

The Scriptures Summarized / Book 11 – I Kings

The Greek Septuagint divided the Hebrew book known as Melakim (Kings) into two separate volumes. They considered it Kingdoms III & IV indicating that book does continue what began in Samuel's historical narratives of David's throne.

The author is unknown but in order to make this compilation, he must have had: 1) access to and understanding of the book of Deuteronomy; 2) access to the official records of Solomon, as well as the annals of the kings of Judah and Israel. (11:41; 14:19 & 29) This might indicate that this was written to provide a royal record for the exiles in Babylon to maintain their national history.

The key development within the book is the tribal revolt of the 10 northern tribes (Israel) against the 2 southern tribes (Judah). This rebellion took place after the construction of a glorious Temple and royal palace during the reign of David's son Solomon. However, the projects were expensive and exhausting.

Solomon was known for his wealth and wisdom. Solomon, however, was unfaithful to the Lord. Foreign wives seduced him into pagan idol worship. David's grandson, Rehoboam, consequently, proved to be unwise. He chose to follow the harsh and poor advice of his immature friends over the wise counsel of his father's seasoned veterans. This led to the fulfillment of this prediction made to Jeroboam.

I Kings 11:34 But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon's hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who obeyed my commands and decrees. 35 I will take the kingdom from his son's hands and give you ten tribes. 36 I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name.

1. Solomon ruled poorly all of but Israel and Judah for 40 years.
2. Rehoboam ruled Israel for only 3 days and Judah for 17 years.
3. Jeroboam ruled Israel poorly for 22 years.
4. Abijah ruled Judah poorly for 3 years
5. Asa ruled Judah well for 41 years
6. Nadab ruled Israel poorly for 2 years.
7. Baasha ruled Israel poorly for 24 years.
8. Elah ruled Israel poorly for 2 years.
9. Zimri ruled Israel poorly for 7 days.
10. Omri ruled Israel poorly for 12 years.
11. Ahab ruled Israel poorly for 22 years.
12. Jehoshaphat ruled Judah well for 25 years.

The book evaluates these administrations on the behavior of these kings as compared to David. (I Kings 15:5)

I Kings 11:6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

I Kings 15:11 Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as his father David had done.

Prophets become increasingly more significant in this era as God warned these sister nations about the sin of idol worship. (I Kings 15:34) Elijah is most prominent within this book and becomes symbolic of the office. His challenge and confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel was a monumental time of spiritual victory and national revival. Elijah is held up as a model of fervent prayer. (James 5:17-18)