

The Divided Kingdom  
1 Kings 12-2 Kings 18:12  
From the death of Solomon to the captivity of the North  
From Rehoboam, successor of Solomon, to 6th year of Hezekiah, King in the South

## Introduction

*Close of the United Monarchy* was given in 1 Kings 1-11. This section includes the appointment of Solomon as king by David and David's death followed by Solomon's reign, the building of the temple, and Solomon's death. The divided kingdom is recorded in *1 Kings 12-2 Kings 18:12* and takes us to 722-721 B.C.

## Character of the texts on the divided kingdom

"The *bulk* of the narrative is .. devoted to a history of the two kingdoms in which the writer *shuttles back and forth* between accounts of the *overlapping reigns* of the kings in each kingdom .... until the northern kingdom is carried into exile by the Assyrians" (IOT 159-160).

The southern kingdom continued until it was conquered by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. This "single kingdom" period is recorded in 2 Kings 18-25.

Kings can be outlined:

- 1 Ki. 1-11 end of United Kingdom
- 1 Ki. 12-2 Ki. 18:12, Divided Kingdom
- 2 Ki. 18:13-25:30, Single Judaic Kingdom

## 1A. Literary Analysis

### 1B. The "notices" framework

Each reign recorded in the bulk of the book has the literary structure of *introductory* and *concluding* notices (IOT 160). They vary slightly but the following pattern for each is typical.

Introductory notices give 1) accession of a king interrelated with the opposing kingdom, 2) age of the king, 3) length of reign, 4) ancestry and 5) evaluation. Concluding notices give 1) sources, 2) death account, and 3) succession. For example, see 2 Ki 15:1-6 on Azariah for both notices. Note: judgements, like his leprosy, were acts of mercy by God that restrained the cancerous conduct of the nation.

### 2B. Outline of contents

The kingdom rent asunder by wars 1 Ki 12-14

Developments under Elijah and Elisha 1 Ki 15-2 Ki 13

Final days of the northern kingdom 2 Ki 14-18:12

## 2A. The division of the kingdom

The kingdom is rent asunder by the shortsightedness of Rehoboam, Solomon's son who unwisely discounted the counsel of the elders in favor of his young friends. Instead of lightening the yoke of rule he tightened it (heavy under my father, I'll make it heavier, 12:11).

People's request for relief 12:4

Elders give counsel 12:6-7 and the young give counsel, 12:8-11, 14

Rejection of Rehoboam 12:16

Jereboam, king in the north 12:20 (labor leader made king of all but Judah & Benjamin)

Between Rehoboam and Jereboam was continual warfare (14:30).

Some successive kings to both are recorded (chapters 15-16) in transition to the introduction of Elijah and Elisha.

## 3A. Elijah and Elisha

In 1 Ki. 17:1-2 Ki. 13:30, we have the sudden appearance of Elijah to the death of Elisha. There is shuttling back and forth from north to south but the *major attention* is on the northern kingdom called Israel in distinction from the southern, called Judah.

## 4A. The final years of Israel

The final years of Israel are briefly summarized up to her captivity (2 Ki. 14-18:12). Note especially 2 Ki 17:5-7; 14-15 (which is repeated in 18:9-12 in connection with Hezekiah, king of Judah in the south):

Samaria, capital of Israel besieged, 17:5

Hoshea, last king of Israel, fell to Assyria 17:6 (cf. deportation); why? 17:7

Hezekiah, King in Judah at this time, 18:9-10; again, why the captivity? 18:12

The author pauses to "*survey the rubble*" of the kingdom splendor of David and Solomon now *crushed* in the north and *subjugated* in the south (paying tribute, 18:14). The *Assyrians* were God's instruments of judgment for Israel's sin (17:18-23). Deportation/importation resulted in the formation of the ethnically mixed *Samaritans* and a long history of conflict that extends down to the time of Jesus (Jn. 4). Thus the outline: (wars, developments, final days)

#### 5A. Theme (of Kings; 1 Ki 12 to 2 Ki 18:12)

The theme is *judgment and grace in the fractured kingdom* up to the demise of Israel in the north. Grace is covenant grace which is confirmed by the author who demonstrates "the continuity of the Davidic dynasty in Judah as a demonstration of God's faithfulness to his promises" (IOT 160) in spite of Israelite disobedience.

#### 6A. The canonical message of Kings (message for us)

##### 1B. Restoration comes through Elijah and Elisha

##### 1) Saving grace and the restraint of evil

Israel though disobedient is summoned by these prophets to return to God. God's blessing was graciously granted to the nation in all the turmoil of idolatry, disobedience and war. God restrained the progress of evil and gave his saving word through his prophets, especially Elijah and Elisha (but there were many other prophets; cf. the disobedient young prophet and the many prophets killed by Jezebel).

##### 2) John and Jesus

Through those prefigured here, John and Jesus, God will bring Israel back to the land forever with Davidic kingship that is everlasting.

David looked this way in Psalm 95 calling Israel to submissive hearts. God's rest is out in front of God's people and is to be entered by faith and anticipated in Sabbath keeping worship on the way. *Rest in the land has the ultimate look to the new heavens and the new earth.*

John is *Elijah* (2 Ki. 1:8 with Matt. 3:4; Matt. 11:14; 17:12). How so? He comes in the *spirit and power* of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers (Lk. 1:17; Mal 4:6). If you know who John is you know the kingdom has come (Matt. 11:7-11).

Jesus is anointed like Elisha by his predecessor at the Jordan River (2 Ki. 2:7-11; Matt. 3:13) to receive a double portion of power for a ministry of miracles (Matt. 11:4-5 "largely a list of the miracles of Elisha" IOT 167). Thus the *kingdom of God promised in the OT* is being *fulfilled now in the church* set in place through John and Jesus.

##### 2B. Restoration comes through the remnant

##### 1) Luke 4:13-28

Luke 4:13-28 records the early ministry of Jesus "in the power of the Spirit (v. 14) but rebuffed at Nazareth. Note the violent response (v. 28). Why such? The context reveals that Jesus refused to do miracles in his "home town" according to their anticipated unbelieving demand (v. 23). They had challenged his gracious words (v. 22). His answer is given in citation of Elijah and Elisha (25-27; Elijah and the widow, 1 Ki. 17:24; Elisha and Naaman the leper, 2 Ki. 5). In all of Israel's sin in the OT, God had a people, *a remnant from outside Israel, people of his choosing leaving Israel to judgment duly deserved. So now God is passing you over, leaving you in your sins and to your just punishment!*

##### 2) Romans 11:1-7

Paul directly cites the remnant principle as exemplified in the example of Elijah (1 Ki. 18:45; 19:1-3; 9, 14, 18; cf. 2 Chron. 30:1, 6-12, a remnant in Hezekiah's day). Even now though

Israel is under judgment and set aside, God is saving Israel according to His covenant in the remnant by His election of grace. This shows that the OT passages on the remnant involved saving grace (not merely a national election) to particular sinners who were a part of sinful Israel but who were lifted out by sovereign mercy. This continues across time into the NT.

3) Jesus is prophet priest and king.

He is the son of David (cf references IOT 166). He is *king of kings* and Lord of Lords.

Thus the kingdom promised in OT has come in Him but when it comes Israel is again disobedient. So the kingdom is given to another nation (Matt. 21:33-46). Still God keeps his word to Abraham, the nations are blessed and Israel is included in remnant as has been God's way down through the ages.

The kingdom comes by a *prophet* (like Moses, Deut. 18:15) teaching in parables (Matt. 13) in a way unexpected, by a sower sowing seed. *Like Elisha* through Christ the kingdom manifests itself powerfully (Matt. 11:11-12).

The kingdom comes by a *priest* who is himself Isaac on the altar (Gen 22), the passover lamb offering himself for those given to him by the Father (Ex. 12; Jn.17).

Now, by his resurrection, the Sabbath sign of consummation is transformed into the Lord's Day memorial. We now know that we will reach our destiny of eternal Sabbath rest through Jesus our risen Prophet, Priest and King.