

VISION FOR THE WORD OF GOD: I KINGS

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About I and II Kings:

In the Jewish tradition, the book of Kings belongs---together with the books of Joshua, Judges and Samuel---to the former Prophets, a collection of works that provide a prophetic interpretation of Israel's history from the conquest of Canaan to the end of the monarchy. Modern scholars call this biblical [collection] "the deuteronomistic history" because the narratives therein share a common vocabulary, literary style, and theological perspective that is heavily influenced by the book of Deuteronomy, which many scholars now regard as the introduction to the [collection]. Although it appears likely that there were earlier editions of the deuteronomistic history---in the reigns of Hezekiah (c. 715-686 BC) and Josiah (c. 640-609 BC)---it seems clear that the work was given its final form sometimes during the exilic period (c. 586-539 BC).¹

Structure of the Book:

I Kings 1-2, Solomon Becomes King

I Kings 3-11, Reign of Solomon

I Kings 12-16, Divided Kingdom to the Beginning of Reign of Ahab

I Kings 17-22, Divided Kingdom, Emergence of Elijah to Death of Ahab

Lessons from I Kings

Chapters 1-2

We must always pray for a discerning spirit when we receive counsel from others because what they tell us can be mixed with their own personal motives and feelings as well as wisdom that may be a blessing for our own lives.

Counsel that passes through the filter of human personality and feelings may still be Good counsel, but we must still "do our own grinding."

Chapters 3-11

While a good start is important, how we end is what counts in the long run.

Every person has his or her own poison. Any poison can be deadly.

We must always be careful about the implications of our actions for the next generation.

Chapters 12-15

Division is always the devil's playground.

The devil's chief aim is separation.

Any time a nation or an individual lose focus of their foundation, and the vision and Mission that makes them distinctive, their days are numbered.

Chapters 16-22

God will always send a person or constituency to hold us accountable and call us back to Sanity when we forget God's vision for our lives and God's word as our guiding principle.

Being the voice of God is not for the faint of heart.

¹ New Interpreters Bible, Volume 3, p.4

Even the best and strongest followers of God can become depressed. God understands and will find ways, persons and resources to sustain us.

God plus one is always a majority in any and every situation.

Wickedness has its season; the people of God have their justification; God has the last and eternal word.