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## GROUP DISCUSSION

The Books of 1 and 2 Kings picks up with the reign of the 3<sup>rd</sup> king of Israel Solomon. This book follows directly from the book of 2 Samuel and continues the story of the monarchy. These books are a type of historical narrative written with a focus on theology. Or to put it another way, it shows how Israel's leaders relate to God and the covenant he has established with them.

**Interpretive Key:** 1-2 Kings are a tragic 400-year history of how poorly the Hebrew kings kept God's covenant.

### OLD COVENANT (TESTAMENT)

Abraham's Covenant – (Gen 12:1-3) – Blessing to the world through one family.

Moses' Covenant – (Dt 28-30) – The family is rescued from Egypt and made into a nation.

David's Covenant – (2Sm 7:12-13) – The line of King David identified as blessing-carrier.

### NEW COVENANT (TESTAMENT)

New Covenant – (Jer 31:31-37) – Enablement of blessing (Jesus' Covenant)

**Read:** 1 Kings 2:1-4 & 10-12

Soloman's father had nearly been overthrown by another son so on his death bed David locks in the kingdom's succession to Solomon.

**Read:** 1 Kings 3:1-15

**Question:** What stands out to you in these verses?

Something interesting to notice about this passage is that the first thing that happens is that Solomon marries a foreign queen, not uncommon for a king to do in the ancient world but notice that the alliance that is formed is with Egypt. The author is subtly telling you that Solomon is getting something wrong by breaking the covenant and trusting in Egypt while at the same time doing something right by asking to be a wise king.

Solomon goes on to build an amazing temple for God.

**Read:** 1 Kings 6:11-13 & 6:37-7:1

Notice again Solomon is honoring God but the author calls out his selfish ambition as well.

**Read:** Deuteronomy 17:14-19

**Question:** Based on the Deuteronomy passage where is Solomon failing?

**Read:** 1 Kings 9:1-9

God visits Solomon one final time.

**Read:** 1 Kings 11:9-13

Later in chapter 11, we read that Solomon died after ruling for 40 years.

Solomon's son Rehoboam is a foolish leader and steps into a difficult conflict with Jeroboam which ends up splitting the nation into upper Israel and lower Judah.

Jeroboam leader in the north ends up setting up Golden Calves so that the people no longer need to travel into Jerusalem in Judeah to worship. (Chapter 12)

From this point forward in the story, we see the northern kingdom has nothing but bad kings. Mostly the same is true in the south with some exceptions.

Israel – The North	Judah – The South
20 kings	19 kings, 1 queen
9 ruling dynasties (charismatic leadership)	2 ruling dynasties (Davidic succession)
Approx 927-722	Approx 926-586 (130+ yrs)
Defeated by Assyrians 722	Defeated by Babylonians 587/586
Avg reign – 10 years	Avg reign - 17 years
7 assassinations, 1 suicide	5 assassinations
1 “stricken by God”	2 “stricken by God”
1 captured during Assyrian evil	3 exiled to foreign lands
All judged “evil” (ex: Ahab & Jezebel)	8 judged “good” (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Hezekiah, Josiah)

We see that Solomon’s reign is a paradigm for the rules that will follow with the subtle question being asked by the reader. Will this next king be the one?

You will see prophets like Elijah rise up in chapter 17 and try to direct the people back to God and his showdown with 400 prophets of a pagan God in chapter 18. In 2 Kings 2 he is taken up into heaven and his protégée Elisha takes on his mantle to continue to challenge the leaders to return to the covenant of God. He will heal people of diseases and even raise someone from the dead, but the leadership of the country will not follow his advice.

Starting in chapter 12 you can read the first few verses of each of the following chapters and see that it tells you pretty quickly what kind of king you will read about in that chapter.

**Read:** Quickly choose a few of those chapters and read the open to them.

**Read:** 2 Kings 25:27-30.

Kings ends with a glimmer of hope looking forward and continuing to ask the question when will the great promised king in the line of David come.

The story of the Kings is one of a people who are unable to keep the covenant with God and ultimately suffer the consequences of their decisions.

**Questions:**

Why is it so tempting for people to put their hope in human government?

Why is it tempting to blame issues in society on the political leadership?

Most political figures promise that they can bring about a utopian vision if given control. How do the books of 1 and 2 Kings give perspective to those promises?