

A simple outline of the book of Kings might look like this:

- I. The United Kingdom 1 Kings 1-11
- II. Israel and Judah 1 Kings 12--2 Kings 17
- III. Judah 2 Kings 18-25

Some offer this outline:

- I. Solomon 1 Kings 1-11
- II. The early Divided Monarchy 1 Kings 1--16:28
- III. Alliance between Israel and Judah 1 Kings 16:29 -  
2 Kings 9:37
- IV. The End of Israel 2 Kings 10-17
- V. The End of Judah 2 Kings 18-25

At any rate you can see the amount of material covered is very large and the kingships of each king might be a course in itself. Heavily featured are the prophets through whom God spoke at this time...not all are named but the prophetic action is very significant. The use of the law in both kingdoms is also instructive.

In the history of redemption, Kings presents to God's people his view of their history. It illustrates the failure of Israel to keep the covenant by describing the nations failures in and through the person of the king (who serves as the representative of the nation). Kings relies heavily on Deuteronomy for its theological interpretation of Israel's history and its expression of that interpretation (see Dt. 7,9,11; note especially 11:22-24). What this book shows most consistently is that Israel and Judah forsook the "way of life" (the Lord) and went after foreign gods. This continual failure (the trend of the book is pessimistic and downhill in spite of bright spots, such as Josiah's reform) only emphasizes Israel's need for her true King who would rule in righteousness and after the manner of David, the standard for all who followed after him.

The building of the Temple by Solomon is the beginning of the centralization of worship at Jerusalem. Before this the people worship at the high places with no negative repercussions (see 1 Sam. 9:12-13 and 1 Kings 3:2-4). After the Temple's construction the presence or destruction of the high places serves as the yardstick for a king's attitude toward God in the southern kingdom. Similarly the building of the golden calves indicates Jeroboam's attitude toward God in the northern kingdom.

Some interesting questions develop in Kings. When the length of the kings' reigns in the northern and southern kingdoms are added separately, there is an apparent discrepancy of at least one generation. How is this reconciled? What is the interrelationship of the prophets (Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, etc.,) the Temple, and the throne? Did God condone the actions of men like Jehu -2 Kings 9-10? What is the Book of the Law found in Josiah's day? How are the promises to David (2 Sam.7) related to the fate of David's kingdom?

Archaeology offers many points of confirmation in Kings. Items that are corroborated or illustrated. The Temple of Solomon follows the architectural and construction techniques of Phoenician temples from the same general time period. Even the use of pomegranates, palm trees, and wheeled carts for decoration are similar to the Phoenician temples. Solomon's income of 666 talents of gold (about twenty tons) was once dismissed as hyperbole, but in