

*The eight sections of Kings:*

- *1 Kings 1:1–2:46 = The Davidic Succession*
- *1 Kings 3:1–11:43 = Solomon in all his glory*
- *1 Kings 12:1–13:34 = The political and religious schism*
- *1 Kings 14:1–16:34 = The two kingdoms until Elijah*
- *1 Kings 17:1 – 2 Kings 1:18 = The Elijah cycle*
- *2 Kings 2:1–13:25 = The Elisha cycle*
- *2 Kings 14:1–17:41 = The two kingdoms to the fall of Samaria*
- *2 Kings 18:1–25:30 = The last years of the kingdom of Judah*

*In David's old age, Adonijah proclaims himself his successor but Solomon's supporters arrange for David to proclaim Solomon as his successor, and so he comes to the throne after David's death. At the beginning of his reign he assumes God's promises to David and brings splendor to Israel and peace and prosperity to his people. The centerpiece of Solomon's reign is the building of the First Temple: the claim that this took place 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt marks it as a key event in Israel's history. At the end, however, he follows other gods and oppresses Israel.*

*As a consequence of Solomon's failure to extinguish the worship of gods other than Yahweh, the kingdom of David is split in two in the reign of his own son Rehoboam, who becomes the first to reign over the kingdom of Judah. Pretty much Solomon had soured the north on the keeping it in the family. Want another king like Solomon? "I don't think so."*

*The kings who follow Rehoboam in Jerusalem continue the royal line of David (i.e., they inherit the promise to David); in the north, however, dynasties follow each other in rapid succession, and the kings are uniformly bad (meaning that they fail to follow Yahweh alone). At length God brings the Assyrians to destroy the northern kingdom, leaving Judah as the sole custodian of the promise.*

*Hezekiah, the 14th king of Judah, does "what [is] right in the Lord's sight just as his ancestor David had done" and institutes a far reaching religious reform, centralizing sacrifice at the temple at Jerusalem and destroying the images of other gods. Yahweh saves Jerusalem and the kingdom from an invasion by Assyria. But Manasseh, the next king, reverses the reforms, and God announces that he will destroy Jerusalem because of this apostasy by the king. Manasseh's righteous grandson Josiah reinstates the reforms of Hezekiah, but it is too late: God, speaking through the prophetess Huldah, affirms that Jerusalem is to be destroyed after the death of Josiah.*

*In the final chapters, God brings the Neo-Babylonian Empire of King Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem; Yahweh deserts his people, Jerusalem is razed and the Temple destroyed, and the priests, prophets and royal court are led into captivity. The final verses record how Jehoiachin, the last king, is set free and given honor by the king of Babylon.*