



# Old Testament Survey

Part Three: 1 Samuel through Esther

History of the Kings and Captivity

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

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- Old Testament Outlines by Ethan Longhenry, [disciple\\_of\\_iesus@hotmail.com](mailto:disciple_of_iesus@hotmail.com)
- Eerdmans Pulpit Commentary
- Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament
- Gill's Exposition of the Bible
- Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible
- Matthew Henry's Commentary
- Old Testament Introductions (Angelfire)
- Wikipedia
- Introductions to Old Testament Books (NIV)
- Chronological Charts of the Old Testament by John H. Walton

(Questions were written by the compiler specifically for this class.)

# First Samuel

## INTRODUCTION TO 1SAMUEL

First and Second Samuel (Hebrew: Sefer Sh'muel שמואל ספר) are named after the person God used to establish the monarchy in Israel. Samuel was the last judge of Israel as well as the first prophet of the kingdom of Israel (3:19-21). He also ministered before the Lord as priest (2:18). Samuel not only anointed both Saul and David, Israel's first two kings, but he also gave definition to the new order of God's rule over Israel. Samuel's role as God's representative in this period of Israel's history is close to that of Moses (Psalm 99:6; Jer. 15:1) since he, more than any other person, provided for covenant continuity in the transition from the rule of the judges to that of the monarchy.

First and Second Samuel were originally one book. It was divided into two parts by the translators of the Septuagint. The title of the book has varied from time to time, having been designated "The First and Second Books of Kingdoms" (Septuagint) and "First and Second Samuel" (Hebrew tradition and most modern versions).

## I. AUTHOR

Who the author was cannot be known since the book itself gives no indication of his identity. Whoever he was, he doubtless had access to records of the life and times of Samuel, Saul and David. Explicit reference in the book itself is made to only one such source (the Book of Jashar, 2Sam. 1:18), but the writer of Chronicles refers to four others that pertain to this period (the book of the annals of King David, 1Chron 27:24; the records of Samuel the seer; the records of Nathan the prophet; the records of Gad the seer, 1Chron. 29:29). We can reasonably conclude that the authors of these two books are Samuel, Nathan, and Gad.

## II. DATE OF WRITING

Scholars disagree on when the Books of Samuel were written. Some believe the work was completed soon after the time of David (1011-971 B.C.). Other scholars have dated the completed work about 650-550 B.C. as part of a larger history including the "Former Prophets" and Deuteronomy. The date of writing is not as important as the fact First and Second Samuel are books given by inspiration of God.

## III. THEME

1Samuel relates God's establishment of a political system in Israel headed by a human king. The following events provide historical background for the beginning of the monarchy:

1) The birth, youth and call of Samuel (chs. 1-3). In a book dealing for the most part with the reigns of Israel's first two kings, Saul and David, it is significant that the writer begins with the birth of their forerunner and anointer, the prophet Samuel. This accentuates the importance of Samuel's role in the events that follow. Kingship is given its birth and then nurtured by the prophetic word and work of the prophet Samuel.

2) The "ark narratives" (chs. 4-6). This section describes how the ark of God was captured by the Philistines and then, after God wreaked havoc on several Philistine cities, how it was returned to Israel. These narratives reveal the folly of Israel's notion that possession of the ark automatically guaranteed victory over her enemies. They also display the awesome power of the God of Israel and His superiority over the Philistine god Dagon. The Philistines were forced to confess openly their helplessness against God's power by their return of the ark to Israel.

3) Samuel as a judge and deliverer (ch. 7). When Samuel called Israel to repentance and renewed dedication to the Lord, the Lord intervened mightily in Israel's behalf and gave victory over the Philistines. This narrative reaffirms the authority of Samuel as a divinely ordained leader; at the same time it provides evidence of divine protection and blessing for God's people when they place their confidence in the Lord and live in obedience to their covenant obligations.

All the material in chs. 1-7 serves as a preface for the narratives of chs. 8-12, which describe the rise and establishment of kingship in Israel. In the study of these chapters, scholars have often noted the presence of a tension in the attitude toward the monarchy: On the one hand, Samuel is commanded by the Lord to give the people a king (8:7,9,22; 9:16-17; 10:24; 12:13); on the other hand, their request for a king is considered a sinful rejection of the Lord (8:7; 10:19; 12:12,17,19-20). These seemingly conflicting attitudes toward the monarchy must be understood in the context of Israel's covenant relationship with the Lord.

Moses had anticipated Israel's desire for a human king (Deut. 17:14-20), but Israelite kingship was to be compatible with the continued rule of the Lord over his people as their Great King. Instead, when the elders asked Samuel to give them a king (8:5,19-20), they rejected the Lord's kingship over them. Their desire was for a king such as the nations around them had, to lead them in battle and give them a sense of national security and unity. The request for a king constituted a denial of their covenant relationship to the Lord, who was their true King. Moreover, the Lord not only had promised to be their protector but had also repeatedly demonstrated his power in their behalf, most recently in the ark narratives (chs. 4-6), as well as in the great victory won over the Philistines under the leadership of Samuel (ch. 7).

Nevertheless the Lord instructed Samuel to give the people a king. By divine appointment Saul was brought into contact with Samuel, and Samuel was directed to anoint him privately as king (9:1 - 10:16). Subsequently, Samuel gathered the people at Mizpah, where, after again admonishing them concerning their sin in desiring a king (10:18-19), he presided over the selection of a king by lot. The lot fell on Saul and publicly designated him as the one whom God had chosen (10:24). Saul did not immediately assume his royal office, but returned home to work his fields (11:5,7). When the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead were threatened by Nahash the Ammonite, Saul rose to the challenge, gathered an army and led Israel to victory in battle. His success placed a final seal of divine approval on Saul's selection to be king (cf. 10:24; 11:12-13) and occasioned the inauguration of his reign at Gilgal (11:14 -- 12:25).

The question that still needed resolution, then, was not so much whether Israel should have a king (it was clearly the Lord's will to give them a king), but rather how they could maintain their covenant with God now that they had a human king. The problem was resolved when Samuel called the people to repentance and renewal of their allegiance to the Lord on the very occasion of the inauguration of Saul as king. By establishing kingship in the context of covenant renewal, Samuel placed the monarchy in Israel on a radically different footing from that in surrounding nations. The king in Israel was not to be autonomous in his authority and power; rather, he was to be subject to the law of the Lord and the word of the prophet (10:25; 12:23). This was to be true not only for Saul but also for all the kings who would occupy the throne in Israel in the future. The king was to be an instrument of the Lord's rule over his people, and the people as well as the king were to continue to recognize the Lord as their Sovereign (12:14-15).

Saul soon demonstrated that he was unwilling to submit to the requirements of his office (chs. 13-15). When he disobeyed the instructions of the prophet Samuel in preparation for battle against the Philistines (13:13), and when he refused to totally destroy the Amalekites as he had been commanded to do by the word of the Lord

through Samuel (ch. 15), he ceased to be an instrument of the Lord's rule over his people. These violations of the requirements of his office led to his rejection as king (15:23).

The remainder of 1Samuel (chs. 16-31) depicts the Lord's choice of David to be Saul's successor, and then describes the long road by which David is prepared for accession to the throne. Although Saul's rule became increasingly opposed to God in nature, David refused to usurp the throne by forceful means but left his accession to office in the Lord's hands. Eventually Saul was wounded in a battle with the Philistines and, fearing capture, took his own life. Three of Saul's sons, including David's loyal friend Jonathan, were killed in the same battle (ch. 31).

#### **IV. CHRONOLOGY**

1105 BC - Birth of Samuel (1Sam. 1:20)

1080 BC - Birth of Saul

1050 BC - Saul anointed to be king (1Sam. 10:1)

1040 BC - Birth of David

1025 BC - David anointed to be Saul's successor (1Sam. 16:1-13)

1010 BC - Death of Saul and beginning of David's reign over Judah in Hebron (1Sam. 31:4-6; 2Sam. 2:1,4,11)

1003 BC - Beginning of David's reign over all Israel and capture of Jerusalem (2Sam. 5)

997-992 BC - David's wars (2Sam. 8:1-14)

991 BC - Birth of Solomon (2Sam. 12:24)

980 BC - David's census (2Sam. 24:1-9)

970 BC - End of David's reign (2Sam. 5:4-5; 1Kings 2:10-11)

#### **V. APPLICATION**

The First Book of Samuel clearly observes that GOD is acting in history. Even the most unfortunate events, as sin and rebellion can be utilized by Him to make his divine plan advance. The corruption of the sons of Eli, and his inability to educate and instruct them, shapes the environment where the child Samuel develops. The rejection of GOD and the demand of a king for Israel give place to the establishment of an earthly dynasty that would prepare for GOD's entry into human history in the person of the Messiah. Finally, Saul, who began so wonderfully, ends his life in a tragedy, killing himself. Because of Saul's weakness, David is taken from raising sheep and introduced to the king's court. The foolish persecution of David on Saul's part served as a backdrop for the ascension to the throne of the greatest of the kings of Israel, a man after GOD's own heart.

But GOD's hand is not only manifested in the great moments of history. In 1 Samuel the following lessons are also made evident: GOD intervenes in the pain and misery of Hannah to give her, not only a son, but a progeny of three sons and two daughters (2:21). Although human beings are fixed on appearances, GOD sees the heart (16:7). Obedience is better than sacrifice (15:22,23), which indicates that GOD is interested in men's hearts as well as their actions. GOD doesn't notice those who show great dignity when they have sinned, since He is a patient and merciful GOD.

The similarities between Jesus and the child Samuel are striking. Both were sons of promise. Both were dedicated to GOD before they were born. Both served to bridge the gap between one age and another in the nation's history. Samuel combined the offices of judge, prophet, and priest; Christ is Prophet, Priest, King, and Judge.

The tragic end of Saul illustrates how earthly kingdoms end. The only hope is in the Kingdom of GOD upon earth, whose government is in the LORD's hands. The

genealogy of the One sent by GOD begins with David. David, the shepherd child, prefigures Christ, the Good Shepherd. Jesus becomes the Shepherd-King.

## VI. 1SAMUEL: BACKGROUND

### A. Setting

1. The period of Judges is not going well; the nation is distressed by sinfulness and corruption
2. 1Samuel covers period from Eli to Saul's death
  - a. Many judges become weak or corrupt near the end
  - b. Israel calls for a king; pros and cons of a king
  - c. The decline of Saul and the ascendancy of David

### B. Authorship

1. Author entirely unknown; it is not Samuel
2. No doubt of its inspiration; material cited in Hebrews 11:32
3. Affinities between 1Samuel and Luke
4. Author seems responsible for 1Samuel, 2Samuel, 1Kings, 2Kings
5. In Greek Septuagint the book is called First Reigns

### C. Date of Writing

1. Events span the end of the Judges, beginning of the kings
2. Possible overlap with end of book of Judges
3. 1Samuel over 100 year period, ca. 1150-1050 BC
4. Book likely based on records, information nearly contemporaneous with events
5. Actual final composition likely around the exile (ca. 586 BCE)

### D. Recipients

1. The audience of the book is Israel in exile and beyond
2. Important for all generations of God's people - Rom. 15:4

### E. Purpose of Writing

1. To describe Israel's transitions from judges to kings, from Saul to David
2. To demonstrate the benefits and difficulties with kings
3. To demonstrate the need of faithfulness to the commands of God

## VII. 1SAMUEL: OUTLINE

### A. Main Sections

1. Samuel (1Samuel 1-8)
2. Saul and Samuel (1Samuel 9-16)
3. Saul and David (1Samuel 17-31)

### B. Samuel's Birth and Dedication (1Samuel 1:1-2:10)

1. Elkanah, Penninah, Hannah; Hannah barren; travel to tabernacle yearly for sacrifice (1Samuel 1:1-4)
2. Hannah's grief over being barren (1Samuel 1:5-8)
3. Hannah's prayer for a son (1Samuel 1:9-11)
4. Eli sees her praying, presumes her drunk, rebukes her (1Sam. 1:12-14)
5. Hannah explains herself (1Samuel 1:15-16)
6. Eli blesses her; she departs; God remembers her; she conceives, bears a son Samuel (1Samuel 1:17-20)
7. Does not go up that year to the Tabernacle, waits for Samuel to be weaned; at being weaned, presented and dedicated to God and Eli in Tabernacle (1Samuel 1:21-28)
8. Hannah's song; they return to their home; Samuel in Tabernacle (1Samuel 2:1-10)

- C. Corruption of Eli's Sons and Condemnation (1Samuel 2:11-3:21)
1. Worthlessness of Eli's sons (1Samuel 2:11)
  2. Custom of priests and their portion (1Samuel 2:12-14)
  3. Eli's sons' corruption of the practice (1Samuel 2:15-17)
  4. Samuel blessed; Hannah's visitations; Hannah's other children (1Samuel 2:18-21)
  5. Eli's rebuke of his sons (1Samuel 2:22-24)
  6. Sons will not listen; Samuel grows before the LORD (1Sam. 2:25-26)
  7. Prophet of God comes, pronounces condemnation and reduction of Eli's house (1Samuel 2:27-36)
  8. Visions from God rare in those days (1Samuel 3:1)
  9. God calls Samuel three times; Samuel thinks it is Eli (1Samuel 3:2-9)
  10. God speaks with Samuel, confirms reduction of Eli's house (1Samuel 3:10-15)
  11. Samuel reveals message to Eli (1Samuel 3:16-18)
  12. Samuel as prophet (1Samuel 3:19-21)
- D. The Ark (1 Samuel 4:1-7:1)
1. Defeat of Israel by Philistia (1Samuel 4:1-2)
  2. Israel calls for the Ark of the Covenant; Eli's sons bring it (1Sam. 4:3-5)
  3. Philistines afraid; take resolve (1Samuel 4:6-9)
  4. Israel defeated; Eli's sons killed; Ark captured (1Samuel 4:10-11)
  5. News revealed to Eli; leads to his death (1Samuel 4:12-18)
  6. News revealed to Phinehas' wife; dies in labor; names child Ichabod (1Samuel 4:19-22)
  7. Ark to Ashdod; humiliation of Dagon (1Samuel 5:1-5)
  8. God sends afflictions of hemorrhoids and mice upon city in which Ark dwells: Ashdod, Gath, Ekron (1Samuel 5:6-12)
  9. Ark there seven months; lords ask magicians what should be done; to be returned to Israel with golden likenesses of the plagues as offerings (1Samuel 6:1-6)
  10. Test: put Ark on cart, attached to two milk cows: if it goes to Beth-Shemesh, difficulties came from the LORD (1Samuel 6:7-9)
  11. Philistines do so; Ark to Beth-Shemesh; great happiness, feasting (1Samuel 6:10-18)
  12. Plague on Beth-Shemesh on account of Ark; Ark to Kiriath-jearim (1Samuel 6:19-7:1)
- E. Revenge on the Philistines (1Samuel 7:2-17)
1. Twenty years elapse (1Samuel 7:2)
  2. Samuel charges people to remove idols; they do so (1Samuel 7:3-4)
  3. Israel gathers at Mizpah; Samuel prays for them, offers sacrifice (1Samuel 7:5-9)
  4. Philistia attacks while Samuel makes offering; Israel, YHWH fight against Philistia; great rout and slaughter of Philistines (1Sam. 7:10-11)
  5. Samuel sets up "Stone of Help," or Ebenezer (1Samuel 7:12)
  6. Restoration of land lost to Philistia; Philistia subdued (1Sam. 7:13-14)
  7. Samuel judges Israel (1Samuel 7:15-17)
- F. Give Us a King! (1Samuel 8)
1. Samuel's sons judge in his old age; corrupt (1Samuel 8:1-3)
  2. Elders, people call for a king (1Samuel 8:4-6)
  3. God explains to Samuel that it is a rejection of Him, not Samuel (1Samuel 8:7-9)

4. Explanation of conditions under a king (1Samuel 8:10-18)
  5. People still want a king (1Samuel 8:19-22)
- G. Saul Made King (1Samuel 9-12)
1. Kish the Benjaminite; his son Saul; Saul tallest man in Israel (1Samuel 9:1-2)
  2. Lost donkeys; Saul and young servant search for them (1Sam. 9:3-5)
  3. Attempt to see a seer to ascertain their location (1Samuel 9:6-14)
  4. Revelation to Samuel that God is sending Saul to him, Saul to be king (1Samuel 9:15-17)
  5. Saul meets Samuel; Samuel reassures Saul; eat together; speak together (1Samuel 9:18-27)
  6. Saul anointed king (1Samuel 10:1)
  7. Samuel's instructions for Saul (1Samuel 10:2-8)
  8. All things take place; Spirit of the Lord upon Saul, and he prophesies (1Samuel 10:9-13)
  9. Saul does not reveal his anointing to his family (1Samuel 10:14-16)
  10. Israel at Mizpah; formal selection; Benjamin, Kish called out by lot; Saul hiding in baggage; taken out, hailed as king by most, not all (1Samuel 10:17-27)
  11. Nahash the Ammonite besieges Jabesh-gilead; Saul informed; Saul calls up army of Israel; Ammon defeated (1Samuel 11:1-11)
  12. Men who doubted Saul spared; kingdom renewed at Gilgal; rejoicing before God (1Samuel 11:12-15)
  13. Samuel before the people; people testify to his uprightness (1Samuel 12:1-5)
  14. Events in Israel while YHWH was recognized as king (1Sam. 12:6-13)
  15. Plea for Israel to remain faithful to God while having a king, sign against them (1Samuel 12:14-18)
  16. People realize the evil they sought in desiring a king (1Samuel 12:19)
  17. Samuel acknowledges it, yet pleads for continued faithfulness to God (1Samuel 12:20-25)
- H. Saul and the Philistines, First Encounter (1Samuel 13-14)
1. Saul's reign, his chosen men (1Samuel 13:1-2)
  2. Jonathan defeats Philistines (1Samuel 13:3-4)
  3. Large Philistine army; Israelites hide in many places; Samuel delayed in coming to make a sacrifice; army deserting (1Samuel 13:5-8)
  4. Saul makes the offering himself (1Samuel 13:9-10)
  5. Saul explains self to Samuel; Samuel condemns him for action, first indication that the kingdom will not remain with Saul's descendants (1Samuel 13:11-14)
  6. Israel's army in three companies (1Samuel 13:15-18)
  7. No blacksmiths in Israel; only Saul and Jonathan have swords, spears (1Samuel 13:19-23)
  8. Jonathan makes raid on Philistine garrison (1Samuel 14:1-16)
  9. Panic and confusion amongst the Philistines; Saul calls for Ark, sets out for battle; great rout of the Philistines (1Samuel 14:17-23)
  10. Saul's foolish oath; Jonathan eats some honey; Jonathan testifies to folly of his father's oath (1Samuel 14:24-31)
  11. Proper sacrifice so that people do not eat blood (1Samuel 14:32-35)
  12. Jonathan's "sin" has led God to not be with people; Saul to kill own son, but the people ransom him (1Samuel 14:36-45)

13. Saul's success against Philistia, other enemies; house of Saul (1Samuel 14:46-50)
- I. Israel and Amalek (1Samuel 15)
  1. Saul charged to fight Amalek (1Samuel 15:1-3)
  2. Saul attacks, but does not completely destroy them (1Samuel 15:4-9)
  3. God, Samuel displeased; Saul tried to justify self (1Samuel 15:10-15)
  4. Samuel tells Saul of God's message: Saul disobedient (1Samuel 15:16-19)
  5. Saul still attempts to justify himself (1Samuel 15:20-21)
  6. Samuel indicates that Saul has been rebellious and not obedient (1Samuel 15:22-23)
  7. Saul recognizes his sin; Samuel indicates that he has been rejected as king, it will be given to another (1Samuel 15:24-31)
  8. Samuel destroys Agag king of Amalek (1Samuel 15:32-33)
  9. Samuel returns to his house; Saul never again sees him alive (1Samuel 15:34-35)
- J. David Anointed (1Samuel 16)
  1. LORD sends Samuel to house of Jesse the Judahite to anoint a king (1Samuel 16:1)
  2. Jesse and sons accompany Samuel at a sacrifice (1Samuel 16:2-5)
  3. Jesse's sons presented: none present accepted by God (1Samuel 16:6-10)
  4. The youngest, David, brought forth from shepherding sheep; God has chosen him; Samuel anoints David before his family; Spirit of LORD upon him (1Samuel 16:11-13)
  5. Spirit of Lord left Saul, to David; Saul has tormenting spirit; David summoned to play lyre to refresh him; becomes his armor bearer (1Samuel 16:14-23)
- K. David and Goliath (1Samuel 17)
  1. Philistines and Saul, Second Encounter; drawn up in battle; Goliath, his imposing appearance (1Samuel 17:1-10)
  2. David and his family; elder brothers lined up for war, David back and forth (1Samuel 17:11-15)
  3. David on the lines; sees Goliath; determines to fight him (1Samuel 17:16-32)
  4. Saul's questioning of David; David previously fought lions and bears (1Samuel 17:33-37)
  5. Saul gives David his armor; too bulky; collects stones for sling (1Samuel 17:38-40)
  6. Goliath taunts David; David replies (1Samuel 17:41-48)
  7. David slings stone, Goliath falls; David uses Goliath's sword to remove his head; rout of the Philistines (1Samuel 17:49-54)
  8. Identity of David made known to Saul (1Samuel 17:55-58)
- L. Saul Against David, First Series (1Samuel 18-20)
  1. Jonathan and David become fast friends (1Samuel 18:1-4)
  2. David's success versus the Philistines; David exalted above Saul in eyes of people; Saul jealous and fearful (1Samuel 18:5-9, 12)
  3. Saul tries to spear David while he plays lyre; David evades him; David made a commander of a thousand, grows in favor with God and people (1Samuel 18:10-16)
  4. Saul tries to get David into the family by marriage, first by Merab, finally

by Michal; David kills many Philistines to gain the honor; David more feared by Philistia than Saul (1Samuel 18:17-30)

5. Saul seeks to kill David; David protected by Jonathan (1Samuel 19:1-7)
6. David successful again against Philistines; Saul again tries to kill him; he evades, also warned by Michal his wife, who covers for him (1Samuel 19:8-17)
7. David with Samuel at Ramah; messengers sent to get him; they start prophesying; two more sets of messengers do the same; Saul himself goes, he starts prophesying (1Samuel 19:18-24)
8. David and Jonathan; David seeks to know if he can sit at the king's table; Jonathan and David work out a sign involving a shot arrow (1Samuel 20:1-23)
9. Saul not amenable to David; Jonathan presents the sign to flee; David flees (1Samuel 20:24-42)

#### M. David and Ahimelech (1Samuel 21)

1. David comes to Ahimelech, eats of the bread of the presence (showbread, "holy bread") (1Samuel 21:1-6)
2. Doeg the Edomite present (1Samuel 21:7)
3. David takes sword of Goliath, departs (1Samuel 21:8-9)
4. David goes to Achish, feigns madness (1Samuel 21:10-15)

#### N. Saul Against David, Second Series (1Samuel 22-24)

1. David becomes leader of gang of 400 in Adullam (1Samuel 22:1-2)
2. David's parents left in Moab (1Samuel 22:3-4)
3. David returns to Israel; Saul hears of it, warns Benjamin about him; Doeg reveals how David saw Ahimelech (1Samuel 22:5-10)
4. Saul summons Ahimelech, priests of Nob; orders them killed; only Doeg will do it, does so; whole city of Nob destroyed (1Sam. 22:11-19)
5. One son of Ahitub, Abiathar, escapes, tells David (1Samuel 22:20-23)
6. Philistines at Keilah; David goes up and saves the city (1Sam. 23:1-5)
7. Saul hears that he is there, prepares to fight against it; David departs (1Samuel 23:6-13)
8. David in Wilderness of Ziph, then Wilderness of Maon; Saul always pursuing; Philistine attack elsewhere gets Saul off David's trail; David in Engedi (1Samuel 23:14-29)
9. Saul then goes to Engedi; David in a cave; Saul enters that cave to relieve himself; David has opportunity to kill Saul, but only cuts off part of garment (1Samuel 24:1-4)
10. Saul leaves cave; David calls after him, demonstrates his faithfulness against those who claim him of insurrection by the piece of garment cut off (1Samuel 24:5-15)
11. Saul humbled, recognizes David's greater righteousness; begs mercy for his offspring; granted (1Samuel 24:16-22)

#### O. Nabal, Abigail, and David (1Samuel 25)

1. Death of Samuel (1Samuel 25:1)
2. Nabal and Abigail; David requests food from Nabal; refused (1Samuel 25:2-12)
3. David readies for conflict (1Samuel 25:13)
4. Abigail informed of situation; previous protection from David; she prepares food and drink for David (1Samuel 25:14-18)
5. David swears to kill all of Nabal's household; Abigail meets him, implores him to not take any action against Nabal; future greatness of

- David (1Samuel 25:19-31)
6. David impressed with Abigail, her discretion; stays his hand (1 Samuel 25:32-35)
  7. Abigail tells Nabal what was to happen; he dies ten days later (1Samuel 25:33-38)
  8. David takes Abigail for a wife; also has Ahinoam of Jezreel as wife; Michal was given to another (1Samuel 25:39-44)
- P. Saul Against David, Third Series (1Samuel 26)
1. Saul told that David was at Hachilah; Saul encamps (1Samuel 26:1-3)
  2. David learns of it; sends spies; at night, he and Abishai enter Saul's tent; Abishai would kill Saul, but David refused (1Samuel 26:4-10)
  3. Instead, they take spear and water jar and leave (1Samuel 26:11-12)
  4. David taunts Abner for failing at his job (1Samuel 26:13-16)
  5. Saul calls David; David again protests his innocence; Saul recognizes his sin, sends David away in peace (1Samuel 26:17-25)
- Q. David With the Philistines (1Samuel 27:1-28:2)
1. David goes over to the Philistines, stays with Achish of Gath (1Samuel 27:1-3)
  2. Saul does not pursue him there; David given Ziklag (1Samuel 27:4-6)
  3. From there, David attacks Israel's enemies to the south as far as Egypt; claims to be fighting Israelites and Kenites to Achish (1Samuel 27:7-11)
  4. Achish trusts David, thinking he is a complete traitor (1Samuel 27:12)
  5. Philistines to fight Israel; David as his bodyguard (1Samuel 28:1-2)
- R. Saul and the Witch of En Dor (1Samuel 28:3-25)
1. Samuel dead; Saul had put out necromancers, mediums from land (1Samuel 28:3)
  2. Philistines, Israelites encamp against each other; Saul afraid; no message from God (1Samuel 28:4-6)
  3. Saul seeks a medium; told of the one in En Dor; goes there in disguise (1Samuel 28:7-8)
  4. Woman initially hesitant; Saul promises that it is alright, asks to conjure up Samuel; woman perceives that it is Saul before her (1Sam. 28:9-13)
  5. Saul speaks to Samuel; Samuel indicates that God is giving Saul's kingdom over to David because of Saul's breeches of faith; he will die as will his army (1Samuel 28:14-19)
  6. Saul fearful and distressed; woman gives him some food; he is strengthened, returns to camp (1Samuel 28:20-25)
- S. David, the Philistines, and the Amalekites (1Samuel 29-30)
1. Philistines want to know why David and Hebrews are with their army; Philistines do not want him there (1Samuel 29:1-5)
  2. Achish sends him back to Ziklag (1Samuel 29:6-11)
  3. When he returns, sees that the Amalekites have raided Ziklag, burned it with fire, took everything captive (1Samuel 30:1-3)
  4. He and his men set out, find a servant of the Amalekites who takes David and his men to them; found them, struck them and killed most of them (1Samuel 30:4-17)
  5. Everything captured was restored, and then some; some who were too tired had not gone on, but David determines that they should also get some of the spoil (1Samuel 30:18-25)
  6. Sends some of spoil as gift to elders of Judah (1Samuel 30:26-31)

- T. Saul and the Philistines, Final Encounter (1Samuel 31)
1. Philistines defeat Israel at Mount Gilboa (1Samuel 31:1)
  2. Philistines kill Jonathan, other sons of Saul; Saul wounded with an arrow; armor-bearer would not finish him off, so Saul commits suicide; armor-bearer then kills self (1Samuel 31:2-6)
  3. Philistines find their corpses, cut off his head, proclaim their fortune in all of their cities and idol temples (1Samuel 31:7-10)
  4. Valiant men of Jabesh-gilead come forth, recover bodies of Saul and Jonathan from Beth-Shan, burn their remains at Jabesh, buried bones (1Samuel 31:11-13)

### VIII. 1SAMUEL: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. 1Samuel 1:1 - 2:10 - Samuel's birth story
1. Consider John the Baptist's birth story in Luke 1-2; strong parallelism
- B. 1Samuel 4:6-9
1. Albeit muddled, testimony from the pagans about God and His power
  2. More evidence that the LORD was successful with His purposes in the exodus and conquest
- C. 1Samuel 15:22-23
1. Important spiritual principle; obedience what God truly wants
- D. 1Samuel 16
1. Samuel with David; God's prophet anointing God's anointed king
  2. Parallels with John the Baptist, Jesus, baptism
- E. 1Samuel 17 - David against Goliath
- F. 1Samuel 21:1-6
1. Background to Matthew 12:1-8 and matters of contingency
- G. Message of 1Samuel
1. Sin still often present in Israel bringing up and down fortunes for them
  2. Hope is coming in the person of David

### QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF FIRST SAMUEL

1. Name the two Judges discussed in the first chapters of 2Samuel. Were they good or bad judges?
2. How did Elkanah treat Hannah? What did Hannah desire? How did she obtain it?
3. Who called on Samuel at night? Who did Samuel think was calling his name?
4. What kind of children did Eli raise? What happened to them?
5. What kind of children did Samuel raise? What did Israel demand as Samuel aged?
6. What did God tell Samuel when Israel demanded a king?
7. Describe Saul's place in Israel before he was chosen to be king.
8. What sin did Saul commit in the second year of his reign? (ch. 13) Who did he blame?
9. What sin did Saul commit when he was instructed to destroy the Amalekites? Who did he blame?

10. Name the Saul's militarily gifted son. How many Philistines did he and his armor bearer kill on a half acre hill top?
11. Who succeeded Saul as king? How was he chosen?
12. How did David and Saul get along? Who was responsible? Why?
13. What fighting experience did David have before he fought Goliath? Describe Goliath. List all of the weapons David used to defeat Goliath.
14. Why did David refuse to kill Saul? What did Saul do to give David cause to kill him?
15. Why did Saul seek out a medium? Why was she afraid of him?
16. Who said, "To obey is better than sacrifice"? What was the occasion?
17. How did Saul die? Lord Dahlburg-Acton wrote in 1887: "All power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." How does this characterize the reign of Saul?

## SECOND SAMUEL

### INTRODUCTION TO 2SAMUEL

First and Second Samuel were originally one book. Second Samuel depicts David as a true (though imperfect) representative of the theocratic (ruling under God's direction) king. David was initially acclaimed king at Hebron by the tribe of Judah (chs. 1-4), and subsequently was accepted by the remaining tribes after the murder of Ish-Bosheth, one of Saul's surviving sons (5:1-5). David's leadership was decisive and effective. He captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites and made it his royal city and residence (5:6-13). Shortly afterward he brought the ark of the Lord from the house of Abinadab to Jerusalem, publicly acknowledging the Lord's kingship and rule over himself and the nation (ch. 6; Ps 132:3-5).

Under David's rule the Lord caused the nation to prosper, to defeat its enemies and, in fulfillment of his promise (Gen. 15:18), to extend its borders from Egypt to the Euphrates (ch. 8). David wanted to build a temple for the Lord, as His royal house, as a place for His throne (the ark of the covenant) and as a place for Israel to worship Him. But the prophet Nathan told David that he was not to build the Lord a house (temple); rather, the Lord would build David a house (dynasty). Ch. 7 announces the Lord's promise that this Davidic dynasty would endure forever. This climactic chapter also describes the establishment of the Davidic covenant (Psalm 89:30-37). Later the prophets make clear that a descendant of David who sits on David's throne will perfectly fulfill the role of the theocratic king. He will complete the redemption of God's people (Isa. 9:6-7, 11:1-16; Jer. 23:5-6, 30:8-9, 33:14-16; Ez. 34:23-24, 37:24-25), thus enabling them to achieve the promised victory with him (Rom. 16:20).

After the description of David's rule in its glory and success, chs. 10-20 depict the darker side of his reign and describe David's weaknesses and failures. Even though David remained a king after God's own heart because he was willing to acknowledge his sin and repent (12:13), he nevertheless fell far short of the theocratic ideal and suffered the disciplinary results of his disobedience (12:10-12). His sin with Bathsheba (chs. 11-12) and his leniency both with the wickedness of his sons (13:12-39; 21; 14:1,33; 19:4-6) and with the insubordination of Joab (3:28-39, 20:10,23) led to intrigue, violence and bloodshed within his own family and the nation. It eventually drove him from Jerusalem at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Nonetheless the Lord was gracious to David, and his reign became a standard by which the reigns of later kings were measured (2Kings 18:3; 22:2).

The book ends with David's own words of praise to God, who had delivered him from all his enemies (22:31-51), and with words of expectation for the fulfillment of God's promise that a king will come from the house of David and rule "over men in righteousness" (23:3-5). These songs echo many of the themes of Hannah's song (1Sam. 2:1-10).

### I. AUTHOR

Possibly the priest Abiathar. The two books that are now joined in First and Second Samuel were originally only one book called "The Book of Samuel". Their true author is unknown; however, other collected materials must have served as the author's source of the text. Three of these are mentioned in 1Chronicles 29:29 as: "the Chronicles of the Seer Samuel", "the Chronicles of the prophet Nathan" and "the Chronicles of the Seer Gad". Gad as well as Abiathar had to have known what occurred in the court of King David, and either of the two could have given us these two books.

## II. DATE OF WRITING

The book should be dated to 931 B.C., after the division of the kingdoms after the Solomonic period, because of the commentary that appears in 1Samuel 27:6, "Ziclāg belongs to the kings of Judah unto this day". Although Israel is often differentiated from Judah, and David reigned over Judah for seven and a half years before the unification of the kingdom, Judah had no king prior to this date. There is no mention or reference to the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., which permits us to fix a date after that year.

## III. HISTORICAL SETTING

The Books of First and Second Samuel describe a turning point in Israel's history. This was a time when the people became dissatisfied with their loose tribal form of organization and insisted on a united kingdom under the ruling authority of a king. For hundreds of years they had existed as a tribal society, with each tribe living on its own portion of the land and minding its own affairs. If a superior enemy threatened the entire nation, they depended on deliverance at the hands of judges, those military leaders described in the Book of Judges, who would raise a volunteer army to make their borders secure.

This system of defense, however, proved woefully inadequate when the Philistines began to flex their muscles against the nation with renewed intensity about 1100 B.C. These warlike people boasted of iron chariots, a well-organized army, and other superior weapons which they used with military precision against the poorly organized Israelites. The threat of this superior force led the nation to clamor for a king - a ruler who could unite all the tribes against a common enemy.

Saul was anointed by Samuel about 1050 B.C. to serve as first king of the nation. A gifted young man of great promise, he ruled for 40 years (Acts 13:21) before taking his life by falling on his own sword when the Philistines prevailed against him in a decisive battle (I Sam. 31:1-7). David, his successor, also ruled 40 years (II Sam. 5:4; I Chron. 29:27), from 1010 to 971 B.C. Building on Saul's beginning, David succeeded in driving out the Philistines, unifying the people, and conquering or establishing peaceful relationships with surrounding nations.

## IV. PURPOSE OF WRITING

Second Samuel continues the account of how GOD established His kingdom through the leadership of Israel's monarchy. In this second portion of Samuel, the anointing of David for rule (1Sam. 16:12-23) was realized. The Davidic king was GOD's adopted son who ruled in the name of the LORD and enjoyed GOD's providential care. This covenant promise became the messianic hope of GOD's people. The messianic expectation was a source of great comfort in Israel's darkest days (Isa. 9:1-7; 11; Amos 9:11-15; Zech 9:9-13). This promise is fulfilled by David's Greater Offspring, Jesus Christ (Luke 1:31-33).

The book also shows how the Davidic covenant affected Israel's national fortunes. The favor of GOD enabled David to establish Jerusalem as the political and religious center of the nation by bringing the ark into the city and establishing a ruling bureaucracy (2Sam 6; 8:15-18). David also experienced victories over the powerful Philistines and Arameans (8:1-14; 10). David's house grew in international prestige, paving the way for a mighty dynastic order. However, while the covenant contained promised blessing, it also included GOD's chastening for sin. The book details the troubling consequences for the nation because of David's sin (chapters 12-20).

Second Samuel teaches that GOD is faithful and merciful. GOD remained loyal to His promise although David at times failed the covenant. David and Bathsheba sinned, and their child died in judgment. GOD, however, gave Bathsheba the child Solomon, whom the LORD loved (12:24-25). GOD continued to reveal His will to David through the prophets Nathan and Gad and the priests Zadok and Abiathar (12:1-14; 15:24-29; 24:11-14). Also, He was merciful by safeguarding David during the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba (chapters 18; 20).

The narrative of 2Samuel indicates that GOD expects faithfulness and righteousness. The Davidic covenant had the provision of punishing David for sin (7:14-15). Nathan the prophet delivered a divine oracle of judgment against David for his sin with Bathsheba (12:1-23). GOD also judged David for his pride in Israel's military strength (chap. 24). Unlike Saul, who tried to excuse his sin, David confessed his sins before the LORD (12:13; 24:10).

Second Samuel depicts Israel's GOD as the covenant LORD of history (5:19b; 6:21-22; 8:14; 12:11; 23:10b; 24:25).

Second Samuel reveals GOD's intervention in history. Although human beings are sinners and must be punished at times, GOD acted through them in order to fulfill His redemptive purpose, fully realized in Jesus Christ, the Messiah and King of kings (Rev. 22:16).

## V. 2SAMUEL: BACKGROUND

### A. Setting

1. Saul is dead, the Philistines victorious; what now?
2. 2Samuel chronicles the reign of David
3. A time of hope and success in Israel
4. Tainted by David's personal failures and their consequences

### B. Authorship

1. Author entirely unknown; it is not Samuel
2. No doubt of its inspiration; material cited in Hebrews 11:32
3. Author seems responsible for 1Samuel, 2Samuel, 1Kings, 2Kings
4. In Greek Septuagint the book is called Second Reigns

### C. Date of Writing

1. Events involve 40 years of David's reign (ca. 990-950 BC)
2. Book likely based on records, information nearly contemporaneous with events
3. Actual final composition likely around the exile (ca. 586 BC)

### D. Recipients

1. The audience of the book is Israel in exile and beyond
2. Important for all generations of God's people - Rom. 15:4

### E. Purpose of Writing

1. To describe David's reign, both positive and negative aspects
2. To demonstrate the importance of faithfulness to the commands of God

## VI. 2SAMUEL: OUTLINE

### A. Main Sections

1. David's power (2Samuel 1-5)
2. David's greatness (2Samuel 6-10)
3. David's sins and consequences (2Samuel 11-20)
4. David's works (2Samuel 21-24)

### B. Saul's Aftermath (2Samuel 1)

1. David informed of Saul and Jonathan's deaths (2Samuel 1:1-10)

2. Amalekite killed for claim of killing Saul (2Samuel 1:11-16)
  3. David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan (2Samuel 1:17-27)
- C. David the King (2Samuel 2-4)
1. David made king of Judah at Hebron; informed of valor of men of Jabesh-Gilead (2Samuel 2:1-7)
  2. Abner takes Eshbaal (Ish-bosheth), son of Saul, makes him king over Israel (2Samuel 2:8-11)
  3. Battle of Gibeon; David's forces defeat Eshbaal's (2Samuel 2:12-17)
  4. Abner kills Asahel, brother of Joab and Abishai (2Samuel 2:18-23)
  5. Joab and Abishai pursue; give up the pursuit; all return to their own places (2Samuel 2:24-32)
  6. War between Eshbaal, David; David gains upper hand; children born to David (2Samuel 3:1-5)
  7. Eshbaal slanders Abner; Abner conspires to go over to David; David requests Michal his ex-wife; Abner puts conspiracy into action (2Samuel 3:6-21)
  8. Joab distrusts Abner; Joab conspires against Abner, murders him; blood of Abner upon house of Joab (2Samuel 3:22-30)
  9. David, Israel mourns for Abner; distances self from Joab and Abishai (2Samuel 3:31-39)
  10. Baanah, Rechab, and Eshbaal; Mephibaal (Mepibosheth) and his condition; Baanah and Rechab murder Eshbaal, bring his head to David; David has them executed for their crime (2Samuel 4)
- D. David, King of Israel (2Samuel 5)
1. David made king over all Israel; rules total of 40 years (2Samuel 5:1-5)
  2. Joab leads way, conquers Jerusalem; Jerusalem the new capital (2Samuel 5:6-10)
  3. David's house built by Tyrians from Hiram (2Samuel 5:11-12)
  4. More wives, concubines, and children for David (2Samuel 5:13-16)
  5. David against the Philistines; defeats them, takes their idols; defeats them again (2Samuel 5:17-25)
- E. God and David (2Samuel 6-7)
1. David goes to fetch the Ark of the Covenant (2Samuel 6:1-4)
  2. Merriment before Ark; Uzzah attempts to stabilize Ark, smitten; David not willing to take Ark into Jerusalem on account of it (2Samuel 6:5-11)
  3. Ark brought into Jerusalem; David dances before the Ark (2Samuel 6:12-15)
  4. Michal sees him, despises him for it; offerings offered to God; Michal chastises David, Michal cursed with barrenness (2Samuel 6:16-23)
  5. David intends to build temple for God; Nathan approves (2Samuel 7:1-3)
  6. Word of the LORD to Nathan: David will not build temple, his son will; God establishes covenant with David, his house and kingdom before God forever (2Samuel 7:4-17)
  7. David prays to God, establishes his gratitude, greatness of God (2Samuel 7:18-29)
- F. Acts of David (2Samuel 8-10)
1. David defeats Philistia, Moab, Zobah, Aram, Hamath, Edom (2Samuel 8:1-14)
  2. David's officers (2Samuel 8:15-18)

3. David does good for Mephibaal, remnant of Saul and Jonathan's house; Ziba, Saul's servant, made Mephibaal's servant; Mephibaal eats at David's table (2Samuel 9)
  4. Hanun king of Ammon disgraces David's servants; Ammon hires Aramean mercenaries; David's army successful; Arameans consolidate lines again, fight, are defeated; Ammon and Ammon subject themselves to David (2Samuel 10)
- G. David and Bathsheba (2Samuel 11)
1. David sees Bathsheba, wife of Uriah his servant, bathing; commits adultery; she becomes pregnant (2Samuel 11:1-5)
  2. David tries to get Uriah to spend time with his wife to cover himself; he continually refuses to stop serving David (2Samuel 11:6-13)
  3. David orders Joab to set Uriah up to be killed in battle; such is done; cover-up established and maintained (2Samuel 11:14-25)
  4. Bathsheba mourns, becomes David's wife (2Samuel 11:26-27)
- H. Consequences (2Samuel 12)
1. Nathan sent to confront David; parable of rich and poor man (2Samuel 12:1-4)
  2. Nathan catches David by the parable; David will suffer shameful consequences (2Samuel 12:5-12)
  3. David confesses his sin; he will not die; child will die (2Sam. 12:13-14)
  4. Child afflicted; David mourns; child dies; David ceases mourning (2Samuel 12:15-23)
  5. David "comforts" Bathsheba; she bears Solomon (2Samuel 12:24-25)
  6. Rabbah of Ammon captured (2Samuel 12:26-31)
- I. Amnon and Tamar (2Samuel 13)
1. Amnon lusts for half-sister Tamar; Jonadab his friend develops ruse for him (2Samuel 13:1-6)
  2. Tamar comes to Amnon, prepares him food; he assaults her; detests her afterward, sends her out; she is shamed (2Samuel 13:7-22)
  3. Absalom, full brother of Tamar, hates Amnon for what he did (2Samuel 13:20-22)
  4. During sheep shearing two years later, Absalom has Amnon killed; Absalom flees to Geshur (2Samuel 13:23-39)
- J. David and Absalom (2Samuel 14)
1. Joab knows David misses Absalom; develops ruse with old woman, catching David in a story as Nathan did previously (2Samuel 14:1-20)
  2. David agrees for Absalom to return; nature of Absalom (2Samuel 14:21-27)
  3. Absalom in Jerusalem 2 years, not in king's presence; Joab does not come when called, thus, Absalom has his field burned; Joab gets Absalom in before David (2Samuel 14:28-33)
- K. Absalom's Insurrection (2Samuel 15-18)
1. Absalom wins hearts of Israel by standing in gate with populist message (2Samuel 15:1-6)
  2. Absalom goes to Hebron, declared king there in a conspiracy (2Samuel 15:7-12)
  3. David flees from Jerusalem; many go with him; he desires the Ark to remain in Jerusalem; leaves Hushai the Archite in Jerusalem as an informant (2Samuel 15:13-37)
  4. Ziba slanders Mephibaal, brings provisions to David (2Samuel 16:1-4)

5. Shimei curses David; David does nothing (2Samuel 16:5-14)
  6. Absalom enters Jerusalem; on Ahithophel's advice, violates his father's concubines in front of all Israel (2Samuel 16:15-23)
  7. Ahithophel's advice: take 12000 men, pursue David immediately (2Samuel 17:1-8)
  8. Hushai's advice: gather all Israel before you attack (2Samuel 17:9-13)
  9. Hushai's advice accepted; Ahithophel's advice ignored (2Sam. 17:14)
  10. Hushai sends word to David through certain men regarding Ahithophel's advice, Hushai's advice; David crosses the Jordan (2Samuel 17:15-22)
  11. Ahithophel goes and kills himself because his advice not heeded (2Samuel 17:23)
  12. Absalom crosses Jordan, has Amasa as head of army; David given provisions by Barzillai, some Ammonites (2Samuel 17:24-29)
  13. David's army meets Absalom's army; Absalom defeated; Absalom's hair caught in a tree; Joab informed of it, has armor-bearers kill him (2Samuel 18:1-15)
  14. Joab calls army back; Israel returns to tents; Ahimaaz and Cushite to tell David of news; Ahimaaz cannot bring self to tell news; David informed of Absalom's death only by Cushite, mourns greatly (2Samuel 18:19-33)
- L. Aftermath (2Samuel 19)
1. Joab rebukes David for his mourning; David speaks to those who saved him (2Samuel 19:1-8)
  2. Judah brings David back over the Jordan; David replaces Joab with Amasa (2Samuel 19:8-15)
  3. Shimei repents; for the time being is preserved (2Samuel 19:16-23)
  4. Mephibaal presents self to David, informs him of Ziba's treachery; Mepibaal just glad that David is well (2Samuel 19:24-30)
  5. David honors Barzillai by having his son Chimham be with David (2Samuel 19:31-40)
  6. Verbal conflict of Israel with Judah over David (2Samuel 19:41-43)
- M. Sheba's Revolt (2Samuel 20)
1. Sheba, a Benjaminite, revolts from David with Israel (2Samuel 20:1-2)
  2. David makes arrangements for his violated concubines (2Samuel 20:3)
  3. Amasa called to take army against Sheba; Joab kills Amasa (2Samuel 20:4-10)
  4. Joab and Abishai against Sheba; siege at Abel of Beth-maacah; wise woman of city does not want to see city destroyed; speaks with Joab; she persuades people, has Sheba executed, head thrown over wall; army back to Jerusalem (2Samuel 20:11-22)
  5. David's officers (2Samuel 20:23-25)
- N. Appendix 1: More Acts of David (2Samuel 21)
1. Famine in days of David three years; on account of Saul killing Gibeonites; Saul killed them despite covenant with Israel (2Samuel 21:1-2)
  2. Atonement involved death of seven of Saul's sons; Mephibaal son of Jonathan spared; seven others given over, killed (2Samuel 21:3-9)
  3. Rizpah, Saul's concubine, mourns; David takes all the bones of Saul's sons with bones of Saul and Jonathan, buried them in tomb of Kish; famine ended (2Samuel 21:10-14)

4. Wars between Israel and Philistia; end of David's active military career; death of the giants from Gath (2Samuel 21:15-22)
- O. Appendix 2: Psalms and Mighty Men (2Samuel 22-23)
  1. David's psalm of deliverance from Saul; magnifies greatness of God (2Samuel 22; Psalm 18)
  2. Last words of David in poetic form; God as mighty (2Samuel 23:1-7)
  3. David's mighty men: the three (2Samuel 23:8-12)
  4. The three get water for David in midst of war (2Samuel 23:13-17)
  5. David's mighty men: the thirty (37) (2Samuel 23:12-39)
- P. Appendix 3: The Census (2Samuel 24)
  1. David incited to number Israel; Joab hesitant but does so; count of Israel 800,000; Judah 500,000 (2Samuel 24:1-9)
  2. David recognizes his sin; God gives him three choices, famine, enemies, pestilence; David chooses pestilence (2Sam. 24:10-14)
  3. Angel of the LORD brings pestilence; 70,000 die; angel's hand stayed at the threshing floor of Araunah; David pleads for mercy (2Samuel 24:15-17)
  4. David goes to Araunah's threshing floor, seeks to buy it; Araunah would give it to him; David refuses to offer sacrifices that cost him nothing; David buys it, builds altar, offers sacrifice; plague averted (2Samuel 24:18-25)

## VII. 2SAMUEL: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. Uzzah (2Samuel 6:6-7)
  1. Potent demonstration of God's holiness & desire to be taken seriously
  2. Uzzah has good intentions, but acts sacrilegiously; killed for it
- B. God and David (2Samuel 7:1-17)
  1. Indication of rashness of presumption
  2. Yet good intentions respected
  3. Furthermore, promise made to David is fulfilled in Christ (Luke 1:32-33)
- C. David and Bathsheba (2Samuel 11-12)
  1. David's great sin; basis of Psalm 51
  2. Demonstration of how God knows, even if man does not
  3. Great consequences of sin committed by great men; no one is exempt
- D. David's sacrifice (2Samuel 24:24)
  1. Sacrifice must have a price
- E. Message of 2Samuel
  1. David's reign: moments of greatness and humiliation
  2. Israel's strongest days

## QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF SECOND SAMUEL

1. How did David react to news of Saul's death?
2. Where was David's original capitol city? To what city did he move the capitol?
3. How did Uzzah die? What was wrong with moving the ark in that manner?
4. What did David want to build for God? Who gave him permission?

5. What was God's response to David's plans to build the temple? What does this say about Divine authority?
6. List the sins David committed in his affair with Bathsheba.
7. How did David react to Nathan's story of the poor man and the ewe lamb? How did David react when he learned he was the guilty oppressor?
8. List the three consequences attached to David's sins.
9. What did Amnon do? What was Absalom's response?
10. What did Absalom do upon his return to Jerusalem to undermine David's authority?
11. How did Absalom meet his end? How did David react to the news? How is this in keeping with Nathan's prophecy of the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba?
12. What atonement did David pay the Gibeonites for Saul's treachery in order to end the famine?
13. How did David sin by holding a census? What was his atonement?
14. Why did David insist on paying for the materials used for the sacrifice?

# First Kings

## INTRODUCTION TO 1KINGS

First and Second Kings (like First and Second Samuel and First and Second Chronicles) are actually one literary work, called in Hebrew tradition simply "Kings." The division of this work into two books was introduced by the translators of the Septuagint (the pre-Christian Greek translation of the OT) and subsequently most modern versions. The Septuagint further designated Samuel and Kings in a way that emphasized the relationship of these two works (Septuagint: First, Second, Third and Fourth Book of Kingdoms). Together Samuel and Kings relate the whole history of the monarchy, from its rise under the ministry of Samuel to its fall at the hands of the Babylonians.

The division between First and Second Kings has been made at a somewhat arbitrary and yet appropriate place, shortly after the deaths of Ahab of the northern kingdom (22:37) and Jehoshaphat of the southern kingdom (22:50). Placing the division at this point causes the account of the reign of Ahaziah of Israel to overlap the end of 1Kings (22:51-53) and the beginning of 2Kings (ch. 1). The same is true of the narration of the ministry of Elijah, which for the most part appears in 1Kings (chs. 17-19). However, his final act of judgment and the passing of his cloak to Elisha at the moment of his ascension to heaven in a whirlwind are contained in 2Kings (1:1 - 2:17).

## I. AUTHOR

There is little conclusive evidence as to the identity of the author of First and Second Kings. Although Jewish tradition credits Jeremiah, few today accept this as likely. Whoever the author was, it is clear that he was familiar with the book of Deuteronomy, as were many of Israel's prophets. It is also clear that he used a variety of sources in compiling his history of the monarchy. Three such sources are named: "the book of the annals of Solomon" (11:41), "the book of the annals of the kings of Israel" (14:19), "the book of the annals of the kings of Judah" (14:29). It is likely that other written sources were also employed such as those mentioned in Chronicles.

Scholars to conclude that these sources were probably records of the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah compiled by the succession of Israel's prophets spanning the kingdom period. First and Second Chronicles makes reference to a number of such writings: "the records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer" (1Ch. 29:29), "the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite" and "the visions of Iddo the seer" (2Ch. 9:29), "the records of Shemaiah the prophet" (2Ch. 12:15), "the annals of Jehu son of Hanani" (2Ch. 20:34), "the annotations on the book of the .kings" (2Ch. 24:27), the "events of Uzziah's reign ... recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz" (2Ch. 26:22; see also 2Ch. 32:32), and there may have been others.

## II. DATE OF WRITING

Some scholars place the date of composition of First and Second Kings in the time subsequent to Jehoiachin's release from prison (562 B.C.; 2Kings 25:27-30) and prior to the end of the Babylonian exile in 538. This position is challenged by others on the basis of statements in The Kings that speak of certain things in the pre-exilic period that are said to have continued in existence "to this day" (e.g., 8:8, the poles used to carry the ark; 9:20-21, conscripted labor; 12:19, Israel in rebellion against the house of David; 2Kings 8:22, Edom in rebellion against the kingdom of Judah). From such statements it is argued that the writer must have been a person living in Judah in the pre-exilic period rather than in Babylon in postexilic times. If this argument is accepted, one must conclude that the original book was composed about the time of the death of

Josiah and that the material pertaining to the time subsequent to his reign was added during the exile around 550.

### III. THEME

The Books of Kings contains no explicit statement of purpose or theme. Reflection on its content, however, reveals that the author has selected and arranged his material in a manner that provides a sequel to the history found in The Books of Samuel, a history of kingship regulated by covenant. In general, The Kings describes the history of the kings of Israel and Judah in the light of God's covenants. The guiding thesis of the book is that the welfare of Israel and her kings depended on their submission to and reliance on Israel's covenant with God, their obedience to the Sinaitic covenant regulations, and their faithful response to God's prophets.

It is clearly not the author's intention to present a social, political and economic history of Israel's monarchy in accordance with the principles of modern history. Consider the reign of Josiah of Judah. Nothing is said about the early years of his reign, but a detailed description is given of the reformation and renewal of the covenant that he promoted in his 18th year as king (2Kings 22:3 - 23:28). Nor is anything said of the motives leading Josiah to oppose Pharaoh Neco of Egypt at Megiddo, or of the major shift in geopolitical power from Assyria to Babylon that was connected with this incident (2Kings 23:29-30). The author is inspired, not to give us all of the facts, but to teach us the consequences of keeping or rejecting the covenant with God. (Romans 15:4 - "The things that were written afore time, were written for our learning.")

The kings who receive the most attention in The Kings are those during whose reigns there was either notable deviation from or affirmation of the covenant. Ahab son of Omri is an example of the former (16:29 - 22:39). His reign is given extensive treatment, not so much because of its extraordinary political importance, but because of the serious threat to covenant fidelity and continuity that arose in the northern kingdom during his reign. Ultimately the pagan influence of Ahab's wife Jezebel through Ahab's daughter Athaliah (whether she was Jezebel's daughter is unknown) nearly led to the extermination of the house of David in Judah (2Kings 11:1-3).

Manasseh (2Kings 21:1-18) is an example of a similar sort. Here again it is deviation from the covenant that is emphasized in the account of his reign rather than political features, such as involvement in the Assyrian-Egyptian conflict (mentioned in Assyrian records but not in 2 Kings). The extreme apostasy characterizing Manasseh's reign made exile for Judah inevitable (2Kings 21:10-15; 23:26-27).

On the positive side, Hezekiah (2Kings 18:1 - 20:21) and Josiah (2Kings 22:1 - 23:29) are given extensive treatment because of their involvement in covenant renewal. These are the only two kings given unqualified approval by the writer for their loyalty to the Lord (2Kings 18:3; 22:2). It is noteworthy that all the kings of the northern kingdom are said to have done evil in the eyes of the Lord and walked in the ways of Jeroboam, who caused Israel to sin (e.g., 16:26,31; 22:52; 2Kings 3:3; 10:29). It was Jeroboam who established the golden calf worship at Bethel and Dan shortly after the division of the kingdom (12:26-33; 13:1-6).

The author also stresses the importance of the prophets themselves in their role as official emissaries from GOD to the court of Israel. The Lord sent a long succession of such prophets to call king and people back to covenant loyalty (2Kings 17:13). For the most part their warnings and exhortations fell on deaf ears. Many of these prophets are mentioned in the narratives of The Kings (e.g., Ahijah, 11:29-40; 14:5-18; Shemaiah, 12:22-24; Micaiah, 22:8-28; Jonah, 2Kings 14:25; Isaiah, 2Kings 19:1-7,20-34; Huldah, 2Kings 22:14-20), but particular attention is given to the ministries of Elijah and Elisha (1Kings 17-19; 2Kings 1-13).

Reflection on these features of The Kings suggests that it was written to explain to a people in exile that the reason for their condition of humiliation was their stubborn persistence in breaking the covenant. In bringing the exile upon his people, God, after much patience, imposed the curses of the covenant, which had stood as a warning to them from the beginning (Lev. 26:27-45; Deut. 28:64-68). This is made explicit with respect to the captivity of the northern kingdom in 2Kings 17:7-23; 18:9-12, and with respect to the southern kingdom in 2Kings 21:12-15. The reformation under Josiah in the southern kingdom is viewed as too little, too late (2Kings 23:26-27; 24:3). It explains the reasons both for the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem and their respective kingdoms and for the bitter experience of being forced into exile.

This does not mean, however, that there is no hope for the future. The writer consistently keeps the promise to David in view as a basis on which Israel in exile may look to the future with hope rather than with despair.

It is important to note that, although the author was undoubtedly a Judahite exile, and although the northern kingdom had been dispersed for well over a century and a half at the time of his writing, the scope of his concern was all Israel, the whole covenant people. Neither he nor the prophets (Isa. 10:20-21; 11:11-13; Jer. 31; Ez. 48:1-29; Hos. 11:8-11; Amos 9:11-15; Zech. 9:10-13) viewed the division of the Israelite kingdom as an eternal rejection of the ten tribes, nor did they see the earlier exile of the northern kingdom as a final exclusion of the northern tribes from Israel's future. As a matter of fact, many from the north had fled south during the Assyrian invasions so that a significant remnant of the northern tribes lived on in the kingdom of Judah and shared in its continuing history.

#### **IV. CHRONOLOGY OF FOREIGN KINGS**

##### ASSYRIA

Tilgath-Pileser III - 745-727 (All dates are B.C. and are those of the kings' reigns)

Shalmaneser V - 727-722

Sargon II - 721-705

Sennacherib - 705-681

Esarhaddon - 681-669

Ashurbanipal - 669-627

##### BABYLON

Nebuchadnezzar II - 605-562

Nabonidus - 556-539

Belshazzar - Coregency with Nabonidus 553(?) - 539

##### PERSIA

Cyrus the Great - 559-530

Cambyses - 530-522

Darius I the Great - 522-486

Xerxes (Ahasuerus) - 486-465

Artaxerxes I - 465-424

Darius II - 423-404

#### **V. APPLICATION**

The message of First and Second Kings is as relevant today as it was when it was written. GOD has human events in His hands. The nation, leader or person who responds to and obeys the LORD will enjoy the benefits of a relationship with Him.

Those who refuse and rebel, will be disciplined by GOD. Although human beings are sinners, GOD is the author of redemption, and mercifully forgives those who repent and return to Him.

The failures of the prophets, priests and kings of GOD's people points to the necessity for the coming of Christ. Christ himself represented the ideal combination of those three offices. As prophet, the word of Christ supersedes that of the great prophet Elijah (Matt. 17:1-5). Many of Jesus' miracles constitute a reminiscence of the wonders realized by GOD through Elijah and Elisha, in the books of Kings. Furthermore, as priest, Christ is higher than any priest mentioned in Kings (Heb. 7:22-27). First Kings vividly illustrates the need for Christ as our sovereign King. When asked if he was king of the Jews, Jesus replied affirmatively (Matt. 27:11). However, Christ is "greater than Solomon" (Matt. 12:41). Solomon's name means "Peace"; Christ is the "Prince of Peace", and there will be no end to his peace (Isa. 9:6). Solomon stood out for his wisdom, but Christ is the wisdom of GOD (1Cor. 1:25,29). The kingdom of Solomon has passed, but Christ will reign upon the throne of David forever (1Chron. 17:14; Is. 9:6), because Christ is "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:16).

## **VI. 1KINGS: BACKGROUND**

### A. Setting

1. What will happen after David?
2. 1 Kings covers the period from David's death to Ahab's death
  - a. A time of sin and division in the Kingdom of Israel
3. Solomon's kingdom is divided
  - a. Israel falls into constant sin
  - b. Judah oscillates between sin and righteousness

### B. Authorship

1. Author entirely unknown
2. No doubt of its inspiration
3. Acts 7:47-48 -- 1 Kings 6, 8
4. Author seems responsible for 1Samuel, 2Samuel, 1Kings, 2Kings
5. In the Greek Septuagint version the book is called Third Reigns

### C. Date of Writing

1. Events involve 130 years of history, from David through Ahab (ca. 950-820 BC)
2. Book likely based on records, information nearly contemporaneous with events
3. Actual final composition likely around the exile (ca. 586 BC)

### D. Recipients

1. The audience of the book is Israel in exile and beyond
2. Important for all generations of God's people - Rom. 15:4

### E. Purpose of Writing

1. To describe Solomon's reign, the building of the Temple, and God's messages to the kings of Israel and Judah through the prophets
2. To demonstrate Israel's unfaithfulness to God in the period of the kings
3. To establish the need to follow God's will

## **VII. 1KINGS: OUTLINE**

### A. Main Sections

1. Solomon (1Kings 1-11)
2. A Kingdom Divided (1Kings 12-14)
3. The Kingdoms to Ahab (1Kings 15-16)

4. Elijah and Ahab (1Kings 17-22)
- B. David and Solomon (1Kings 1-2)
1. David old; warmed by Abishag (1Kings 1:1-4)
  2. Adonijah sets self up as king; Joab & Abiathar follow (1Kings 1:5-10)
  3. Nathan, Bathsheba confirm with David: Solomon to be king (1Kings 1:11-17)
  4. David instructs Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah to establish Solomon as king; they do so (1Kings 1:28-40)
  5. Adonijah informed, is alarmed; begs mercy from Solomon (1Kings 1:41-53)
  6. David instructs Solomon to follow God; to deal with Joab and Shimei; remember Barzillai's kindness (1Kings 2:1-9)
  7. David dies; Solomon established (1Kings 2:10-12)
  8. Adonijah requests Abishag as wife through Bathsheba; Solomon has him executed for it (1Kings 2:13-25)
  9. Solomon has Abiathar exiled to his own house; prophecy to Eli fulfilled (1Kings 2:26-27)
  10. Joab flees to tent of the LORD; killed there (1Kings 2:28-35)
  11. Shimei instructed to stay in Jerusalem; he departs; executed (1Kings 2:36-46)
- C. Solomon's Greatness (1 Kings 3-4)
1. Solomon marries Pharaoh's daughter (1Kings 3:1-2)
  2. Solomon follows God; offers offerings to God; at Gibeon, God asks what Solomon desires; wisdom; God gives him wisdom and riches and honor (1Kings 3:3-15)
  3. Two harlots come before Solomon; he judges their case wisely; all Israel impressed (1Kings 3:16-28)
  4. Solomon's officials (1Kings 4:1-6)
  5. Officer for each tribe to make provisions (1Kings 4:7-19)
  6. Peace and prosperity; provisions necessary for king (1Kings 4:20-28)
  7. Exceeding greatness of Solomon's wisdom and knowledge (1Kings 4:29-34)
- D. Building the Temple (1Kings 5:1-9:9)
1. Solomon requests cedars from Hiram king of Tyre; granted (1Kings 5:1-12)
  2. Solomon drafts forced labor, has wood brought down, rock quarried (1Kings 5:13-18)
  3. Temple begun in 4th year of Solomon, 480th year since Exodus (1Kings 6:1)
  4. Description of structure (1Kings 6:2-10)
  5. God will establish Himself in house if Israel is faithful (1Kings 6:11-13)
  6. Description of Temple: holy place, holy of holies, its walls, doorposts, etc. (1Kings 6:14-36)
  7. Beginning and completion of Temple (1Kings 6:37-38)
  8. Building of Solomon's palace (1Kings 7:1-12)
  9. Solomon commissions Hiram of Tyre to fashion Temple implements in bronze (1Kings 7:13-51)
  10. Assembly of Israel; Ark brought into Temple; overwhelming number of sacrifices (1Kings 8:1-11)
  11. Solomon invokes, blesses the LORD (1Kings 8:12-21)
  12. Solomon dedicates Temple through prayer to God (1Kings 8:22-53)

13. Solomon blesses Israel, exhorts them to faithfulness (1Kings 8:54-61)
  14. Seven day feast; plenty of offerings (1Kings 8:62-66)
  15. The LORD appears to Solomon; He consecrates Temple; exhortation to faithfulness, warnings regarding disobedience (1Kings 9:1-9)
- E. Acts of Solomon (1Kings 9:10-11:29)
1. Solomon gives Hiram 20 cities of Galilee for all of the materials (1Kings 9:10-14)
  2. Building of Millo, store cities; Canaanites and others enslaved (1Kings 9:15-23)
  3. Offerings to God; fleet of ships in the Red Sea, their travels and acquisitions (1Kings 9:24-28)
  4. Queen of Sheba hears of Solomon's wisdom; comes to him and questions him; quite impressed with his wisdom; great amount of spices and precious stones given (1Kings 10:1-10)
  5. Hiram's ships also provide exotic material (1Kings 10:11-12)
  6. Solomon gives the Queen whatever she wishes; she returns to her own land (1Kings 10:13)
  7. Great wealth of Solomon: gold, ivory throne; wealth more vast than any other king; great number of chariots and horsemen (1Kings 10:14-29)
- F. Solomon's Downfall (1Kings 11)
1. Solomon has 700 wives, 300 concubines; they induce him to serve other gods (1Kings 11:1-8)
  2. Solomon's son will suffer division of kingdom (1Kings 11:9-13)
  3. Hadad the Edomite rebels against Solomon, as does Rezon of Syria (1Kings 11:14-25)
  4. Jeroboam son of Nebat, former servant of Solomon; Ahijah the prophet meets him, indicates that he will be made king of ten tribes of Israel; Solomon seeks Jeroboam's life, he flees to Egypt (1Kings 11:26-40)
  5. Solomon reigns 40 years; dies; son Rehoboam rules (1Kings 11:41-43)
- G. Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1Kings 12)
1. Rehoboam asked to make load lighter on Israel; elders agree, young men disagree; Rehoboam follows young men; Israel revolts (1Kings 12:1-15)
  2. Jeroboam brought back, made king over ten tribes of Israel (1Kings 12:16-20)
  3. Rehoboam musters an army; Shemaiah man of God tells him that this is from the LORD; Rehoboam demurs; remains king of Judah (1Kings 12:21-24)
  4. Jeroboam's apostasy: golden calves in Dan and Bethel, non-Levite priests, changes in dates of festivals (1Kings 12:25-33)
- H. Jeroboam's Downfall (1Kings 13-14)
1. Man of God predicts that Josiah will destroy temples of Jeroboam (1Kings 13:1-3)
  2. Jeroboam orders man seized; his hand dries up; man released; food offered him; he refuses based on God's word to him (1Kings 13:4-10)
  3. Man of God meets old prophet in Bethel; encourages him to share a meal; man initially refuses; prophet lies, says angel spoke to him; man comes and eats (1Kings 13:11-18)
  4. Word of the Lord comes to prophet, predicts downfall for the man for his disobedience; met by lion in the road; killed (1Kings 13:19-25)

5. Prophet hears of it, buries man in his own grave, intends to be buried there also; condemnation of Jeroboam's temples confirmed (1Kings 13:26-32)
  6. Jeroboam continues in evil; Jeroboam's son becomes ill; Jeroboam sends wife to Ahijah; Ahijah knows who she is, foretells the death of their son on account of their idolatry; takes place; Jeroboam also dies after reigning 22 years (1Kings 13:33-14:19)
  7. Rehoboam reigns in Judah 17 years; Judah acts wickedly; Shishak king of Egypt plunders Temple; death of Rehoboam (1Kings 14:20-30)
- I. To Ahab (1Kings 15-16)
1. Abijam rules 3 years in Judah; wicked (1Kings 15:1-8)
  2. Asa rules Judah 41 years; good king, even removing his own mother from her position because of her idolatry; constant conflict between him and Baasha; covenants with Aram to hinder Israel; builds Geba and Mizpah with the material Baasha used in Ramah (1Kings 15:9-24)
  3. Nadab reigns two years in Israel; Baasha conspires against him, kills him and house of Jeroboam, as predicted by Ahijah (1Kings 15:25-32)
  4. Baasha reigns 24 years in Israel; Jehu predicts downfall of his house (1Kings 15:33-16:7)
  5. Elah reigns 2 years in Israel; Zimri kills him, takes throne; kills all the house of Baasha, as predicted by Jehu (1Kings 16:8-14)
  6. Zimri reigns 7 days; Omri, commander of army, named king by all Israel; Tirzah besieged, Zimri throws self in burning palace and dies (1Kings 16:15-20)
  7. Omri versus Tibni, Omri successful; reigned 12 years; built Samaria (1Kings 16:21-28)
  8. Ahab reigns 22 years; quite evil; marries Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of Sidon; served Baal and Asherah (1Kings 16:29-33)
  9. Hiel of Bethel rebuilds Jericho; loses firstborn and lastborn as Joshua said (1Kings 16:34)
- J. Elijah and the Drought (1Kings 17)
1. Elijah tells Ahab about the drought; flees to TransJordan; fed by ravens (1Kings 17:1-7)
  2. Elijah goes to widow of Zarephath; she has only a little food; God continues to provide for them (1Kings 17:8-16)
  3. Widow's son dies; Elijah prays; boy revives (1Kings 17:17-24)
- K. Elijah vs. Ahab, YHWH vs. Baal (1Kings 18)
1. In third year, God sends Elijah to confront Ahab; Ahab tells Obadiah, who had previously hidden prophets of God from Jezebel, to find water and grass (1Kings 18:1-6)
  2. Elijah meets Obadiah, tells him to tell Ahab that he is there; Obadiah concerned for his welfare; Elijah gives him assurance; Ahab and Elijah meet (1Kings 18:7-16)
  3. Ahab addresses Elijah as troubler of Israel; Elijah says that such is Ahab; contest between Baal and YHWH (1Kings 18:17-19)
  4. Contest established: 2 altars, 2 offerings, everything but fire: 450 Baal prophets to cry to Baal to bring down fire, Elijah to pray to YHWH for fire (1Kings 18:20-24)
  5. Baal prophets go first; nothing comes; Elijah mocks them; they cut themselves, still no fire; went on most of the day (1Kings 18:25-29)

6. Elijah summons people to him; builds altar to YHWH with 12 stones; trench made around altar, filled with water; wood for offering also drenched with water (1Kings 18:30-35)
  7. Elijah petitions YHWH; fire comes from Heaven, consumes offering, wood, stones, dust, and water; people confess that YHWH is God; Baal prophets seized; Elijah executes them (1Kings 18:36-40)
  8. Ahab told to go eat and drink, for rain is coming; nothing seen seven times; little cloud seen, and rain begins to fall heavily (1Kings 18:41-46)
- L. Elijah in the Wilderness (1Kings 19)
1. Jezebel threatens Elijah's life; he flees to south Judah (1Kings 19:1-3)
  2. Elijah despairs of life; angel comes and brings him nourishment (1Kings 19:4-7)
  3. Comes to Horeb; stays 40 days and nights; sees wind, earthquake, fire; LORD not there (1Kings 19:8-12)
  4. Sound of silence afterward; LORD there; Elijah comes out; puts forth his claim (1Kings 19:13-14)
  5. God tells him to return and get busy: between Hazael of Syria, Jehu of Israel, and Elisha the prophet, God will gain the victory; 7000 remain in Israel who have not bowed to Baal (1Kings 19:15-18)
  6. Elijah meets Elisha, places his cloak over him; becomes Elijah's assistant (1Kings 19:19-21)
- M. Ahab and Aram (1Kings 20)
1. Ben-hadad king of Aram fights Ahab; fought against Samaria; Ahab sends message of peace; Ben-hadad seeks too much; Ahab rejects his offer (1Kings 20:1-12)
  2. Prophet tells Ahab that YHWH will deliver Aram into his hand; fight takes place, Israel successful (1Kings 20:13-21)
  3. Prophet warns that Aram will return next year; Aramaeans take YHWH to be a god of the hills, believe success will come on the plain (1Kings 20:22-25)
  4. Great victory for Israel at Aphek; Ben-hadad captured, released by Ahab after conceding land and bazaar space (1Kings 20:26-34)
  5. Prophet condemns Ahab: because he spared Ben-hadad, he will die, and Israel will be subdued (1Kings 20:35-43)
- N. Naboth's Vineyard (1Kings 21)
1. Naboth has vineyard; Ahab wants it; refuses to give up (1Kings 21:1-4)
  2. Ahab despondent; Jezebel connives to have Naboth executed; Ahab takes vineyard (1Kings 21:5-16)
  3. Elijah comes, pronounces condemnation on Ahab and his house (1Kings 21:17-26)
  4. Ahab repents; LORD tells Elijah that disaster will come upon Ahab's son (1Kings 21:27-29)
- O. Ahab's Death (1Kings 22)
1. Aram vs. Israel; Jehoshaphat king of Judah allies with Ahab against Aram (1Kings 22:1-4)
  2. Jehoshaphat seeks to inquire of YHWH; Ahab brings prophets who speak positively of campaign; Jehoshaphat seeks another; Ahab speaks of Micaiah, but he always speaks evil of Ahab (1Kings 22:5-8)
  3. Micaiah summoned; initially speaks positively; later tells of the throne scene where God sends lying spirits so that Ahab will fight and meet disaster (1Kings 22:13-23)

4. Micaiah struck by Zedekiah who spoke positively of the fight; Micaiah again imprisoned, testifies what will happen to Ahab (1Kings 22:24-29)
5. Ahab disguises himself, and yet is still hit with an arrow; dies; word of the LORD comes true (1Kings 22:30-40)
6. Jehoshaphat reigns in Judah 25 years; does well; made peace with Israel; failed expedition to Ophir (1Kings 22:41-50)
7. Ahaziah king of Israel; does wickedly (1Kings 22:51-53)

### **VIII. 1KINGS: IMPORTANT PASSAGES**

- A. 1Kings 6:1 - Provides dating structure for events before Solomon
- B. 1Kings 8:27 - Acts 7:48
  1. God is not confined to a building
- C. 1Kings 12:25-33
  1. Sins of Jeroboam led Israel into sin for generations
  2. Subtle changes of God's will for political expediency
- D. Elijah and the Drought (1Kings 17)
  1. James 5:17-18 and the power of prayer
  2. Luke 4:25-26 - condemnation of Israel because Elijah had to go to Zarephath (a type of Jesus)
- E. 1Kings 18:17 - Who is really troubling Israel?
- F. 1Kings 19:15-18 - Rom. 11:2-6
  1. A faithful remnant to God
- G. Message of 1Kings
  1. The best and worst of Israel
  2. Glory days of Solomon
  3. Depravity of Ahab

### **QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF FIRST KINGS**

1. Which son of David attempted to take the throne? Who was David's true successor?
2. What three things did David ask of Solomon?
3. What request did Adonijah make of Solomon that cost him his life?
4. When God offered Solomon anything he asked, what did Solomon ask for?
5. What was Solomon's instruction to the two harlots arguing over a baby? Why was this considered a wise solution?
6. List Solomon's three great building projects.
7. How many wives/concubines did Solomon have? How did this lead to his decline?
8. What price did Solomon pay Hiram for materials to build the temple?
9. Who came from a distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon? How did she describe it?
10. Who was Rehoboam? What was his error in judgment that led to the division of the nation? Who became the leader of the northern ten tribes?

11. What did Jeroboam do to keep Israel from returning to Jerusalem to worship?
12. Who was arguably the most wicked king of Israel? Who did he marry?
13. What two miracles did Elijah perform for the woman of Zarephath?
14. What did Ahab call Elijah at the contest on Carmel? What was Elijah's response?
15. What did Elijah say in mockery of the priests of Baal?
16. How did Elijah's prayers affect the weather? What did James say about his prayers?
17. How did Ahab acquire Naboth's vineyard?
18. Who was Micaiah and what did he prophesy about Ahab?

## Second Kings

### INTRODUCTION TO 2KINGS

As First Kings closes, Ahaziah, son of Ahab, has ascended the throne of Israel. It is apparent the house of Ahab must be destroyed, for, despite the work of Elijah and the death of Ahab in fulfillment of the word of Micaiah, Ahaziah persists in the sins of his father. Second Kings relates the history of Israel and Judah from the reign of Ahaziah until the destruction of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC, a period of about 275 years.

Through the ministries of the great prophets Elijah and Elisha, the Lord exterminated the Baal and Ashtoreth worship introduced by Ahab and destroyed even the house of Ahab (10:17,26-28). These brave prophets, as God's spokesmen, represented the true strength of Israel (2:12). But Israel remained idolatrous (10:29-31).

Because of Jehoshaphat's compromising actions, Baal worship was also brought into Judah (8:16-18). The house of David was almost obliterated (11:1-2). But the priest Jehoida eradicated the influence of the house of Ahab and its attendant Baal worship from Judah (11:13-21).

Israel continued to reject God. They not only continued the calf worship but brought in every form of abominable idolatry. Not a single monarch of the northern kingdom served the Lord with a true heart. Thus, God annihilated them by the Assyrians in 721 BC (17:5-18).

Judah eventually became even worse than her northern sister (17:19; Ez. 16:51). The only good kings of Judah after Jehoshaphat were Amaziah, Uzziah (Azariah), Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah. Eventually, Judah too was taken into captivity, by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 606 - 586, for her own wickedness (24:1-3; 25:1-21). Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (25:9-10).

### I. AUTHOR

The author is unknown, although often attributed to Jeremiah. The Second Book of Kings was originally part of a single work. This work must have been compiled sometime after the capture of Judah by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (2Kings 25). The impression is given that the book is the fruit of a single author who witnessed the fall of Jerusalem. Although it's not known who wrote it with exactitude, several suggestions have been offered. A certain number of experts say that the author of I and II Kings was an unknown prophet or a Jewish captive in Babylon around the year 550 B.C. Since Josephus (a prominent Jewish historian of the first century A.D.) attributes Kings to "the prophets", many have abandoned the search for a specific author. However, it was most probably that the prophet Jeremiah is the author of 2Kings. The early Jewish tradition of the Talmud affirms that. That famous prophet preached in Jerusalem before and after the fall of the city, and 2Kings 24 and 25 appear in Jeremiah 39-42; 52. Jeremiah could have written the entire text, except for the content of the final appendix (2Kings 25:27-30), which was probably added by one of his students.

### II. DATE OF WRITING

Although the precise date in which 2Kings was written is uncertain, it's believed to have been finished at the end of the 6th century B.C. The final event of 2Kings is the liberation of King Jehoiachin from his prison in Babylon. Since Jehoiachin was made prisoner in 597 B.C. (2Kings 24:8-17) and liberated 37 years later (2Kings 25:27), 2Kings must have been written after 560 B.C. to include this information. If the author had known of the fall of Babylon to Persian in 538 B.C. he would have mentioned

something so important. Since he didn't do so, the conclusion is reached that 2Kings was possibly written between 560 and 538 B.C., although the events narrated in 1Kings took place some 300 years earlier.

### III. PURPOSE FOR WRITING

On contemplating the horrible situation of GOD's exiled people, the author wrote The Kings to respond to the awkward question of why the kingdom of Israel in the north, like the kingdom of Judah in the south, had fallen into captivity. He wrote a prophetic message that shows how the punishment of having fallen under foreign domination was the inevitable result of the constant violation of their covenant with GOD. Kings was written so that the exiles would reflect upon their own history and return to GOD. Perhaps this prophetic perspective is one of the reasons why Kings was included among the "early prophets" in the Hebrew Bible.

2Kings takes up the historical events where 1 Kings left off. However, 2Kings is more than a mere compilation of the most important political and social events that occurred in Israel and Judah. In fact, it can't be considered as much a detailed history as would be expected (300 years contained in only 25 chapters). Instead, 2Kings is a selective history with a theological purpose. Therefore, the author selects and emphasizes the personages and events that have moral and religious significance. The Second Book of Kings presents GOD as the LORD of history. Sharing the historical experience explains GOD's providential work in and through the life of his people in order to redeem them. It demonstrates the necessity to obey the covenant of GOD and the painful consequences of disobedience. Thus 2 Kings shouldn't be considered a simply history book, but a theology that extracts lessons from history.

The Second Book of Kings takes up the history of the "divided kingdom" with Ahaziah on the throne of Israel, while Jehosaphat governs Judah. The narration is difficult to follow, as it is with 1Kings. The author goes back and forth, referring indistinctly to the kingdom of Israel in the north, the kingdom of Judah in the south and tracking their history simultaneously. There were 19 kings in Israel, all evil. In Judah there were twenty, only eight of whom were good, and of them only three that were considered righteous. 2Kings speaks of the final ten kings of Israel and the last sixteen of Judah. Some of those twenty-six sovereigns are only mentioned briefly, while entire chapters are dedicated to others. The attention is centered on those who could serve as a model of rectitude, or on those who illustrate why these states collapsed.

### IV. 2KINGS: BACKGROUND

#### A. Setting

1. Elijah and Ahaziah to Jehoiachin's release from prison in exile
2. The rest of the story of the kings
3. Exile of Israel to Assyria
4. Renewal in Judah, return to sinfulness, exile to Babylon

#### B. Authorship

1. Author entirely unknown
2. No doubt of its inspiration
3. Luke 4:27 - 2Kings 5:1-19
4. Author seems responsible for 1Samuel, 2Samuel, 1Kings, 2Kings
5. In the Greek Septuagint version, the book is called Fourth Reigns

#### C. Date of Writing

1. Events involve 260 years of history, from Ahaziah to Judah's exile (ca. 820-560 BC)

2. Book likely based on records, information nearly contemporaneous with events
  3. Actual final composition likely around the exile (ca. 586 BC)
- D. Recipients
1. The audience of the book is Israel in exile and beyond
  2. Important for all generations of God's people - Rom. 15:4
- E. Purpose of Writing
1. To describe God's messages through the prophets to the last kings of Israel and Judah
  2. To set forth the history of Israel and Judah leading up to the exile
  3. To explain why God exiled His own people

## V. 2KINGS: OUTLINE

- A. Main Sections
1. Ahaziah and Elijah (2Kings 1-2)
  2. Elisha (2Kings 3-8)
  3. The end of Israel (2Kings 9-17)
  4. The exile of Judah (2Kings 18-25)
- B. Ahaziah's Impiety (2Kings 1)
1. Moab's revolt (2Kings 1:1)
  2. Ahaziah fell, becomes ill; seeks after Beelzebub of Ekron (2Kings 1:2)
  3. Elijah meets messengers, tells them of God's condemnation of Ahaziah to death (2Kings 1:3-4)
  4. Ahaziah told of it; sends two sets of fifty men to fetch Elijah; fire from Heaven consumes them (2Kings 1:5-12)
  5. Third set of fifty more humble; Elijah goes to Ahaziah, condemns him in person; he dies (2Kings 1:13-18)
- C. Elijah's Translation (2Kings 2)
1. Elijah from Gilgal to Bethel; Elisha knows of his near departure (2Kings 2:1-3)
  2. Elijah keeps going; Elisha remains with him (2Kings 2:4-8)
  3. Elijah asks what Elisha wants from him; double portion of his spirit; Elijah and Elisha separated by chariots of fire; Elijah taken up in a whirlwind; with cloak of Elijah, Elisha parts Jordan River, returns to sons of the prophets (2Kings 2:9-14)
  4. Sons of prophets wish to find Elijah, unable to do so (2Kings 2:15-18)
  5. Water of Jericho not good; Elisha heals it (2Kings 2:19-22)
  6. Boys of Bethel mock Elisha; Elisha curses them; bears come out and kill many (2Kings 2:23-25)
- D. Israel and Moab (2Kings 3)
1. Jehoram king of Israel; Mesha king of Moab rebels against Israel; Jehoram and Jehoshaphat march against him (2Kings 3:1-8)
  2. Wilderness without water; Jehoshaphat seeks prophet; Elisha there; promises the LORD will provide water; water comes (2Kings 3:9-20)
  3. Moabites come out against Israel, overconfident by false sign; Israel defeats Moabite army; Mesha offers own son as offering, leads to wrath against Israel; Israel goes home (2Kings 3:21-27)
- E. Acts of Elisha (2Kings 4-8)
1. Widow of prophet speaks to Elisha, sons about to become slaves; he tells her to obtain jars, pour her one jar of oil into all the jars; from that, woman able to pay debts and live (2Kings 4:1-7)

2. Shunammite woman builds extra room for Elisha when he comes by; because of her faith, he promises her that she will have a child; she does so (2Kings 4:8-17)
3. Woman's son grows, has head difficulty, dies; she goes to Elisha; Elisha goes, lays upon the child, child revives (2Kings 4:18-37)
4. In Gilgal during famine, stew made for sons of prophets; someone accidentally puts poisonous vine in it; Elisha informed of it, takes flour, cleanses stew (2Kings 4:38-41)
5. Man comes with firstfruits for Elisha; told to give them to the men; God makes sure that all the men eat and have leftovers (2Kings 4:42-44)
6. Naaman the Aramean army commander leprous; told of Elisha; goes with all kinds of finery and money to be cured to king of Israel; king of Israel distressed, tears clothes (2Kings 5:1-7)
7. Elisha informed, tells king to send Naaman to him; sends messenger to Naaman, telling him to wash in the Jordan seven times; Naaman insulted, considers Aramean rivers better; servants persuade him otherwise; he bathes in Jordan, becomes clean (2Kings 5:8-14)
8. Naaman returns to Elisha, confesses faith in YHWH; wants two loads of soil, will offer only to YHWH; seeks forgiveness for state duties relative to Rimmon (2Kings 5:15-19)
9. Gehazi goes after Naaman to obtain some of the gifts he was going to give; Elisha knows of it; Naaman's leprosy upon Gehazi and descendants (2Kings 5:20-27)
10. While cutting down trees, son of prophet's axe head falls into Jordan; Elisha throws stick in, iron floats to surface (2Kings 6:1-7)
11. Aram fights against Israel; Israel constantly informed of Aramean camp location by Elisha; Aramean king goes to fight Elisha (2Kings 6:8-14)
12. Elisha's servant concerned; Elisha not bothered, prays that God will open eyes of servant; servant sees spiritual host ready to fight (2Kings 6:15-17)
13. Elisha prays for blindness of Arameans; leads Arameans to Samaria (2Kings 6:18-19)
14. Eyes opened in Samaria; king asks what is to be done with them, told to provide them food; they went back to Aram, and no more raids on Israel (2Kings 6:20-23)
15. Arameans besiege Samaria; destitution, desperate measures taken; messengers sent to Elisha (2Kings 6:24-33)
16. Elisha promises that food would be plentiful the next day; captain doubts, told of his fate (2Kings 7:1-2)
17. Lepers at entrance of gate go out to Arameans; no one there; LORD had made sound of chariots come in their ears, feared reinforcements for Israel, Arameans fled; lepers take advantage, take food and spoil (2Kings 7:3-8)
18. Lepers inform gatekeepers who inform king's house; king is conservative, sends out horsemen, who see evidence of panic and flight but no Arameans (2Kings 7:9-15)
19. People went out, plundered camp; food plentiful; captain trampled in gate, fulfilling word of Elisha (2Kings 7:16-20)

20. Shunammite from earlier sojourns at decree of Elisha; returns after seven years, appeals to king for land; king told of how woman was helped by Elisha, land restored (2Kings 8:1-6)
21. Aramean king Ben-hadad ill; Hazael his servant told to see Elisha, inquire whether he would recover; Elisha weeps before Hazael, knowing how Hazael will bring Israel low; Hazael kills Ben-hadad, becomes king of Aram (2Kings 8:7-15)
22. J(eh)oram becomes king of Judah; wicked; Edom in rebellion (2Kings 8:16-24)
23. Ahaziah king of Judah; he and Joram king of Israel fight Hazael, Joram wounded; Ahaziah goes to visit him (2Kings 8:25-29)

#### F. Jehu (2Kings 9-10)

1. Elisha sends son of prophet to Jehu to anoint him king of Israel (2Kings 9:1-10)
2. Jehu's soldiers proclaim him king (2Kings 9:11-13)
3. Jehu to Jezreel; messengers sent to him, go with him; Joram and Ahaziah go out to meet him; Jehu shoots both of them; they die (2Kings 9:14-29)
4. Jezebel executed (2Kings 9:30-37)
5. Jehu summons sons of Ahab, all of them killed, whole house of Ahab destroyed as Elijah foretold (2Kings 10:1-11)
6. Relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah come; executed (2Kings 10:12-14)
7. Jehu and Jonadab wipe out rest of Ahab's family (2Kings 10:15-17)
8. Under pretense of serving Baal, Jehu has all the prophets, worshipers, and priests of Baal come for a feast; has them all executed; Baal pillar overthrown, temple destroyed, made into a landfill (2Kings 10:18-26)
9. Jehu's reign secure, but does not remove golden calves; has four generations of kings promised, longest Israel would see; Hazael defeats Israel constantly, takes over TransJordan (2Kings 10:28-36)

#### G. Athaliah and Joash (2Kings 11-12)

1. Queen mother Athaliah of Judah has royal family killed; Joash spared (2Kings 11:1-6)
2. Seven years later, Jehoiada the priest informs guards of Joash's existence, weapons produced; Joash hailed as king (2Kings 11:7-12)
3. Athaliah goes to Temple on account of commotion, seized, taken to king's house, executed (2Kings 11:13-16)
4. Jehoiada gets people to forsake Baal and serve YHWH; Joash follows God as long as Jehoiada lives (2Kings 11:17-12:3)
5. Repairs needed for Temple; not done for many years (2Kings 12:4-8)
6. Money brought to Temple then provided for repairs; Temple repaired (2Kings 12:9-16)
7. Hazael conquers Gath, goes to Jerusalem; Joash gives him sacred gifts of Temple to buy him off, he leaves; Joash dies from a conspiracy (2Kings 12:17-21)

#### H. The End of Israel (2Kings 13-17)

1. Jehoahaz king in Israel; laid low by Ben-hadad son of Hazael (2Kings 13:1-9)
2. Jehoash king in Israel; Elisha dying, tells Jehoash to shoot arrows, strike ground with them; does so three times; will defeat Aram three times (2Kings 13:10-19)

3. Elisha dies, buried; Moabites who raided came upon men burying another; corpse touches Elisha's bones, revived (2Kings 13:20-21)
  4. Conflict with Aram; Israel laid low in time of Jehoahaz, more successful under Jehoash; he recovers cities of Israel (2Kings 13:22-25)
  5. Amaziah king in Judah; defeats Edom; fights Israel, defeated by Israel; wall of Jerusalem breached, Temple plundered, Amaziah captured; later returns to Judah, passed over in favor of his son (2Kings 14:1-22)
  6. Jeroboam (II) rules in Israel; prosperity & restoration (2Kings 14:23-29)
  7. Azariah rules Judah; faithful; a leper (2Kings 15:1-7)
  8. Zechariah rules Israel; dies from a conspiracy (2Kings 15:8-12)
  9. Shallum rules Israel one month; killed by Menahem (2Kings 15:13-16)
  10. Menahem rules Israel; buys off Pul king of Assyria by extorting the wealthy (2Kings 15:17-22)
  11. Pekahiah rules Israel; dies at hands of conspiracy (2Kings 15:23-26)
  12. Pekah rules Israel; Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria captures all of Aram, most of Israel except Ephraim; dies by conspiracy (2Kings 15:27-31)
  13. Jotham king of Judah; faithful (2Kings 15:32-38)
  14. Ahaz king of Judah; wicked; Rezin and Pekah against him; Ahaz becomes vassal of Assyria to ward off threat (2Kings 16:1-9)
  15. Ahaz sees altar in Damascus, has replica made, put it in the Temple; innovates Temple worship with Assyrian elements (2Kings 16:10-20)
  16. Hoshea king of Israel; Shalmaneser king of Assyria comes in, besieges Samaria; son Sennacherib conquers Israel; Israel later exiled to Assyria (2Kings 17:1-6)
  17. Exile took place on account of idolatry, refusal to heed prophets; Judah also seduced; Jeroboam's sins led to exile (2Kings 17:7-23)
  18. Assyria resettles land; YHWH sends lions among them because they did not fear Him; priests sent to land from Assyria to teach of YHWH (2Kings 17:24-28)
  19. Settlers feared YHWH but also served their gods; God was willing to make covenant with them, but they persisted in idolatry (2Kings 17:29-41)
- I. Hezekiah (2Kings 18-20)
1. Hezekiah king of Judah; very faithful; removed Nehustan; removed high places; rebelled against Assyria, defeated Philistines (2Kings 18:1-8)
  2. Capture, exile of Israel (2Kings 18:9-12)
  3. Sennacherib against Hezekiah; provides ransom, still fights Judah (2Kings 18:13-18)
  4. Rabshakeh makes speech, claiming Hezekiah unfaithful to YHWH; king's men seek him to speak in Aramaic, not Hebrew; he speaks in Hebrew; extols Assyria and its gods, claims that no god can deliver Jerusalem from Assyria (2Kings 18:19-37)
  5. Hezekiah laments, sends messengers to Isaiah; Isaiah establishes that Sennacherib will leave (2Kings 19:1-7)
  6. Letter to Hezekiah again denying YHWH's ability to save; Hezekiah prays to God; Isaiah comes and prophesies the fall of Sennacherib (2Kings 19:8-34)
  7. Angel of LORD strikes down 185,000 Assyrians; Sennacherib returns to Assyria, killed by his sons (2Kings 19:35-37)

8. Hezekiah ill; told he will die by Isaiah; Hezekiah prays, God hears prayer, grants him 15 more years; sign provided of shadow retreating ten steps (2Kings 20:1-11)
9. Babylonian delegates visit; Hezekiah shows them storehouses; Isaiah predicts Babylon's return, capture of all such things; Hezekiah not bothered since things would be well in his own day (2Kings 20:12-20)

J. Manasseh and Amon (2Kings 21)

1. Manasseh king in Judah; evil; served all kinds of gods, installed foreign divinities in Temple (2Kings 21:1-9)
2. Prophets denounce his idolatry, proclaim that God will destroy Jerusalem; Manasseh killing many innocents (2Kings 21:10-18)
3. Amon king in Judah; wicked; conspiracy against him; conspirators also killed (2Kings 21:19-26)

K. Josiah and the Beginning of the End (2Kings 22-23)

1. Josiah king of Judah; faithful; has Temple repaired (2Kings 22:1-7)
2. In midst of repairs, book of the Law found; book read to the king; he tears his clothes, knows wrath of God for Judah's sins (2Kings 22:8-13)
3. Huldah the prophetess visited; foretells doom for Judah, but not in days of Josiah (2Kings 22:14-20)
4. Josiah has Law read to people; people reaffirm the covenant (2Kings 23:1-3)
5. Josiah removes all idolatrous objects; defiled Topheth; defiled high places; tore down temples of Dan and Bethel, finds tomb of prophets who foretold it would take place; sacrificed high priests of Dan and Bethel on their altars (2Kings 23:4-20)
6. Passover restored, observed in way not seen since Judges (2Kings 23:21-23)
7. Mediums, necromancers, teraphim, etc. cast out; faithful to Law of Moses; God's anger not ameliorated, doom to come (2Kings 23:24-27)
8. Josiah fights Necho king of Egypt; Josiah killed, son Jehoahaz reigns three months in his place; Necho takes him to Egypt, installs Jehoiakim king in his place as vassal (2Kings 23:28-37)

L. The Exile of Judah (2Kings 24-25)

1. Jehoiakim serves Babylon 3 years, revolts; Nebuchadnezzar and others fight against him; he fills Jerusalem with blood; wicked; Egyptian "empire" lost to Nebuchadnezzar (2Kings 24:1-7)
2. Jehoiachin king of Judah; Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem; Jehoiachin gives himself up along with many officials; carried off to Babylon with treasures of Jerusalem and entire middle and upper classes (2Kings 24:8-17)
3. Zedekiah installed as king of Judah; rebels against Babylon; Babylonians come up, besiege Jerusalem; Zedekiah attempts to flee, is captured, his sons killed, himself blinded (2Kings 24:18-25:7)
4. Jerusalem, Temple captured, plundered; Temple and city destroyed; almost everyone sent into exile (2Kings 25:8-20)
5. Gedaliah made governor of few who remained; killed later; rest of people in land flee to Egypt in fear of Babylon (2Kings 25:21-26)
6. 25 years later, Jehoiachin freed by Evil-Merodach; dined at king's table (2Kings 25:27-30)

## VI. 2KINGS: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. 2Kings 3
  1. In Moab, stelae of Mesha found, proclaiming his revolt from Israel
  2. Does not speak of military defeat, but indicates that he keeps power
- B. 2Kings 5:1-19
  1. Naaman, a type of baptism - Luke 4:27
- C. 2Kings 6:15-17 - Spiritual reality looks different than physical reality
- D. 2Kings 17:1-23 - Exile of Israel on account of idolatry
- E. 2Kings 18-20 - Hezekiah: example of a man faithful to God
- F. 2Kings 22-23 - Josiah: repentance does not always remove temporal consequences
- G. Message of 2Kings
  1. Overall, a sad account with a few bright examples
  2. Idolatry and sin lead to exile and destruction

### QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF SECOND KINGS

1. What prophet succeeded Elijah? What did he ask of Elijah?
2. Describe how Elijah left this world.
3. List five of the miracles performed by Elisha.
4. Who was Naaman and why did he want to see Elisha?
5. What did Elisha instruct him to do? How did he respond?
6. What concession did Naaman try to get from Elisha? What did Gehazi attempt to get from Naaman? What happened to him as a result?
7. Who was the only king to bring restoration and prosperity to Israel?
8. What effect did the bones of Elisha have on the corpse of another man?
9. Hezekiah prayed for more time. How many more years was he given?
10. What act of poor judgment of Hezekiah led to invaders coming into Judah?
11. How old was Josiah when he became king? What kind of king was he?
12. List some of the reforms he began. Describe the quality of the Passover that year.
13. Did the reforms of Josiah avert the fall of Judah? Why not?
14. Of all of the sins committed by Israel, which one is most credited with their fall?
15. What nation took Judah into captivity? For how long?
16. What names were given to the books of 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament read by Jesus and the apostles?

## First Chronicles

### INTRODUCTION TO 1CHRONICLES

The Hebrew title (dibre hayyamim) can be translated "the events of the days (or years)." The same phrase occurs in references to sources used by the author of Kings. The Septuagint refers to the book as "the things omitted," indicating that its translators regarded it as a supplement to Samuel and Kings. Chronicles was first divided into two books by the Septuagint translators.

### I. AUTHOR

According to ancient Jewish tradition, Ezra wrote Chronicles and Ezra. In his recounting of history long past, the Chronicler relied on many written sources. About half his work was taken from Samuel and Kings; he also drew on the Pentateuch, Judges, Ruth, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations and Zechariah (though he used texts of these books that varied somewhat from those that have been preserved in the later standardized Hebrew texts). And there are frequent references to still other sources: "the book of the kings of Israel" (9:1; 2Ch. 20:34; 33:18), "the book of the annals of King David" (27:24), "the book of the kings of Judah and Israel" or "of Israel and Judah" (2Ch. 16:11; 25:26; 27:7; 28:26; 32:32; 35:27; 36:8), "the annotations on the book of the kings" (2Ch. 24:27). It is unclear whether these all refer to the same source or to different sources, and what their relationship is to Samuel and Kings or to the royal annals referred to in Kings. In addition, the author cites a number of prophetic writings: those of "Samuel the seer" (29:29), "Nathan the prophet" (29:29; 2Ch. 9:29), "Gad the seer" (29:29), "Ahijah the Shilonite" (2Ch. 9:29), "Iddo the seer" (2Ch. 9:29; 12:15; 13:22), "Shemaiah the prophet" (2Ch. 12:15), "the prophet Isaiah" (2Ch. 26:22), "the seers" (2Ch. 33:19). All these he used to tell the complete account of the past. By inspiration, he arranged and integrated his sources to compose a narrative "sermon" for postexilic Israel as she struggled to reorient herself as the people of God in a new situation.

### II. DATE OF WRITING

Although the date in which The Chronicles were written can't be established exactly, the text probably adopted its definitive form at the end of the 5th century B.C. The last event spoken of in the final verses of 2Chronicles is the decree of the Persian King Cyrus that authorizes the Jews to return to Judah. This decree is dated in 538 B.C. and its mention leaves the impression that Chronicles was composed shortly after its issue. However, the last person mentioned in Chronicles is Anani, representing the eighth generation from King Jehoiakim (1Chron. 3:24). Jehoiakim was deported to Babylon in 597 B.C. Depending of how these generations are calculated (approximately 25 years), the birth of Anani had taken place in sometime between the years 425 and 400 B.C. Thus The Chronicles can be dated between 425 and 400 B.C.

### III. PURPOSE OF WRITING

The Chronicler wrote for the spiritually restored community of exiles. The burning issue was the question of continuity with the past: Is God still interested in us? Are his covenants still in force? Now that we have no Davidic king and are subject to Persia, do God's promises to David still have meaning for us? After the great judgment (the dethroning of the house of David, the destruction of the nation, of Jerusalem and of the temple, and the exile to Babylon), what is our relationship to Israel of old? In short, the law and the prophets, like the temple, are more crucial to Israel's continuing relationship with the Lord than the presence or absence of a king.

The Chronicler further underscores the importance of obedience to the law and the prophets by emphasizing the theme of immediate retribution. (2Ch. 12:5; 15:2,7; 16:7,9; 19:2-3; 21:14-15; 24:20; 25:15-16; 28:9; 34:24-28). In writing his accounts of individual reigns, he never tires of demonstrating how sin always brings judgment in the form of disaster (usually either illness or defeat in war), whereas repentance, obedience and trust yield peace, victory and prosperity.

The author of Chronicles wished to sustain Israel's hope for the promised Messiah, son of David, in accordance with the Davidic covenant (2Sam. 7) and the assurances of the prophets, including those near to him (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi). He was careful to recall the Lord's pledge to David (1Ch. 17) and to follow this with many references back to it (2Ch. 13:5; 21:7; 23:3). Consider his depictions of David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. While not portrayed as flawless, these Davidic kings are presented as prime examples of the Messianic ideal, as royal servants of the Lord whose reigns promoted godliness and covenant faithfulness in Israel. They were crowned with God's favor toward his people in the concrete forms of victories, deliverances and prosperity. They sat, moreover, on the "throne of the Lord" (29:23; 28:5; 2Ch. 9:8) and ruled over the Lord's kingdom (17:14; 2Ch. 13:8). Thus they served as types, foreshadowing the King to come of whom the prophets had spoken, and their remembrance nurtured hope in the face of much discouragement (see the book of Malachi).

Yet another major theme of the Chronicler's history is his concern with "all Israel" (e.g., 9:1; 11:1-4; 12:38-40; 16:1-3; 18:14; 21:1-5; 28:1-8; 29:21-26; 2Ch 1:1-3; 7:8-10; 9:30; 10:1-3,16; 12:1; 18:16; 28:23; 29:24; 30:1-13,23-27; 34:6-9,33). As a matter of fact, he viewed the restored community as the remnant of all Israel, both north and south (9:2-3). His narrative makes frequent note of movements of godly people from Israel to Judah for specifically religious reasons. The kingdom of "Judah" had absorbed many from the northern kingdom through the years, and the Chronicler viewed it as the remnant of all Israel from the time of Samaria's fall.

The genealogies also demonstrate continuity with the past. To the question "Is God still interested in us?" the Chronicler answers, "He has always been." God's grace and love for the restored community did not begin with David or the conquest or the exodus, but with creation (1:1).

The Chronicler often introduces speeches not found in Samuel and Kings, using them to convey some of his main emphases. Of the 165 speeches in Chronicles of varying lengths, only 95 are found in the parallel texts of Samuel and Kings.

The bulk of the Chronicler's history is devoted to the reigns of David (chs. 11-29) and Solomon (2Ch. 1-9). His portraits of these two kings are quite distinctive and provide a key to his concerns:

#### **IV. GENEALOGIES**

There are three general areas in which genealogies function: the familial or domestic, the legal-political, and the religious. In the domestic area an individual's social status, privileges and obligations may be reflected in his placement in the lineage (7:14-19); the rights of the firstborn son and the secondary status of the children of concubines are examples from the Bible. In the political sphere genealogies substantiate claims to hereditary office or settle competing claims when the office is contested. Land organization and territorial groupings of social units may also be determined by genealogical reckoning, e.g., the division of the land among the 12 tribes. In Israel military levies also proceeded along genealogical lines; several of the genealogies in Chronicles reflect military conscription (5:1-26; 7:1-12,30-40; 8:1-40). Genealogies

function in the religious sphere primarily by establishing membership among the priests and Levites (6:1-30; 9:10-34; Neh. 7:61-65).

As to form, some genealogical lists trace several lines of descent (segmented genealogies) while others are devoted to a single line (linear genealogies). Comparison of genealogical lists of the same tribal or family line often brings to light surprising differences. The most common type of variance in Biblical genealogies is telescoping, the omission of names from the list. Unimportant names are left out in order to relate an individual to a prominent ancestor, or possibly to achieve the desired number of names in the genealogy. Some Biblical genealogies, for example, omit names to achieve multiples of 7: For the period from David to the exile Matthew gives 14 generations (2 times 7), while Luke gives 21 (3 times 7), and the same authors give similar multiples of 7 for the period from the exile to Jesus (Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38).

## V. APPLICATION

While The Kings emphasize human responsibility, showing that sin leads to defeat, The Chronicles accentuate the sovereign liberating action of GOD. The themes of divine warning and encouragement still resound in our day. GOD has been faithful throughout the history of those who have lifted their cry to Him. Chronicles relates that GOD stays faithful to his word and the promises that he has made to the chosen people. This is an inexhaustible source of encouragement for believers of all ages. GOD makes and fulfills promises; He is someone in whom we can trust. He has always been and is our hope, and his purposes will prevail in history. However, Chronicles also exhorts us to learn from the errors of the people of GOD in the past, so that they won't be repeated in us (1Cor. 10:11; Heb. 4:11).

## VI. 1CHRONICLES: BACKGROUND

### A. Setting

1. 1Chronicles: another presentation of Israel's history
2. Genealogical records
3. The reign of David

### B. Authorship

1. Author not definitively known
2. Ezra a strong possibility
3. If not Ezra, someone associated with the priesthood/Levites
4. 1 & 2 Chronicles is considered a single work in the Greek Septuagint version, and is called First Paraleipomena ("omitted things")

### C. Date of Writing

1. Book presents genealogies from Adam through exile, describes David's reign (ca. 990-950 BC)
2. Material roughly contemporaneous with 1Samuel 31 through 1Kings 2
3. Much of the information also from contemporaneous documents, 1-2 Samuel, 1Kings (1Chronicles 29:29-30)
4. Final composition after the exile (ca. 430 BC)

### D. Recipients

1. The audience represents the returned exiles in the Persian period
2. Important for all generations of God's people - Rom. 15:4

### E. Purpose of Writing

1. To preserve the genealogical listing of Israel's ancestors
2. To present the account of David and God's covenant with him
3. To encourage the returning exiles with God's promise of a new king
4. To point to the coming of Jesus Christ

## VII. 1CHRONICLES: OUTLINE

### A. Main Sections

1. Genealogies (1Chronicles 1-9)
2. David's Ascension (1Chronicles 10-14)
3. Acts of David (1Chronicles 15-21)
4. Temple Preparations (1Chronicles 22-29)

### B. Genealogies (1Chronicles 1-9)

1. Adam to Jacob and Esau (1Chronicles 1)
2. Judahites to David (1Chronicles 2)
3. David's descendants (1Chronicles 3)
4. Descendants of Jacob's sons (1Chronicles 4-7)
5. Descendants of Benjamin, especially Saul's house (1Chronicles 8)
6. Returnees from the exile (1Chronicles 9:1-34)

### C. Saul and His Demise (1Chronicles 9:35-10:14; 1Samuel 31)

1. Saul's genealogy (1Chronicles 9:35-44)
2. Last conflict between Saul and the Philistines; death of Saul and his sons (1Chronicles 10:1-7)
3. Saul and sons stripped, carried off; men of Jabesh-Gilead come and take away their bodies (1Chronicles 10:8-12)
4. Saul died for breach of faith, consulting medium; kingdom given to David (1Chronicles 10:13-14)

### D. David's Ascension (1Chronicles 11-14; 2Samuel 1-6, 23)

1. David anointed king; Jerusalem captured (1Chronicles 11:1-9)
2. David's mighty men and their pursuits (1Chronicles 11:10-45)
3. Men who came to him at Ziklag; men of other tribes who join to David, his army (1Chronicles 12)
4. Ark brought from Kiriath-jearim; Uzzah struck; ark remains with Obed-edom (1Chronicles 13)
5. Hiram of Tyre sends messengers, trees, carpenters; wives of David, his children (1Chronicles 14:1-7)
6. Philistines defeated twice; nations fear David & Israel (1Chron 14:8-17)

### E. The Ark (1Chronicles 15-16; 2Samuel 6)

1. Ark to be brought to Jerusalem, carried by Levites (1Chron. 15:1-15)
2. Players of musical instruments appointed (1Chronicles 15:16-24)
3. Ark brought with joy; David dances; Michal despises him (1Chronicles 15:25-29)
4. Ark placed in a tent; offerings made (1Chronicles 16:1-3)
5. Levites appointed before the Ark, including Asaph; David's song of thankfulness to the LORD (1Chronicles 16:4-36; Psalms 105:1-15, 96:1-13)
6. Offerings, those praising God appointed (1Chronicles 16:37-43)

### F. The Covenant (1Chronicles 17; 2Samuel 7)

1. David seeks to build Temple; Nathan approves (1Chronicles 17:1-2)
2. LORD speaks to Nathan: Solomon to build Temple, covenant with David to establish his kingdom forever (1Chronicles 17:3-15)
3. David thankful before the LORD, extols His greatness (1Chronicles 17:16-27)

### G. Acts of David (1Chronicles 18:1 - 22:1; 2Samuel 8-24)

1. David defeats Philistia, Moab, Zobah-Hamath, Aram; Abishai defeats Edomites (1Chronicles 18:1-13)
2. David's administration (1Chronicles 18:14-17)

3. Hanun king of Ammon disgraces David's messengers; Hanun hires Arameans to help fight against David; David's armies crush both Ammonites and Arameans (1Chronicles 19)
  4. Joab captures Rabbah of Ammon; David obtains its crown (1Chronicles 20:1-3)
  5. Philistine giants killed (1Chronicles 20:4-8)
  6. Satan incites David to count Israel; Joab does so; God sends pestilence, stays hand of angel at threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (1Chronicles 21:1-17)
  7. David buys floor from Ornan, builds altar, offered sacrifice; declared that is where the Temple would be built (1Chronicles 21:18-22:1)
- H. Temple Preparations (1Chronicles 22:2 - 26:32)
1. David obtains material and workers for the Temple (1Chron. 22:2-5)
  2. David charges Solomon to build Temple (1Chronicles 22:6-19)
  3. Solomon made king when David is old; Levite genealogies; David organizes them for their tasks of ministering to God (1Chronicles 23)
  4. David organizes priests for their service; genealogies (1Chronicles 24)
  5. David organizes musicians; their work & organization (1Chronicles 25)
  6. Divisions of gatekeepers for Temple (1Chronicles 26:1-19)
  7. Treasurers, officers, judges (1Chronicles 26:20-32)
- I. The End of David (1Chronicles 27-29; 1Kings 1-2)
1. Military divisions and their months (1Chronicles 27:1-15)
  2. Tribal leaders, king's officials (1Chronicles 27:16-34)
  3. David charges Israel to follow God; Solomon to be king, build Temple (1Chronicles 28:1-8)
  4. David charges Solomon to follow God, to build Temple; provides designs and materials for the work (1Chronicles 28:9-21)
  5. David puts forth his offerings for the Temple; the people also provide resources for the project (1Chronicles 29:1-9)
  6. David's prayer: thankfulness to God, His greatness; offerings made (1Chronicles 29:10-22)
  7. Solomon made king; conclusion of David's life and reign (1Chronicles 29:23-30)

### **VIII. 1CHRONICLES: IMPORTANT PASSAGES**

- A. 1Chronicles 4:9-10 - The prayer of Jabez
- B. 1Chronicles provides harmony and support to 2Samuel
- C. Message of 1Chronicles
  1. Preserving the genealogies of Israel
  2. Showing the Second Temple period the glory of the First Temple
  3. Showcasing David's greatness and piety
  4. Known for what is omitted as much as what is presented: nothing said of David's difficulties with Saul, Ishbaal; no mention is made of about David's adultery, nor the revolt of Absalom; not a denial of their existence, but rather a strong focus on David's positive attributes

### **QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF FIRST CHRONICLES**

1. What was the name of the books of Chronicles in the Septuagint version?
2. What was the purpose for writing Chronicles?

3. How many chapters of 1Chronicles is taken up with genealogies? What was the purpose of genealogies to the Jews?
4. Who was Jabez and what four things did he pray for?
5. What reasons were given for Saul's downfall?
6. Who was Asaph? Where in the Bible do his writings appear?
7. Was there more than one giant in Philistia? How many digits did one of the sons of Goliath have on his hands and feet?
8. On what site did David declare that the temple was to be built?
9. Although David was not permitted to build the temple, what preparations did he make for its construction?
10. What does Acts 13:22 say about the kind of man David was?

## Second Chronicles

### INTRODUCTION TO 2CHRONICLES

Second Chronicles traces the story of God's ancient people, the Jews, from the time of Solomon through the historical periods of the Divided Kingdom, Judah Alone, and the Babylonian Captivity to the decree of Cyrus of Persia to restore Israel to Palestine. During the Divided Kingdom period, unlike First and Second Kings, Second Chronicles only relates the stories of the kings of Judah, rather than of both Israel and Judah. This is because the chronicler is concerned with the restoration of Israel based on the rule of David and the Levitical priesthood, and only Judah had kings of the lineage of David and priests descended from Aaron. This book demonstrates that righteousness toward God is the basis of national greatness (7:11-22). In fact the theme of Second Chronicles is righteousness is the basis of Israel's glory. The glory of the reigns of David and Solomon departed because Judah became unrighteous (36:11-21).

### I. AUTHOR

As First and Second Chronicles were originally one book and the identity of the author isn't clear in either one, many have opted to refer to this unknown author as "the chronicler". The early Jewish tradition of the Talmud affirms that Ezra wrote The Chronicles. Also the final verses of 2Chronicles (2Chron. 36:22-23) are repeated in the book of Ezra (Ezra 1:1-3). This not only supports the thesis of Ezra's authorship, but indicates that The Chronicles formed part of an epic, along with Ezra, of a single work. Furthermore, Chronicles and Ezra, have a similar literary style, vocabulary and content. Ezra was a scribe as well as a priest, and played a significant role in the community of exiles that returned to Jerusalem. Although we can't be sure, it seems reasonable to assume that "the chronicler" was Ezra.

### II. CONTENTS

The Book of 2Chronicles covers the period that begins with the reign of Solomon in 971 B.C. to the end of the exile, around 538 B.C. However, the specific background of 2Chronicles is the period after the exile. In this time, the ancient world was under the domination of the powerful Persian Empire. All that remained of the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon was the small province of Judah. The Persians had replaced the monarchy there with a provincial governor. Although GOD's people had been allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, their situation was much different that which they enjoyed in the golden years of David and Solomon.

### III. PURPOSE FOR WRITING

The return of the exiles from Babylon made it necessary to make a written record of GOD's people, especially Judah. The second book of Chronicles was composed with the double purpose of encouraging and warning those who returned to Jerusalem. The remnant that had remained needed encouragement to maintain their faith in the midst of difficulty; hope to confront the time to come. The emphasis of 2Chronicles on the spiritual inheritance of David, Solomon, the temple and the priesthood, reminded them that GOD remained faithful and didn't forget his promises to David and his people. Chronicles also constituted an energetic exhortation for GOD's people to adhere to the covenant and the ritual of Moses, so that the past tragedy wouldn't be repeated.

The Second Book of Chronicles can be divided into two principal sections. The first part of the book (chaps. 1-9) offers a vision of Solomon's kingdom. The story emphasizes the construction of the temple (chaps. 2-7), and the riches and wisdom of

this extraordinary king (chap. 8, 9). However, the narration ends abruptly and doesn't mention Solomon's failure in his later years, as 1Kings 11 relates.

The second section of 2Chronicles covers chapters 10-36. After the division of the kingdom, 2Chronicles is almost exclusively occupied with the southern kingdom of Judah, and treats the history of the northern kingdom of Israel as incidental. In 2Chronicles is found the events that took place during the reign of the twenty monarchs of Judah until the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. The book concludes with Cyrus' decree authorizing the liberation and return of the remnant to their land (36:22-23).

#### **IV. 2CHRONICLES: BACKGROUND**

##### A. Setting

1. 2Chronicles: another look at the kings, focusing on Judah
2. Solomon and the Temple
3. Rehoboam through the exile

##### B. Authorship

1. Author not definitively known
2. Ezra a strong possibility
3. If not Ezra, someone associated with the priesthood/Levites
4. 1-2 Chronicles considered a single work; in the Greek Septuagint it is called Second Paraleipomena ("omitted things")

##### C. Date of Writing

1. Book presents Solomon's reign through Cyrus' proclamation (ca. 950-530 BC)
2. Material roughly contemporaneous with 1Kings 3 - 2Kings 25; Ezra 1
3. Much of the information from contemporaneous documents - 1-2 Kings
4. Final composition after the exile (ca. 430 BC)

##### D. Recipients

1. The audience represents the returned exiles in the Persian period
2. Important for all generations of God's people - Rom. 15:4

##### E. Purpose of Writing

1. To present the story of the Davidic line of kings
2. To present the story of the building of the First Temple
3. To commend faith and condemn disobedience

#### **V. 2CHRONICLES: OUTLINE**

##### A. Main Sections

1. Solomon (2Chronicles 1-9)
2. Early Judahite Kings (2Chronicles 10-24)
3. Late Judahite Kings (2Chronicles 25-36)

##### B. Solomon Established (2Chronicles 1; 1Kings 3)

1. Solomon goes to Gibeon to serve God (2Chronicles 1:1-6)
2. God visits him at night; he prays for wisdom (2Chronicles 1:7-13)
3. Great wealth given to him (2Chronicles 1:14-17)

##### C. The First Temple (2Chronicles 2-7; 1Kings 5-8)

1. Solomon begins to prepare for building; sends for supplies from Hiram king of Tyre (2Chronicles 2:1-10)
2. Hiram answers, sends material and Hiram the craftsman (2Chronicles 2:11-16)
3. Solomon's resident alien workers; beginning building on Mount Moriah (2Chronicles 2:17-3:2)
4. Temple measurements and layout; materials used (2Chronicles 3:3-17)

5. Temple furnishings (2Chronicles 4)
  6. Temple completed; Ark brought into Temple; great sacrifice; singers and musicians playing; glory of God in the Temple (2Chronicles 5)
  7. Solomon blesses God and people (2Chronicles 6:1-11)
  8. Solomon dedicates Temple, prays that God will hear the prayers of the people (2Chronicles 6:12-42)
  9. Fire comes from heaven, consumes offerings; people prostrate themselves (2Chronicles 7:1-3)
  10. Thousands of sacrifices offered; seven day feast (2Chronicles 7:4-10)
  11. God appears to Solomon; accepts Temple, will hear prayers if obedient, problems if there is disobedience (2Chronicles 7:11-22)
- D. Solomon (2Chronicles 8-9; 1Kings 9-11)
1. Rebuilds cities in north; took Zobah and Hamath; foreigners as laborers (2Chronicles 8:1-10)
  2. Pharaoh's daughter to special house; offerings in Temple; ships to Ophir (2Chronicles 8:11-18)
  3. The queen of Sheba visits Solomon; Solomon's wealth; death of Solomon (2Chronicles 9)
- E. Rehoboam (2Chronicles 10-12; 1Kings 12-14)
1. Rehoboam becomes king; asked to make burden lighter; elders tell him to do so, young men say make it worse; follows young men; tribes revolt (2Chronicles 10)
  2. Rehoboam ready to fight; told not to do so; reinforces defense cities (2Chronicles 11:1-12)
  3. Priests, Levites flee to Judah because of Jeroboam; Rehoboam's family (2Chronicles 11:13-23)
  4. Rehoboam becomes unfaithful; Shishak king of Egypt conquers Judah, plunders Temple; reign and death of Rehoboam (2Chronicles 12)
- F. Abijah and Asa (2Chronicles 13-16; 1Kings 15)
1. Abijah king; war with Jeroboam; taunt against Jeroboam; Abijah successful (2Chronicles 13)
  2. Asa king; land at rest; faithful king, removes idolatry; Ethiopians attack Judah, Asa cries to God, God delivers Judah (2Chronicles 14)
  3. Azariah exhorts Judah to faithfulness; idols removed; sacrifices made; queen mother deposed for idolatry (2Chronicles 15)
  4. Baasha of Israel militant against Asa; Asa makes agreement with Aram, incurs anger of God; later dies (2Chronicles 16)
- G. Jehoshaphat (2Chronicles 17-20; 1Kings 22 - 2Kings 3)
1. Jehoshaphat king; fortifies border cities; faithful to God (2Chronicles 17:1-6)
  2. Officials and Levites teach Judahites from Book of the Law (2Chronicles 17:7-9)
  3. Fear of king upon other nations; military and other resources strengthened (2Chronicles 17:10-18)
  4. Alliance with Ahab; battle at Ramoth-Gilead, Micaiah predicts death of Ahab; comes to pass (2Chronicles 18)
  5. Jehu the seer condemns Jehoshaphat for alliance; appoints judges in Judah; has special judges from Levites in Jerusalem for greater cases (2Chronicles 19)

6. Coalition of Ammonites, Moabites against Judah; Jehoshaphat prays to God for deliverance; Jahaziel prophesies salvation from God (2Chronicles 20:1-17)
  7. Judah goes out to see; Edomites against Ammonites and Moabites; mutual destruction; Judah able to plunder the spoil (2Chron. 20:18-30)
  8. Jehoshaphat's failed Ophir expedition; death (2Chronicles 20:35-38)
- H. Jehoram Through Joash (2Chronicles 21-24; 2Kings 8-12)
1. Jehoram king; kills brothers, unfaithful to God; revolt of Edom; plague on Jehoram; Philistines and Arabians defeat Judah (2Chronicles 21)
  2. Ahaziah king; unfaithful; visits Joram of Israel, killed by Jehu (2Chronicles 22:1-9)
  3. Athaliah kills all but Joash, reigns in Judah; unfaithful (2Chronicles 22:10-12)
  4. Jehoiada the priest gathers some of the army, has Joash made king; proclaimed in Temple; Athaliah comes and hears it, executed (2Chronicles 23:1-15)
  5. Jehoiada makes covenant with people and king to be God's people; Baal altars torn down; offerings to God in Temple; king installed; peace (2Chronicles 23:16-21)
  6. Temple repairs; funded by tax of people; death of Jehoiada (2Chronicles 24:1-16)
  7. Joash turns unfaithful to God; Zechariah rebukes him, is killed (2Chronicles 24:17-20)
  8. Aram defeats Judah; conspiracy against Joash; he is killed (2Chronicles 24:21-27)
- I. Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz (2Chronicles 25-28; 2Kings 14-16)
1. Amaziah king; avenges father; mostly faithful (2Chronicles 25:1-4)
  2. Prepares army to fight; buys Israelite mercenaries, told to send them away; defeated Edomites (2Chronicles 25:5-13)
  3. Brings back idols of Edom, serves them; prophet warns him, turned away (2Chronicles 25:14-16)
  4. Amaziah fights Joash of Israel, is defeated and captured; Joash plunders Jerusalem; death of Amaziah (2Chronicles 25:17-28)
  5. Uzziah king; faithful; defeated Philistines and Arabians; fortified Jerusalem (2Chronicles 26:1-15)
  6. Becomes proud; offers incense in Temple; struck by God with leprosy; Jotham made king (2Chronicles 26:16-23)
  7. Jotham king; faithful; built cities; fought Ammonites (2Chronicles 27)
  8. Ahaz king; unfaithful; Baal service, burned sons as offering (2Chronicles 28:1-4)
  9. Aram and Israel defeat Judah; Israelites take spoil, let the people return; Edomites defeat Judah; Ahaz appeals to Assyria (2Chronicles 28:5-21)
  10. Ahaz serves Aramean gods; dies (2Chronicles 28:22-27)
- J. Hezekiah (2Chronicles 29-32; 2Kings 18-20)
1. Hezekiah king; faithful; cleanses the Temple, covenant renewed (2Chronicles 29:1-19)
  2. Temple service restored; musicians stationed; prostration and offerings (2Chronicles 29:20-36)
  3. Call to celebrate Passover throughout all Judah and Israel; many mock, others are humbled, come (2Chronicles 30:1-12)

4. Great assembly in Jerusalem; altar removal; some not cleansed, Hezekiah prays for pardon; extended for seven days; great joy (2Chronicles 30:13-27)
  5. Altars, high places overthrown; Hezekiah appoints divisions of priests, chambers in Temple prepared; priests and Levites enrolled (2Chronicles 31)
  6. Sennacherib invades Judah; reviles God; Hezekiah prays to God, God provides deliverance (2Chronicles 32:1-23)
  7. Hezekiah becomes ill; God answers his prayer; great wealth and honor for Hezekiah (2Chronicles 32:24-33)
- K. Manasseh and Amon (2Chronicles 33; 2Kings 21)
1. Manasseh king; quite evil; rebuilt high places, even installs foreign gods in Temple (2Chronicles 33:1-9)
  2. Manasseh did not hear word of God, brought into Assyrian captivity, repents of his sin (2Chronicles 33:10-13)
  3. Returns to Jerusalem, fortifies city, removes foreign gods, restored Temple; people continue to serve on high places, but only to YHWH; dies (2Chronicles 33:14-20)
  4. Amon king; unfaithful; conspired against and killed; conspirators killed (2Chronicles 33:21-25)
- L. Josiah (2Chronicles 34-35; 2Kings 22-23)
1. Josiah king; faithful; removes high places and foreign gods in Judah and Israel (2Chronicles 34:1-7)
  2. Temple repaired; book of the Law found; read to the king; he mourns for the sins of his fathers (2Chronicles 34:8-21)
  3. Huldah the prophetess prophesies later disaster, but after Josiah; Josiah has book read to all the people, covenant renewed (2Chronicles 34:22-33)
  4. Passover kept; Levites placed in order; offerings sacrificed; kept entirely properly for first time since Samuel (2Chronicles 35:1-19)
  5. Josiah against Neco; dies; lamentation (2Chronicles 35:20-27)
- M. The Exile of Judah and Restoration (2Chronicles 36; 2Kings 24-25; Ezra 1)
1. Jehoahaz king; deposed by Neco (2Chronicles 36:1-4)
  2. Jehoiakim made king; unfaithful; Nebuchadnezzar takes him away (2Chronicles 36:5-8)
  3. Jehoiachin king; unfaithful; brought to Babylon (2Chronicles 36:9-10)
  4. Zedekiah king; unfaithful; does not heed Jeremiah; rebels (2Chronicles 36:11-14)
  5. God as patiently exhorting to faithfulness; message not heeded; thus Babylonians come, destroy Temple, Jerusalem, lead Judah into exile; land at rest (2Chronicles 36:15-21)
  6. Cyrus' proclamation for the return of exiles to Jerusalem (2Chronicles 36:22-23)

## VI. 2CHRONICLES: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. 2Chronicles 29:25
1. Music in Temple as commanded by God
  2. Instituted by David through Gad
  3. Thus, the command for instruments in Temple in old covenant
- B. Message of 2Chronicles
1. More details about Judah and its history

2. Contrasts between faithfulness and faithlessness
3. A more spiritual and positive message, overall
4. Emphasis on Temple, devotion to God
5. Solomon's unfaithfulness not mentioned
6. Story does not end with exile but with the return
7. There is a time for correction, and there is a time for encouragement

### **QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF SECOND CHRONICLES**

1. Who was Cyrus? Why was an important figure in the history of the Jews?
2. Solomon prayed for wisdom, and God granted it. What else did God give him that he did not ask for?
3. How many sacrifices were offered at the dedication of the Temple?
4. What caused the revolt in Israel during Rehoboam's reign?
5. List some of the reforms of King Asa.
6. What kind of king was Jehoshaphat? With what wicked king did he make an alliance?
7. List the faithful kings in Judah.
8. List the faithful kings in Israel.
9. List the reforms of King Josiah. Did his reforms prevent the fall of Judah?
10. What nation took Judah into captivity? What else did they do to the nation of Judah?
11. In whose reign did God authorize instrumental music in tabernacle/temple worship?
12. List a few significant matters omitted in 2Chronicles. With what event does 2Chronicles end?

## Ezra

### INTRODUCTION TO EZRA

GOD has promised through Jeremiah (25:12) that the Babylonian captivity would last only a time. In due time, He fulfilled his promise and inclined the heart of King Cyrus of Persia to make a decree through which he authorized the return of the exiles (1:1-4). He then provided leaders (Zerubbabel and Ezra) who were sent bearing a cargo that included things taken from the temple of Solomon (1:5-10).

The Book of Ezra belongs to the post-exilic period. These were the years just after a remnant of the nation returned to Jerusalem following their exile of about 50 years in Babylon. The return came about after the defeat of Babylon by the Persian Empire. Unlike the Babylonians, the Persians allowed their subject nations to live in their own native regions under the authority of a ruling governor. The Persians also practiced religious tolerance, allowing each nation to worship its own god. This explains the proclamation of Cyrus of Persia, which allowed the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple. Cyrus even returned the Temple treasures that the Babylonians took when they destroyed Jerusalem about 50 years earlier (1:7-11).

Many scholars believe the Jewish people in Babylon and Persia must have numbered at least two million. Yet only about 50,000 chose to return to Jerusalem with the first group under Zerubbabel (2:64-65). This indicates that most of them probably had become comfortable with their lives in these foreign lands. Or perhaps the certainties of their present existence were more appealing than the uncertainties of life in Jerusalem - a city which most of them had never seen.

### I. AUTHOR

It is evident that Ezra wrote the book that bears his name. As in the closely related books of First and Second Chronicles, one notes the prominence of various lists in Ezra and Nehemiah from official sources. Included are lists of:

- 1) The temple articles (Ezra 1:9-11),
- 2) The returned exiles (Ezra 2, which is virtually the same as Neh. 7:6-73),
- 3) The genealogy of Ezra (Ezra 7:1-5),
- 4) The heads of the clans (Ezra 8:1-14),
- 5) Those involved in mixed marriages (Ezra 10:18-43),
- 6) Those who helped rebuild the wall (Neh. 3),
- 7) Those who sealed the covenant (Neh. 10:1-27),
- 8) Residents of Jerusalem and other towns (Neh. 11:3-36),
- 9) Priests and Levites (Neh. 12:1-26).

Also included in Ezra are seven official documents or letters (all in Aramaic except the first, which is in Hebrew):

- 1) The decree of Cyrus (1:2-4),
- 2) The accusation of Rehum and others against the Jews (4:11-16),
- 3) The reply of Artaxerxes I (4:17-22),
- 4) The report from Tattenai (5:7-17),
- 5) The memorandum of Cyrus's decree (6:2-5),
- 6) Darius's reply to Tattenai (6:6-12),
- 7) The authorization given by Artaxerxes I to Ezra (7:12-26). These documents are similar to contemporary non-Biblical documents of the Persian period.

Certain materials in Ezra are first-person extracts from his memoirs: 7:27-28; 8:1-34; 9. Other sections are written in the third person: 7:1-26; 10. Linguistic analysis has

shown that the first-person and third-person extracts resemble each other, making it likely that the same author wrote both.

Most scholars conclude that the author of Ezra was also the author of The Chronicles. This is based on certain characteristics common to both Chronicles and Ezra. The verses at the end of Chronicles and at the beginning of Ezra are virtually identical. Both Chronicles and Ezra exhibit a fondness for lists, for the description of religious festivals and for such phrases as "heads of families" and "the house of God." Especially striking in these books is the prominence of Levites and temple personnel. The words for "singer," "gatekeeper" and "temple servants" are used almost exclusively in Ezra and Chronicles.

Ezra was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses (7:6), an expert in the law (7:11) and a priest (Ibid). He had diligently prepared himself to keep and to teach God's law (7:10). He was commissioned by King Artaxerxes I of Persia in 458 BC (7:8) to go from Babylon to Jerusalem to provide the finances to restore the worship of God in the Temple and to beautify the Temple (7: 11-24), to set up rulers over Palestine (7:25-26), and to teach the people the Law of Moses (7:25).

Although Nehemiah 1:1, "The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah," indicates that Ezra and Nehemiah were originally two separate compositions, they were combined as one very early. Josephus (A.D. 37-100) and the Jewish Talmud refer to the book of Ezra but not to a separate book of Nehemiah. The oldest manuscripts of the Septuagint (the pre-Christian Greek translation of the OT) also treat Ezra and Nehemiah as one book. However, the canon of Old Testament books now has Ezra and Nehemiah as two distinct books as originally written.

## II. DATE OF WRITING

Ezra may be dated to 440 B.C. Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the seventh year (Ezra 7:8) of Artaxerxes I (458 B.C.), followed by Nehemiah, who arrived in the king's 20th year (444; Neh. 2:1,11).

Ezra and Nehemiah were written in a form of late Hebrew with the exception of Ezra 4:8 - 6:18; 7:12-26, which were written in Aramaic, the language of international diplomacy during the Persian period. Of these 67 Aramaic verses, 52 are in records or letters.

## III. MESSAGE

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah both relate how God's remnant was restored from Babylonian exile to the covenant land as a community of God's people even while continuing under Gentile rule.

The restoration of Israel from exile was God's doing. He moved the hearts of Persian emperors; He moved the hearts of the remnant and those who supported them; He raised up prophets to prod and support them; He protected them on the way and delivered them from their opponents; He stirred up Ezra and Nehemiah to perform their separate ministries; He prospered the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem.

The restoration of the covenant community was complete, even though political independence was not attained. "All Israel" was repatriated through a representative remnant; the temple was rebuilt and its services (daily sacrifices, priestly ministries, Levitical praise, annual feasts) revived in accordance with the Law of Moses and the regulations instituted by David; the Law was reestablished as regulative for the life of the community; the "holy city" (Jerusalem) was rebuilt and inhabited; the people were purged; the covenant was renewed.

Just as God used the world powers to judge his people, so he used them to restore his people to their land; imperial action and authority directly and indirectly

initiated, protected and sustained every aspect of the restoration. Israel's restoration evoked fierce opposition, but that opposition was thwarted at every turn. The restored community was a chastened people, yet they were also in need of frequent rebuke and reformation. Israel remained a wayward people. They still awaited the "new covenant" of which Jeremiah had spoken (ch. 31) and the renewal to be effected by God's Spirit as announced by Joel (ch. 1) and Ezekiel (ch. 36).

#### **IV. CONTENTS**

The first six chapters tell of the rebuilding of the Temple under Zerubbabel. After Cyrus issued the decree for the Jews who were willing to return and rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem (1:1-4), a great contribution was made by the Jews and by Cyrus to accomplish this (1:5-11). Forty-two thousand three hundred sixty Jews returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the governor 2:1; 3:8-13). The Gentile populace of the land wanted to help, but Zerubbabel rejected them (4:1-3). They then opposed the work by discouraging the Jews and by hiring counselors to write the kings of Persia to try to get the work stopped (4:4-24). This opposition continued even after the time of Zerubbabel and into the reign of Artaxerxes I (465 - 425 B.C.) (4:6-7). They succeeded in temporarily halting the building of the Temple (4:23-24). But Haggai and Zechariah prophesied to the people, encouraging them to finish the Temple (5:1-2). Under Zerubbabel's leadership the Jews resumed the work (5:2), overcame opposition (5:3 - 6:13) and completed the Temple in 515 B.C. (6:14-15). The people joyfully worshiped God.

There is a sixty-seven year break between chapters six and seven. Chapter seven begins the story of the restoration of the Law under Ezra. Ezra came to Jerusalem from Babylon with a large number of Jews in 458 B.C. (chapters 7 - 8). He was dismayed to find the people, including many of the priests, had intermarried with the pagan inhabitants of the land, repeating the very mistake that began Israel's downfall under Solomon five centuries earlier (chapter 9). Under Ezra's leadership the people put away their foreign wives (chapter 10).

After more than sixty years of Babylonian captivity, GOD touches the heart of the governor of Babylon, King Cyrus of Persia, and he dictates a decree where he proclaims that the Jews who wish to may return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the city. A group of the faithful respond positively and leave in 538 B.C. under the direction of Zerubbabel. The reconstruction of the temple is begun, but the opposition of the non-Jewish inhabitants discourages the people, who halt the work. GOD then raises the prophetic ministries of Haggai and Zechariah, who call the people to complete the begun work. Although less splendid than the earlier temple of Solomon, the new temple is finished and dedicated in 515 B.C.

Around sixty years later (458 B.C.) another group of exiles return to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra (chapters 7-10). They are sent by the Persian king Artaxerxes with additional resources and objectives to develop the temple worship. Ezra is also commissioned to name leaders in Jerusalem to supervise public affairs.

Once in Jerusalem, Ezra assumes the role of religious reformer for about a year. After that, it appears that he continued living as an influential member of the community until the time of Nehemiah. As a devout priest, he finds an Israel that has adopted many pagan practices; he calls for repentance and renewed submission to the Law, to the point of ordering the Israelites to divorce their pagan wives.

#### **V. APPLICATION**

The messages of Ezra are a constant reminder of how the people of GOD can lose their heart and their ways. GOD was fulfilling his promises. In spite of that, the

people of the covenant easily forget their promises and the qualities that should characterize a "royal priesthood, holy nation, people acquired by GOD" (I Peter 2:9). When this happens, GOD's plans are delayed. The errors of the holy can't frustrate GOD's plans, but they can delay or oppose them. GOD is greater than us and has ways of overcoming our limitations. However, he wants us to be obedient so that his plans are fulfilled as they have been revealed.

Some Bible readers are bothered by Ezra's treatment of the pagan women whom the Jewish men had married (10:10-19). How could he be so cruel as to insist that these wives be "put away" (divorced) with no means of support? His actions must be understood in light of the drastic situation that faced the Jewish community in Jerusalem following the Exile. Only a small remnant of the Covenant People had returned, and it was important for them to keep themselves from pagan idolatry and foreign cultural influences at all costs. Ezra must have realized, too, that this was one of the problems which had led to their downfall and captivity as a people in the first place. Yet even the horrors of defeat and exile by the Babylonians had failed to teach the people a lesson. He was determined to stamp out the problem this time before it became a widespread practice among GOD's Covenant People.

## **VI. EZRA: BACKGROUND**

### A. Setting

1. How the Jews fared after the exile and the return
2. Rebuilding of Temple; restoration issues of Ezra's day (foreign marriages)

### B. Authorship

1. Ezra certainly responsible for part or whole of the book
2. In ancient times, Ezra and Nehemiah were considered one book

### C. Date of Writing

1. Ezra covers two periods of time
2. Return to Judah, rebuilding of Jerusalem and Temple (ca. 539-516 BC)
3. Ezra's move to Judah, issues of that day (ca. 458-457 BC)
4. Composition not long after these events

### D. Recipients

1. The audience represents the returned exiles in the Persian period
2. Important for all generations of God's people - Rom. 15:4

### D. Purpose for Writing

1. To encourage the Jews of Judah in their faith
2. To describe the rebuilding of the Temple
3. To describe Ezra's role in the instruction of the people

## **VII. EZRA: OUTLINE**

### A. Main Sections

1. Return and Rebuilding (Ezra 1-6)
2. Ezra and the People (Ezra 7-10)

### B. The Return (Ezra 1-2)

1. Cyrus' proclamation for Jews to return, rebuild Temple (Ezra 1:1-4)
2. Jews rise up to return, given all kinds of resources (Ezra 1:5-11)
3. Return of people; genealogy and number of those returning (Ezra 2)

### C. Rebuilding and Complications (Ezra 3-6)

1. People gather in Jerusalem, rebuild altar (Ezra 3:1-3)
2. Feast of Booths celebrated; preparations begin to rebuild Temple (Ezra 3:4-7)

3. Temple rebuilding begins (Ezra 3:8-9)
  4. Priests, Levites praise God according to directions of David; people shout; those who remember first Temple mourn (Ezra 3:10-13)
  5. Samaritan "adversaries" seek to help build Temple; assistance refused; sought ways to hinder them (Ezra 4:1-5)
  6. Letter from Samaritans to Cambyses: danger of Jews in Jerusalem if Temple rebuilt (Ezra 4:9-16)
  7. Letter of Cambyses: Temple building to cease; Jews stop for a time (Ezra 4:17-24)
  8. Haggai and Zechariah prophesy; Jews begin rebuilding Temple; governor seeks insight as to what to do from Darius (Ezra 5:1-5)
  9. Letter of Tattenai to Darius: explanation of situation, Jews say that Cyrus decreed that Temple should be rebuilt; search to see if it is so (Ezra 5:6-17)
  10. Cyrus' proclamation found in Ecbatana; proclamation restated (Ezra 6:1-5)
  11. Letter of Darius: Temple to be rebuilt, resources from royal treasury (Ezra 6:6-12)
  12. Temple then completed, dedicated; many offerings (Ezra 6:13-18)
  13. Passover observed (Ezra 6:19-22)
- D. Ezra to Judah (Ezra 7-8)
1. In days of Artaxerxes, Ezra the scribe and priest goes up to Jerusalem with Jews (Ezra 7:1-10)
  2. Letter of Artaxerxes commending Ezra, material that he was given, material he should be given; Ezra to teach laws of God (Ezra 7:11-26)
  3. Blessing of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:27-28)
  4. Genealogy of those returning with Ezra (Ezra 8:1-14)
  5. Ezra sends for Levites who come with him (Ezra 8:15-20)
  6. Ezra seeks protection of God during journey (Ezra 8:21-23)
  7. Priests guard offerings; journey successful; offerings presented (Ezra 8:24-36)
- E. Intermarriage (Ezra 9-10)
1. Officials tell Ezra that people have intermarried with local foreign nations; Ezra laments and mourns (Ezra 9:1-5)
  2. Ezra prays for the guilt of Israel (Ezra 9:6-15)
  3. While he prays, people gather and confess their sin, intend to cast off foreign wives and children (Ezra 10:1-4)
  4. Ezra has leading men swear an oath to do so; fasts and mourns; proclamation of assembly to meet in Jerusalem (Ezra 10:5-8)
  5. Ezra tells the assembly of their sin; they agree to cast off their foreign wives and children (Ezra 10:9-17)
  6. Listing of those guilty of the sin (Ezra 10:18-44)

### **QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF EZRA**

1. What foreign king released Judah from captivity? What was his nationality?
2. How long did the captivity last? Did Judah know its duration in advance? How?

3. Who led the first group of Jews to return to Jerusalem? How many were in that group?
4. Do all of the Jews return to Jerusalem? Why or why not?
5. Who were the Samaritans? What was their national origin?
6. Which prophets encouraged Judah to rebuild the temple?
7. How many years passed before the second group of Jews returned to Jerusalem? Who led them? How many came with him?
8. What activity of the Jews moved Ezra to pull out his hair?
9. List the two major moral issues in the book of Ezra.
10. Why did the Samaritans want work on the temple to cease?

# Nehemiah

## I. AUTHOR

The book of Nehemiah is named for its author and chief character (1:1). Nehemiah was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes I of Persia (1:11; 2:1), who appointed him governor of Judah for twelve years, from 445 to 433 B.C. (5:14) and then allowed him to return as governor again (13:6-7). Nehemiah loved his people the Jews deeply (1:1-4) and was a man of prayer (1:4-5; 2:4), courage (4:7-20; 6:10-14), tireless energy in working for the Lord (4:21-23), extraordinary zeal for the Law of God (5:1-13; 13:4-31) and generosity (5:14-19). Above all, he was a man of deep faith (1:5; 2:20).

## II. DATE OF WRITING

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Book of Nehemiah appeared along with Ezra. The history that is narrated here begins in the book of Ezra and is completed in Nehemiah. This man, who twice served as governor of Judea, came from Persia for his first mission in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I, who reigned from 465 to 424 B.C. (2:1). He returned to Persian during the 32nd year of that king (13:6) and, "after certain days", went to Jerusalem again.

The content of the book indicates that the work couldn't have been written until sometime after Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem from Persia. Perhaps its definitive writing took place before the death of Artaxerxes I, in the year 424 B.C., as the death of the monarch was not mentioned in Nehemiah.

The historical period covered by the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is approximately 110 years. The reconstruction of the temple under Zerubbabel, inspired by the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, lasted 21 years. Sixty years later, Ezra brought revival and a necessary message about the temple worship. Thirty years later, Nehemiah came to rebuild the walls. Malachi may have also prophesied during this time. If so, Nehemiah and Malachi worked together to eradicate polytheistic worship, and attacked the Israelites' promiscuity with the other peoples established in Judah forcefully by the Assyrians 200 years earlier. They were so successful in their endeavor that, during the intertestamental period, GOD's people didn't relapse into idolatry. Thus, when the Messiah came, people like Zachariah, Elisabeth, Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna, shepherds and others, were devout people with whom GOD could communicate.

## III. CONTENTS

Nehemiah was serving King Artaxerxes in Shushan (Susa) the capital of Persia in 445 B.C. when word came to him of the desperate straits of the Jews in Judah (1:1-3). Nehemiah wept, mourned and prayed to God about this problem (1:4-11). King Artaxerxes granted his request to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the city (2:1-8). He was immediately opposed by the Gentiles in Palestine, led by Sanbalat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab (2:10,19). After secretly surveying the situation at night (2:11-16), Nehemiah revealed his plans to the leaders of the people (2:16-20). The people were willing to work (2:18) and rebuilt the wall and gates of the city in an astonishing fifty-two days! (chapter 3:6,15) In doing so they overcame the opposition of their enemies manifested in mockery (4:1-6), threats (4:7-23), offers of compromise (6:1-4), and lies (6:5-14). They also had to overcome the sins of their nobles (chapter 5), some of whom did not join in the work (3:5). The people accomplished this great task because God was with them (2:20) and they worked willingly (4:6). The Jews were then able to dwell safely in Jerusalem and in their cities around Palestine (chapter 7).

When this great work was completed, Ezra read and expounded the Law to the people (8:1-8). A great holy day was proclaimed (8:9-12), and the festival of booths was celebrated in a manner unknown since the days of Joshua (8:13-18). Israel separated themselves from foreigners and confessed their sins to God (chapter 9). Ezra led the people in renewing the covenant with the Lord and in supporting the priests and Levites (chapter 10). The leaders of the people and another tenth of the people were selected to dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city (chapter 11). The wall was dedicated with joy, and the Levites and priests received their portions (chapter 12). Israel separated themselves from the Gentiles (13:1-3). Finally, Nehemiah, upon his return from Shushan, separated all Gentiles from the Temple (13:4-10), insured that the priests and Levites would be supported (13:10-14), restored the Sabbath (13:15-22) and forbade the people to marry the pagans of the land (13:23-31).

#### **IV. APPLICATION**

Four important principles are derived from Nehemiah.

- 1) Obedience to GOD's will is often born from compassion.
- 2) Cooperation with others is required to accomplish GOD's will.
- 3) Trust is a fruit of fervent prayer and the proclamation of the Word of GOD, in which his will is revealed.
- 4) Courage should manifest itself as tenacity that refuses all compromise in regards to GOD's will.

#### **V. NEHEMIAH: BACKGROUND**

##### A. Setting

1. Sad conditions for Israel
2. Nehemiah stands firm
3. Description of building of wall, covenant faithfulness

##### B. Authorship

1. Book written by Nehemiah; mostly in first person
2. In ancient times, Ezra and Nehemiah were considered one book

##### C. Date of Writing

1. Book covers Nehemiah's activities between 445-432 BC
2. Composition not long after these events

##### D. Recipients

1. The audience represents the returned exiles in the Persian period
2. Important for all generations of God's people - Rom. 15:4

##### E. Purpose for Writing

1. To describe the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls
2. To set outline Nehemiah's leadership
3. A plea for faithfulness and trust in God

#### **VI. NEHEMIAH: OUTLINE**

##### A. Main Sections

1. The Walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1-6)
2. Renewal of covenant and reform (Nehemiah 7-13)

##### B. Nehemiah and the wall (Nehemiah 1-2)

1. Nehemiah in Susa; informed of the wall being broken down (Nehemiah 1:1-3)
2. Fast and prayer; confession of sin; desire to receive mercy; Nehemiah as king's cupbearer (Nehemiah 1:4-11)

3. King asks Nehemiah about his sadness; Nehemiah informs him, prays, granted ability to return to repair walls (Nehemiah 2:1-8)
  4. Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem; displeasure of Sanballat and Tobiah; Nehemiah inspects situation; tells Israelites that it is time to build (Nehemiah 2:9-18)
  5. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem presume insurrection; Nehemiah trusts in God (Nehemiah 2:19-20)
- C. Rebuilding and Opposition (Nehemiah 3-4)
1. Builders, building of Sheep Gate, Fish Gate, Gate of Yeshanah, Valley Gate, Dung Gate, walls near said gates (Nehemiah 3:1-14)
  2. Builders, building of Fountain Gate and its environs; priests rebuild Horse Gate region (Nehemiah 3:15-32)
  3. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem mock the Jews; Nehemiah's imprecatory prayer (Nehemiah 4:1-5)
  4. Wall half its height; Sanballat threatens war; Nehemiah stations people for battle (Nehemiah 4:6-14)
  5. When plans made known, Sanballat withdraws; half of people worked on wall, other half carried spears; work continues day and night (Nehemiah 4:15-23)
- D. Ending Oppression, Showing Generosity (Nehemiah 5)
1. People cry out: taxation is high, famine in land, richer Jews enslaving poorer Jews (Nehemiah 5:1-5)
  2. Nehemiah confronts officials and nobles regarding their usury; they agree to give up possession of fields, etc., without charge (Nehemiah 5:6-13)
  3. Nehemiah as governor in Judah, did not eat food allowance, did not oppress people (Nehemiah 5:14-19)
- E. Conspiracy and Completion (Nehemiah 6:1-7:4)
1. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem seek to meet with Nehemiah to kill him; he refuses four times (Nehemiah 6:1-4)
  2. At fifth time, Sanballat sends accusation of intent to rebel; Nehemiah stands firm against the claim (Nehemiah 6:5-9)
  3. Nehemiah advised to seek shelter in Temple on account of them, but such really is conspiracy against him; he refuses, keeps working; some prophets seek to make him afraid (Nehemiah 6:10-14)
  4. Wall completed; fear of nations; Tobiah as connected to nobles of Judah by marriage, attempts to discourage Nehemiah (Neh. 6:15-19)
  5. Appointment of proper officials; Nehemiah gives Hanani and Hananiah charge over Jerusalem and its gates; few houses in city (Neh. 7:1-4)
- F. Genealogy of Returned Exiles; servants in Temple; some unable to demonstrate membership in Israel, told to wait until priest with Urim and Thummim would arise; numbers and gifts (Nehemiah 7:5-73)
- G. The Law Read (Nehemiah 8)
1. People gather; Ezra brings book of Law, reads it with understanding (Nehemiah 8:1-8)
  2. People grieved; told to be encouraged and rejoice (Nehemiah 8:9-12)
  3. Feast of Booths celebrated (Nehemiah 8:13-18)
- H. Confession, Renewal of Covenant (Nehemiah 9-10)
1. Confession of sin before God (Nehemiah 9:1-5)

2. History of God and Israel: creation, Egypt, exodus, conquest, kings; unfaithfulness of Israel; confession of wrongdoings and difficulties (Nehemiah 9:6-37)
3. Covenant sealed (Nehemiah 9:38)
4. People who sealed the covenant (Nehemiah 10:1-27)
5. Obligations in covenant: observance of Law, Temple tax, wood, firstfruits, other offerings, maintenance of Temple (Nehemiah 10:28-39)
- I. Persons (Nehemiah 11-12)
  1. People in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 11:1-23)
  2. Villages where Jews lived (Nehemiah 11:24-36)
  3. Priests & Levites who came in days of Zerubbabel (Nehemiah 12:1-11)
  4. Later priests and Levites (Nehemiah 12:12-26)
  5. Wall dedicated (Nehemiah 12:27-30)
  6. Choirs giving thanks, those involved in them (Nehemiah 12:31-43)
  7. Men appointed over various Temple tasks, singers and gatekeepers (Nehemiah 12:44-47)
- J. Final Reforms (Nehemiah 13)
  1. Ammonites and Moabites not to enter Temple, based in the Law; separation of foreigners from Israelites (Nehemiah 13:1-3)
  2. Tobiah as having chamber in Temple; Levites not receiving their due; work on the Sabbath; Jews intermarrying with foreigners; Nehemiah works to correct all of these abuses and difficulties (Nehemiah 13:4-31)

## **VII. NEHEMIAH: IMPORTANT PASSAGES**

- A. Nehemiah 2:1-4
  1. Nehemiah tells king of difficulty and prays in middle of discussion
- B. Nehemiah 8:8
  1. Law read before the people; not just read, but interpreted for sense
- C. Nehemiah 13:24
  1. Language of Ashdod; speaking a religiously foreign language, not knowing the speech of Bible principles
- D. Message of Nehemiah: a man of faith and courage
  1. Stand up to enemies of God
  2. Encourage Israel despite dark days
  3. Stand firm for God's laws
  4. Jerusalem and Jews benefit from his leadership

## **QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH**

1. What was Nehemiah's original job? What did the king notice about his appearance? What did Nehemiah ask of the king?
2. List the three opponents of the work at Jerusalem? Were they successful in their efforts to stop the work? Why or why not?
3. What measures did the workers take to ensure the work continued? What quote from the book of Nehemiah describes the attitude of the people of Judah toward the work?
4. List a few of the moral problems Judah faced in the book of Nehemiah?
5. What did the people do during the reading of the Law? How did they react to it?

# Esther

## INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER

The message of Esther is Divine Providence. The book relates a series of events that would seem at first hardly if at all related, but the strands of the story are woven together by God in His unseen providential care for His people throughout the world and in the humblest of conditions into a beautiful pattern of divine salvation. Esther shows that God cares for His people wherever they are, not just in Palestine.

It receives its title from the Persian name of its chief character, Esther, meaning "star." Her Hebrew name was Hadassah (2:7), "myrtle." Esther was a Jewish girl of the Dispersion (Jews outside Canaan) in Persia, raised by her cousin Mordecai as his adopted daughter (2:7), whom she obeyed as a father even after she was queen of Persia (2:20), the greatest kingdom of the world in her day and the largest empire the Middle East had known to that time (1:1). Esther was the most beautiful young virgin in all the vast kingdom (2:17; She won the "Miss Persia Contest"!); yet her loveliness of character surpassed her beauty of face and figure.

Mordecai, her guardian, lived in Shushan (Susa), the winter capital of Persia, as one of the Jews of the tribe of Benjamin in the Dispersion (2:5-6).

The book of Esther is remarkable for several reasons. It is the only book of the Bible in which God is never mentioned, yet every line relates the story of His providential care for His people (Jer. 30: 11; 46:28). The book does not record a single miracle, yet the hand of God is behind every event. Prayer is not mentioned directly even once, but the book chronicles the answer to millions of fervent prayers. The Word of God is unmentioned, yet Mordecai was a stricter observer of that Word (3:1-4; Deut. 6:13-15). The book records the deliverance of the Jews from the greatest danger the seed of Jacob ever faced. Had evil Haman been successful in his wicked plot, every Jew upon the face of the earth would have been killed (1:1; 3:8-14). Christ would not have come of the lineage of David. The heroine who effected this great deliverance was a young orphan girl, far from her homeland, raised by her cousin. Girls, here is a real role model.

## I. AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

Although we do not know who wrote the book of Esther, from internal evidence it is possible to make some inferences about the author and the date of composition. It is clear that the author was a Jew, both from his emphasis on the origin of a Jewish festival and from the Jewish nationalism that permeates the story. The author's knowledge of Persian customs, the setting of the story in the city of Susa and the absence of any reference to conditions or circumstances in the land of Judah suggest that he was an exile resident of a Persian city. The earliest date for the book would be shortly after the events narrated, 460 BC (before Ezra's return to Jerusalem - 8:12). Internal evidence also suggests that the festival of Purim had been observed for some time prior to the actual writing of the book (9:19) and that Xerxes had already died (10:2). The absence of Greek words and the style of the author's Hebrew dialect suggest that the book must have been written before the Persian empire fell to Greece in 331.

## II. PURPOSE FOR WRITING

The author's central purpose was to record the institution of the annual festival of Purim and to keep alive for later generations the memory of the great deliverance of the Jewish people during the reign of Xerxes. The book accounts for both the initiation of that observance and the obligation for its perpetual commemoration (3:7; 9:26-32).

Throughout much of the story the author calls to mind the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Amalekites (notes on 2:5; 3:1-6; 9:5-10), a conflict that began during the exodus (Ex. 17:8-16; Deut. 25:17-19) and continued through Israel's history (1Sam. 15; 1Ch. 4:43; and Esther). As the first to attack Israel after their deliverance from Egypt, the Amalekites were viewed as the epitome of all the powers of the world arrayed against God's people (Num. 24:20; 1Sam. 15:2-3; 28:18). Now that Israel has been released from captivity, Haman's edict is the final major effort in the OT period to destroy them.

Closely associated with the conflict with the Amalekites is the rest that is promised to the people of God (Deut. 25:19). With Haman's defeat the Jews enjoy rest from their enemies (9:16,22).

The author also draws upon the remnant motif that recurs throughout the Bible (natural disasters, disease, warfare or other calamities threaten God's people; those who survive constitute a remnant). Events in the Persian city of Susa threatened the continuity of God's purposes in redemptive history. The future existence of God's chosen people, and ultimately the appearance of the Redeemer-Messiah, appeared to be jeopardized by Haman's edict to destroy the Jews. The author of Esther patterned much of his material on the events of the Joseph account (2:3-4,9,21-23; 3:4; 4:14; 6:1,8,14; 8:6), in which the remnant motif is also central (Gen. 45:7).

Feasting is another prominent theme in Esther, as shown in the outline below. Banquets provide the setting for important plot developments. There are ten banquets: (1) 1:3-4, (2) 1:5-8, (3) 1:9, (4) 2:18, (5) 3:15, (6) 5:5-6, (7) 7:1-10, (8) 8:17, (9) 9:17, (10) 9:18. The three pairs of banquets that mark the beginning, middle and end of the story are particularly prominent: the two banquets given by Xerxes, the two prepared by Esther and the double celebration of Purim.

Recording duplications appears to be one of the favorite compositional techniques of the writer. In addition to the three groups of banquets that come in pairs there are two lists of the king's servants (1:10,14), two reports that Esther concealed her identity (2:10,20), two gatherings of women (2:8,19), two fasts (4:3,16), two consultations of Haman with his wife and friends (5:14; 6:13), two unscheduled appearances of Esther before the king (5:2; 8:3), two investitures for Mordecai (6:10-11; 8:15), two coverings of Haman's face (6:12; 7:8), two royal edicts (3:12-15; 8:1-14), two references to the subsiding of the king's anger (2:1; 7:10), two references to the irrevocability of the Persian laws (1:19; 8:8), two days for the Jews to take vengeance (9:5-12,13-15) and two letters instituting the commemoration of Purim (9:20-28,29-32).

An outstanding feature of this book, one that has given rise to considerable discussion, is the complete absence of any explicit reference to God, worship, prayer, or sacrifice. This has produced many detractors who have judged the book to be of little religious value. However, it appears that the author has deliberately refrained from mentioning God or any religious activity as a literary device to heighten the fact that it is God who controls and directs all the seemingly insignificant coincidences (6:1) that make up the plot and issue in deliverance for the Jews. God's sovereign rule is assumed at every point (4:12-16). It becomes clear to the careful reader that Israel's Great King exercises his providential and sovereign control over all the vicissitudes of his beleaguered covenant people.

### III. LESSONS

Esther contains great lessons. Haman put his trust in mindless fate, luck ("Lady Luck"), the casting of lots (pur) (3:7; 9:24). This backfired on him (7:9-10; 9:25). "Hanged on Haman's gallows" has become a maxim for an evil plot that turns to the destruction of

its deviser. In reality, every wicked scheme eventually backfires on its designer, either here or hereafter.

Mordecai placed his faith in divine providence (4:13-14) and was victorious (10:3). While trusting God's care, Mordecai would not venture to affirm what specific events that providence would bring about (4:13-14).

Esther was an orphan girl of a powerless, despised, racial and ethnic minority. But, in the providence of God, she became queen. Because she had the courage to do her duty even though it meant she might die, she delivered God's people from certain destruction.

God has a plan for the life of everyone, a plan that we accomplish by using the abilities He gives us to obey His revealed will, the Scriptures, in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. Doubtless Esther never dared imagine that she would be the queen of the mightiest empire the world had ever seen and would deliver her beloved people from destruction, but her responsibility was to do her duty in the situation where she was found with the abilities God had given her. If we refuse to do our duty, God's plan will still be accomplished, but we will be destroyed.

God used each person of the book and each event of the story to accomplish His will, yet each person exercised free will and was responsible for his own conduct.

Although God was in control throughout, not a single circumstance or incident was miraculous.

God, not fate, directs the world and its affairs. His rule, His providence, is for the care of His people.

#### **IV. ESTHER: BACKGROUND**

##### A. Setting: Jews in Exile

1. Dire challenges for Judah; Jews consigned to death
2. Esther has the opportunity to save her people

##### B. Authorship

1. Author unknown
2. Book sometimes questioned as inspired since it does not have the name of God within it, no NT attestation
3. Nevertheless, hand of God present throughout the book
4. Greek Septuagint includes additions to Esther, parts of book not found in Hebrew manuscripts, rather redundant, not considered inspired

##### C. Date of Writing

1. Book covers events in times of Xerxes king of Persia (ca. 485 BC)
2. Book written sometime after events

##### D. Recipients

1. The audience represents the returned exiles in the Persian period
2. Important for all generations of God's people - Rom. 15:4

##### E. Purpose of Writing

1. To describe Israel's deliverance from Haman's plot
2. To explain the origins of the feast of Purim
3. To exhibit the example of Esther

#### **V. ESTHER: OUTLINE**

##### A. Main Sections

1. Esther's Ascension (Esther 1-2)
2. Haman's Plot (Esther 3-7)
3. Vindication (Esther 8-10)

##### B. Xerxes and Vashti (Esther 1)

1. Xerxes (Ahasuerus) has great feast in Susa; opulent (Esther 1:1-8)
  2. Queen Vashti also has feast; Xerxes summons her; she does not come (Esther 1:9-12)
  3. Wise men advise Xerxes to depose her lest husbands be held in contempt by wives throughout the empire; done (Esther 1:13-22)
- C. Esther and Mordecai (Esther 2)
1. Xerxes seeks virgins to find next queen (Esther 2:1-4)
  2. Mordecai, relative of King Saul through Shimei (2Samuel 16, 19), has raised niece Hadassah (Esther); very fair (Esther 2:5-7)
  3. Mordecai gets Esther in as one of the virgins; Esther pleasant to chief eunuch, given place of prominence; her Jewish identity not known (Esther 2:8-11)
  4. After year of preparation, Esther gets her chance; Xerxes loves Esther, makes her chief queen in Vashti's place (Esther 2:12-20)
  5. Mordecai in gate; hears of plot of eunuchs against Xerxes; Esther tells Xerxes in Mordecai's name; written in annals of king (Esther 2:21-23)
- D. Haman and His Plot (Esther 3)
1. Haman the Agagite elevated in kingdom; Mordecai refuses to bow to him; greatly angers Haman (Esther 3:1-5)
  2. Haman conspires to wipe Jews out of empire; convinces Xerxes to go along with it; decreed (Esther 3:6-13)
  3. All things in place (Esther 3:14-15)
- E. Esther's Test of Faith (Esther 4-5)
1. Mordecai mourns; Esther hears of it, communicates with him via Hathach her eunuch; given copy of decree, instructions (Esther 4:1-9)
  2. Esther concerned; not called to see the king; to enter king's presence without summons means death unless he spares her (Esther 4:10-12)
  3. Mordecai encourages Esther to take the risk for her own life and the life of the Jews; all this communication through Hathach (Esther 4:13-14)
  4. Esther tells Mordecai to have Jews fast on her behalf and she will go in three days (Esther 4:15-17)
  5. Esther before Xerxes; he lifts scepter toward her, pardoning her; she requests Xerxes and Haman to come to a feast (Esther 5:1-4)
  6. Haman, Xerxes come to feast; she requests that they come back the next day for another feast (Esther 5:5-8)
  7. Haman exultant at his fortune, despite seeing Mordecai; describes to his wife all the things the king has given him and the feast he enjoyed; soul vexed by Mordecai; commissions gallows to be erected to hang Mordecai (Esther 5:9-14)
- F. Haman Undone (Esther 6-7)
1. King unable to sleep; has records read to him; account of Mordecai and the uncovering of the plot read (Esther 6:1-2)
  2. Xerxes wants to know if anything has been done; told no; Haman enters at this time (Esther 6:3-4)
  3. Xerxes asks Haman what should be given to the one in whom the king delights; thinking it refers to himself, he talks about all these grandiose honors; Xerxes tells him to bestow them on Mordecai (Esther 6:5-11)
  4. Haman and wife recognize his situation; Haman goes to Esther's banquet (Esther 6:12-14)
  5. Feast; Xerxes again asks what Esther wants; she reveals her people are to be killed; he wants to know how this happened (Esther 7:1-5)

6. Esther identifies Haman; Xerxes in anger goes to garden; Haman pleads for life; Xerxes thinks he is assaulting queen, Haman is seized (Esther 7:6-8)
  7. Xerxes informed of gallows Haman made for Mordecai; commands Haman to be hung on it (Esther 7:9-10)
- G. Vindication (Esther 8-10)
1. Mordecai given Haman's place, honor; Esther again speaks to king to reverse Haman's decree (Esther 8:1-6)
  2. Authority granted to Mordecai and Esther to have new decree written up; new one written giving Jews authority to kill enemies; dispatched quickly by king's horses and horsemen (Esther 8:7-12)
  3. Jews rejoice, have feast and holiday; Mordecai in royal robes (Esther 8:13-17)
  4. On appointed day, Jews obtain vengeance on enemies, assisted by royal officials fearing Mordecai; 500 killed in Susa, and 10 sons of Haman (Esther 9:1-12)
  5. Xerxes has edict of second day of vengeance; sons of Haman hung; 300 more killed in Susa; 75,000 in the provinces (Esther 9:13-16)
  6. 14th day of the month of Adar set aside for feasting; Mordecai and Esther make it a perpetual holiday to commemorate the defeat of Haman and God's deliverance; called Purim (Esther 9:17-32)
  8. Mordecai in the court, next to Xerxes; took care of Jews and their interests (Esther 10:1-3)

## VI. ESTHER: IMPORTANT PASSAGES

- A. Esther 1:13-17
1. Customs may seem odd, but it is a demonstration of need for respect of wives for husbands
- B. Esther 4:11
1. Nature of coming before a superior, follow his rules, or else
  2. Same with the King of Kings?
- C. Esther 4:14
1. Mordecai suggests to Esther that Providence hand has placed her where she is so that she can deliver Israel
  2. Encouragement to us: even without direct words from God, we perhaps are placed in circumstances where we can present God's truths by His providential care

## QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF ESTHER

1. Who was king in Persia in the book of Esther? What was the name of the queen?
2. What order of the king did the queen refuse? What happened to her?
3. What Jewish woman became queen in Persia after this? What was her uncle's name?
4. Who was second in command after the king in Persia? What decree did he purchase from the king for 10,000 talents of silver? Why did he want to do this?
5. List the evil schemes Mordecai discovered.

6. Was Esther eager to go to the king on behalf of her people? What did Mordecai say?
7. What did Esther do to arrange exposure of Haman and his plot?
8. How did the king correct the matter of the decree against the Jews purchased by Haman? What happened to Haman? How many of Haman's co-conspirators perished?
9. What annual feast of the Jews commemorates these events?
10. Whose name is conspicuously absent from the book of Esther? Does that have any impact on its authenticity and inspiration?
11. Esther contains the longest verse in the Bible. List the reference.
12. What important principles can be learned from the book of Esther?