

# Through the Bible Book by Book

## Old Testament

by Myer Pearlman

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### First Kings

**Theme:** In I and II Samuel we read how the Jewish nation demanded a king in order that they might be like the other nations. Though contrary to His perfect will, GOD granted their request. In this book we learn how Israel fared under the kings. Though many righteous kings ruled, the history of most of them is one of misrule and iniquity. In accordance with His promise in I Samuel 12:18-24, the Lord did not fail to bless His people as long as they sought Him, but, on the other hand He never failed to punish them when they departed from Him.

**Author:** The human author is unknown. It is believed that Jeremiah compiled the records made by Nathan and Gad (I Chronicles 29:29) and others.

**Scope:** From the death of David to the reign of Jehoram over Israel, covering a period of 118 years from 1015-897 B. C.

### CONTENTS

- I. The Establishment of Solomon's Kingdom (Chapters 1, 2).
- II. Solomon's Reign (Chapters 3-11).
- III. The Disruption and Decline of the Kingdom (Chapters 12-22).

#### I. The Establishment of Solomon's Kingdom

- 1. Adonijah's plot (1:1-38).
- 2. Solomon appointed by David (1:39-53).
- 3. The death of David (2:1-11).
- 4. Solomon's accession (2:12-46).

What was David's physical condition at this time?

Who attempted to seize the kingdom?

What should have been a warning to him (II Samuel 15:1-6)?

Who were his accomplices?

How was the plot foiled?

Why could not Adonijah become king (I Chronicles 22:9, 10)?

Concerning David's last charge to Solomon (2:1-9) we quote from Bahr's commentary:

"The special directions which refer to individual persons, David communicates, not as a private man, but as king of Israel. Joab's double murder had gone fully unpunished. At the time of its commission, David was not in a condition to be able to punish him; but he felt the full weight of his deed, and in horror of it, uttered an imprecation against Joab (II Samuel 3:29).

In the eyes of the people, nevertheless, the non-punishment must have been regarded as an insult against the law and righteousness, the charge of which devolved upon the king. It was a stain upon his reign not yet blotted out. Even on his deathbed he cannot think otherwise than it is his duty, as that of a supreme judge, to deliver to his successor a definite direction about it.

It lay upon his conscience, and he desired that the stain somehow ("**Do according to thy wisdom**") should be removed. Moreover, Joab's participation in Adonijah's revolt must have appeared as dangerous for the throne of Solomon. As the punishment of Joab was to him a matter of conscience, so also was Barzillai's compensation. What Barzillai had done, he had done for him as King, as the anointed of the Lord.

Such fidelity and devotion to the reigning house, ought to be publicly requited, and to be recognized in honorable remembrance after the death of the king. In direct contrast to the action of Barzillai was that of Shimei.

He did not curse David as a private person, but he cursed him with the heaviest curse as the anointed of the Lord, and therein the Lord Himself indirectly. For blasphemy against the king was on the same level as blasphemy against GOD (I Kings 21:10). Both were punished with death (Leviticus 24:14; Exodus 22:28), hence Abishai thought that Shimei should be put to death (II Samuel 19:21)

But David wished on the day when GOD had showed him great mercy, to show mercy himself, and on that account saved his life. But it was no small matter to allow the miscreant to spend his life near him (no banishment was talked of). And to permit him to spend his days quietly under the following reign (which had never been promised him) would have been a kindness that might have been greatly abused as a precedent of unpunished crimes. In fact, Shimei was a dangerous man, capable of repeating what he had done to David. As for the rest, David left Solomon to choose the manner and time of his punishment only he was not to go unpunished."

## **II. Solomon's Reign**

1. Solomon's wisdom (Chapters 3, 4).
2. The building of the temple (Chapters 5-7).
3. The dedication of the temple (chapter 8).
4. Solomon's glory and fame (Chapters 9, 10).
5. Solomon's fall (chapter 11).

Whom did Solomon marry?

Where did Solomon and the people sacrifice for want of a sanctuary (3:2-4)?

What request did Solomon make at this time (3:9)?  
What else did the Lord give besides that for which he asked?  
What scripture does that illustrate (Ephesians 3:20)?  
What incident illustrating Solomon's wisdom is given?  
What was the condition of Israel and Judah during Solomon's reign (4:20, 24, 25)?  
What were the boundaries of Solomon's dominions (4:21, 24)?  
Who supplied Solomon with materials to build the temple?  
In what year after Israel's departure from Egypt was the building of the temple begun?  
What message came to Solomon at this time (6:11-13)?  
How long did it take to build the temple (6:38)?  
How long did it take Solomon to build his own house?  
What was done after the temple was completed (8:1-19)?  
What did the ark contain?  
How did GOD manifest His presence at this time?

Notice carefully:

Solomon's sermon (8:12-21);  
Solomon's prayer of dedication (8:22-53);  
Solomon's blessing of the people (8:54-61).

How was the dedication celebrated (8:62-66)?  
When was Solomon's prayer answered (9:1-9)?  
What choice did the Lord lay before Solomon and his people (9:4-9)?  
What did Israel ultimately choose? Describe Solomon's activities (9:10-28).  
Describe his wealth (10:1-29).  
Who caused Solomon's down fall (11:1,2)?  
What did they lead him into (11:5-8)?  
How did GOD say He would punish him (11:11)?  
When would that take place (11:12)?  
How much of his kingdom would be left?  
What prophet is introduced here (11:29)?  
What opportunity was presented Jeroboam (11:38)?

### **III. The Disruption and Decline of the Kingdom**

The most profitable way to study this section will be for the student to make a list of the kings of Judah and Israel, briefly noting the following facts; the character of the king; the length of his reign; the names of the prophets mentioned in connection with his reign; the principal events of his reign. For example:

#### **Reboboam**

Foolish and unjust; reigned 17 years; kingdom divided; people commit idolatry; invasion by king of Egypt.

## **Jeroboam**

Idolatrous, etc.

The following list of kings of Judah and Israel, arranged as far as possible in chronological order will guide the student.

<b>Judah</b>	<b>Israel</b>
Rehoboam	Jeroboam
Abijam	
Asa	
Nadab	
Baasha	
Elah	
Zimri	
Omri	
Jehoshaphat	Ahab
Jehoram	Ahaziah

What petition did the elders of the people bring to Rehoboam?

In spite of the outward prosperity of Solomon's reign, what was the condition of the people (12:4)?

What showed Rehoboam's foolishness?

What did he lose by it?

Had there already been the beginning of a breach between Judah and Israel (II Samuel 2:8-11; 19:41 to 20:1, 2)?

What did Rehoboam attempt to do to prevent the secession of the other tribes?

What restrained him?

What did Jeroboam fear (12:26)?

What did he do to prevent this (12:27, 28)?

Did he at first wish to entirely destroy the worship of the Lord, or did he wish to conduct it in another way?

What suggested his setting up of the golden calves (Exodus 32:1-4)?

Where did he set these?

What commandment did he break concerning the priesthood?

Concerning the feasts?

Who denounced his sin? (13:1, 2)?

Whose birth, 350 years before, did he prophesy (Compare II Kings 23:15)?

What scripture does the disobedience of the man of GOD illustrate (Compare 13:18 and Galatians 1:8, 9)?

What judgment was pronounced upon Jeroboam? What prophecy concerning Israel was uttered (14:15, 16)?

Let us notice the main events of the ministry of Elijah. In order to give a complete account of his life, we shall draw from II Kings.

1. His message to Ahab (17:1).
2. His flight to the brook Cherith (17:2-7).
3. Fed by the widow of Zarephath. Raises her son from the dead (17:8-24).
4. His contest with the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel (chapter 18).
5. His flight to Mt. Sinai before Jezebel (19:1-18).
6. The call of Elisha.
7. His denunciation of Ahab for the murder of Naboth (21:17-29).
8. His message to Ahaziah (II Kings 1:3-16).
9. His translation (II Kings 2:1-11).

Elijah and John the Baptist are mentioned together in the New Testament, the latter as fulfilling the ministry of the former in relation to Messiah's first advent (Luke 1:17; Matthew 17:10-13).

Elijah is the John the Baptist of the Old Testament, and John the Baptist is the Elijah of the New Testament. Their ministries yield an interesting comparison.

1. Both ministered in times when Israel had departed from the true spiritual worship of GOD.
2. They resembled each other in appearance (II Kings 1:8; Matthew 3:4).
3. Both preached national repentance (I Kings 18:21; Matthew 3:2).
4. Both rebuked wicked kings (I Kings 18:18; Matthew 14:3,4).
5. Both were persecuted by wicked queens (I Kings 19:1; Matthew 14:8).
6. Elijah's sacrifice on Mt. Carmel, and John's baptism marked a time of national repentance.
7. Elisha, Elijah's successor, received his power for service at the Jordan; Jesus, John's successor, received the anointing of the Spirit in the same river.
8. Both, towards the close of their ministry, yielded to discouragement (I Kings 19:4; Matt. 7:2-6).

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