

1 Kings

1 KINGS recounts the reign of King Solomon (forty years) and the following eighty-five years of the kingdom. It also tells of the spread of idolatry in the Northern Kingdom, in spite of the work of the prophet Elijah.

The Kingdom of God

The two books of Kings record the history of the 'Kingdom of God' in the past with its capital, Jerusalem. King David (chapter 1) and his son, Solomon (chapters 2–11) ruled a united kingdom, but decay set in after Solomon turned to idolatry (chapter 11).

After Solomon, the kingdom was divided. His son, Rehoboam, ruled the southern two tribes from Jerusalem – and his descendants

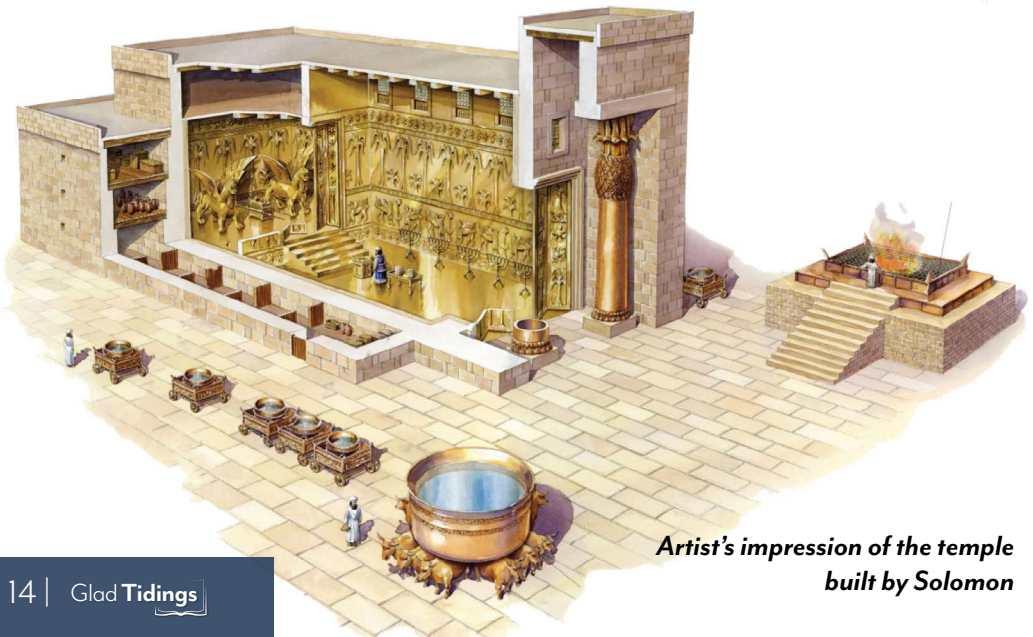
continued to do so. Various wicked kings ruled in the northern ten tribes, starting with a man called Jeroboam.

The Temple of God

The temple built by Solomon (chapters 5–8) was similar in design to the Tabernacle, though the sizes of the two main rooms were doubled and the number of lampstands and washing places (lavers) was now ten.

Built in a time of peace, this temple pointed forward to a future one, when the Kingdom of God will be restored in Israel – with Jesus Christ as king!

Yes, he shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on



Artist's impression of the temple built by Solomon

his throne; so he shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zechariah 6:13).

King Solomon

This great monarch was famed for his wisdom and wealth. The Queen of Sheba (southern Arabia) paid a state visit (chapter 10).

Solomon's ships traded across the known world, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks from as far away as India.

King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom (10:23).

His legendary wisdom was shown in the story of two women who lived together with their baby sons. One boy had died in the night and both claimed the surviving child was theirs. Solomon solved the argument by offering to cut the living boy in two. His real mother became evident as she would rather have given away her son than have him killed. The baby and his mother were reunited.



Some interesting links with other parts of the Bible

- ◆ **1 Kings 13:18** – see Galatians 1:8
- ◆ **1 Kings 18:21** – see Isaiah 44:6; John 17:3
- ◆ **1 Kings 22:24** – see Micah 5:1; Matthew 26:67



Elijah the Prophet

Elijah (chapters 17–22) was a prophet of God to the Northern Kingdom (which later was called Israel).

He showed who was the true God when, on Mount Carmel, and in the sight of all the false prophets, he called on God to send down fire from heaven. God sent His fire, which consumed the sacrifice that Elijah had prepared. Thus it became clear that Baal – worshipped by so many in Israel – was nothing more than a dumb idol.

Fleeing from king Ahab's wife Jezebel, Elijah came to Mount Horeb where God revealed Himself in *"a still small voice"* (19:12).

Norman Owen

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