

Key to I KINGS

1. STATISTICS:

Writer, Jeremiah, according to tradition. Note similarity of II Kings 25 and Jeremiah 39; 52. Extent of time, 120 years. Key thought, kingdom glory and decline; key verse, 2:12; key characters, Solomon, Elijah. Type of book, history.

2. THEME:

Following David's death, Solomon became king, ruled well, built the temple but eventually made some serious mistakes. At his death the kingdom was divided and a great prophet, Elijah, came on scene.

3. OUTLINE:

David's counsel and death (1,2) Elijah emerges (17-19)
Solomon's magnificence and temple (3-11) King Ahab's story (20-22)
Division and early Kings (12-16)

4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Books of Kings present political aspect of the time while Chronicles present the priestly aspect of same period.

Other existing books referred to by sacred writer: book of Acts of Solomon; History of Nathan; History of Gad; Visions of Iddo.

Solomon was colorful figure to describe. He wrote 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs, and besides was an authority on botany and zoology.

The second half of the book deals mainly with the prophet Elijah.

5. OUTSTANDING FEATURES:

Solomon's reign began in splendor as in deep humility he asked for wisdom. Received wisdom, wealth and honor. The downfall of the world's wisest man came in his failure to follow God's admonitions.

His reign prefigures the millennial kingdom when "**the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.**"

His unique wisdom did not save him from the idolatry introduced by his heathen wives. Unlike David, he did not show penitence and confess his sin. At his death, his kingdom was seething with unrest.

Rehoboam's foolish decision split the Tribes into two nations which remained through the period of the captivity. There were a few of the kings of Judah who followed the LORD, but for the most part the picture of both kingdoms was a sad one. The strongest impression is the long-suffering patience of GOD.

Elijah, one of two remarkable prophets in the Northern Kingdom, first appeared as a grown man, facing King Ahab with flaming reproof. A strange supernatural atmosphere surrounded him. He was like a lion, strong, stern. He performed miracles and lived as an ascetic. He was GOD's man for the hour.

To keep Israel from religious pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Jeroboam erected two golden calves to worship in Bethel and Dan. He became a synonym for sin in Israel's history. Again and again following his name is the phrase "**who made Israel to sin.**"

6. INTERESTING FEATURES:

There were 19 kings (9 dynasties) in Israel; 20 kings (1 dynasty) in Judah.

Solomon had extensive stables (9:15, 16; 10:26, 28) at Megiddo.

A three-word description of the kings following Solomon would be: Idolatry, immorality and bloodshed.

7. KEY TO UNDERSTANDING:

Study the life of Solomon and ask, Why did this king fail when he had started so magnificently. Make a list of the kings of Judah and Israel and you will see the size of the grace of GOD.

~ end of I Kings ~

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