

Summaries of the Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles

Introducing the Books of I and II Samuel

I and II Samuel record the history of the Hebrew nation from the time of the last of the Judges (Eli and Samuel) to the establishment of the unified Kingdom of Israel under Kings Saul and David.

I Samuel

The Book of I Samuel tells the story of the last two Judges of Israel (Eli and Samuel) and the beginning of the monarchy with King Saul, covering a period of about 100 years. The leading character in the book is Samuel, both Judge of Israel (the last) and Prophet. He was the prophet on whom King Saul depended for guidance from God, the one who anointed David to be Saul's successor, and the one to whom David fled as Saul pursued him to kill him.

II Samuel

The Book of II Samuel records the 40-year period of David's life as King, from his crowning at age 30 until the end of his life at age 70. During this period he established Israel as a unified kingdom, fully conquered all its enemies, conquered the Jebusite fortress at Jerusalem and established the city as the kingdom's permanent capitol, both political and spiritual. He established a Tabernacle there on Mt. Zion, and brought there the Ark of the Covenant, from the house of Obed-edom.

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Introducing the Books of I and II Kings

I and II Kings open with the death of David, and record the prosperous and peaceful period under Solomon, the division of the kingdom, and the parallel histories of the two kingdoms until their dismal end in captivity. As H.H. Halley observed, "I Kings opens with the Hebrew nation in its glory, and II Kings closes with the Hebrew nation in ruin." Together they cover a period of about 400 years,

approximately from 1,000 BC to 600 BC. In the outside world, it is the time of Homer, the Trojan War, and the dawn of Greek history.

I Kings

The Book of I Kings opens with the death of David, and the passing of the throne to his son Solomon. Then follows the history of the unified kingdom under Solomon, his wisdom, the building and dedication of the Temple, his descent into idolatry, and his death. The kingdom is divided after Solomon's death into the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and the Book of I Kings records about the first 75 years of the period of the two separate kingdoms. As the book closes, wicked King Ahab is killed, and succeeded by his son Ahaziah as King of Israel, and pious-but-gullible Jehoshaphat dies, and is succeeded by his son Jehoram (Joram) as King of Judah. Altogether, the book records a period of about 125 years.

II Kings

The Book of II Kings opens during the last part of the life and ministry of the great prophet, Elijah, and the beginning of the ministry of his successor, Elisha. As II Kings opens, Ahaziah, Ahab's son, is King of Israel; and Jehoram (Joram), son of Jehoshaphat, is King of Judah. The book records the reigns of the Kings of Israel and Judah, from the death of Ahaziah, until the carrying off of the Northern Kingdom into captivity by the Assyrians, and the subsequent carrying off of the Southern Kingdom into Babylonian captivity. This period, of about 275 years, is essentially a dismal story of wicked kings and their leading of the people into apostasy and idolatry; this depressing pattern is relieved occasionally by the refreshing reigns of a few godly Kings of Judah.

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Introducing the Books of I and II Chronicles

Whereas I and II Kings present parallel histories of the northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, the books of I & II Chronicles record only the history of Judah, the Southern Kingdom. They retell the story of the kings of Judah, with emphasis on the more godly ones. Special emphasis is given

to the reigns of David and Solomon (the “golden years” of the kingdom). Together the two books record the history of the Southern Kingdom from the death of Saul to the return from Babylonian captivity, at which point the Book of Ezra takes up the historical account.

I Chronicles

I Chronicles begins with nine chapters of genealogical records which record in great detail the hereditary line of David; the rest of the book records the history of the united Kingdom of Israel, from the death of Saul to the death of David. During this period David finally conquers the Jebusite fortress at Jerusalem, subdues the pagan enemy nations around the Israelite people, and fully establishes the settlement in the Promised Land. He brings the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, and gathers materials for the building of the Temple. At the time of his death he leaves the nation secure, prosperous and righteous. Except for the early years of the reign of his son, Solomon, the nation will not be in this state again until the second coming of Christ, “David’s greater Son,” at the end of the age.

II Chronicles

The Book of II Chronicles records the history of the Southern Kingdom, from the reign of Solomon to the return from Babylonian captivity, where the Book of Ezra takes up the story. It essentially recapitulates the history of I and II Kings, except that it is exclusively the story of the kings of Judah. By concentrating exclusively on David’s descendants, the human ancestry of Jesus, II Chronicles points us to David’s Greater Son, the Messiah to come.

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Outline Summary of the Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles

I and II Samuel — Last of the Judges, King Saul, and King David

 I Samuel — Eli to Saul’s Death

 II Samuel — David as King, to His Death

I and II Kings — **Kings of Israel and Judah** from David’s Death to the Captivity

I Kings — Kings of Israel and Judah from the death of David to the death of Ahab and Jehoshaphat

II Kings — Kings of Israel and Judah from Ahaziah and Jehoram to the Captivity

I and II Chronicles — **Kings of Judah (Only)**, from the Death of Saul to the Return from Babylon

I Chronicles — Genealogy and the Reign of David

II Chronicles — Reign of Solomon to the Return from Babylon

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