

1 & 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles

Introduction:

- We are indebted to David Dorsey's *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament* for the basic outlines.
- It is helpful to remember that 1 & 2 Kings are part of Hebrew section of *The Prophets*, while 1 & 2 Chronicles are part of *The Writings*. Both Kings and Chronicles were originally one book each.
- These books cover 23 southern (Judah) kings and 19 northern (Israel) kings.
- The timeframe covers @ 385 years (971-586 BC).
- We addressed 1 Kings 1:1-2:11 and much of 1 Chronicles in our study of 1 & 2 Samuel.
- Differences between the two books:
 - **Kings:** Most important, for the exiled Jews in Babylonia the Book of Kings served as an encouraging reminder that Yahweh was not just a weak local deity who had failed to protect his people against the forces of Mesopotamia. The book's structure emphasizes that Yahweh is almighty, and that their nation had fallen because Yahweh had decreed that it fall as an act of divine punishment for their disobedience. **The layout reinforces the theme that Yahweh is worthy of their respect, their trust, and their obedience.** (emphasis added) Not only is he all powerful, as the stories of Elijah and Elisha show; but he also loves his people and is able and willing to help them, even in the worst of times and even in foreign lands, as those same stories (and others in the book) show. The Judean exiles in Babylonia needed to know these truths if they were to continue to place their trust in the God who had destroyed their land. (Dorsey)
 - **Chronicles:** Chronicles is not a superfluous repetition of the Book of Kings, although both books cover the same period of Israel's history. Chronicles has an entirely different agenda from that of Kings. Written more than a century after Kings, **the purpose of Chronicles was to provide the postexilic community with hope and a desperately needed sense of identity and direction.** (emphasis added) The tiny, chastened Jewish community and its religious leaders needed to hear, not words of condemnation (as in the Book of Kings), but a message that would inspire them to get back on track and regroup around the focal point of the temple, with its priests and Levites who could teach and lead them according to God's laws. The author wanted to demonstrate that the key to Israel's success, past and future, lay with the temple and its servants. (Dorsey)

Overview of Kings

- a Solomon's reign in Jerusalem; Jerusalem's wealth; temple is built (1 Kings 3:1–11:43)
 - highlighted position (center): Solomon builds the temple
 - making of temple's bronze and gold articles, bronze pillars and Sea, etc.
- b rise of northern kingdom: its first *seven* kings (1 Kings 12:1–16:34)
 - first unit is the longest
 - **focus: *birth of the northern kingdom***
- c prophet Elijah and early Omride dynasty (1 Kings 17:1–2 Kings 1:18)
 - **central** unit: *Jezebel kills Naboth* for his vineyard
 - prediction: *dogs will lick up Jezebel's blood* in Naboth's vineyard
 - prediction: *annihilation of Ahab's family* in his son's day
 - establishment of Baal worship
 - instructions to *anoint Jehu and Hazael* as new kings
- d **CENTERPIECE: Elisha's miracles of kindness** (2 Kings 2:1–8:6)
- c' prophet Elisha and end of Omride dynasty (2 Kings 8:7–13:25)
 - **central** unit: *Jezebel is killed* for sin against *Naboth*
 - fulfillment: *dogs lick up Jezebel's blood* in Naboth's vineyard
 - fulfillment: *annihilation of Ahab's family* in his son's day
 - removal of Baal worship
 - Elisha *anoints Jehu and Hazael* as new kings
- b' fall of northern kingdom: its last *seven* kings (2 Kings 14:1–17:41)
 - last unit is longest
 - **focus: *fall of the northern kingdom***
- a' Solomon's dynasty in Jerusalem ends; fall of Jerusalem and destruction of Solomon's temple (2 Kings 18:1–25:30)
 - highlighted position (end): Solomon's temple destroyed
 - plunder of temple's gold and bronze articles, bronze pillars and Sea, etc.

Overview of Chronicles

- a beginning: genealogies from Adam to the *Babylonian exile and return* (1 Chron. 1:1–9:44)
 - topics: *Babylonian exile and return*
- b establishment of David's kingdom (1 Chron. 10:1–22:1)
 - *promise to David* that his dynasty would continue forever (17:1–27)
 - David's defeat of *Syria, Ammon, Moab, Edom* (in the *Valley of Salt*), *Philistia* (on numerous occasions)
 - David's *intrusion* into the priestly/levitical sphere of duty in the transportation of the ark (13:5–14; 15:12–15)
- c David assembles all Israel to make preparations for Solomon's building of the temple (1 Chron. 22:2–29:30)
 - themes: *unity of all Israel*, sense of happy *cooperation*
- d **CENTER: Solomon, the temple builder** (2 Chron. 1:1–9:31)
- c' division of Israel; Judean kings from Rehoboam to good King Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 10:1–20:37)
 - themes: the *disintegration of all Israel, strife*
- b' seven southern kings: Jehoram to Ahaz (2 Chron. 21:1–28:27)
 - three crises threatening the *promise to David* of an eternal dynasty (cf. 21:7; 21:16–22:1; 22:10–11; 23:3)
 - warfare with the neighboring nations: *Syria, Ammon, Moab, Edom* (in the *Valley of Salt*), *Philistia* (on numerous occasions)
 - theme: *intrusion* into the priestly/levitical sphere of duty (23:6; 26:16–21; 27:2)
- a' end: Judah's final kings: good King Hezekiah to the *Babylonian exile*, and a note about *the return* (2 Chron. 29:1–36:23)
 - Judah's *exile* and a reference to the *return*

Part 1: Solomon's dynasty begins—1 Kings 2:12-11:43; 2 Chron. 1:1-9:31 [@ 971-931 BC]

- a Solomon's marriage to Egyptian princess (3:1-3)
*his love of **Yahweh***
- b Solomon's request for wisdom; will receive great wealth and wisdom (3:4-15)
 - c two women come to Solomon (3:16-28)
his wisdom in justice
people *see*
 - d overview of government (4:1-34)
officials, forced labor, horses, etc.
 - e Hiram of Tyre provides supplies for Solomon (5:1-18)
 - f Solomon builds Yahweh's temple and palace (6:1-7:51)
 - g **CLIMAX:** temple dedication (8:1-66)
 - the center is the dedication prayer (8:22-54)
 - f' Yahweh's approval of temple (9:1-9)
"after Solomon had finished building the temple and palace"
 - e' Hiram of Tyre is paid for supplies (9:10-14)
 - d' overview of government (9:15-28)
officials, forced labor, horses, etc.
 - c' queen of Sheba comes to Solomon (10:1-13)
his wisdom and justice
she *sees*
 - b' Solomon's great wisdom and wealth (10:14-29)
- a' Solomon's marriages to foreign women (11:1-43)
*his love of **them**; his sin and punishment*

Part 2: The birth of the NORTHERN Kingdom and its first seven kings—1 Kings 12:1-16:34; 2 Chron. 10:1-16:14 [@ 930-853 BC]

- 1) Jeroboam [930-909 BC] (1 Kings 12:1-14:20)
 - a) The standard of evil kings (1 Kings 13:33; 14:16; 15:30, 34; 16:2, 7, 19, 26, 31; 22:52)
 - b) Three kings in the south (Judah) during this time: Rehoboam, Abijah, and Asa (1 Kings 14:21-15:24)
- 2) Nadab [909-900 BC] (1 Kings 15:25-32)
- 3) Baasha [900-886 BC] (1 Kings 15:33-16:7)
- 4) Elah [886-885 BC] (1 Kings 16:8-10)
- 5) Zimri [885 BC] (1 Kings 16:11-20)
- 6) Omri [885-874 BC] (1 Kings 16:21-28)
- 7) **Climax:** Ahab [874-853 BC] (1 Kings 16:29-34)
 - a) Surpasses the standard of evil kings (16:30, 33)

Part 3: The ministry of the prophet Elijah—1 Kings 17:1-2 Kings 1:18; 2 Chron. 17-20 [@
865-847 BC]

- a Elijah and Ahab: drought and *fire from heaven* (17:1–18:46)
 - king *seeks Baal instead of Yahweh for help*
 - Yahweh *demonstrates his power with fire that falls* upon the offerings and *consumes* them
- b Yahweh encourages Elijah in Sinai (19:1–21)
 - faithful remnant: Elisha
 - bright spot in narrative: focus on righteous people
- c war between Israel and Aram (20:1–43)
 - Ahab wins; Ben-hadad not killed
 - other prophets (not Elijah) *predict Ahab's victories*
- d **CENTER:** Naboth's vineyard and the sin of Ahab and Jezebel (21:1–29)
 - *summary* of Ahab's sinfulness
- c' war between Israel and Aram (22:1–40)
 - Ahab loses and is killed
 - another prophet (not Elijah) *predicts Ahab's defeat*
- b' reign of Jehoshaphat (22:41–50)
 - he is a faithful king; activity in Sinai
 - bright spot in narrative: focus on righteous king
- a' Elijah and Ahaziah: king's sickness and *fire from heaven* (22:51–2 Kings 1:18)
 - king *seeks Baal-zebul instead of Yahweh for help*
 - Yahweh *demonstrates his power with fire that falls* upon the soldiers and *consumes* them

Part 4: The ministry of the prophet Elisha—2 Kings 2:1-13:25; 2 Chron. 21-24 [@ 847-798 BC]

Center: Elisha's miracles of kindness (2 Kings 2:1-8:6)

first group of miracles (2:1–4:37)

- theme: **death**
- a power over death (2:1–12a)
 - Elijah *departs* to heaven
- b Elisha and sons of prophets after a *death* (2:12b–18)
 - Elisha parts the Jordan; response of sons of prophets to Elijah's *death*
- c water sweetened at Jericho (2:19–22)
 - no more *death* in it
- d **center:** death of the mocking boys at Bethel (2:23–25)
- c' water provided during Moabite campaign (3:1–27)
 - redness of water mistaken to be from *death* of slain Israelites
- b' Elisha and sons of prophets after a *death* (4:1–7)
 - one of sons of prophets *dies*; widow's oil multiplied
- a' power over death (4:8–37)
 - Elisha raises son of Shunamite woman from the *dead*

second group of miracles (4:38–8:6)

- theme: helping those in **distress**
- a poisonous pottage made harmless *during the famine* (4:38–41)
- b miraculous multiplication of the loaves of *barley* (4:42–44)
- c Elisha heals the Syrian soldier, Naaman, of leprosy (5:1–27)
 - the Israelite king does not know what to do with him
- d **center:** lost axhead restored (6:1–7)
- c' Elisha blinds the Syrian soldiers—and then spares them (6:8–23)
 - the Israelite king does not know what to do with them
- b' miraculous provision of fine meal and *barley* during the siege of Samaria (6:24–7:20)
- a' Shunamite woman helped *during the famine* (8:1–6)
 - she tells to the king her story of her son's raising from the dead

List of kings (8:7-13:25)

- a *Hazael* anointed king of Aram: he will devastate Israel (8:7–15)
 - begins: Ben-hadad suffers from *illness* (he will not recover)
- b Jehoram of Judah (8:16–24)
 - his *chariots*
 - *military defeats*
- c Ahaziah of Judah (8:25–29)
 - introduction to *Athaliah*
- d **CENTER:** Jehu's coup and fall of Omride dynasty; deaths of Jezebel and Ahab's entire family; sin involving Naboth's vineyard avenged! (9:1–10:35)
- c' Joash of Judah (11:1–12:21)
 - *Athaliah's* wicked rule

- b' Jehoahaz of Israel (13:1–9)
 - his *chariots*
 - *military defeats*
 - a' Jehoash of Israel: he defeats *Hazael* (13:10–25)
 - ends: Elisha suffers from terminal *illness*
- conclusion: Elisha's death and Hazael's reign and death

Part 5: The fall of the NORTHERN Kingdom and its final seven kings—2 Kings 14:1-17:41; 2 Chron. 25-28 [@ 786-722 BC]

- 1) Jeroboam II [786-747 BC] (2 Kings 14:23-29)
 - a) Uzziah of Judah (2 Kings 15:1-7)
- 2) Zechariah [747-746 BC] (2 Kings 15:8-12)
- 3) Shallum [746 BC] (2 Kings 15:13-16)
- 4) Menahem [746-737 BC] (2 Kings 15:17-22)
- 5) Pekahiah [737-735 BC] (2 Kings 15:23-26)
- 6) Pekah [735-732 BC] (2 Kings 15:27-31)
 - a) Jotham of Judah (2 Kings 15:32-38)
 - b) Ahaz of Judah (2 Kings 16:1-20)
- 7) **Climax:** Hoshea [732-722 BC] (2 Kings 17:1-41)
 - a) Theological explanation for the fall of the kingdom (17:7-23)

**PART 6: Solomon's dynasty ends (final seven kings)—2 Kings 18:1-25:30; 2 Chron. 29-36
[@ 715-586 BC]**

Hezekiah's reign [715-697 BC] (2 Kings 18:1-20:21)

- a summary of Hezekiah's reign and reference to the fall of the northern kingdom (18:1–12)
- b arrival of hostile emissaries and troops from Assyrian king (18:13–19:13)
 - they come with threatening *message* and hostile intentions
 - Hezekiah does not allow them into the city and fears them
 - Isaiah reassures: these Assyrians *will not destroy Jerusalem!*
- c Hezekiah prays for rescue from Assyrians (19:14–34)
 - *Isaiah's reassurance* that prayer will be answered
- d **CLIMAX:** Yahweh delivers Jerusalem! (19:35–37)
- c' Hezekiah prays for rescue from death (20:1–11)
 - *Isaiah's reassurance* that prayer will be answered
- b' arrival of friendly emissaries from Babylonian king (20:12–19)
 - they come with *message* and gifts of peace
 - Hezekiah welcomes them into the city and trusts them
 - Isaiah warns: these Babylonians *will destroy Jerusalem!*
- a' summary of Hezekiah's reign (20:20–21)

Last seven kings [697-586 BC] (2 Kings 21:1-25:30)

- a) Manasseh [697-642 BC] (2 Kings 21:1-18)
- b) Amon [642-640 BC] (2 Kings 21:19-26)
- c) Josiah [640-609 BC] (2 Kings 22:1-23:30)
 - a introductory summary of Josiah's reign (22:1–2)
 - b Hilkiyah discovers law book (22:3–20)
 - inevitability of judgment because of disobedience of fathers (Josiah will be spared)
 - c assembly in Jerusalem for covenant renewal (23:1–3)
 - d **CLIMAX:** Josiah's reforms (23:4–20)
 - c' assembly in Jerusalem for Passover (23:21–23)
 - b' Josiah fully obeys the law book that Hilkiyah discovered (23:24–27)
 - inevitability of judgment because of sins of fathers
 - a' concluding summary of Josiah's reign (23:28–30)
- d) Jehoahaz [609 BC] (2 Kings 23:31-35)
- e) Jehoiakim [609-597 BC] (2 Kings 23:36-24:7)
- f) Jehoiachin [597 BC] (2 Kings 24:8-17)
- g) **Climax:** Zedekiah [597-586 BC] (2 Kings 24:18-25:30)