

INTRODUCTION

COMPOSITION

The composition of 1 and 2 Kings has generated much debate. The questions of author, date, and nature of the composition are complex. A detailed exposition of the issues involved would go well beyond the scope of this introduction. The following discussion will lay out some of the assumptions of this commentary's approach to Kings.

Current views of the composition of Kings have been most influenced by the publication of Martin Noth's seminal work on the Deuteronomistic History (abbreviated DtrH, Deuteronomy and Joshua through 2 Kings).¹ Scholars have generally viewed this literary corpus as a unified composition. In contrast with earlier approaches that set out to identify preliterate sources or viewed the separate books as individual compositions with redactional layers, Noth saw this material as a unified work of a single author, whom he named the Deuteronomist (Dtr). Dtr composed his theological history of Israel in the Babylonian exile, not long after the release of Jehoiachin from prison ca. 560 B.C. For Noth, the similar language and style of the various books suggest the unity of the composition. After Noth, other scholars, while accepting in broad outline Noth's thesis, have seen redactional layers in DtrH. One popular theory, (the "Double Redaction" theory of Frank Moore Cross²), hypothe-

¹For an English translation of the part of Noth's work dealing with DtrH, see Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSup 15 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981; 2nd reworked ed., 1991). The original German edition was published in 1943. For more detailed summaries of the history of interpretation of DtrH, see Steven L. McKenzie, "Deuteronomistic History," in *ABD*; Flemming A.J. Nielsen, *The Tragedy in History: Herodotus and the Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSup 251, Copenhagen International Seminar 4 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 85-97.

²Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History*

sizes that DtrH as it stands is composed of two separate editions, one from the time of Josiah and an updated version from the exile.

Aspects of Noth's thesis, particularly the view that Deuteronomy is a product of the exile, are inconsistent with a conservative view of Scripture. It also does not necessarily follow that similar themes, theological slant, and literary style indicate that Joshua through 2 Kings is the product of a single author.³ At the same time, however, a literary analysis of Kings suggests that the book is the product of an author, not a redactor(s).⁴ Recognizing that sources were used and that works like Deuteronomy lie in the background of the composition, it is inconceivable that the sophisticated literary work that is Kings is the product of a redactor(s) who spliced together strands and episodes of pretexts to form the composition.

For example, the commentary on 1 Kings 20 below will show the storyteller using allusions to Deuteronomy 7:1-3 and the conquest of Jericho (Joshua 2, 6) to frame his account of Ahab's wars with Ben-Hadad and the subsequent judgment on Ahab by an unnamed prophet. Ahab displays mercy to and makes a covenant with Ben-Hadad, who had been dedicated (חֲרֵם, *hērem*) to Yahweh, as had the people of Jericho (cf. Deut 7:1-3). The allusions reinforce the judgment on Ahab and say that the king of Israel should have known better than to make a covenant with the dedicated-to-Yahweh king of Aram — as he should have known not to marry the Canaanite Jezebel. In Deuteronomy 7:1-3, Moses instructed Israel not to make covenants with, show mercy to, or marry the people of the land, who were to be totally destroyed (*hērem*). For purposes of this discussion, it is important to observe that the allusions in 1 Kings 20 cross pro-

of the Religion of Israel (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 274-289.

³See James E. Smith, *1 & 2 Samuel*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2000), p. 17.

⁴For a critique of redactional views of DtrH, see Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History, Part 2: 1 Samuel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), pp. 11-13; Nielsen, *Tragedy in History*, pp. 96-97; Burke O. Long, *1 Kings: With an Introduction to Historical Literature*, vol. 9, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), pp. 16-21; Pauline A. Viviano, "Glory Lost: The Reign of Solomon in the Deuteronomistic History," in *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*, ed. Lowell K. Handy (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 336-337.

posed redactional boundaries, between a battle narrative and a prophet story, and indicate the narrative is a unified composition (see comments on 1 Kings 20). This example, which represents the use of only one technique in the composition, implies that Kings is the product of an author. The idea of a redactor is incompatible with the sophisticated use of allusion that characterizes this narrative.⁵

For the date of the book, Kings must have been written shortly after the release of Jehoiachin from prison in Babylon around 560 B.C. An exilic date means that the composition has been framed to address the situation of the exile.⁶ As the inspired storyteller makes clear, sources were used to compose the history (e.g., “the book of the annals of Solomon” [1 Kgs 11:41], “the book of the annals of the kings of Israel” [14:19], and “the book of the annals of the kings of Judah” [14:29]), but the theological narrative is crafted to answer issues important to an exilic audience, the dominant question being: “How does one explain the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in light of Yahweh’s promise of an eternal throne for David (2 Samuel 7)?” Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple is one good place to see this dimension of the narrative. While the author indicates that his history is based on reliable sources (see comments on 1 Kgs 8:13), the episode is clearly retold for an exilic audience. The emphasis on prayer toward the temple (not sacrifices

⁵Serge Frolov’s recent literary analysis of the succession narrative (i.e., much of 2 Samuel and 1 Kings 1–2) reflects current trends in the interpretation of DtrH and reinforces the position taken here. He concludes that the “subdivision [of DtrH] into fragmented narrative substrate and Deuteronomistic redactional layer(s) is not sufficiently warranted” (“Succession Narrative: A ‘Document’ or a Phantom?” *JBL* 12/1 [2002]: 104).

⁶A postexilic date for Kings DtrH, and much of the Hebrew Bible in the Hellenistic period is currently popular (see, e.g., Nielsen, *Tragedy*, p. 164), but unlikely (see, e.g., William G. Dever’s critique of this position in *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001], pp. 273–276). A date for Kings in the early postexilic period is more plausible (so, e.g., Solomon’s prayer is a call to pray toward a reconstructed temple in Jerusalem), but the fact that the conclusion of Kings does not know the edict of Cyrus (cf. 2 Chr 36:22–23; see Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], p. 161) and that passages like 2 Kgs 8:1–6 appear to offer hope that Israel’s inheritance might be returned, imply an exilic date for the composition.

at the temple) would have particular meaning for the exiles (see comments on 1 Kings 8).⁷ In the New Testament, a similar purpose explains some of the differences between the Gospel of John and the Synoptics. For example, the fact that there are no Sadducees in John may be reasonably explained when one recalls that the Gospel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, when the Pharisees dominated Judaism (the Sadducees receding into the background after the destruction of the temple). In this situation, John retells the story of Jesus in such a way that a polemic is set up between the ministry of Jesus and the Pharisees, who also represent the Jewish leaders of John's day. In his account, John selectively highlights the role that the Pharisees play in opposition to the ministry of Jesus, as the author of Kings highlights prayer in the account of the dedication of the temple.⁸ The book of Chronicles also demonstrates how the same underlying history of Israel can be recast for another historical situation to answer additional questions. In the case of Chronicles, the composition is addressing for a postexilic audience whether Yahweh still cares for Judah. Recognizing an exilic audience for the story of Kings will help readers see many of the theological implications of the narrative.

The assumption of this commentary is that Kings was composed by a literary artist, an author, in the exile (probably in Babylon), sometime in the mid-sixth century B.C.⁹ In light of this assumption, this person will be named "storyteller/narrator" (even in sections which are not dramatized) and "author/writer" through the course of the commentary.

⁷Gary N. Knoppers contends that Solomon's prayer is a late preexilic (i.e., from the time of Josiah's reforms) attempt to connect the king, the city, and the temple in a way that "bolsters the power of [the temple] by centralizing prayer" ("Prayer and Propaganda: Solomon's Dedication of the Temple and the Deuteronomist's Program," in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000], p. 374, cf. pp. 370-396). While he makes some cogent arguments, the most reasonable view is that 1 Kings 8 is framed for an exilic audience.

⁸See Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (i-xii)*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 29 (New York: Doubleday, 1966), pp. lxx-lxxv.

⁹Cf. T.R. Hobbs, 2 *Kings*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 13 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), p. xxxiii; Burke O. Long, *1 Kings*, p. 21.

CHRONOLOGY

One important aspect of Kings that deserves special comment is chronology. The narratives of the kings of Judah and Israel are set in a chronological frame that provides structure to the composition. With each king, regnal notices give the length of the king's reign, a synchronism with the reign of the king in the corresponding kingdom, and for the kings of Judah the age of the king at his ascension to the throne. For the author of Kings, the attention to these details indicates his concern for chronology. However, the figures do not always add up.

There are in places inconsistencies between the lengths of reigns and the corresponding synchronisms.¹⁰ For example, Pekah began his reign in the fifty-second and final year of the reign of Azariah of Judah and reigned twenty years (2 Kgs 15:27). Following the death of Azariah, Jotham reigned in Judah sixteen years (15:33), followed by his son Ahaz (16:2). However, Pekah was slain by Hoshea in the twentieth year of Jotham (15:30), and 2 Kings 17:1 says that Hoshea began to reign in the twelfth year of Ahaz of Judah. On the surface, these data are contradictory. In another type of discrepancy, the years in the regnal notations for the reigns of the kings in one kingdom do not always add up to the reigns of the kings in the other kingdom. For example, the total years for the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel from the division of the kingdom in about 930 to the death of Ahaziah of Israel in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat (2 Kgs 3:1) should be the same, but the reigns for the kings of Judah add up to seventy-nine years and for the kings of Israel eighty-six years. In addition, on occasion there appears to be an inconsistency between the chronology in Kings and extrabiblical chronological information from surrounding states. In the records of Shalmaneser III, for example, references are made to Ahab's participation in the battle of Qarqar and twelve years later to tribute paid by Jehu. During the intervening period, the text in Kings documents the two-year reign of Ahaziah (2 Kgs 22:51) and the twelve-year reign of Joram (2 Kgs 3:1), which together eclipse the twelve years of the Assyrian records.

¹⁰For the following discussion, see Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications; Zondervan, 1983), pp. 43-60; cf. Dillard and Longman, *Introduction*, pp. 156-159.

Some of the discrepancies can be explained by understanding how reigns were calculated in the ancient Near East. In the accession-year system (or postdating), the reign of the king was not counted until the first New Year following the king's ascension. In the nonaccession-year system (or antedating), the king's reign was figured from the first day of his kingship. Since in the nonaccession-year system the king's accession year is counted twice (as part of the reign of the preceding king and the beginning of the reign of the new king), this system of dating adds one year to each reign. To further complicate the issue, in some states the new year began in the month of Nisan in the spring, in others in the month of Tishri in the fall. In the text of Kings, there is evidence to suggest that Israel and Judah for much of the period of the divided kingdom employed different systems of reckoning reigns, while for brief periods their procedures were the same. Thiele argues that from the division of the kingdom Israel employed the nonaccession-year system until the reign of Jehoash. From his reign until the fall of Samaria, the accession-year system was used. In Judah, the accession-year system was the procedure from Solomon to the reign of Jehoram. Under the influence of the house of Ahab, the nonaccession-year system was employed from the reign of Jehoram to Joash. From the reign of Amaziah until the fall of Jerusalem, regnal counting followed the accession-year system. The two kingdoms apparently also began their regnal years at different times.¹¹

Taking into account the additional year in the nonaccession-year system may resolve issues like some of the conflicting totals in the reigns of the kings of Judah versus the reigns of the kings of Israel. When the nonaccession-year counting is considered, the total reigns for the kings of Judah and Israel from the division of the kingdom to the death of Ahaziah are the same (seventy-nine years). Problems like the inconsistency between Kings and the record of Shalmaneser III for the period from the end of Ahab's reign to the reign of Jehu may also be resolved by factoring out the additional years. As a result, Ahaziah and Jotham ruled twelve actual years, which corresponds with the Assyrian records.¹² However, inconsistencies between the regnal notices and the synchronisms are often more difficult to

¹¹Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, pp. 51-60.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 49-51.

resolve. Thiele proposes coregencies (eight in all) and dual dating to solve such discrepancies. In the example of differences between the length of reigns and synchronisms cited above, the inconsistency in the statements about the length of Jotham's reign (that he reigned sixteen years [2 Kgs 15:33] and that he reigned twenty years [15:30]) may be explained by coregency. Thiele suggests the reasonable solution that Jotham was coregent with his son Ahaz during the last four years of his reign. But if this is accurate, it also means that the author of Kings is using "dual dating." The notation that Jotham reigned sixteen years must refer to his "official reign," whereas the reference to the twentieth year of Jotham encompasses his total reign, including the period when he was coregent with this father.¹³

Thiele's approach is not without its shortcomings. Some are uncomfortable with the fact that coregencies are usually inferred (not explicitly stated), and not everyone accepts the principle of dual dating.¹⁴ In the final analysis, there is no approach that is completely satisfying. While perhaps overstating the case somewhat, Dillard and Longman maintain the chronological notations in Kings "remain something of an enigma."¹⁵ Nevertheless, Thiele has contributed a plausible strategy for solving many, if not all, of the chronological difficulties in Kings. In the commentary below, specific issues of chronology will be addressed as they arise in the course of the discussion. The following chart is adapted from Thiele's outline of the chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel¹⁶ and may be used for reference.

¹³Jotham apparently was also coregent with his father Azariah for about ten years (during the time that Azariah was smitten with leprosy), which was counted as part of Jotham's official reign. For a more in-depth discussion of the chronological issues surrounding the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, and related issues (e.g., the difficulty with Pekah's twenty year reign in Israel), see *ibid.*, pp. 118-138; and comments on 2 Kgs 15:27-28.

¹⁴See Hobbs, *2 Kings*, pp. xlili-xliv; Gershon Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah*, Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East, ed. B. Halpern and M.H.E. Weippert (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 3-4; Dillard and Longman, *Introduction*, pp. 158-159.

¹⁵Dillard and Longman, *Introduction*, p. 159.

¹⁶Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, p. 10.

Dates of the Rulers of Judah and Israel

| Judah | B.C. | Israel | B.C. |
|--|----------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Rehoboam | 930-913 | Jeroboam I | 930-909 |
| Abijah | 913-910 | | |
| Asa | 910-869 | Nadab | 909-908 |
| | | Baasha | 908-886 |
| | | Elah | 886-885 |
| | | Zimri | 885 |
| | | Tibni | 885-880 |
| | | Omri | 885-874 |
| Jehoshaphat coregent | 872-869 | Ahab | 874-853 |
| Jehoshaphat total reign | 872-848 | Ahaziah | 853-852 |
| Jehoram coregent | 853-848 | Joram | 852-841 |
| Jehoram total reign | 853-841 | | |
| Ahaziah | 841 | Jehu | 841-814 |
| Athaliah | 841-835 | | |
| Joash | 835-796 | Jehoahaz | 814-798 |
| Amaziah | 796-767 | Jehoash | 798-782 |
| Azariah overlap with Amaziah | 792-767 | Jeroboam II coregency | 793-782 |
| Azariah (Uzziah) total reign | 792-740 | Jeroboam II total reign | 793-753 |
| | | Zechariah | 753 |
| | | Shallum | 752 |
| | | Menachem | 752-742 |
| Jotham coregency | 750-740 | Pekah | 752-732 |
| Jotham official years | 750-735 | Pekahiah | 742-740 |
| Jotham total years | 750-732 | | |
| Ahaz overlap with Jotham | 735-732 | | |
| Ahaz official years | 732-715 | Hoshea | 732-723 |
| <i>Hezekiah coregent</i> ¹⁷ | <i>729-715</i> | | |
| <i>Hezekiah sole reign</i> | 715-686 | | |
| Manasseh coregent | 696-686 | | |
| Manasseh total reign | 696-642 | | |
| Amon | 642-640 | | |
| Josiah | 640-609 | | |
| Jehoahaz | 609 | | |
| Jehoiakim | 609-598 | | |
| Jehoiachin | 598-597 | | |
| Zedekiah | 597-586 | | |

LITERARY ANALYSIS

In recent decades, scholars have rediscovered the literary dimension of the Old Testament. With the historical books (especially the

¹⁷Instead of coregency, Thiele posits an emendation by a late editor (at 2 Kgs 18:1-2,9-10) to explain apparent inconsistencies in the text (*ibid.*, pp. 135-136, 174-176). For the possibility of a coregency with Ahaz, see the introductory comments on 2 Kings 18-20.

Primary History, Genesis through 2 Kings), this has meant a deemphasis on historical questions and a turn toward issues of literary composition and style. The result has been that Hebrew narrative has emerged as an extremely well-crafted body of literature. In fact, many have been taken aback by the sophisticated nature of Hebrew storytelling. For that reason, the way biblical narratives are read has changed. Instead of relegating the narrative sections of the Old Testament to questions of history and background, for the more overtly theological sections of Scripture, scholars and lay people alike are reading these narratives more as stories (many in the church have intuitively read biblical narrative this way for centuries) – stories that are crafted for theological ends, to say something about God’s interaction with his creation in the story of Israel. Robert Alter even avers it well may be that it is only in reading Hebrew narratives as stories that readers are able “to see more clearly what they mean to tell us about God, man, and the perilously momentous realm of history.”¹⁸

As a result of the renewed emphasis on the literary dimension of Scripture, narrative criticism of the Hebrew Bible has described the techniques of storytelling employed by its authors. Adele Berlin describes her work on the poetics of biblical narrative as an effort to come up with the recipe (i.e., how the stories are told) for Bible stories.¹⁹ Hermeneutically, if one has the formula for storytelling in Scripture, he is going to be better able to discover the intent of the author.²⁰ Understanding the methods used by the storyteller gives

¹⁸Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. 189.

¹⁹Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, Bible and Literature Series, vol. 9 (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1983; reprint, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), p. 15 (page citations are to the original edition).

²⁰This view is not shared by everyone. Many place more emphasis on the reader in interpretation and question whether one can determine the intent of the author (see, e.g., Willem S. Vorster, “Readings, Readers, and the Succession Narrative: An Essay on Reception,” in *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism*, ed. Paul R. House, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, vol. 2 [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992], pp. 395-407). J.P. Fokkeman believes biblical texts were written to stand on their own, without the need to appeal to the author and his situation. According to Fokkeman, what is needed for responsible interpreta-

direction to the reader and militates against the indiscriminate use (i.e., out of context) of Old Testament stories as “illustrations” for New Testament sermons. It will also undermine the tendency to spiritualize or moralize from Old Testament stories.²¹ Hebrew narrative can be read on its own terms for determining what the inspired storyteller is saying about Israel’s history for an audience in exile – and as sacred Scripture for subsequent generations of believers. Because of the large amount of story in the composition, these understandings are important for a commentary on Kings. In fact, one can view Kings as being composed of dramatized stories (e.g., the Elijah/Ahab narrative, 1 Kgs 16:29–22:40) that are set in a chronological frame.²² Narrative criticism is essential for interpreting the stories, but even the frame (in which reigns are chronicled in exposition) displays “narrative” features. The narrator’s voice continues in the expository sections (occasionally interspersed with dialogue), which are also characterized by the same indirect style of the dramatized stories. For example, in the chronological frame apparently inconsistent statements are often juxtaposed, leaving the reader to draw the appropriate, often ironic, inferences and conclusions (see, e.g., comments on 14:25–28). As in the dramatized stories, meaning is conveyed indirectly.

The discussion now turns to summarize some of the more important techniques of composition that appear in Kings.²³ The narrative

tion is a “competent reader” (*Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide*, trans. Ineke Smit [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999], pp. 22–23). However, even if one considers the important role the reader plays in interpretation, meaning must be controlled by the text. Recognizing the sophisticated literary design in Hebrew stories directs the reader toward intentionality – since “design demands a designer!”

²¹See Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), pp. 157–187.

²²G. Michael Hagan, “First and Second Kings,” in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), p. 184.

²³For an introduction to narrative criticism of the Hebrew Bible, see Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*; Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*; Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative*; Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, JSOTSup 70 (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1989); Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987);

of Naaman's healing and the subsequent affliction of Gehazi will illustrate many of the conventions that are discussed.²⁴

Analysis of the recipe for Old Testament stories reveals that Hebrew narrative is scenic, moving from one scene to another with a scarcity of detail. Unlike modern forms of storytelling, there is little description of characters or scenes. When there is description, it is frequently significant. Readers are invited to create their own visual images, a technique which draws the reader into the story. Hebrew stories also display plot with narrative tension and structure (often in concentric [i.e., ABC/C'BA'] or parallel [ABC/AB'C'] patterns). Dialogue dominates, usually with two actors on the stage at one time. When dialogue appears, the pace of the narrative slows, and the narrated time corresponds with real time. The reader hears for himself; the story is not "told," but "shown." A careful reader takes notice when this happens, for, more often than not, the narrator will convey meaning in these dramatized scenes. In fact, one of the hallmarks of Hebrew narrative is its indirect style, where meaning is expressed obliquely through character speeches and actions — in other words, in a story. In the Naaman narrative (2 Kings 5), tension is created initially when Naaman is described as an Aramean leper, through whom Yahweh had given victory to Aram over Israel (5:1). Dialogue begins after only two verses of exposition, and the lack of detail in the narrative calls the reader to visualize the events of the story. A concentric structure begins with the introduction of the leper Naaman and ends with the leprous servant of Elisha, Gehazi (5:1,27).

Like other forms of good storytelling, the major characters in Hebrew narrative are often complex, true to life. Characters are developed by what they say (including inner speech) and do, what is said about them, and how they contrast/compare with other characters (or with themselves in other scenes). Often, character speeches and actions are ambiguous. The reader experiences the character as one does in real life, observing what they say and what they do — invited to draw evaluative conclusions about the character's persona in relation to other characters and the God of the story. Tension

David M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, The Oxford Bible Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²⁴For a more detailed literary analysis of the Naaman narrative, see comments on 2 Kings 5.

created by the ambiguity may intensify when characters reflect different points of view.

Point of view is a technique the storyteller often uses for dynamic effect. In what they say and how they act, both major and minor characters reflect differing perspectives, which give the stories more depth. Also, like a camera, the narrator's telling eye often moves to narrate a story from different perspectives, sometimes in a panoramic view, at other times watching a character perform, even at times within a character revealing his inner thoughts (i.e., inner life). At all times, the omniscient narrator is in control. While a reader may question whether the statement of a character is true, statements by the narrator are reliable.²⁵ Whether in exposition or through character actions and dialogue, the narrator orchestrates events. He may even intentionally leave gaps in the story to further draw the reader into the narrative. Consequently, it is in and through the story that the narrator indirectly projects his own ideological point of view.²⁶ With Naaman, the storyteller highlights the contrasting perspectives of the various characters in the story and focuses especially on the point of view of Naaman. He even leaves a gap in the narrative as to Elisha's motivation for not receiving the Aramean, allowing the reader to see things from Naaman's point of view (5:9-12). The change in the foreign commander's perspective is a crucial aspect of the story. Through Naaman, the ideological point of view of the author is also verbalized: "there is no God in all the world except in Israel" (5:15).

Another hallmark of Hebrew storytelling is repetition. Repeated actions and speeches (by characters or by the narrator) may indicate

²⁵Some question whether the narrator is always reliable (cf. David M. Gunn, "New Directions in the Study of Biblical Hebrew Narrative," in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, vol. 8 [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000], pp. 566-577).

²⁶In some narrative works, it is important to distinguish between the actual author and the implied author/narrator (also the actual audience and implied audience). For example, C.S. Lewis is the author of both *The Screwtape Letters* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, but each one has a different narrator (analogy suggested by David Shelburne, a Lubbock Christian University graduate student). However, since this distinction is not made with Hebrew narrative (i.e., the Primary History), the author and the implied author/narrator, for all practical purposes, are one and the same.

emphasis. Sometimes dialogue is even repeated by the narrator, which may serve to highlight the statement or point of view of a character. Subtle changes in repeated phrases may also be significant. The repetition of key words (technically designated *Leitwörter*), motifs, and themes is an especially important technique. Often the ideological stance of the narrative will not be too far from a cluster of repeated words or themes. In the story of Naaman, a “great/little” motif serves the storyteller to characterize Naaman, as the “great” commander is healed only when he becomes “little” in his own eyes and submits. His flesh becomes that of a “little” boy (5:14). This motif also calls attention to the important role that contrast often plays in Hebrew storytelling. The contrast between the “great” commander and the “little” girl (and the “great woman,” the Shunammite, in ch. 4) establishes a frame for evaluating the character of Naaman and the change that he undergoes in the narrative. By the end of the story, however, the reader discovers that the most glaring contrast is between Naaman and Elisha’s servant Gehazi. With structural irony,²⁷ the storyteller by contrast casts Gehazi as the outsider. At the end of the narrative, the servant of Elisha leaves unclean, with Naaman’s leprosy (5:27).

The characterization of Gehazi illustrates another literary technique that the author of Kings uses for maximum effect. When Gehazi takes silver and clothing from Naaman and hides them in his house, he mirrors the actions of Achan, who took gold, silver, and clothing and hid them beneath his tent (Josh 7:19-21). The allusion frames the actions of Gehazi and serves to characterize him negatively. Later, when four lepers take gold, silver, and clothing from the Aramean camp and hide them (2 Kgs 7:8), both the story of Achan and Gehazi are actualized in such a way that their actions call attention to Yahweh’s unseen actions in the story. According to Elisha’s prophecy, the windows of heaven open, and the city of Samaria is blessed with bounty from the Arameans (7:1-2,17-20). When Gehazi emerges without leprosy in 8:1-6, the preceding scenes resurface to raise the hope of restoration for an exilic audi-

²⁷Brandon L. Fredenburg delineates three kinds of irony in Hebrew Scripture, “verbal, dramatic, and structural,” and describes how they are intentionally used in the Ahab narrative (“With Horns of Irony: The Implications of Irony in the Narrative of Ahab’s Reign [1 Kings 16:29–22:40],” (Ph.D. diss., University of Denver and The Iliff School of Theology, 2003)).

ence. All of this is accomplished with the use of intratextual (within Kings) and intertextual allusions (with texts outside of Kings).

The use of allusion as a technique of composition is important for the overall purposes of the storyteller. Allusions to antecedent narratives enable the author of Kings to situate and frame characters and events in light of earlier stories in the sacred history. This has the effect of giving additional commentary on the story of kingship in Judah and Israel and guides the reader in interpretation.²⁸ In Kings, allusions frame characters (and their stories) as follows: Adonijah//Absalom; Solomon//Moses, and then Pharaoh in his harsh rule; Rehoboam//Pharaoh, as he follows in his father's footsteps; Jeroboam//Moses, and then Aaron as he sets up golden calves; Elijah//Joshua/Moses; Elisha//Elijah/Joshua; Ahab//Saul/Achan; Naboth//Achan, in the way he was executed; Gehazi//Achan; Hezekiah//David; Manasseh//Ahab; Josiah//Solomon/Moses, and Ahab when he humbles himself; Jehoiachin//Joseph, and Joash as the one who carries the Davidic promise (see comments on the various stories for specific allusions). The larger pattern suggests that the storyteller (in dialogue with Deuteronomy) deliberately set out to frame the story of kingship in Israel with the Exodus and conquest narratives. Israel lost her right to the land and was dispossessed like the Canaanites. In addition, the account of the house of Ahab and the subsequent decline and fall of Samaria frame the fall of Judah and Jerusalem.²⁹ As Joash survived the destruction of the

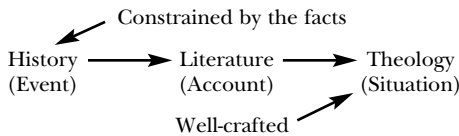
²⁸Dennis Ronald MacDonald describes the "transvaluation" of aspects of Homeric epic in the *The Acts of Andrew*, where through allusion values in the earlier texts are replaced in the subsequent text ("Is There a Privileged Reader? A Case from the Apocryphal Acts," *Semeia* 71 [1995]: 32). While the author of Kings does not use antecedent texts in the same way as does the author of *The Acts of Andrew* (cf. pp. 30-33), the use of allusion in both documents appears to represent an ancient technique of composition.

²⁹George Savran observes that the larger composition of 1 and 2 Kings is concentric, with the account of the Omride dynasty at the center of the composition ("1 and 2 Kings," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode [Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987], pp. 148-149). Since a concentric structure highlights what is at the center, the story of the Omrides stands out in Kings, in part for the defeat of Baal worship and the role of prophecy in Israel. But through the narrator's use of allusion, the account of the Omrides also frames the events to follow, which demonstrates a sophisticated literary strategy for Kings.

house of Ahab (which was linked to the house of David), so Jehoiachin survives the judgment on the house of David. When he is released from prison in exile, hope is rekindled that the promise to David of an eternal throne (2 Samuel 7) might yet be fulfilled.

The impact on reading is profound. Recognizing the literary dimension of Hebrew narrative, including Kings, suggests that meaning is usually found in reading the larger context. The text creates its own world for interpretation as speeches, actions, and statements by the narrator have meaning in context with other speeches, actions, and statements by the narrator – within Kings and in the larger canon. It also means that the underlying events are selectively retold in order to achieve theological goals. The ensuing commentary will demonstrate the sophisticated literary design of the narrative of Kings. However, recognizing this aspect of the composition does not preclude reading the narratives as good history. V. Phillips Long adeptly defends reading Hebrew narrative as both good literature and reliable history. In his discussion, he describes the dynamic interplay of what he names the three “impulses” of Hebrew narrative: history, literature, and theology.³⁰ The relationship between these three aspects of the text is represented in the following diagram:

The Dimensions of Hebrew Narrative



Describing Hebrew narrative as “representational” (as opposed to “nonrepresentational” art forms), Long believes that the authors of these narratives were “in some measure” constrained by the facts of Israel’s history.³¹ At the same time, however, they framed Israel’s his-

³⁰V. Phillips Long, “The Art of Biblical History,” in *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, ed. Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), p. 327. Long is responding to Alter’s characterization of Hebrew narrative as “fictionalized history” and “historicized fiction,” p. 321; cf. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, pp. 24-25).

³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 325-327.

tory in a well-crafted account of events. The two ideas (i.e., good literature and reliable history) are not mutually exclusive. And, most important, even though they are cast as stories, these narratives are theological compositions, written for the purpose of addressing questions about Yahweh's relationship with Israel. The diagram brings out the dynamic relationship the text maintains with the underlying history (as the authors are "constrained" by the facts) and indicates that its theological purposes are enabled by the nature of the literature, as well-crafted narrative. Without the creative way the story of kingship is recounted in Kings, it would simply be a chronicle of selected events in the history of Israel. Instead, it is a brilliant literary composition and a theological masterpiece that answers fundamental questions about Yahweh's commitment to his people after the fall of Jerusalem.

In this commentary, these three dimensions of the text will be kept before the reader. The discussion will highlight the literary dimension of the narrative, which has too often been overlooked. At the same time, historical issues and background information from archaeology and Near Eastern studies will be discussed in order to maintain the important connection with the underlying events. But the goal is theological. Attention to the situation of an exilic audience will direct the modern reader to the questions of the narrative and, by extension, to important theological meanings for the people of God in any generation.

THEOLOGY

Recognizing that the narrative of Kings was skillfully written to address important theological questions for a Judean audience in exile enables a modern reader to draw out of the text several important themes. From this brilliantly conceived and well-executed story of kingship in Israel, the following theological issues stand out:

1) Kings is clearly a theodicy (i.e., an attempt to justify a troubling act of God), written in part to answer the question, "Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?" (1 Kgs 9:8). The answer in Kings is that Yahweh is not capricious; Israel and Judah are punished "because they have forsaken the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, and have embraced

other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why the LORD brought all this disaster on them” (9:9).

2) This answer, however, creates tension in the composition. Jerusalem is destroyed, and the descendants of Israel are exiled because they have broken covenant with Yahweh — but what about Yahweh’s promise to David that his house and his kingdom would be established and endure forever (2 Samuel 7)? This is the tension between the conditional Mosaic covenant and the unconditional Davidic covenant — the tension between law and grace. The Mosaic covenant provides the legal basis for the destruction of Jerusalem, but what about the covenant with David? An exilic audience knows what Yahweh has done to his house, the place where he caused his name to dwell. The underlying question of Kings is, “How can the covenant with David be unconditional? Will there be grace in the end for the exiles?”

3) In the process of wrestling with the tension between the two covenants, other theological issues emerge. One important theme that surfaces in the course of the story is the tension between the sovereignty of God and free will. While neat schemes of proof-texts may be marshaled to defend the complete sovereignty of God or, on the other hand, the free will the creator has bestowed on humans, the story of Kings affirms both ideas. Yahweh’s sovereign will is established in the course of Israel’s history, and the kings of Judah and Israel demonstrate free will in their choices to serve or not serve the God of Israel. This tension is maintained, for example, in the storyteller’s account of Solomon’s ascension to the throne (1 Kings 1–2). Indirectly, the narrator demonstrates that Solomon is Yahweh’s choice — that the God of Israel is working to keep his promise to David. However, the distance the storyteller keeps between Yahweh and the actions of Solomon indicates that the king’s executions (Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei; 1 Kings 2:13–46) to “establish” the kingdom “in his hand” are of his own volition.

4) An aspect of the tension between the sovereignty of God and free will is the question of how God works in the world. The narrative of Kings indicates that all of creation is at his disposal. In Kings, Yahweh works through and uses faithful kings (e.g., Josiah [2 Kings 23]), unfaithful/wicked kings (e.g., Baasha [1 Kings 15:33–16:7]), overzealous kings (e.g., Jehu [2 Kings 9–10]), faithful prophets (e.g., Elijah [2 Kings 1]), overzealous prophets (e.g., Elijah [1 Kings 21]),

unfaithful/“foreign” prophets (e.g., the old prophet from Bethel [1 Kings 13], Zedekiah and Ahab’s prophets [1 Kings 22]), lying prophets and lying spirits (e.g., Micaiah and the lying spirit [1 Kings 22]), foreign kings (e.g., Sennacherib [2 Kings 18–19]), and perhaps even foreign gods (e.g., Chemosh [2 Kings 3]) to do his bidding. The audience of Kings would be encouraged to know that Yahweh is Lord of history, the absolute ruler of heaven and earth who was in control of their situation in exile.

5) A prophet-fulfillment theme also runs through the narrative. Stories like the widow of Zarephath demonstrate the power of the prophetic word (1 Kings 17). The theme of the fulfillment of the word of Yahweh would be important for an exilic audience who, with the destruction of the temple and exile of the Davidic king, had reason to doubt God’s promises.³² At the same time, in the Elijah narrative especially, Kings introduces the idea of prophetic initiative and suggests that prophets of Yahweh are also flawed (1 Kings 17–19, 21; 2 Kings 1; see “Excursus: Elijah in Context, Literary Artistry for Theological Ends” below). Yet, even with imperfect prophets like Elijah, Yahweh’s words (and the words of his prophet) are fulfilled. The question of true and false prophecy may also underlie stories like the man of God from Judah in 1 Kings 13 and Micaiah and the lying spirit in 1 Kings 22. If so, the storyteller reiterates the criteria laid out by Moses in the “law of the prophet” (Deut 18:14–22; cf. 1 Kgs 22:28). Moreover, in the account of Jehu’s purge, the storyteller appears to address the misuse of the prophetic word, which still comes to pass. Jehu destroys the house of Ahab according to prophecy, but also appropriates the word of Elijah for his own political ends. Yahweh commends Jehu for carrying out his prophetic word and punishes the house of Jehu for his indiscretions (see comments on 2 Kings 9–10).

6) In line with the role the Mosaic covenant plays in Kings, the book of Deuteronomy lies behind the composition. Moses’ speeches in Deuteronomy frame statements and stories in Kings, often with Deuteronomic language and themes. Dillard and Longman write, “[The writer of Kings] takes laws that are unique to the book of Deuteronomy as the spectacles through which he assesses the his-

³²Dillard and Longman, *Introduction*, p. 164.

tory of the nation.”³³ For example, the “law of the king” in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 serves as a frame for reading the account of Solomon’s reign. When Solomon acquires horses, silver, gold, and wives, an informed reader recognizes that his actions run counter to the faithful king envisioned by Moses. But Kings (and the rest of DtrH) also provides commentary on Deuteronomy. When Elijah retreats to Sinai and then steps beyond the instructions of Yahweh in his judgment on Ahab (1 Kings 19, 21), the author of Kings extends (i.e., “applies”) the “law of the prophet” in Deuteronomy 18:14-22. Even faithful prophets of Yahweh can speak presumptuously. A prophet of Yahweh must be careful to speak only the words of Yahweh (see “Excursus: Elijah in Context, Literary Artistry for Theological Ends” below).³⁴

7) The author of Kings claims Yahweh alone is God. When, following the defeat of the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, the people cry, “The LORD—he is God!” (1 Kgs 18:39), and Naaman, after being healed of his leprosy, exclaims, “Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel” (2 Kgs 5:15), the theological stance of the author is verbalized. A related aspect of God’s nature is expressed when at the dedication of the temple Solomon says, “The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less the temple I have built!” (1 Kgs 8:27). With “name theology,” Solomon explains Yahweh’s presence in the house that he builds and calls on Yahweh to hear from heaven (8:29-30). A modern reader would say that Yahweh is omnipresent and omniscient. However, the theology of Kings is bigger than an apologetic claim about the supremacy of the God of Israel who rules (and hears) from heaven. The underlying message of the book is something more like the following: “Yahweh is not like the gods of the nations and should not be treated that way!” The mistake Israel and her kings make is in becoming like the nations they were to dispossess from the Promised Land. This happens when they emulate

³³Ibid., p. 162.

³⁴Gary N. Knoppers claims that Dtr’s “use of Deuteronomy is sophisticated hermeneutically.” He is “an independent author who often goes his own way” in his application of Deuteronomy to the history of Israel (“Solomon’s Fall and Deuteronomy,” in *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*, ed. Lowell K. Handy [Leiden: Brill, 1997], p. 409; see comments on 1 Kings 11:1-10).

Canaanite lifestyle and become enmeshed in idolatry. But their idolatry is not displayed primarily in worshiping other gods; it is in having an idolatrous attitude toward their own God, Yahweh. For them, he becomes just another god, an idol created in Israel's own image – who can be manipulated and controlled by appropriate ritual and religious service (see comments on 2 Kings 23). If Kings says anything about Israel's God, it says that he is not a God who can be directed, or over whom one can have power. Those who would call on the God of Abraham, Moses, and David must submit and listen to him!

8) The plot of Kings demonstrates that kingship, as an institution, does not deliver. But the underlying message is even more pointed. Not only does kingship not deliver, when a son of David is raised up who repents and faithfully restores the covenant, Yahweh's wrath is not assuaged. In Kings, Josiah is the loyal son, a Moseslike king who reestablishes the covenant with Yahweh. But even a righteous king is not able to undo the coming judgment. In a premature death, Josiah receives a measure of grace, but Judah and Jerusalem will experience the wrath of Yahweh (see comments 2 Kings 22–23). By implication, *repentance* and covenant *restoration*, in and of themselves, do not save. While Kings lauds the reformers among the kings of Judah (cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 15:9-15) and calls on an exilic audience to repent and turn to Yahweh (see comments on 1 Kings 13–14), the message of the book is that Yahweh is the one who saves. Recognizing that Moses said Yahweh would bring them back to the land and circumcise their hearts to love him (Deut 30:6), so an audience in exile must wait on Yahweh to deliver.

9) The release of Jehoiachin (meaning “Yahweh will establish”) from prison at the end of the book indicates that there is grace in the end. Yahweh has not forgotten his promise to “establish” the throne of David forever (see comments on 2 Kgs 25:27-30). In the tension between the Mosaic and Davidic covenants, between law and grace, God's people should repent and look for grace. The Christian knows that, in due time, grace comes in David's greatest son, Jesus!

OUTLINE

I. THE STORY OF SOLOMON – 1:1-11:43

A. Solomon Becomes King – 1:1-53

1. King David's Powers Wane – 1:1-4
2. Adonijah Wants to Be King – 1:5-10
3. Has Adonijah Become King? – 1:11-14
4. Bathsheba Approaches the King – 1:15-21
5. Nathan the Prophet Approaches the King – 1:22-27
6. King David Confirms His Oath – 1:28-31
7. King David Acts – 1:32-37
8. Solomon Is Anointed King – 1:38-40
9. Jonathan Reports to Adonijah – 1:41-49
10. Adonijah Fears for His Life – 1:50-53

B. Solomon's Kingdom Is Established – 2:1-46

1. David Charges Solomon – 2:1-9
2. David Dies, and Solomon's Kingdom Is Established – 2:10-12
3. Adonijah Asks for Abishag – 2:13-18
4. Solomon Eliminates Adonijah – 2:19-25
5. Solomon Exiles Abiathar – 2:26-27
6. Solomon Eliminates Joab – 2:28-35
7. Solomon Makes an Oath to Shimei – 2:36-38
8. Solomon Eliminates Shimei; The Kingdom Is Established in Solomon's Hand – 2:39-46

Excursus: The Succession Story Viewed in Context (1:1-2:46).

C. Yahweh Gives Solomon Wisdom and More – 3:1-5:18

1. Solomon's Reign Is Framed – 3:1-3
2. Solomon Asks for a Discerning Heart – 3:4-15
3. Solomon Demonstrates His Wisdom – 3:16-28
4. Solomon Rules over All Israel – 4:1-20
5. Solomon Rules the Nations – 4:21-25
6. Solomon Multiplies Horses – 4:26-28
7. Solomon's Fame Spreads – 4:29-34

8. Solomon Prepares to Build Yahweh's House — 5:1-18

D. The Promise of a House for Yahweh Is Fulfilled —

6:1-8:66

1. Solomon Builds a House for Yahweh — 6:1-38
2. Solomon Builds His House — 7:1-12
3. Solomon Furnishes Yahweh's House — 7:13-51
4. The Ark of the Covenant Is Brought to the Temple — 8:1-13
5. Solomon Blesses Israel — 8:14-21
6. Solomon Prays for Mercy — 8:22-53
7. Solomon Blesses Israel Again — 8:54-61
8. Solomon and the People Sacrifice and Celebrate — 8:62-66

Excursus: Solomon's Temple Viewed in Context

E. Solomon Is Blessed with Tarnished Treasures —

9:1-10:29

1. Yahweh Appears to Solomon Again — 9:1-9
2. Solomon Builds His Kingdom — 9:10-28
3. The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon — 10:1-13
4. Solomon Accumulates Wealth — 10:14-29

F. Solomon Turns Away from Yahweh — 11:1-43

1. Solomon's Wives Turn His Heart — 11:1-13
2. Yahweh Raises up Adversaries against Solomon — 11:14-40
3. Solomon Sleeps with His Fathers — 11:41-43

II. THE STORY OF JEROBOAM'S APOSTACY — 12:1-14:20

A. Jeroboam Receives the Kingdom — 12:1-24

1. Israel Asks Rehoboam for Relief — 12:1-5
2. Rehoboam Listens to His Young Friends — 12:6-15
3. Rehoboam Rejects Israel's Request — 12:16-24

B. Jeroboam Sins against Yahweh — 12:25-33

C. The Prophet from Judah Curses the Altar in Bethel and Is Cursed — 13:1-34

1. The Word of the Lord Is Delivered in Bethel — 13:1-10
2. The Prophet from Judah Is Deceived — 13:11-19
3. The Word of the Lord Judges the Prophet from Judah — 13:20-25
4. The Prophet from Bethel Buries the Man of God — 13:26-32
5. Jeroboam Does Not Repent — 13:33-34

D. Ahijah Prophesies against Jeroboam — 14:1-20

III. SOME KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL — 14:21–16:28**A. Kings of Judah Are Both Good and Bad — 14:21–15:24**

1. Rehoboam Does Evil in the Eyes of Yahweh — 14:21-31
2. Abijah Follows in His Father's Footsteps — 15:1-8
3. Asa Walks in the Way of David — 15:9-24

B. Kings of Israel Follow in the Sins of Jeroboam — 15:25–16:28

1. Baasha Rises Up against the House of Jeroboam — 15:25-32
2. Baasha Walks in the Way of Jeroboam — 15:33–16:7
3. The Dynasty of Baasha Is Consumed — 16:8-14
4. Zimri Is Replaced by Omri — 16:15-20
5. Omri Prevails and Becomes King — 16:21-28

IV. THE STORY OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA VERSUS THE HOUSE OF AHAB — 16:29–2 Kings 12:21[22]**A. Elijah Challenges Ahab — 16:29–19:21**

1. The Reign of Ahab Is Framed — 16:29-34
2. Elijah Declares a Drought — 17:1-7
3. Elijah Is Sustained by a Widow — 17:8-16
4. Elijah Raises the Widow's Son — 17:17-24
5. Elijah Meets Obadiah — 18:1-15
6. Elijah Battles the Prophets of Baal — 18:16-46
7. Elijah Retreats to Mount Horeb — 19:1-18
8. Elisha Is Called to Follow Elijah — 19:19-21

*Excursus: Elijah in Context: Literary Artistry for Theological Ends***B. Ahab Battles the King of Aram — 20:1-43**

1. The King of Aram Picks a Fight with Ahab — 20:1-12
2. Ahab Defeats the King of Aram — 20:13-34
3. The Word of Yahweh Condemns Ahab — 20:35-43

*Excursus: Ahab's Wars with Aram***C. Ahab Takes Possession of Naboth's Vineyard — 21:1-29**

1. Ahab and Jezebel Murder Naboth for His Vineyard — 21:1-16
2. The Word of Yahweh Censures Ahab and Elijah — 21:17-29

D. Yahweh's Word against Ahab Comes to Pass — 22:1-40

1. Micaiah Prophesies Ahab's Death — 22:1-28
2. Ahab Is Killed at Ramoth Gilead — 22:29-40

*Excursus: The Reign of Ahab (16:29–22:40)***E. Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah Are Contrasted — 22:41–2 Kings 1:18**

1. Jehoshaphat Walks in the Ways of His Father – 22:41-50
2. Ahaziah Walks in the Ways of His Parents – 22:51-53
3. Ahaziah Hears the Word of Yahweh from Elijah –
2 Kings 1:1-18

F. Elijah Is Replaced by Elisha – 2:1-25

1. Elijah Is Taken Up to Heaven – 2:1-18

Excursus: The Translation of Elijah in Context

2. Elisha Blesses the Waters of Jericho – 2:19-22
3. Elisha Curses Jeering Children – 2:23-25

G. Moab Rebels against Israel – 3:1-27

**H. Elisha Performs Miracles for the Small and Great –
4:1-8:6**

1. Elisha Rescues a Widow – 4:1-7
2. Elisha Blesses a Woman from Shunem – 4:8-37
3. Elisha Salvages Stew for a Company of Prophets –
4:38-41
4. Elisha Multiplies Bread for the People – 4:42-44
5. Elisha Blesses a Syrian Commander – 5:1-27
6. Elisha Makes an Axhead Float – 6:1-7
7. Elisha Captures the Army of Aram – 6:8-23
8. The Siege of Samaria Is Lifted by a Word from Elisha
– 6:24-7:20
9. The Shunammite Reports on Elisha's Great Deeds –
8:1-6

I. The House of Ahab Comes to an End – 8:7-10:36

1. Elisha "Anoints" Hazael – 8:7-15
2. Jehoram of Judah Is Defeated by Edom – 8:16-24
3. Ahaziah Joins Joram of Israel against Hazael – 8:25-29
4. Jehu Is Anointed King of Israel – 9:1-15
5. Jehu Assassinate Joram and Ahaziah – 9:16-29
6. Jehu Eliminates Jezebel – 9:30-37
7. Jehu Eliminates the Seventy Sons of the House of Ahab
– 10:1-11
8. Jehu Slaughters Relatives of Ahaziah and Those Who
Remain from the House of Ahab – 10:12-17
9. Jehu Destroys Baal in Israel – 10:18-28
10. The Reign of Jehu Is Evaluated – 10:29-36

J. Revolt and Reform Revive Judah – 11:1-12:21[22]

1. The House of David Survives Athaliah – 11:1-21[12:1]
2. The Reign of Joash Ends Up Less than Solomon –
12:1[2]-21[22]

V. **KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH TO THE FALL OF SAMARIA** — 13:1–17:41

A. **Yahweh Blesses Jehoahaz and Jehoash of Israel** — 13:1-25

1. Jehoahaz Seeks Yahweh's Favor, But Does Not Turn from the Sins of Jeroboam — 13:1-9
2. Jehoash Does Not Turn from the Sins of Jeroboam — 13:10-13
3. Elisha Predicts Victory over Aram — 13:14-20a
4. The Bones of Elisha Revive the Dead — 13:20b-21
5. Yahweh Shows Compassion on Israel — 13:22-25

Excursus: Elisha in Context

B. **The Reign of Amaziah Foreshadows the End of Judah** — 14:1-22

1. Jehoash of Israel Defeats Amaziah of Judah — 14:1-14
2. The Reign of Jehoash Is Summarized — 14:15-16
3. The People of Judah Conspire against Amaziah — 14:17-22

C. **Yahweh Saves Israel through Jeroboam** — 14:23-29

D. **Yahweh Afflicts Azariah of Judah** — 15:1-7

E. **The Fortunes of Israel Decline Precipitously** — 15:8-31

1. The House of Jehu Falls with Zechariah — 15:8-12
2. Shallum Reigns One Month — 15:13-16
3. Menahem Gains Support from Assyria — 15:17-22
4. Pekahiah Reigns Two Years — 15:23-26
5. Pekah Reigns, and Assyria Exiles Israelites — 15:27-31

F. **Jotham Does Right in the Eyes of Yahweh** — 15:32-38

G. **Ahaz of Judah Follows the Kings of Israel** — 16:1-20

H. **Samaria Falls to Assyria** — 17:1-41

1. Hoshea Is Seized, and Samaria Is Captured — 17:1-6
2. Israel Is Exiled because of a Broken Covenant — 17:7-23
3. Samaria Is Resettled by Assyria — 17:24-41

VI. **THE STORY OF THE FINAL DAYS OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID** — 18:1–25:30

A. **The Promise of Hezekiah's Reform Turns Portentous for the Fortunes of Judah** — 18:1–20:21

1. Hezekiah "Trusts" in Yahweh and "Pays Off" the King of Assyria — 18:1-16
2. The King of Assyria Threatens Hezekiah and Defies the God of Judah — 18:17-37
3. Hezekiah Turns to Yahweh — 19:1-37

4. Yahweh Delivers Hezekiah from Illness – 20:1-11
5. Hezekiah Shows Off the Treasures of Judah – 20:12-21
- B. Manasseh and His Son Amon Secure Judah's Fate – 21:1-26**
 1. Manasseh Does Evil in the Eyes of Yahweh – 21:1-18
 2. Amon Walks in All the Ways of His Father – 21:19-26
- C. Josiah's Reforms Cannot Forestall the Fall of Judah – 22:1-23:30**
 1. The Book of the Law Is Found – 22:1-20
 2. Josiah Institutes Reforms and Renews the Covenant – 23:1-27
 3. Josiah Dies Unexpectedly – 23:28-30
- D. Yahweh's Promise to Destroy the City of David Is Realized – 23:31-25:30**
 1. The Exile of Jehoahaz to Egypt Foreshadows Judah's Captivity – 23:31-35
 2. Jehoiakim Rebels against the King of Babylon – 23:36-24:7
 3. Jehoiachin Is Exiled to Babylon – 24:8-17
 4. Zedekiah Rebels, and Jerusalem Falls – 24:18-25:26
 5. Jehoiachin Is Released in Babylon – 25:27-30