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## Article 11: First Kings at a Glance

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## FIRST KINGS AT A GLANCE

This book begins with the death of David, records the 40-year reign of Solomon, his building of the first temple, the splendor of his kingdom, his moral failure and death, followed by Israel's tragic civil war, the appearance of Elijah, the call of Elisha, and concludes with the death of Ahab, an especially wicked northern Israelite king.

### **BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION**

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS! THE BUILDING OF ISRAEL'S FIRST TEMPLE IS THE GOOD NEWS. THE BREAKUP OF ISRAEL'S TWELVE TRIBES IS THE BAD NEWS!

Concerning the good news: The overseer of this first temple was the world's wisest man (chapter 3) and one of the richest men who ever lived (chapters 4, 10). Solomon's reign was the high water mark of Israel's kingdom in the Old Testament. He controlled more than 60,000 square miles, some ten times the size of David's dominion. The three Old Testament books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon were written during this time. This temple, begun in 968 B.C., lasted nearly four centuries. It was destroyed by Babylonian monarch Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

Concerning the bad news: Solomon's love for wealth, women, pomp, and power had seriously weakened the fragile unity among the twelve tribes. Upon Solomon's death, the northern ten split from the southern two in a tragic civil war.

### **FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK**

1. Who? **Jeremiah.** He was known as the weeping prophet (Jer. 4:19; 9:1, 2, 10; 13:17; 14:17) and authored the longest book in the Bible (apart from the Psalms), the book of Jeremiah.
2. What? The books of 1 and 2 Kings, Lamentations, Jeremiah.
3. When and where?
  - a. 1 Kings: 600 B.C., from Jerusalem
  - b. 2 Kings: 600 B.C., from Jerusalem
  - c. Lamentations: 586 B.C., from Jerusalem
  - d. Jeremiah: 580 B.C., from Egypt
4. Why?
  - a. **1 Kings:** A record of Israel's kings from Solomon to Ahaziah, son of Ahab
  - b. **2 Kings:** A record of Israel's kings from Ahaziah to Zedekiah
  - c. **Lamentations:** A funeral chant over the doomed city of Jerusalem
  - d. **Jeremiah:** Events just prior to and following the destruction of Jerusalem
5. To whom?
  - a. 1 & 2 Kings written to both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel
  - b. Lamentations and Jeremiah written to the southern kingdom

## KEY EVENTS

1. The death of David and beginning of Solomon's reign
2. Solomon receives his supernatural gift of wisdom
3. Dedication of the first temple
4. Solomon's visit by Queen of Sheba, and the splendor of his reign
5. The disobedience and death of Solomon
6. Israel's civil war, beginning of Jeroboam's wicked reign (12-14)
7. Samaria becomes the new capital of the northern 10 tribes
8. Beginning of Elijah's ministry as he raises a boy from the dead
9. Elijah defeats his enemies on Mt. Carmel
10. God speaks to a discouraged Elijah on Mt. Horeb followed by the call to Elisha
11. Ahab and Jezebel's deaths predicted by Elijah for murdering Naboth

## KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **David:** Israel's greatest king, who reigned for forty years
2. **Solomon:** David's successor and Israel's third king
3. **Adonijah:** Older half-brother who organized an unsuccessful plot to steal the throne from Solomon
4. **Joab:** David's former military commander who joined in the plot to overthrow Solomon
5. **Abiathar:** co-high priest who joined the plot to overthrow Solomon
6. **Zadok:** co-high priest who remained faithful to Solomon during Adonijah's plot
7. **Nathan:** prophet who remained faithful to Solomon during Adonijah's plot
8. **Bathsheba:** David's wife who helped her son Solomon secure the throne during Adonijah's plot
9. **Queen of Sheba:** monarch who visited Solomon and testified regarding his wealth, power, and wisdom
10. **Jeroboam:** first ruler of the northern ten tribes following the division of Israel at Shechem
11. **Rehoboam:** son of Solomon and first ruler of the southern kingdom following the division of the tribes at Shechem
12. **Asa:** third ruler of the southern kingdom and first righteous king
13. **Jehoshaphat:** fourth ruler of the southern kingdom who instituted a national religious education program.
14. **Ahab:** seventh ruler of the north and husband of Jezebel
15. **Jezebel:** wicked queen who murdered Naboth and attempted to kill Elijah
16. **Elijah:** fearless prophet who denounced the sins of his people and successfully confronted the pagan priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel
17. **Widow of Zarephath:** poverty stricken woman who befriended Elijah who in turn rewarded her by feeding her family and raising her dead son
18. **Naboth:** godly farmer who was murdered by Queen Jezebel for refusing to sell his vineyard to the royal palace
19. **Elisha:** farmer chosen by God and anointed by Elijah to be his successor

20. **Micaiah:** a fearless prophet, imprisoned by Ahab who predicted the wicked king would be killed in battle with Syria

### KEY PLACES

1. **Gibeon:** where God appeared in a dream to Solomon and gave him his great wisdom
2. **Tyre:** home nation for Hiram the King of Tyre and Hiram the artisan
3. **Land of Sheba:** home of the queen who visited Solomon
4. **Jerusalem:** Solomon's capital city and home of the first temple
5. **Bethel and Dan:** cities where Jeroboam set up pagan altars
6. **Samaria:** capital of the northern kingdom from the reign of King Omri until its destruction by the Assyrians
7. **Gilead:** homeland of Elijah the prophet
8. **The Brook Cherith:** where Elijah was fed by the ravens
9. **Zarephath:** home of a widow whose son Elijah raised from the dead
10. **Mt. Carmel:** where Elijah challenged and defeated the priests of Baal
11. **Kishon Brook:** where Elijah slew the priests of Baal
12. **Mt. Horeb:** where God spoke to Elijah in a still small voice
13. **Jezreel:** home of Naboth whom Ahab murdered for his vineyard

### UNIQUE FEATURES

1. In Scripture there are four key periods in which many miracles were performed. The book of 1 Kings marks the beginning of the second period.
  - First period: accomplished in the days of Moses and Joshua
  - Second period: accomplished in the days of Elijah and Elisha
  - Third period: accomplished in the days of Daniel and Ezekiel
  - Fourth period: accomplished in the days of Christ and his apostles
2. This book records the first of eight bodily resurrections from the dead. Christ's glorious resurrection is not counted in this number, for it was in a class entirely by itself. These eight are:
  - Resurrection of a dead boy by Elijah (widow of Zarephath's son: 1 Kings 17:22)
  - Resurrection of a dead boy by Elisha (Shunammite woman's son: 2 Kings 4:34)
  - Resurrection of a dead man by Elisha (2 Kings 13:21)
  - Resurrection of a dead girl by Christ (Jairus' daughter: Lk. 8:54)
  - Resurrection of a dead boy by Christ (widow of Nain's son: Lk. 7:14)
  - Resurrection of a dead man by Christ (Lazarus: Jn. 11:43)
  - Resurrection of a woman by Peter (Dorcas: Acts 9:39-40)
  - Resurrection of a boy by Paul (Eutychus: Acts 20:9-11)
3. 1 Kings records a great tragedy as Solomon, who was "*wiser than anyone else*" (4:31), gave himself over to the temptations of wealth and women (10:14-11:13).
4. It records the building and dedication of Israel's first Temple, which lasted nearly four centuries (968-586 B.C.). Compare 5-8 with 2 Chron. 2-7.

5. During Solomon's reign, Israel attained its largest size ever – much larger than present day Israel. Solomon not only solidified but also expanded the gains made by David (4:24; see exposition on 2 Sam. 8:1-18).
6. It describes the ministry of Elijah, whom many believe was the most colorful Old Testament prophet (17:1).
7. It marks the only instance when God used the animal world to feed His servant (17:4-6).
8. It was also the only Old Testament occasion when God pronounced the death penalty upon a man and his wife (21:19, 23).
9. In fact, this wife was the first of scripture's most bloody and brutal women! These are:
  - Jezebel (1 Kings 21)
  - Athaliah (2 Kings 11)
  - Herodias (Mt. 14)
10. In the book we see how a random arrow was used by God to accomplish His will (22:34)
11. Finally, Elijah's contest on Mount Carmel marks the second of scripture's two greatest demonstrations showing the power of the true God as opposed to that of the false gods (1 Kings 18). The ten plagues in Moses' day were history's first such demonstration (see Ex. 7-12).

### **COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS**

#### **Ezekiel:**

- 1 Kings describes for us the Solomonic Temple (7), while Ezekiel does the same in regards to the Millennial Temple.

#### **Revelation:**

- In 1 Kings 12 we find described the disuniting of Israel's twelve tribes. In Revelation 7 we find described the future uniting of Israel's twelve tribes.

### **TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS**

1. Lord God of Israel (1:48)
2. Giver of Wisdom (3:5-12)
3. Lord of Hosts (18:14)
4. God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (18:36)
5. Angel of the Lord (19:7)
6. God of the Hills and Valleys (20:28)