



PALMA CEIA
Presbyterian Church

The Fall of Judah & Babylonian Exile (II Kings)

Gathering Together Around God's Word

*Sunday, April 3rd 2022
10:05am in EM 307/308 & Zoom*

Background

I & II Kings is a singular work covering Israel's history from the death of David and the ascension of Solomon (970 BC) through the fall of Jerusalem (587/586 BC) and the return of King Jehoiachin's release from prison in Babylon (561/560 BC). The books contain several narratives around important historical events including the building of the temple by Solomon, the split of Israel into a divided kingdom, the conquest of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians, and the Babylonian conquest of Judah. I & II Kings conclude the set of books known as the Deuteronomistic History. These historically focused books, all influenced by Deuteronomy, began with Joshua and conclude with II Kings.

I & II Kings captures the history of a divided kingdom, but its parallel telling of these two histories symbolizes and stresses the fundamental unity of Israel and Judah. The covered material describes the reigns of kings in the both the Southern (Judah) and Northern (Israel) Kingdoms, though the texts make no claim to being comprehensive. Reference is made throughout to other books which are no longer extant (*e.g.*, Book of the Acts of Solomon [I Kings 11:41]). There is no scholarly consensus on the dates for when I & II Kings were written. Some scholars claim an original composition during the reign of Hezekiah (715-687/686 BC) or Josiah (640-609 BC), with the books being finalized early in the exile (586-539). Other scholars advocate for the book's composition to have taken place sometime post-exile.

Though I & II Kings are essentially historical narratives, their primary theme is explicitly theological. Throughout, the narrator judges each king's reign by their adherence, or lack thereof, to the Shema's (Deuteronomy 6) command to, "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Within this religious framework, covenant loyalty is centered around two principles: 1) to not worship other gods and 2) that worship should happen in one central location (*cf.* Deuteronomy 12). Additional themes include the pressure of regional superpowers, including the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians, as well as the importance of prophecy and the role of the prophet in speaking to God's will and calling for reform.

Outline

I Kings 1:1 – 2:46

Solomon Becomes King

I Kings 3:1 – 11:43

The Reign of Solomon

I Kings 12:1 – 16:20

The Kingdom Divides (931-885 BC)

I Kings 16:21 – II Kings 10:36

The Divided Kingdom: The Omri Dynasty (885 – 841 BC)

II Kings 11:1 – 17:41

The Divided Kingdom: Jehu to the Fall of Samaria (841 – 722 BC)

II Kings 18:1 – 25:30

Judah's Final Years: The Babylonian Exile (722 – 560 BC)

The Fall of Israel

- Israel Carried Captive to Assyria
 - **II Kings 17**
 - vv. 1-4: King Hoshea of Israel refuses to pay tribute to King Shalmaneser of Assyria.
 - vv. 5-6: The king of Assyria invades Israel and carries the Israelites away to Assyria (722/721 BC).
 - vv. 7-18: This passage provides an explicitly theological explanation for the fall of Israel to Assyria, based largely off a Deuteronomistic point of view.
 - **II Kings 18**
 - vv. 9-12: This later passage recaps the fall of Israel to Assyria.

The Fall of Judah

- Sennacherib Invades Judah
 - **II Kings 18-19**
 - 18:13-17: In response to King Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria (18:7), King Sennacherib of Assyria attacks Judah and captures many of its cities (701 BC)
 - 19:8-13: Sennacherib threatens to take Jerusalem.
 - 19:14-19: Hezekiah prays to the Lord.
 - 19:20-34: Isaiah prophesies against Assyria and proclaims the Lord will protect Jerusalem from Assyria "*for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David*" (v. 34).

- Envoys from Babylon
 - **II Kings 20**
 - vv. 12-15: Envoys from the king of Babylon come to Judah to present gifts to the now recovered Hezekiah (he had fallen gravely ill). Hezekiah welcomes the Babylonians and shows them all the riches of Judah.
 - vv. 16-19: Isaiah prophesies that Babylon will invade and take everything from Judah and that even Hezekiah's own sons shall be taken away and become "*eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon*" (v. 18).

- Manasseh Reigns over Judah
 - **II Kings 21**
 - vv. 10-16: Prophets, speaking on behalf of the Lord, predict the fall of Jerusalem because of the evil ways of King Manasseh.

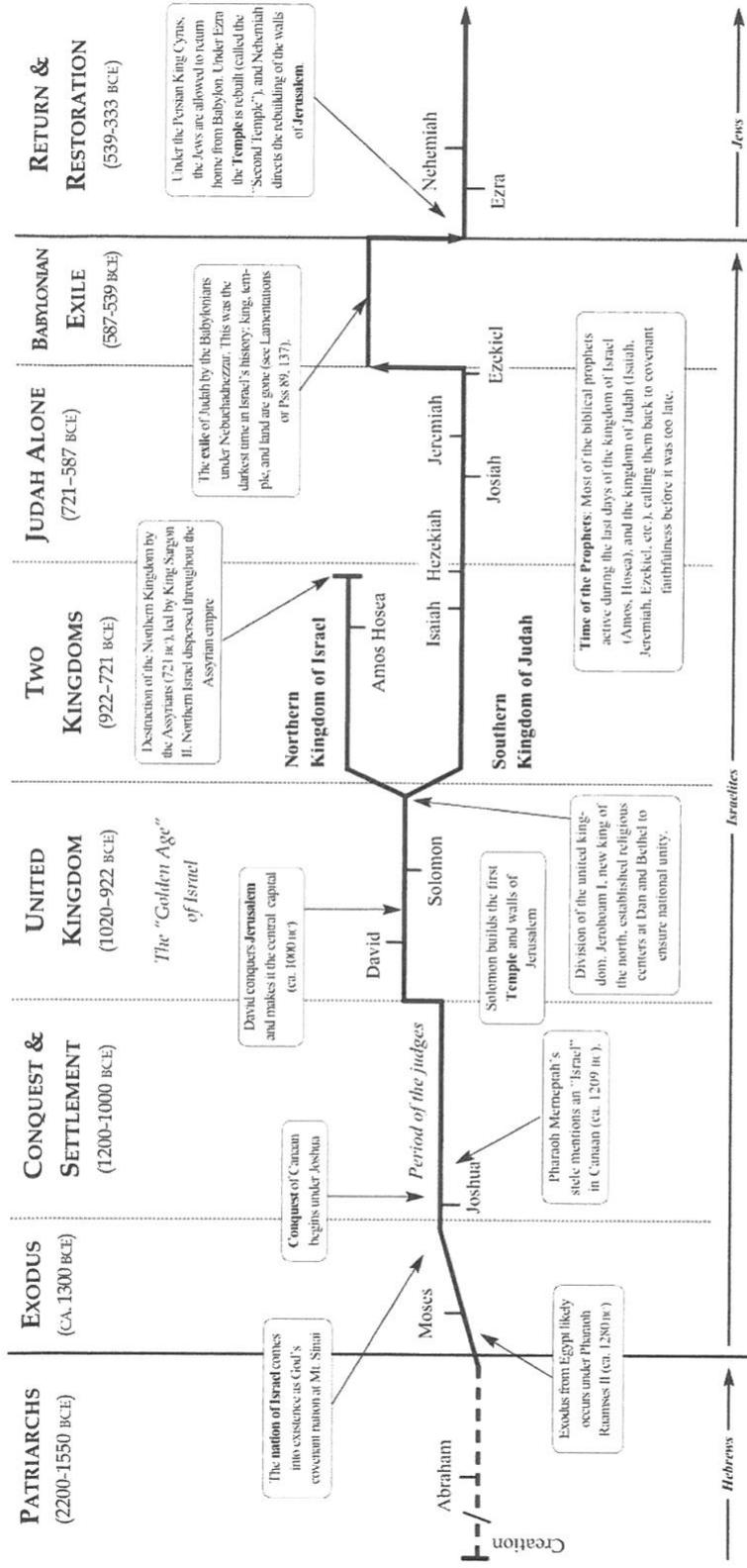
- Josiah Reigns over Judah, Hilkiyah Finds the Book of the Law
 - **II Kings 22**
 - vv. 14-20: The prophetess Hulda predicts the fall of Jerusalem, but says Josiah will die beforehand "*because your heart was penitent*" (v. 19) upon the finding of the Book of the Law and hearing its words.

- Josiah's Reformation
 - **II Kings 23**
 - vv. 26-27: In spite of Josiah's reforms and the celebration of the Passover, God's wrath toward Manasseh and Judah still burns and God declares Judah will still be destroyed.

- Judah Overrun by Enemies
 - **II Kings 24**
 - vv. 1-2: Nebuchadnezzar is now in power in Babylon. King Jehoiakim of Judah serves him for three years but then rebels. The Lord sends Chaldeans, Arameans, Moabites, Ammonites against Jehoiakim.

- vv. 3-4: *“Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the Lord, to remove them out of his sight for the sins of Manasseh, for all that he had committed, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord was not willing to pardon.”*
- Reign and Captivity of Jehoiachin
 - **II Kings 24**
 - vv. 8-12: Servants of King Nebuchadnezzar siege Jerusalem and capture King Jehoiachin and his family and officials. Jehoiachin is taken prisoner.
- Capture of Jerusalem, Reign of Zedekiah
 - **II Kings 24**
 - vv. 13-16: All the wealth of Jerusalem is taken away to Babylon as well as all of the people “except the poorest people of the land” (14).
 - vv. 17-20: The king of Babylon makes Jehoiachin’s uncle Zedekiah king of Judah.
- The Fall and Captivity of Judah
 - **II Kings 25**
 - vv. 1-26: Zedekiah rebels against Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar lays siege to Jerusalem (587 BC).
 - vv. 4-7: Zedekiah tries to escape but is captured, blinded, and taken to Babylon.
 - vv. 8-21: The temple is completely destroyed, and priests are murdered alongside other officials (586 BC).
 - vv. 22-26: Gedaliah is made governor over those who remained in the land of Judah.
- Jehoiachin Released from Prison
 - **II Kings 25**
 - vv. 27-30: Under King Evil-Merodach of Babylon (562-560 BC), King Jehoiachin is released from prison.

The Old Testament Story†



Genesis | *Exod. - Lev. - Num. - Deut.* | *Joshua* | *Judges* | *Sammel* | *Kings* | *Chronicles*

The "Primary History" of Israel: Covers the history of Israel from Creation to Exile. Made up of the Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy) + the "Deuteronomistic History" (Joshua through 2 Kings)

The "Secondary History" of Israel: Covers the history of Israel from Creation to Return & Restoration. Made up of the "Chronicles's History" + Ezra-Nehemiah

- ANE: Major ANE superpower during this period was Egypt (Canaan under its control)
- **Hebrew People:** This was the formative period for the Hebrews. God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 12) set out God's plan of redemption, including: descendants ("great nation"); blessing ("I will bless you"); and land ("Go to the land I will show you").
- ANE: Philistines invade Canaan
- **Israel:** While the initial settlement appears to be a success (cf. Josh 1-12), Israel was continually plagued by infighting and oppression by foreign nations (see Judges).
- ANE: There is a power vacuum in the ANE, allowing Israel to prosper
- **Israel:** High point for the nation. David established Israel militarily. Israel prospered economically and culturally under Solomon
- ANE: The Assyrians increase in power under Tiglath-Pileser III
- **Israel:** While N. Israel is more powerful than Judah, Israel's apostasy eventually brings upon them God's judgment (cf. 2 Kings 17).
- ANE: Babylon displaces Assyria as the superpower of the ANE
- **Israel:** Despite some high points (Hezekiah, Josiah), Judah follows the kingdom of N. Israel to apostasy and its exile in Babylon. The Babylonian exile was a time of redefining Israelite faith and religion. Synagogues likely developed during this time, and many biblical books were completed.
- ANE: The Persians under Cyrus take control of the ANE
- **Israel:** Jews allowed to go home under Cyrus. Judaism emerges from the furnace of the exile. Israel is no longer an independent nation, but a province ("Yehud") of the mighty Persian empire.

† Prepared by Tyler F. Williams (2002).

Psalm 79

¹O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins.

²They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the air for food, the flesh of your faithful to the wild animals of the earth.

³They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them.

⁴We have become a taunt to our neighbors, mocked and derided by those around us.

⁵How long, O LORD? Will you be angry forever? Will your jealous wrath burn like fire?

⁶Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call on your name.

⁷For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation.

⁸Do not remember against us the iniquities of our ancestors; let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low.

⁹Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and forgive our sins, for your name's sake.

¹⁰Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" Let the avenging of the outpoured blood of your servants be known among the nations before our eyes.

¹¹Let the groans of the prisoners come before you; according to your great power preserve those doomed to die.

¹²Return sevenfold into the bosom of our neighbors the taunts with which they taunted you, O Lord!

¹³Then we your people, the flock of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise.