

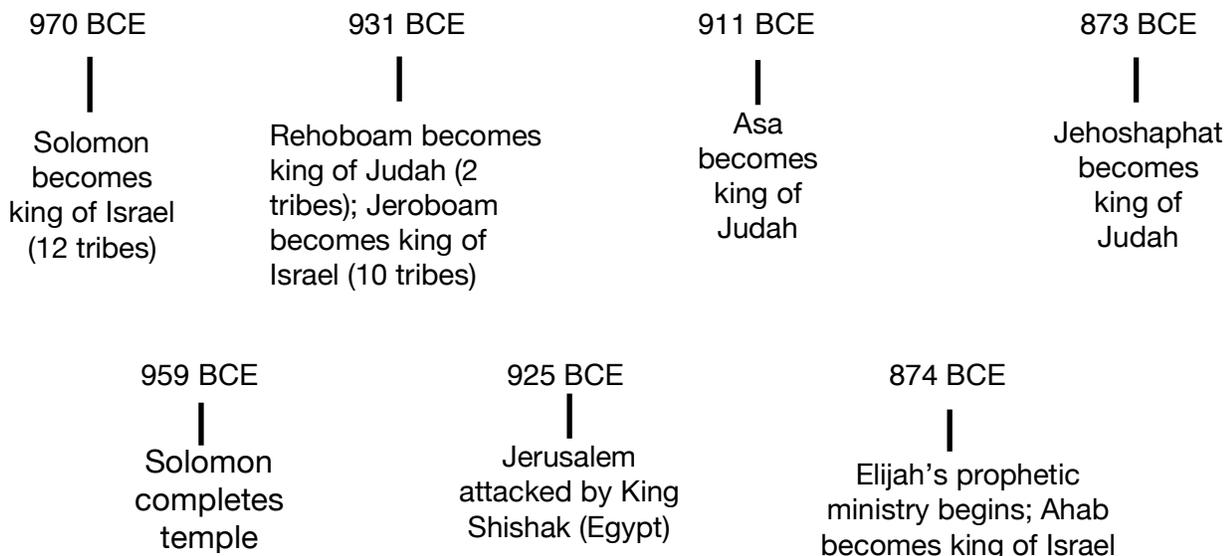
AP 30

1 Kings / מלכים א / *Melekim 1*

First and Second Kings - originally one book - is the sequel to 1 and 2 Samuel. This history of the kings of Israel (and Judah after the split) is also a history of the prophets who were sent by God to correct the ways of the kings and the Israelites. It is a history of kings, and their subjects, doing evil, hearing from prophets, suffering consequences for sin, improving (sometimes), and repeating the cycle.

First Kings begins with the end of David's life and the beginning of the rule of Solomon, David's son by Bathsheba¹. Solomon's rule starts with palace intrigue as a brother asks permission to marry the last member of David's harem. Since he who inherits the harem is king, Solomon saw this as a continuing threat from his brother (who had previously claimed kingship) and Solomon has him killed - and generally cleans house of threats to his throne. Solomon marries the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt, solidifying his political power and stability. [It would be nice to be able to ignore these chapters about the political intrigue. Shockingly, such power struggles and marriage for power in 1000 BCE was mirrored in the history of England and Scotland, often with the church being engaged on both sides. Beware: "God is on our side" often is claimed by both sides in politics.] Solomon's administration, building program, and wealth are described in detail. Of paramount importance in Solomon's reign is the building of the temple in Jerusalem and details of the building process are included in 1 Kings. Solomon's death brings his son Rehoboam to the throne. Important in Rehoboam's rule is that 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel split off under Jeroboam. The ten tribes are called Israel; the two tribes remaining with Rehoboam (Solomon's son) are called Judah. Israel establishes its temple at Shechem; Judah's temple is Solomon's temple in Jerusalem.

The remainder of 1 Kings (and 2 Kings) is a repeated theme of moral failures of the kings of Judah and Israel and prophetic ministries to call for a return to God and/or God's judgment for failure to return to Him. In contrast, 1 and 2 Chronicles covers a similar historical period, but does so from a priestly, rather than prophetic, point of view. Using the same facts about the kings, the emphasis of Chronicles is limited to the Kings of Judah, and focuses on themes of redemption, God's faithfulness, and God's kingship.



¹ Recall that David had an adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and, when she became pregnant, arranged for Bathsheba's husband to be killed in battle to cover his sin.

- Sunday 1 Kings 1:1-30; 2:1-10 (spotlight verse 2:3)
 For Reflection: David gives Solomon critical insight for receiving God’s blessing and prospering. If your time to “sleep with your fathers” was near, what important spiritual guidance would you want to give? To whom would you give this guidance? Since you don’t know when your last day will be, when should you share your insight with those you want to hear it?
 Lagniappe: Luke 16:19-31
- Monday 1 Kings 2:13-46 (spotlight verses 2:31-33)
 For Reflection: The world is messy. There is evil. Wars happen - and we (or our children and grandchildren) are told to kill the enemy. Or we supply arms for others to kill the enemy. How do we make sense of this and find God’s will for our decisions - our votes, our protests, our willingness to serve so that there may “be the Lord’s peace forever”?
 Lagniappe: Ephesians 5:15-17; Matthew 7:15-17
- Tuesday 1 Kings 3:1-28 (spotlight verses 3:9-13)
 For Reflection: Following directly with Monday’s reflection, Solomon is concerned with correct decisions. Solomon asks for wisdom to discern right from wrong. (This should be on your list for yesterday’s reflection.) Jesus said, “I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” (John 11:22). What will you ask of God? Do you think your request, like Solomon’s, will please God?
 Lagniappe: Matthew 7:7-8
- Wednesday 1 Kings 6:11-14; 8:22-53; 9:1-9 (spotlight verses 9:6-9)
 For Reflection: In Solomon’s prayer of dedication God’s presence in the temple can be turned to for many functions - justice, forgiveness, guidance, meeting needs, protection, and healing. God assures His help, but the “temple will become a heap of rubble” if the people sin and turn from God. Jesus is called the temple. And our body is a temple where God dwells. Dedicate yourself as God’s temple by modifying Solomon’s prayer of dedication to apply to yourself. Listen for God’s assurance in response.
 Lagniappe: John 2:18-22; 1 Corinthians 6:19
- Thursday 1 Kings 11:1-13; 12:1-19; 12:22-24 (spotlight verses 12:6-10)
 For Reflection: Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, rejected the advice: “If today you will **be a servant to these people and serve them** and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.” Compare this to Jesus instruction in the Lagniappe. There were consequences for Rehoboam’s failure to follow this advice. Consider your own life and the world around you. Where do you see servant leadership? Where do you see arrogant self-service? In which direction are you shifting the balance? How can you move the needle more toward servant leadership?
 Lagniappe: Mark 10:42-45
- Friday 1 Kings 17:1; 18:1-45 (spotlight verses 18:18-21)
 For Reflection: Elijah challenges the belief system — worship of Baal² — of his time. He calls on the people to repent and follow the true God. In our time there are many examples of Christians calling for obedience to the one true God, rather than the

² Baal was the Canaanite-Phoenician god of fertility and rainstorms; also used generically means “Lord” and can refer to a number deities of the ancient Near East.

cultural - perhaps dominant - false gods. I think of Martin Luther King with justice and Dietrich Bonhoeffer opposing the Nazis. But for each of us, to follow Jesus means to love God and to love our neighbor (defined by Jesus to include Samaritans - those our culture despises). Take time to identify any "Baals" in your life that compete with following Jesus. Repent of such "lesser gods" and commit to "the Lord who is God."
Lagniappe: Matthew 17:10-13; Mark 1:4-8

Saturday 1 Kings 19 (spotlight verses: 19:11-13)

For Reflection: Shocking! One of the greatest³, who has just participated in the destruction by God of the priests of Baal is afraid, depressed, praying for death. Our lives have mountaintops of joy and valleys of despair and painful circumstances - and God is present for us in both. Think on times of despair and pain you have experienced. How did God speak to you? What helps you be most receptive to God? Spending time in His word? Quiet time in nature? Praying with a close spiritual ally? Use your best method to listen for God's will today.

Lagniappe: Matthew 26:36-39

³ Elijah did not die, but was taken up by God into heaven (2 Kings 2:11) and only Elijah (of the prophets) and Moses (of the leaders) appeared with Jesus in the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-3).