

A STUDY OF 1 & 2 KINGS

COVENANT on the Ground

WITH DR. JOHN N. OSWALT

VOLUME 1: SOLOMON TO AHAB

STUDENT
WORKBOOK



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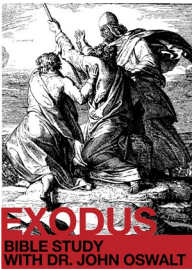
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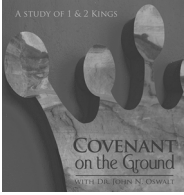


Isaiah



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A Study of 1 & 2 Kings with John Oswalt

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the Hebrew order of the books of the Old Testament? What is the significance of that order for Kings?
2. Why are Joshua through Kings included in “Prophets”?
3. What is “The Deuteronomic Theology of History”? How does it show up in Joshua – Kings?
4. Why isn’t Chronicles included with the other “Historical Books” (as in our English Bibles)?
5. Were Joshua – Kings all written by one person? Why? Why not?
6. What is the purpose of Kings?
7. Is Kings a “history” book? Why? Why not?
8. What does the presence of the repeated “regnal formulae” tell us about the probable way the book was compiled?

9. Who were the likely compilers of the book?

10. What is the overall outline of the book?

I.

II.

A.

1.

2.

3.

B.

11. What kind of coverage is given to each of the kings?

A.

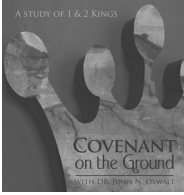
B.

C.

D.

12. What does this look like in terms of years?

13. What is the possible significance of the very last paragraph of the book?



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A Study of 1 & 2 Kings with John Oswalt

1 KINGS 1:1–27

1. How is the account of Solomon (1 Kgs 1–11) structured?
2. Look up 1 Chronicles 28–29. What does it say about Solomon's accession?
3. What do verses 1–4 tell us about David's condition? (The piece about Abishag will be important later.) Is there a lesson for us here?
4. Where does Adonijah fall in the order of David's sons (2 Sm 3:2–6 [Daniel must have died as an infant, see verse 6 here])? What might this have to do with Adonijah's expectations?
5. What does verse 6 tell us about the responsibilities of parenthood? Why is such an action important (after all: "If you can dream it, you can do it.")?
6. Overall, what do verses 5 and 6 tell us about Adonijah's personality and character? What is the lesson for us?
7. See verses 7–10. Joab is the general; Benaiah, his second in command. Abiathar is chief priest; Zadok, second in command. What has Adonijah done? What does what he did tell us about what he knew and tried to avoid?

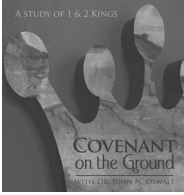
8. Look at 2 Samuel 12:24–25 and explain why Nathan gets involved here. What does this say about responsibility?

9. Why did Nathan involve Bathsheba? (Think about David's condition.)

10. If Chronicles is correct (and it is!), why not make more of the public announcement that had been made?

11. Why would Bathsheba and Solomon (David's 11th son) be counted as criminals (v. 21)? What does this say about what Adonijah knew?

12. What does all this say about wisdom (as opposed to manipulation) in complex life situations?



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A Study of 1 & 2 Kings with John Oswalt

1 KINGS 1:28–52

Background: to swear in the name of Yahweh (v. 30) was to say something like: “May Yahweh strike me dead if I do not do so and so.”

- “En Rogel” (1:9) was a spring in the Kidron Valley southeast of Jerusalem. “Gihon” (1:33) is the great spring in the Kidron Valley just at the foot of the hill of Jerusalem. It is considerably nearer the city and a much more significant water source.
 - It seems that there were two competing priestly families stemming from Aaron’s two surviving sons: Eleazar and Ithamar. Those descended from Ithamar had somehow become the priests at the Tabernacle in Shiloh (Eli). After the loss of the Ark to the Philistines and the death of Eli’s sons (1 Sam 4:17), it seems that the family of Eleazar (who had been the high priest, Josh. 14:1) began to regain influence. Abiathar (1:7) was from Ithamar, and Zadok (1:32) was from Eleazar.
 - The Kerethites and Pelethites (1:38) were David’s personal bodyguard, probably originally stemming from his time as an outlaw in the southern desert.
 - “The horns of the altar” (1:50) were projections on the four corners of an altar, perhaps serving to keep offerings from falling off. Sacrificial blood was splashed on the horns (Lev. 4:7, etc.) and perhaps this suggested to felons that their sins could be forgiven.
1. Whether a demented David actually remembered his vow, he has been convinced by Bathsheba and Nathan that he did make it, and that is enough for him. Look up Ps 50:14–15; 56:12–13, and 65:1–3. While vows and oaths are not exactly the same, they are both in God’s name. Why is it important to fulfill them?
 2. Why might a king (either Adonijah or Solomon) have been crowned at a water source? What is the symbolism. Look up John 7:37–38.
 3. Notice “king over Israel and Judah” (v. 35). The division between the two entities is long-standing. Look up 2 Samuel 2:4, 8–9; 20:40–43.

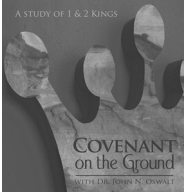
4. Notice the threefold support for Solomon (v. 44): priest, prophet, captain of forces. Think of Jesus in this respect.

5. Notice David's response in verse 48 to the statement in verse 47. What would Saul's response have been to a statement like that? What accounts for the difference? Look up 2 Samuel 22:28–34. [Note that verse 33 actually (in spite of NIV!) is the same wording as verse 31: "...makes my way perfect"; "...his way is perfect."]

6. What would be the Christian equivalent of clinging to the horns of the altar? But see Amos 3:14. Why would that be the case?

7. Newly made kings regularly killed all their potential rivals (see 1:21), so Adonijah clearly expected it here. In what ways is Solomon's response here a model for us?

8. What does this story tell us about God's ability to accomplish his purposes?



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1 KINGS 2

Securing the Throne

David's Instructions (vv. 1–12)

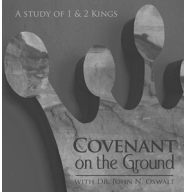
1. Why does “walking” in the instructions God gave to Moses require strength and “manliness”? (See also Josh 1:7.)
2. Does obedience to God's commands guarantee success (a better translation than “prosper”)? Why or why not?
3. We are pretty comfortable with verses 1–4, but I expect we are lot less comfortable with verses 5–9. Why is that so? Once again, what is David's probable mental condition at this point in his life?

What is the lesson for us?

4. What is the reason for the judgment on Joab (vv. 5–6; see further in vv. 31–33)? Reflections?
5. What is the reason for the judgment on Shimei (vv. 8–9; see 2 Sam 16:5–14)? Why was David generous then but not now? Reflections?

Threats to Solomon's Reign (vv. 13–46)—Adonijah, Abiathar, Joab, and Shimei

1. Remember Solomon's generosity toward Adonijah (1 Kgs 1:52–53). What does Adonijah's request (v. 17) confirm to us [after Chapter 1] about the man?



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1 KINGS 3

Background: We come now to the middle section of Solomon's story. In this chapter we see the roots of Solomon's success and his ultimate failure. Initially, in chapters 4–10 the theme seems to be all success, but there are intimations that all is not well. Again, the skillful author/editor does not tell us what to think, but at key points gives us information that leaves us wondering.

- Jeremiah seems to indicate that although 1 Samuel does not say so, the Tabernacle of Moses was destroyed by the Philistines when they captured the ark of the covenant (Jer 7:12–14). The data we have in the rest of Samuel seems to support that, with a tabernacle at Nob (1 Sam 21:1), and another at Gibeon, as seems to be implied here. Maybe this reflects the two priestly lines battling one another. The facts that the Israelites seemed to feel no compulsion to take the ark to the tabernacle when they recovered it and that David felt no compulsion to take the ark back to either one of those places but constructed his own in Jerusalem also seems to argue that Moses' Tabernacle was no longer in existence.
 - Nob was located about two miles north of Jerusalem on the high hill overlooking the city where Hebrew University is located today. Gibeon was about six miles northwest of Jerusalem on one of the chief roads leading down to the coast.
 - “High places” were often on hilltops that were thought closer to the gods' dwelling places in heaven. However, it is pretty clear that the Hebrew term *bamah* had come to be used for any worship place (so NLT “local places of worship”). These places undoubtedly gained in popularity if the Tabernacle had been destroyed and competing tabernacles had been built.
 - A treaty between nations regularly involved marriage between the families and a recognition of each other's gods.
1. The fact that the content of verse 1 precedes everything following is of considerable importance. What Solomon does here is wrong on two counts. What are they? Look up Exodus 34:12–16. What does this have to do with us?
 2. How do verses 1 and 2 relate to each other? Notice “however” in the NIV and NRS. What is the likely significance of that? Look up Numbers 33:52.
 3. How did Solomon show his love for Yahweh? What is the significance of such a statement for us and for the nature of the Christian faith?

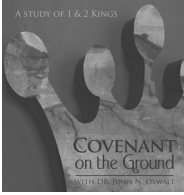
4. The final statement of verse 3 is going to be repeated of every Judean king until Hezekiah 200 years later. What is the nature of compromise? When is it justified and when not?

5. Verses 4–9 are Solomon’s shining hour. What does he ask for (v. 9), and what motivates him to ask (v. 6)? What are the guidelines for our prayer?

6. What is the caveat in God’s promises according to verse 14? Why should this be the case?

7. Notice what Solomon asked for (vv. 9, 11). “Judging” here is not so much legal adjudication as wise governing. How does this help us as we look at some of the contradictions in Solomon’s behavior?

8. What are the motives of the two women in verses 16–26? What is the underlying lesson about life here?



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1 KINGS 4–5

“Wisdom” in Action

Background: Chapter four further develops the theme of Solomon’s wisdom, as seen in two areas: administration (vv. 1–28) and insight into the workings of the world, particularly in classification (vv. 29–34). It tends to be laudatory, but as before, we see the author/compiler, more by what is not said, letting us see that there is a worm in the apple. Chapter five develops that theme and its attendant questions.

- As I said in the introduction to the study, there is almost no agreement among scholars as to how the book of Kings was put together, but what little agreement there is suggests that the persons responsible incorporated existing writings whenever they could. So, in these chapters, it seems possible that 1 Kings 4:1–6, 7–19, 20–28, and 29–34 may have been separate pieces that have been brought together around the theme. Likewise, 1 Kings 5:13–18 might be from a record, whereas 1 Kings 5:1–12 might be the personal knowledge of the editor at that point. This use of sources may explain certain discrepancies (Abiathar 4:4?).
 - In 1 Kings 4:6, Ahishar is said to be “over the house.” So NIV translates “palace administrator.” I and a handful of others think this position is equivalent to “prime minister.”
 - “Thirty cors” (4:22) was about 5½ tons.
 - By controlling everywhere from Egypt to the Euphrates, and from the Mediterranean to the Arabian desert, Solomon had a stranglehold on much of the trade of the ancient world, and was thus able to become very wealthy.
 - “Wisdom” in the ancient world is the discovery of how things work. So a proverb is a poetic statement of observation: “a diligent man will become rich; a lazy man will go hungry.” It is very pragmatic: “If you want to get your goods out of customs, give the customs officer a gift.” It is not a question so much of right and wrong, but of what works.
 - A covenant with Hiram (1 Kgs 5:12) almost certainly involved recognizing the gods of the Phoenicians (Sidonians, see 11:5).
1. Compare this list to those in 2 Samuel 8:16 and 20:23–24. What are the similarities and differences?
 2. Notice verse 7 and the phrase “all Israel.” What have we said earlier about the significance of this phrase? Compare verses 20 and 25. Judah is not one of the twelve districts. Why might he have done this? What would be the likely result? Wise?

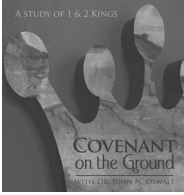
3. Verse 22 reports what each district was to supply every day for one month. Look up 1 Samuel 8:11–17. What has happened? Why would he do this? Wise?

4. How do you evaluate verses 20–28? Is it a positive description or a negative one, or...? What is the lesson for us?

5. Evidently Solomon was a brilliant observer (vv. 29–34; see wisdom above). He could see how to accomplish his goals. Is there anything wrong with that? His people were prosperous and happy. The surrounding nations were subject to him. People thronged to learn from him. What more could we ask?

6. Who instigated the relationship that ended in a covenant (1 Kgs 5:1–12)? Is there any problem with this? What did a covenant involve? Compare Genesis 14:21–24.

7. What did it take to get the materials needed for Solomon's royal building projects (vv. 10–11; 13–16). Do you see any problem here? What is the principle?



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1 KINGS 6–7

Building the Temple

Background—Some would argue that the Temple is the central theme of the book of Kings, given the extensive treatment of its building here in the beginning of the book, the references to its renovation under Joash (2 Kgs 11–12), and again under Josiah (and the importance of recovering the law book at that time, 2 Kgs 22), and the centralization of worship there under Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18) and again under Josiah, and then its destruction in the last chapter of the book (2 Kgs 25). Without denying the Temple’s importance to the point the book is making, I would argue that the point being made is that the Temple is secondary. The primary point is *Yahweh* and obedience to his covenant. If the Temple accurately symbolizes that devotion, well and good, but without that devotion, the symbol is worthless. Biblically speaking, symbols are very important. How we treat them is often a very accurate gauge of our inner state. On the other hand, the contempt *Yahweh* has for symbols when we try to use them to insulate ourselves from him is nothing short of massive.

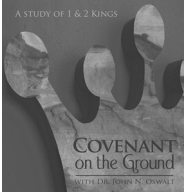
- While I tend to take “480th year” (1 Kgs 6:1) at face value [meaning that since the date of the Temple is pretty secure at ca. 965 BC, the Exodus occurred ca. 1445 BC], it still must be admitted that it is a little suspicious [the result of multiplying two very symbolically significant numbers: 1 Kgs 6:12, 40].
 - The cherubim were probably similar to Egyptian sphinxes and to the guardian figures found at the gates of Assyrian and Babylonian structures. That is: human head, front quarters of a lion, hind quarters of an ox, and wings of an eagle.
1. The layout of the temple: courtyard, porch, main room, inner room, seems to have been the standard plan of Canaanite temples at this time. Likewise, the decorations (cherubim, palms, pomegranates, lilies) are the same as elsewhere. What are we to make of this?
 2. One feature that seems to separate this temple from the Canaanite ones was its precision: square and symmetrical. If that is distinguishing, why might that be?
 3. What does “nothing inserted into the temple walls” (1 Kgs 6:6) and no hammering sounds (1 Kgs 6:7) suggest to us?

4. 1 Kings 6:19 identifies what sets this temple off from every other. In the others the idol of the chief god or goddess would be present in the inner room. What is present here? What is the significance of this?

5. Notice what occurs between the description of the structure of the temple (1 Kgs 6:1–38) and the furnishings of the temple (1 Kgs 7:13–51), and compare the final statement of 1 King 6:38 with 7:1. What was the temple part of? What are your reflections? What does this say to us?

6. Compare 1 Kings 7:13–14 to Exodus 31:1–5. What are your reflections?

7. The description of both the building itself and the furnishings is so intricately detailed. Think about the description of the Tabernacle in Exodus 25–31 and 35–40, and then the description of the New Temple in Ezekiel 40–43. What do you think is going on here? Why is this much space taken up in God’s Word for buildings that in the end God doesn’t really value that highly [on this point see Jer 7:1–15, and Ezek 8:1–18]? See Ephesians 2:19–3:1, 14–21.



COVENANT on the Ground

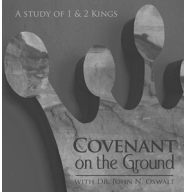
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1 KINGS 8

Dedicating the Temple

Introduction: If Solomon's prayer at Gibeon (1 Kgs 3:6–9) was Solomon's first "shining hour," this is surely the second. The prayer shows an understanding of Yahweh and of the means of relating to him that is both deep and broad. It makes his final end the more tragic. It tells us that right understanding must always be accompanied by daily application.

- The feast in the seventh month (1 Kgs 8:2) is Succoth, or Shelters. This was the harvest festival, a time of joy, but also one that was associated with the Day of Atonement, a day of fasting and repentance for the unintentional sins committed during the previous year. Pagans were weeping for the dead vegetation god, giving him a good funeral so that he would be sure to come back in the Spring. Israel is weeping over sin.
 - The covenant box ("ark") had cherubim cast as one piece with the lid ("the mercy seat" as Luther would call it), but in the Temple there were also separate cherubim on either side of the box (1 Kgs 6:23–28).
 - Because there were doors on the Holy of Holies (1 Kgs 6:31–32), it is hard to understand what is meant by the statement that the carrying poles could be seen from the Holy Place (1 Kgs 8:8). Perhaps it means they could be seen when the doors were opened.
 - Hebrews 9:4 says that a bowl of manna (Ex 16:33) and Aaron's budding rod (Num 17:10–11) were in the covenant box. However, those passages speak of the items being beside the box, and here (1 Kgs 8:9) it is specifically said that the only things in the box were the two tablets. Perhaps the Hebrews writer was relying on tradition.
1. Why do you think so much space (nine verses) is given to the bringing of the covenant box into the Temple?
 2. Compare 1 Kings 8:10–11 to Exodus 40:34–35. "Glory" in the Old Testament is something solid and weighty. This is no ordinary cloud. Think also of Isaiah 6:3–4. What is the earth full of? What does that mean?
 3. How many times does Name appear in verses 16–20? What is the significance of this? What does it say about the function of the Temple?



COVENANT on the Ground

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1 KINGS 9–10

Heavenly Conditions and Earthly Glory

Background: There are four parts here. The first is Yahweh's response to the temple (9:1–9), the second a summation of Solomon's activities (9:10–28); the third the visit of the Queen of Sheba (10:1–13); and the fourth a summary of his amazing wealth (10:14–29).

- The visit of the Queen of Sheba was almost certainly a trade mission. Sheba refers to the extreme south of the Arabian Peninsula, where Yemen, Dubai, and the other small emirates are located today. This is the only place where frankincense occurs, and much of the trade in that precious commodity would have been up the Red Sea coast to the port of Elath and then up the Highway of the Kings east of the Dead Sea to Damascus.
- It appears that there were two classes of conscripted laborers: Israelites who worked for set periods of time (5:13–14) and Canaanites, who were enslaved (9:20–23).

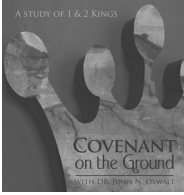
1. What do you think is the significance of the statement in 9:1?
2. What might be the intent here of the reference to Yahweh's appearance to Solomon at Gibeon? What did God promise to Solomon there, and how might that relate to the content of chapters 9 and 10?
3. Compare the tone of Yahweh's messages in 3:10–14 and 9:3–9. How are they similar and how are they different? What is the significance of these similarities and differences?
4. What are the conditions for Yahweh's blessing of the Temple and of the Davidic dynasty?
5. Overall, what would you say is Yahweh's attitude toward the Temple?

6. List the topics covered in 9:10–28. On the surface, they seem somewhat miscellaneous. But if there were a single point being made in the section, what would you say it is?

7. What was it that impressed the Queen of Sheba (10:6–7)? To whom does she give the credit (see v. 9)? What does this say about what might have been the result of Israel's influence in the world had Solomon been faithful and the kingdom had not broken up?

8. Why do you think the Scripture devotes fifteen verses to a description of Solomon's wealth? Is it approving or judging, or both? What is the Bible's attitude toward wealth? (See 1 Chr 29:12; Ps 112:1–3; Pro 3:13–16; 22:4; 1 Tim 6:17–18; Ps 52:5–7; Prov 11:3–4; Jer 9:23–24; Ezek 28:4–8; Matt 13:22; Jas 5:1–3)

9. Compare 10:26–11:1 to Deuteronomy 17:16–17. Why doesn't the writer of Kings point out the obvious? What shall we say about wealth and the blessing of God?



COVENANT on the Ground

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1 KINGS 11

Solomon's Tragic End

Background: There is a certain symbolism in the locations of the two adversaries (vv. 14–25): Edom, where Hadad was from, was south of Judah; and Syria, where Rezon was from, was to the north. Thus, Solomon faced enemies on all sides, enemies who were only waiting for some sign of weakness to break loose.

Two things are interesting about Jeroboam:

- The first is that he was in charge of the forced labor of the two major tribes in the north: Ephraim and Manasseh (“the house of Joseph,” v. 28). We might think that he would have been hated for this, but evidently he handled the responsibility without undue oppression, and it actually worked in his favor, so he was looked on favorably by the northern tribes (unlike Adoram, in charge of all forced labor, who was evidently hated; see 1 Kgs 12:18).
 - The second interesting point is that when Solomon tried to kill his anointed successor, just as Saul tried to kill David, Jeroboam fled to Egypt. David fled to the Philistines, but there was not a total break from the land of Yahweh. Jeroboam, though still in contact with people in Israel (12:2), was far away from Yahweh’s land. Did that time away condition him to the compromises he was later to make as king of Israel?
1. Look again at Deuteronomy 17:16–17. We looked at this in relation to 1 Kings 10:23–29 last week and saw two issues. Now look at 1 Kings 11:1–3 for the third issue. What has gone wrong?
 2. Notice that the author now calls attention (v. 2) to the prohibition of marrying wives from idolatrous neighbors, something he did not do in chapter three. Why here and not there?
 3. Hundreds of years later, 100 years after the return from Babylonian exile, Ezra and Nehemiah discovered that even the leaders of the Judeans had married pagan women, and Ezra and Nehemiah demanded that these pagan wives and their children be put away. This is regularly pointed to as an example of religious bigotry. How do you respond considering what is described here in verses 1–8?

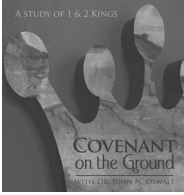
4. In verse 4, Solomon's "heart" is described as no longer "whole" to God (KJV "perfect"; ESV "wholly true"; NASB "wholly devoted"; NIV "fully devoted"; NLT "completely faithful"). What does it mean to have a "heart" that belongs "wholly" to God? Practically speaking, what does that look like today? (In verse 6, the versions have some form of "did not fully follow God." The Hebrew is "did not fill after God." What does this thought add to the discussion?

5. Why do you think verse 9 makes a point of Yahweh having appeared to Solomon? Where are the two appearances located and what is the significance of that?

6. Why did Yahweh leave one tribe to the house of David? Why was it important that the covenant with David be kept inviolate? Look up Psalm 2.

7. Verses 14–25 describe two adversaries of Solomon (see Background above). Their enmity is said to extend back to what may well be excesses of David's in his conquest of the two regions. Yet the text (vv. 14, 23) says Yahweh raised them up. So, did Yahweh cause David to kill in a vicious fashion? If not, how might we reconcile the two expressions?

8. Like Saul, Jeroboam began his rule with every possibility of success: he was chosen by Yahweh (v. 37); the same symbol, a torn robe, that illustrated tearing the kingdom from Saul and giving it to David (1 Sam 15:27–28) was used (vv. 30–31); he was promised God's presence, and an eternal kingdom like that promised to David (v. 38). But there are conditions imposed (v. 38; cf. 33). What are they, and why are they important (cf. Deut 17:18–20)?



COVENANT on the Ground

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1 KINGS 12–13

Division: Rehoboam and Jeroboam

Background: It appears that in the early days of the kingdom, it was customary for the people to give their approval for the inauguration of a king (Saul: 1 Sam 10:17–25; David: 2 Sam 5:1–3). So here, Rehoboam apparently went to the northern city of Shechem for this event, apparently as something of a concession to the northern tribes.

No translation is going to be gross enough to say literally what the intent of the Hebrew is in verse 10. The Hebrew term is not “waist” (NIV), but “loins” or “groin.” Rehoboam is saying that his little finger is thicker than his father’s male member. So, what does Rehoboam’s male member look like?! Notice that in his actual speech to the tribes he refrains from using that language!

1 Kings 12:1–24

1. What does the fact that the Israelites called Jeroboam to come back from Egypt before they went to meet Rehoboam tell us about their attitude?
2. The condition which the northern tribes gave to Rehoboam (v. 4) sounds reasonable, but it would have occasioned some serious “belt-tightening” for the king. Why did the old counselors support that option, and why did the younger ones argue for making the situation more severe?
3. It is a fair question whether, with Jeroboam already called, the northern tribes would have submitted to Rehoboam even if he had met their condition, but his foolish response certainly made their rejection certain. Since the division had already been predicted, who caused the breach, Yahweh or Rehoboam? Did Rehoboam have a choice? What is verse 15 saying?

That Rehoboam was not a very wise man is seen in his sending out the man in charge of forced labor to resolve the situation (v. 18)!

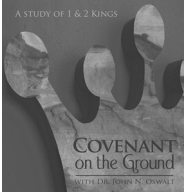
4. “Look after your own house, David” (v. 16) is somewhat chilling given God’s promise to give David a “house” (2 Sam 7:11–12). The northern tribes are in effect saying that they are refusing to have a part with God in fulfilling his promise. What happens when we refuse to participate with God in fulfilling his promises?

1 Kings 12:25–33

Notice God’s promise to Jeroboam in 1 Kings 11:38. But what did Jeroboam do? What was his reasoning? Why go to the extent of idols? Why golden calves? Why not just build an alternate temple? Why alternate festivals (1 Kgs 12:33)? Why not at least use Levites for priests?

1 Kings 13:1–13

1. Why do you think this rather bizarre story receives so much space? List the lessons being taught here, and try to determine what is the fundamental point being made?
2. Why does the man of God who at least carried out the first part of his mandate get killed, and the old liar who deceived him apparently escape scot-free?
3. How might the story relate to the history of Judah and Israel being told in these two books?



COVENANT on the Ground

A Study of 1 & 2 Kings with John Oswalt

1 KINGS 14–15

Background: Shiloh, the site of the Tabernacle during Samuel's boyhood, may have retained some of its sacred aura, which might explain what Ahijah was doing there.

- The trip from Tirzah to Shiloh was between 20 and 25 miles.
- The statement appearing in 1 Kings 14:11 is found again in the judgment pronounced on Ahab in 1 Kings 21:24. This was evidently a traditional expression—or became one.
- 1 Kings 14:13, “the only one belonging to Jeroboam”; that is, his other children would not receive honorable burials. His son Nadab, who succeeded him, was assassinated by Baasha.
- One of the unique features of the Judean accession formula is the naming of the king's mother (1 Kgs 14:21). Identifying Rehoboam's mother as an Ammonite speaks volumes.
- Chronicles (2 Chr 11) speaks rather better of Rehoboam than Kings does, primarily because of his attention to the Temple and the priesthood as well as his ultimate repentance for his sins. Perhaps that is why here it is said that Judah did evil (1 Kgs 14:22) rather than that Rehoboam did. Nevertheless, he is clearly implicated.
- Chronicles says the father of Maakah was Absalom, but this is probably not the son of David, as that would throw off the generations. So here *Abishalom*.

1 Kings 14:1–20—Another Encounter with Ahijah

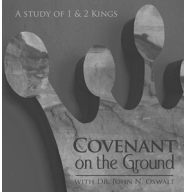
1. Why did Jeroboam believe that his wife needed to hide the identity of her husband from Ahijah?
2. How does Ahijah's foreknowledge concerning who was coming to see him relate to the veracity of his message?
3. How has Jeroboam's behavior been the reverse mirror image of David's behavior (8–9)?
4. What do verses 14–16 tell us about the ultimate impact of Jeroboam's choices? Was Israel fated, with no hope of repentance and revival, from this time forward?

1 Kings 14:21–15:8—Rehoboam and Abijah

1. What are the sins that the Judean people committed? What sparked this resurgence of paganism? 1 Kings 11:5–8? What is the impact of example?
2. Consider that Solomon’s wife had been Egyptian and now an Egyptian sacks Solomon’s Temple (1 Kgs 14:25–26; see also 2 Chr 12:2–9). What lesson might be drawn from this?
3. What do you think is the author’s purpose in recounting the incident of the shields (1 Kgs 14:26–28)?
4. What are some possible relationships between the two parts of 1 Kgs 15:3?
5. Note that in the cases of both Rehoboam and Abijah the thing that is said in their death formulae is that they had war with Jeroboam. Why, do you think?

1 Kings 15:9–24—Asa

1. What was it that Asa did right? How does this accord with the Deuteronomic philosophy?
2. 1 Kings 15:14 argues the “the high places” were not pagan shrines, but places where Yahweh was worshipped. How could Asa’s heart be perfect toward God and yet he permitted this?
3. Look up 2 Chronicles 14:11 for an example of Asa’s faith. Then look at 2 Chr 16:7–12 for an interpretation of Asa’s actions near the end of his life. Kings mentions his diseased feet, but not the rest. Why not? Think about the Deuteronomic philosophy.
4. What was wrong with Asa’s actions in regard to Ben-Hadad? Is it wrong to rely on the help of unbelievers when we are in a difficult situation?



COVENANT on the Ground

A Study of 1 & 2 Kings with John Oswalt

1 KINGS 15–16

Background: Continuing to cover the intervening period between the death of Solomon (ca. 930 BC) and the crowning of Ahab (ca. 874 BC). This is the period when Asa was king of Judah, when the Judean kingdom seems to have been placed on a solid footing, and when Israel in the north was going through the rise and fall of four different dynasties. Finally, with the fourth dynasty, Omri (885–874) seems to have brought some order and stability.

- In chapter 17, the story of Elijah/Elisha and their conflict with the Baal religion begins and will continue all the way to chapter 13 in 2 Kings.
- The passing references to Jehu, son of Hanani (16:1, 7) remind us that prophets were very common during this period when Yahweh was trying to call his people back to himself.
- Gibbethon, where Omri was campaigning when the army crowned him king (16:15), was a northern outpost of the Philistines. It appears in the biblical account several times (Josh 19:44; 1 Kgs 15:27). It was on the coastal plain, almost straight west of Jerusalem.
- Samaria was on top of a conical hill at the head of a broad valley leading down to the coast and the international highway. Its establishment signals a new self-confidence in Israel and in its place among the nations.
- We do not know how long the dispute with Tibni lasted, probably not at long as the six years Omri ruled in Tirzah.

The Dynasty of Baasha (15:33–16:14)

1. What are the two things said about Baasha in verse 33? Is there a difference between them? Why say it both ways? These two things are said of every Israelite king after Jeroboam (eighteen of them!).
2. Here is the first instance in which a king of some substance (ruling for 24 years and creating problems for Asa [15:16–21]), is dismissed with a very few words. There will be several more. On what basis is he being judged? Is this “fair”?
3. With some variety, the phrase “provoking God to anger with their sins” will occur frequently in the rest of the story. Notice the addition of “which they made Israel to sin” in 16:13. What theological truths emerge from the statement?

4. Like Jeroboam's son, Nadab, Baasha's son, Elah, was destined to reign a very short time, that is for about a year (16:8, 10) during two "calendar" years (16:8). Relate this to the "the sins of the fathers" in Exodus 34:7. Was their fate unjust? Look at verses 9 and 13.

Zimri and Omri (16:15–28)

1. Look at the relative ranks of Omri and Zimri and explain why the army of "all Israel" crowned Omri king there on the battlefield.
2. What kind of a man do you think Zimri was? Look at verses 10 and 18.
3. Notice the brief statement in verses 21 and 22. What do you think was going on? Why?
4. Note the comment about Samaria in the background section earlier. What does the purchase of Samaria imply about the character of Omri?
5. "More evil than those who preceded him"—What do you think that means?

Ahab (16:29–34)

1. How many different kings have reigned during Asa's reign?
2. Again, more evil than all who preceded him—How do Ahab's sins seem to exceed those of Omri? See verses 31–33.



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