This history ends with the deportation to Babylon.

Place in the Old Testament: In the original Hebrew, 1 & 2 Kings, like 1 & 2 Samuel, are a single book – in this case Kings. Along with Joshua, Judges and Samuel, it is counted among the books that are labeled The Former Prophets. The Latter Prophets consisted of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and The Twelve (a.k.a. The Minor Prophets).

A Very Quick Outline (from J. Vernon McGee)

- I. Death of David, 1 Kings 1, 2
- II. Glory of Solomon's reign, 1 Kings 3—11
 - A. Solomon's prayer for wisdom, Chapters 3, 4
 - B. Building of the Temple, Chapters 5—8
 - C. Fame of Solomon, Chapters 9, 10
 - D. Shame and death of Solomon, Chapter 11
- III. Division of the kingdom, 1 Kings 12—2 Kings 16
- IV. Captivity of Israel by Assyria, 2 Kings 17
- V. Decline and captivity of Judah by Babylon, 2 Kings 18—25

A Very Brief Summary

These books start with the death of David and the succession of Solomon to the throne. From that point on they trace the history of the divided kingdom. In Judah the line of kings continues through the descendants of David. In the northern kingdom of Israel, there are nine different dynasties, none of them lasting very long. Both Israel and Judah fall into idolatry, but Israel never experiences a single revival, nor does it have even one good king. Spiritually, the prophets Elijah and Elisha are prominent characters.