EXPOSITION OF 1–2 KINGS

---

by

Jason Coke

Dec 2024

EXPOSITION OF 1–2 KINGS

Canonical Context

All 66 inspired books of the Protestant canon relate to the progressively revealed Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible, but not in the same way. Each book either *carries* the metanarrative,[1] *contributes* to it but does not carry it,[2] or *contemplates* the metanarrative.[3] A book's placement into one of these three categories does not necessarily depend on genre, even though a correlation frequently exists. Rather, a book's categorization depends on its contents and its relationship to other books.[4]

In the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of Scripture, the following compose the major elements of the story:

Table 1: Elements of the Metanarrative of Scripture

Setting:	Heaven and earth	Gen 1–2
Hero:	God the Father	Gen 1–2
Hero's desire:	Image bearers to rule the earth	Gen 1:26–28
Problem:	Image bearers gave their rule to the serpent	Gen 3
Solution (the plot):	Promise seed will strike the serpent and restore rule to image bearers	Gen 3:15–Rev 19
Turning point:	The Cross	Gospels
Climax:	The Great Tribulation	Rev 6–19
Resolution / denouement:	Image bearers again rule the earth	Rev 20–22

[1] The carrier category refers to biblical books that carry the primary plotline of the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible. Many books of historical narrative and certain parts of prophetic books fall into this category because they carry the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative. Such books describe the outworking of the promise in Genesis 3:15–16.

[2] The contributor category refers to biblical books that contribute to, but do not carry, the plot of the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible. Most prophetic books and certain parts of the NT epistles fall into this category because while they do not carry the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative, they contribute important (often prophetic) information about that metanarrative. Additionally, certain historical narratives run in parallel to one another (e.g., Kings and Chronicles, the four Gospels). In these cases, 1–2 Kings function as the carrier and 1–2 Chronicles as the contributor. Among the Gospels, Matthew functions as the carrier and the other three as contributors.

[3] The contemplator category refers to biblical books that neither carry nor contribute to the plot of the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible. Rather, these books reflect upon (contemplate) the realities of that narrative. Books of wisdom, poetry, and most NT epistles fall into this category, because in light of the Genesis 3:15 promised seed having come, they address how the people of God should live until he returns to establish his kingdom.

[4] For this reason, certain biblical books fit into more than one of these three categories.

As shown in Table 1, the Bible as a whole presents God as the hero of the story who desires his image bearers to rule the world on his behalf. This metanarrative begins in the book of Genesis and concludes in the book of Revelation. Genesis presents the setting,[5] the characters,[6] the plot problem,[7] and the beginning of the rising action. The problem identified in Genesis 3 did not change God's desire for his image bearers to rule the world. The prophecy of Genesis 3:15–16 indicates a war between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed. This battle is the central conflict in the entire biblical narrative; a conflict not resolved until Revelation 20. In this prophecy, God promised the seed of the woman—a man—would defeat the serpent, restore humanity to the garden, and restore rule of the earth to God's image bearers. The anticipation of this promised seed drives the plot of the biblical narrative. The entire plot of the metanarrative thus revolves around how Genesis 3:15–16 comes to fruition. This prophecy reaches the first phase of its fulfillment in Revelation 20 in the thousand-year kingdom of Christ on earth, and its final phase of fulfillment in Revelation 21–22 in the new heaven and earth.

In narrative (or a metanarrative such as the whole Bible), "The story is the meaning."[8] Every book must be interpreted in light of the plot problem, rising action, and resolution. Recent decades have seen advances in narrative criticism applied to biblical texts which have brought to light the complexity and skillful crafting of biblical narratives. Such complexity is not merely limited to individual biblical books. As one scholar noted, "Narrative structure, usually interconnected to plot or characterization, may extend across several books, supporting the evangelical concept that the divine author provides unity and continuity in the biblical story."[9] This paper, then, recognizes the place of Kings in light of the divine author's total metanarrative. Indeed, "The Bible's total story sketches in narrative form the meaning of all reality."[10]

The entire Pentateuch forms a serial narrative in five parts which are all geared toward preparing the second generation of Israelites to possess the land of promise and live there in covenant faithfulness. Just as humanity was banished east of the garden (Gen 3), by the close of the Pentateuch the nation of promise camped on the eastern shore of the Jordan ready to head west into the Promised Land. Deuteronomy concludes with the death of Moses, and Joshua begins, "After the death of Moses" (Josh 1:1) and recounts Israel's failed attempt to dispossess the Canaanites of that Promised Land. Joshua closes with Joshua's death, and Judges opens with, "After the death of Joshua" (Judg 1:1). Whereas Deuteronomy 16–18 delineates the roles of judges, kings, priests, and prophets, so-called "Deuteronomic history" plays out in Joshua–2 Kings as the judges, kings, priests, and prophets fail to produce covenant faithfulness in the "holy nation" of "royal priests." Just as post-flood humanity had descended into rebellion at the

---

[5] Heaven and earth, Genesis 1–2.

[6] God, the hero of the story; mankind, the object of God's desire; and the antagonist, the serpent.

[7] Despite God's desire for mankind to rule the earth on his behalf, the man and woman gave their rule over to the serpent (Gen 3).

[8] Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 88.

[9] J. Daniel Hays, "An Evangelical Approach to Old Testament Narrative Criticism," *BSac* 166 (2009): 8.

[10] Richard Bauckham, *God and the Crisis of Freedom: Biblical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 64.

tower of Babylon (Gen 11), the failure of these offices resulted in the chosen nation's exile east into the new Babylon, echoing the exile east of the garden.[11]

If the Pentateuch was aimed primarily at why the Israelites should enter the promised land and how to live in covenant fidelity and so enjoy blessing in the land, the rest of Deuteronomic history (Joshua–Kings) describes how the nation's covenant infidelity resulted in banishment from the land and Babylonian exile. Moses' establishment of four offices in Israel, judges, priests, kings, and prophets (Deut 16–18), and deuteronomic history successively reveals the failure of each office to do so. The book of Judges described the failure of the judges (chs. 3–16) and the Levites (chs. 17–21) and set the stage for the failure of the levitical high priest (1 Sam 1–7), the kings (1 Sam 9–2 Kgs 25), and the prophets (1 Kgs 17–2 Kgs 13).[12] The prophets Elijah and Elisha, and even the so-called "good" Judean kings who effected spiritual and cultic reformation (e.g., Asa, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah) ultimately failed to bring about lasting righteousness. These failures ultimately point to the need for the eternal Judahite king (king-priest-judge-prophet) as per the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7) who would restore covenant fidelity to the people and place them in the promised land forever as per Yahweh's promise (Deut 30:1–10) in the Land Covenant. The author of Kings sought to persuade his exilic audience of the just nature of the exile on account of the failure of the kings to effect righteousness (covenant fidelity) in Israel, and to promote adherence to the Law while waiting for the coming king. The books of 1–2 Kings is placed, then, in the serial narrative from Genesis through Kings and *carries* the plot of the Messiah-redeemer-rule metanarrative as the nation waits for the ultimate prophet-king-priest-judge.

Glossary of Literary Terms and Devices[13]

Acrostic: A poem in which the successive units begin with the consecutive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
Allegory: A work of literature in which some or all of the details have a corresponding other meaning and refer to either a concept or historical particular.
Alliteration: involves the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words in close proximity, used to create rhythm or emphasis.
Allusion: a reference to another work of literature, person, or event, often used to enhance meaning or provide deeper insight.
Ambiguity: the use of language that allows for multiple interpretations or meanings, adding complexity and depth to the narrative.
Anti-hero: a literary protagonist who exhibits an absence of the character traits that are conventionally associated with literary heroes.

---

[11] Gary E. Schnittjer, *Torah Story: An Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2023), 38.

[12] David Klingler, "Validity in the Identification and Interpretation of a Literary Allusion in the Hebrew Bible" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2010), 210.

[13] This list is a composite of terms from four sources: (1) Ryken, *Words of Delight*, 513–17, (2) Schnittjer, *Torah Story*, 8–19, (3) Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook,* edited by David M. Howard, Jr., Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006), 227–31, and (4) David R. Klingler, "Bible Exposition Template and Instructions," unpublished manuscript, 2023.

Anti-romance: a work of literature, or part of a work of literature, that presents unideal experience; a literary world of total bondage and the absence of the ideal.
Anthropomorphism: the attribution of human characteristics, emotions, or behaviors to animals, inanimate objects, or deities.
Antagonist: the character or force that opposes the protagonist, thus creating conflict in the narrative.
Antithetic parallelism: a two-line poetic unit in which the second line states the truth of the first in the opposite way or introduces a contrast.
Aphorism: a short, memorable statement of truth.
Archetype: an image, plot motif, or character type that recurs throughout literature and is part of a reader's total literary experience.
Blazon: a love poem that praises the attractive features and / or virtues of the beloved by means of a catalogue or listing technique.
Calling stories: in the Gospels, stories in which Jesus calls a person to follow him or to respond to a command. Also called vocation stories.
Canonical form: the present or final form of the text as it appears within the canon of Scripture, as opposed to a hypothetical form the text may have had before it was placed in its present location in the canon of Scripture.
Characterization: the process by which the author reveals the personality, traits, and attributes of a character or group of characters in a narrative.
Climax: the moment of peak tension / plot conflict in the story.
Climactic parallelism: a form of parallelism in which the first line is left incomplete until the second line repeats part of it and then makes it a whole statement by adding to it.
Comedy: a story with a U-shaped plot in which the action begins in prosperity, descends into potentially tragic events, and rises to a happy ending.
Conflict / plot tension: the central struggle or problem between opposing forces that drives the plot forward. This can be internal (within a character) or external (between characters or between a character and an external force). The plot tension generally revolves around the protagonist's desire and the antagonistic elements (see "antagonist") working against that desire.
Conflict stories: Gospel stories that narrate Jesus' controversies with an opposing person or group. Also called controversy stories.
Denouement: the last phase of a story, following the climax; literally the "tying up of loose ends."
Didactic: having the intention or impulse to teach.
Discourse: an address to an audience.
Dramatic monologue: a literary work in which a single speaker addresses an implied but silent listener and in which various details keep this dramatic situation alive in the reader's consciousness.
Dramatic structure: the arrangement of a story's scenes and episodes, sometimes distinguished in the story's discourse structure.
Emblem: a symbolic and sometimes pictorial image to which a person or thing is compared.
Emblematic blazon: a love poem that lists the features of the beloved and compares them to objects or emblems in nature or human experience.
Encomium: a work of literature that praises an abstract quality or a generalized character type.
Encounter stories: gospel stories in which a person is confronted with the claims of Jesus, which that person must either accept or reject.

Epic: a long narrative having a number of conventional characteristics.
Epiphany: a moment of heightened insight in a literary work.
Episode: An incident or a series of incidents that forms a distinct literary subunit in a narrative or story; an episode can include two or more scenes.
Epistle: a letter that attains literary status by virtue of the literary techniques used in it.
Epithalamion: a lyric poem that celebrates a wedding.
Epithet: an exalted title for a person or thing; a feature of the high style, especially as found in epic.
Explication: the literary term for close reading of a text. It implies not only careful analysis of a text but also putting one's analysis into organized form for written or oral presentation to an audience.
Exposition: the opening phase of a story in which the writer presents the background information that the reader needs in order to understand the plot that will subsequently unfold.
Expository writing: writing whose main purpose is to convey information.
Ellipsis: the author may drop an element of what is expected in the story in order to draw attention to it.
Extended Echo Effect: the repetition of parallel ordering, elements, or features in multiple narrative units (A-B-C, A-B-C). Similar to "typological pattern," but without the inclusion of prophetic expectation.
Flashback: a scene that interrupts the narrative to show events that happened at an earlier time, providing background or context.
Foil: a character who stands in contrast to another, thereby highlighting one or more of the latter's characteristics or traits.
Foreshadowing: involves hints or indications of what is to come later in the story, creating anticipation or suspense.
Folk literature: literature couched in the language of everyday speech and appealing to the common person. Also called popular literature.
Genre: a literary type or kind.
Hero: a protagonist who is exemplary and representative of a whole community.
Hero story, heroic narrative: a story built around the character and exploits of a protagonist who is exemplary and representative of a whole community.
Hybrid forms: narratives that combine elements of one or more genres.
Hyperbole: a figure of speech in which a writer uses conscious exaggeration for the sake of effect, usually emotional effect.
Imagery: descriptive language that appeals to the senses, helping to create a vivid mental picture for the reader.
Image: any concrete picture of reality or human experience, including any sensory experience, a setting, a character, or an event.
Inclusio: the bracketing of a unit of text identified by the repetition of features or elements at the beginning and end of the unit.
Interchange: an alternation of elements in the story which can cause heightened literary irony or develop comparative imaging.
Irony: a contrast between expectation and reality which can take various forms:

> **Verbal Irony:** occurs when a speaker says one thing but means another.
> **Situational Irony:** occurs when there is a discrepancy between what is expected to happen and what actually occurs.

Dramatic Irony: a situation where the reader knows something which some or all the characters in a story are ignorant.

Janus: a bidirectional turning point looking both backward and forward.

Juxtaposition: placing two contrasting elements side by side to highlight their differences or create a particular effect.

Comparison: the juxtaposition of similar elements such as words, imagery, or events.

Contrast: the juxtaposition of dissimilar elements such as words, imagery, or events.

Lyric: a short poem containing the thoughts or feelings of a speaker. The emotional quality, even more than the reflective, is usually considered the differentia of lyric.

Metaphor: a figure of speech in which the writer makes an implied comparison between two phenomena.

Miracle stories: gospel narratives that focus on miracles that Jesus performed.

Motif: a recurring element, theme, or idea in a narrative that has symbolic significance and helps to develop the story's themes.

Narrative Perspective (Point of View): the lens through which the story is told, affecting the reader's perception. Common perspectives include:

First-Person: the narrator is a character in the story, using "I" or "we."

Second-Person: the narrator addresses the reader directly using "you."

Third-Person Limited: the narrator is outside the story but knows the thoughts and feelings of one character.

Third-Person Omniscient: the narrator knows all the thoughts and feelings of all characters.

Narrative space: narrators may employ physical space / locations as part of the setting, but may also assign symbolic meaning to certain physical spaces.

Narrative sequence: narrators may employ dischronological narrative in the form of previews or flashbacks in an advantageous way to the story.

Narrative time: in real history, time is a constant. But in narrative literature, the narrator may speed up (pass many years briefly) or slow down (focus an extended portion of text in a brief window of time) according to his discretion.

Narrative typology: a case in which, by design of the narrator, an earlier character or event supplies the pattern for a later character or event in the story.

Normative character: a character in a story who expresses or embodies what the storyteller wishes us to understand is correct.

Occasional literature: a work of literature that takes its origin from a particular historical event or a particular situation in the writer's life.

Ode: an exalted lyric poem that celebrates a dignified subject in a lofty style.

Paneled sequence: a literary structural technique where repeated elements appear in successive movements, yielding a structure of ABC // ABC.

Parable: a brief narrative that explicitly embodies one or more themes.

Paradox: an apparent contradiction that upon reflection is seen to express a genuine truth; the contradiction must be resolved or explained before we see its truth.

Parallelism: the verse form in which all biblical poetry is written. The general definition that will cover the various types of parallelism is as follows: two or more lines that form a pattern based on repetition or balance of thought or grammar. The phrase thought couplet is a good working synonym.

Stairstep parallelism: a type of parallelism in which the last key word of a line becomes the first main word in the next line.
Synonymous parallelism: a type of parallelism in which two or more lines state the same idea in different words but in similar grammatical form; the second line repeats the content of all or part of the first line.
Synthetic parallelism: a type of parallelism in which the second line completes the thought of the first line, but without repeating anything from the first line. also called growing parallelism.

Parody: a work of literature that parallels but inverts the usual meaning of a literary genre or a specific earlier work of literature.
Passion stories: gospel stories that narrate the events surrounding the trial, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
Pastoral: literature in which the setting, characters, and events are those of the shepherd's world.
Personification: a figure of speech in which human attributes are given to something nonhuman, such as animals, objects, or abstract qualities.
Plot: the sequence of events in a story, usually based on a central conflict and having a beginning, middle, and end.
Plot Twist: an unexpected or surprising turn of events in a narrative that alters the direction of the story or changes the reader's understanding of the plot.
Poetic justice: the feature of stories by which good characters are rewarded and evil characters are punished.
Poetic license: figurative language that is not literally true or factual.
Prolepsis (opposite of flashback): interrupts the chronological flow of a story by jumping ahead in time to reveal something that will happen later. Prolepsis can take several forms, such as a direct flashforward showing future events, or more subtly, through hints or statements that suggest what will happen.
Proportion: highlighting a work's emphasis by the quantitative amount it occupies in the narrative.
Protagonist: the leading character in a story, whether sympathetic or unsympathetic.
Proverb: a concise, memorable expression of truth.
Pun: a play on words, often using a word that sounds like another word but that has a different meaning.
Repetition: the recurrence of similar or identical elements (words, actions, concepts).
Resolution: following the climax, the part of the story where the conflict is resolved and the narrative comes to a conclusion. It ties up loose ends and provides closure for the characters and the plot.
Rhetorical question: a figure of speech in which the writer asks a question whose answer is so obvious that it is left unstated; a question asked, not to elicit information, but for the sake of effect, usually an emotional effect.
Rising Action: rising action is the building of tension as the plot conflict escalates towards the climax.
Sarcasm: the use of irony to mock or convey contempt, often through exaggerated statements that are not meant to be taken literally.
Satire: the exposure, through ridicule or rebuke, of human vice or folly.
Satiric norm: the standard by which the object of attack is criticized in a satire.

Scene: a subunit of an episode; it records an incident that takes place in a different place and/or at a different time than the incidents that precede and follow it.
Setting: the time and place in which a story occurs.
Simile: a figure of speech in which the writer compares two phenomena, using the explicit formula "like" or "as."
Suspense: the feeling of anticipation or anxiety about what will happen next in the story, often created through uncertainty or danger.
Symbol: any detail in a work of literature that in addition to its literal meaning stands for something else.
Symbolism: involves the use of symbols to represent ideas or concepts beyond their literal meaning, often conveying deeper significance.
Temporal overlay: a literary technique where the narrator juxtaposes episodes or scenes that overlap chronologically, rather than presenting events in strictly chronological succession.
Theme: a generalization about life that a work of literature as a whole embodies or implies.
Tone: the attitude or emotional stance of the narrator or author towards the subject matter, conveyed through word choice and style.
Tragedy: a narrative form built around an exceptional calamity stemming from the protagonist's wrong choice.
Turning point (character): the place in a narrative where a character's characterization changes significantly due to events in the plot.
Turning point (plot): the point from which, at least in retrospect, the reader can begin to see how the plot conflict will be resolved.
Typological pattern: the prophetic expectation of similarities in character or events. Similar to "extended echo effect," but with the inclusion of prophetic expectation.
Voice: the distinct personality and style of the narrator or author, influencing how the story is perceived.
Well-made plot: a plot that unfolds according to the following pattern: exposition (background information), inciting moment (or inciting force), rising action, turning point (the point from which, at least in retrospect, the reader can begin to see how the plot conflict will be resolved), further complication, climax, and denouement.
Witness stories: gospel stories in which either Jesus or another character testifies about Jesus or his works. Also called testimony stories.

Occasion

Who?

The text does not identify its author / editor / compiler. While Jewish tradition acknowledged the prophet Jeremiah as author of Kings, biblical and historical evidence make this assertion somewhat unlikely.[14] With the narrative's prominence given to the prophets and their activities—nearly one-third of 1–2 Kings records the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, for example—it is not unreasonable to consider Kings as the product of one or more unnamed prophets. In the end, however, authorship cannot be validated with certainty. For the purposes of this paper, the author is assumed to be an anonymous Israelite prophet in Babylon during the exile.

To Whom?

The text does not explicitly identify its audience. Based on its apparent rhetorical purpose, however, Kings appears to have been written for the exiles of Judah in Babylon.

When?

The text does not indicate its date of composition. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in 597 BC and took Jehoiachin and other nobles captive (2 Kgs 24:12). The final event narrated in the text is Jehoiachin's release from Babylonian prison in the thirty-seventh year of his exile, ca. 561 BC. Thus, its compilation was most likely completed during the Babylonian exile sometime between 561–539 BC.[15]

Where?

Given the apparent date and rhetorical purpose of Kings, the work appears to have been composed in its final form among the Israelite exiles living in Babylon.

Why?

In Deuteronomy, Moses had foretold of the Israelites' future exile in a foreign land due to their covenant infidelity:

> And all the nations will say, 'Why has Yahweh done such a thing to this land? What caused the fierceness of this great anger?' And they will say, 'It is because they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, which he made with them when he brought them out from the land of Egypt. And *they went and served other gods* and bowed down to them, gods whom they did not know them and he had not allotted to

---

[14] See R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 719–20, and Tremper Longman, III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 168.

[15] Earlier in this period *seems* more likely than later, although this cannot be validated.

> them. *So the anger of Yahweh was kindled* against that land to bring upon it all the curses written in this scroll, *and Yahweh uprooted them from their land* in anger and in wrath and in great fury, *and he cast them into another land*, just as it is today' (emphasis added) (Deut 29:23–27 MT [24–28]).

Stringing together the emphasized text in order to focus on Moses' main point: foreign nations would understand the Israelites' exile as occurring because they (the Israelites) went and served other gods, so the anger of Yahweh was kindled and Yahweh uprooted them from their land (Israel) and he cast them into another land (Babylon). In other words, Israel's exile would occur as a result of idolatry / covenant infidelity.

Once the exile did occur, both Ezekiel and Jeremiah addressed exilic audiences who believed their punishment in exile was unjust. Both prophets quoted the proverb, "The fathers eat the sour grapes, but the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezek 18:2; Jer 31:29).[16] Ezekiel also quoted his audience as saying, "The way of Yahweh is not just" (Ezek 28:25). These hints point to the exilic Israelites' belief that the punishment of exile was unjustified.

Apparently addressing that vein of thought, the author of Kings sought to persuade his exilic audience to believe that the curse of exile was indeed justified because every king of Judah and Israel had failed to meet the deuteronomic standard. None could fulfill the Davidic Covenant. Yet, Yahweh had continually remained faithful to his people and would uphold his covenant for David's sake. Yahweh's faithfulness manifested through the ministry of the prophets, but ultimately the prophets, like the kings, failed to purge idolatry from the land. All four offices of Deuteronomy 16–18 (judge, priest, king, and prophet) had thus failed to produce covenant fidelity (for the duration of deuteronomic history, Judges–Kings) and this resulted in the well-justified exile. The author thus sought implicitly to encourage his exilic audience to a state of acceptance about their exilic punishment, and to live in covenant fidelity to Yahweh while awaiting the eternal Davidic king.

Genre

The book of Kings was written as an historical narrative.

Proposed Message Statement

In order to address the apparent belief that the nation of Israel did not merit the punishment of exile, an unknown author wrote an historical narrative to the exiles of Judah in Babylon sometime between 561–539 BC, in order to (1) justify the exile based on the nation's idolatry resulting from the failure of kings and prophets to generate deuteronomic fidelity to Yahweh, and (2) demonstrate Yahweh's faithfulness for David's sake, so that the exiles would (1) agree with the author's assessment of their guilt and the nation's justified exile, and (2) live in covenant fidelity to Yahweh while trusting his faithfulness to establish the king foretold in the Davidic Covenant.

---

[16] The proverb is essentially a complaint meaning, "Our fathers sinned, but we received the punishment."

Proposed Outline

Aside from the focus on Solomon in the first eleven chapters of 1 Kings, the books of 1–2 Kings somewhat defy structural outlining. One cannot organize an outline by the northern and southern kingdoms, because the narrator constantly shifts viewpoint between the two kingdoms. One could outline based on the reign of each king, but this would not give the merited weight to the one-third of the text devoted to the acts of the prophets. Indeed, particularly beginning in 1 Kings 17 and nearly to the end of 2 Kings, substantial material exists on the interactions between kings and prophets. While not entirely satisfying, the outline below nevertheless attempts to bring out the message of 1–2 Kings: failure of the kings and prophets led to idolatry which justifiably led to the exiles of Israel and Judah.

I. Solomon's ascent to the throne (1 Kgs 1:1–2:46)
II. Solomon's descent to idolatry (1 Kgs 3:1–11:43)
III. Idolatrous Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:1–14:31)
IV. Intermediate failed kings (1 Kgs 15:1–16:28)
V. Idolatrous Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kgs 16:29–2 Kgs 10:36)
VI. Intermediate failed kings (2 Kgs 11:1–17:41)
VII. Final failed kings of Judah (2 Kgs 18:1–25:30)

Use of Rhetoric in 1–2 Kings

Classical rhetoric employs three modes and three species of rhetoric. The three modes of rhetoric include *logos*,[17] *pathos*,[18] and *ethos*.[19] The three species include judicial,[20] epideictic,[21] and deliberative[22] rhetoric.[23] As will be demonstrated in the proposed argument exposition below, the author of 1–2 Kings employed all three modes for judicial and deliberative purposes. In brief, the author made logical appeals (*logos*) by showing that the kings and prophets, despite occasional successes and revivals, ultimately failed to turn the nation away from foreign gods. Instead, their failure resulted in Israel's Canaanite transformation—they became just like the surrounding Gentile pagan nations. Since Moses had warned that idolatry violated the Law and would ultimately result in exile, and since the nation committed grievous and consistent idolatry, their exile was therefore justified. The author used *ethos* by appealing to the authority of Yahweh through fulfillment of his words as delivered by the prophets. As shown in Table 2 below, no fewer than thirty-two examples of prophetic fulfillment occur in 1–2 Kings.

Table 2: Fulfilled prophecies of the prophets

Prophet	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Unnamed man of God	Foretold that Eli's house would not serve as priests (1 Sam 2:27–33)	Solomon banished Abiathar from the priesthood in fulfillment of this prophecy (1 Kgs 2:27)
Ahijah	Foretold the splitting of the united kingdom (1 Kgs 11:31–37)	Kingdom split (1 Kgs 12:15)
Unnamed man of God	Foretold the desecration of Jeroboam's altar in Bethel by a son of David named Josiah (1 Kgs 13:1–2)	Josiah defiled Jeroboam's altar in Bethel (2 Kgs 23:15–16)
Old prophet	Foretold the man of God's death due to his disobedience (1 Kgs 13:21–22)	Man of God killed by a lion (1 Kgs 13:24)

[17] The rhetoric of *logos* employs logical arguments intended to appeal to rational principles found within the author's discourse.

[18] The rhetoric of *pathos* employs arguments intended to arouse an emotional reaction and play upon the audience's feelings.

[19] The rhetoric of *ethos* makes ethical appeals on the basis of credibility: good character or authority.

[20] With judicial rhetoric, the author seeks to persuade the audience to make a judgment about events that occurred in the past. This judgment often deals with questions of truth or justice, and can be positive (a defense or "apology" of correctness / innocence) or negative (a prosecution, emphasizing guilt).

[21] With epideictic rhetoric, the author seeks to persuade his audience to hold or reaffirm a certain point of view in the present time. The author wants to increase (or decrease / undermine) his audience's asset to a certain value or belief. To this end, epideictic rhetoric will frequently use examples of *praise* and *blame*.

[22] With deliberative rhetoric, the author seeks to persuade the audience to take (or not take) some action in the (often near) future. Deliberative rhetoric deals with questions of self-interest and future benefits for the audience, and appears in the form of exhortation (positive) or warning (negative).

[23] For a complete discussion of classical rhetoric in biblical studies, see George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

Ahijah	Foretold disaster against Jeroboam's house (1 Kgs 14:10)	Baasha killed all the house of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 15:29)
Ahijah	Foretold the death of Jeroboam's son (1 Kgs 14:12)	Jeroboam's son died as predicted (1 Kgs 14:17)
Jehu	Foretold the destruction of Baasha's house (1 Kgs 16:2–4)	Baasha's house destroyed (1 Kgs 16:12)
Joshua	Foretold the death of the sons of any who would rebuild Jericho (Josh 6:26)	Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt Jericho and his two sons died (1 Kgs 16:34)
Elijah	Foretold a severe drought (1 Kgs 17:1)	The drought lasted for three years (1 Kgs 18:1)
Elijah	Foretold the widow of Zarephath's food would not run out (1 Kgs 17:14)	The containers of olive oil and flour did not run out (1 Kgs 17:16)
Unnamed prophet	Foretold the death of the man who would not strike him by a lion (1 Kgs 20:35–36)	The man died from a lion attack (1 Kgs 20:36)
Elijah	Foretold dogs would lick Ahab's blood (1 Kgs 21:19)	Dogs licked Ahab's blood (1 Kgs 22:38)
Elijah	Foretold the destruction of Ahab's house (1 Kgs 21:21–22)	Ahab died in Battle (1 Kgs 22:37) and his descendants were killed (2 Kgs 10:7, 11)
Elijah	Foretold dogs eating Jezebel (1 Kgs 21:23)	Dogs ate Jezebel (2 Kgs 9:33–37)
Micaiah	Foretold Ahab's death in battle (1 Kgs 22:17–28)	Ahab died in Battle (1 Kgs 22:37)
Elijah	Foretold Ahaziah's death (2 Kgs 1:4, 16)	Ahaziah died (2 Kgs 1:17)
Elisha	Foretold of purified water at Jericho (2 Kgs 2:21)	Waters purified (2 kgs 2:22)
Elisha	Foretold of water during the campaign against Moab (2 Kgs 3:17)	Water filled the wadi (2 Kgs 3:20)
Elisha	Foretold of victory over Moab (2 Kgs 3:18–19)	Israel defeated Moab (2 Kgs 3:24)
Elisha	Foretold the Shunammite woman she would bear a son (2 Kgs 4:16)	Shunammite woman bore a son at the time predicted by Elisha (2 Kgs 4:17)
Elisha	Foretold relief from famine and inflation (2 Kgs 7:1)	Relief from famine and inflation (2 Kgs 7:16)
Elisha	Foretold the death of the doubting officer (2 Kgs 7:1)	The doubting officer died as predicted (2 Kgs 7:
Elisha	Foretold that Hazael would be king over Aram (2 Kgs 8:13)	Hazael became king over Aram (2 Kgs 8:15)
Elisha	Foretold that Hazael would commit evil against Israel (2 Kgs 8:12)	Hazael razed Israel (2 Kgs 10:32–33)
Elisha	Foretold Jehu's slaughtering Ahab's house (2 Kgs 9:6–9)	Ahab's descendants killed (2 Kgs 10:7, 11)
Elisha	Foretold dogs eating Jezebel (2 Kgs 9:10)	Dogs ate Jezebel (2 Kgs 9:35–37)
Elisha	Foretold Jehoash's victory against Aram (2 Kgs 13:17)	Jehoash defeated Aram three times (2 Kgs 13:25)
Prophets of Bethel and Jericho	Foretold Elijah's being taken up to heaven (2 Kgs 2:3, 5)	Elijah taken up to heaven (2 Kgs 2:11)

Jonah	Foretold the restoration of Israel's borders	Israel's border restored (2 Kgs 14:25)
Isaiah	Foretold Sennacherib's defeat (2 Kgs 19:32–34)	Sennacherib defeated by the angel of Yahweh (2 Kgs 19:35–36)
Isaiah	Foretold Hezekiah's healing and 15-year extension of life (2 Kgs 20:5–6)	Hezekiah healed and given an extension to his life (2 Kgs 20:7)
Isaiah	Foretold the temple's treasures being taken to Babylon (2 Kgs 20:17)	Temple treasures plundered by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 24:13; 25:13–17)

In most cases, the author wrote of the prophetic fulfillment using a phrase like: such-and-such happened according to the word of Yahweh spoken through [name of prophet]. Examples include 1 Kings 12:15; 13:26; 14:18; 15:29; 16:12, 34; 17:16; 22:38; and 2 Kings 1:17; 2:22; 3:12; 7:16, 17; 9:36; 10:10; 14:25; 23:16. Variations in wording are evident, but conceptually the point remains the same: Yahweh spoke through the prophets, and their words were true. Thus, when Yahweh's anger burned at the sins of Manasseh and he proclaimed, "I will remove Judah also from my presence as I removed Israel" (2 Kgs 23:27, NIV), the audience can be certain of the authority of the statement. The Babylonian exile was justified on account of the idolatry and sins of the nation.

The author use the above modes of rhetoric to pursue a judicial purpose and a deliberative purpose. Judicially, he sought for the exilic audience to recognize and condemn both Israel and Judah for their guilt in idolatry. Logically, then, the audience must agree that the exiles of both kingdoms were justified. Deliberatively, the author intended the narrative to persuade his audience to be loyally committed to Yahweh. Going after foreign gods resulted in nothing but covenant curses and exile. The exilic audience's only hope was for the coming king who would fulfill the Davidic Covenant, and the author wanted them to live faithfully while waiting for him.

Proposed Argument Exposition

In the book of Kings, the author will demonstrate how none of Israel's kings or prophets succeeded in upholding the Mosaic Law. Despite brief periods of revival and success, they all failed to produce a lasting covenant fidelity in the chosen nation. Instead of becoming a holy nation and a kingdom of priests (Exod 19:6), the nation went after other gods and this idolatry resulted in the nation's exile in Babylon. What began as a glorious monarchy full of wealth, gold, and a temple in the Promised Land (1 Kgs 3–10) will end with the poorest people of the land, articles of bronze,[24] a destroyed temple, and exile (2 Kgs 25).

In his account of **Solomon's ascent to the throne (1 Kgs 1:1–2:46)**, the author employed narrative ambiguity to demonstrate the uncertainty of Solomon being Yahweh's choice of king. Moses had commanded that only the one whom Yahweh chose should be king (Deut 17:15). Whereas Saul and David were clearly chosen and anointed, Solomon was not. Despite the many voices speaking to Solomon's ascension in the first two chapters, Yahweh's choice and approval is noticeably absent. In fact, Yahweh's only "speech" comes through David charging Solomon to walk in obedience to the Law (1 Kgs 2:2–5), something Solomon decidedly will not do.[25]

Adonijah's rebellion with a chariot, horses, and fifty runners (1 Kgs 1:5) echoes what Absalom did at the time of his rebellion against David (2 Sam 15:1). Just as David prevailed over Absalom, the reader can expect Solomon to prevail over Adonijah. The rebellion functions as a juxtaposition by contrast to Solomon's assumption of the throne. The firm establishment of Solomon's throne was repeatedly emphasized (1) by the command of David (1 Kgs 1:30–35), (2) by David's loyal officials (1 Kgs 1:36–39), (3) through the voice of Jonathan son of Abiathar (1 Kgs 1:43–48), (4) through Solomon's own voice (1 Kgs 2:24, 33, 45), (4) Adonijah, and (5) ….use at the end of Solomon's life, Yahweh will not remove the whole kingdom during Solomon's lifetime *only* for the sake of David (1 Kgs 11:34). In any case, the author intended his audience to feel the ambiguity about the choice of Solomon as king.[26]

In his description of **Solomon's descent into idolatry (1 Kgs 3:1–11:43)**, the author used extensive verbal irony (saying one thing while meaning another) to "boast" of Solomon's greatness while *actually* boasting of Solomon's great ability to disobey the Law. On the surface, Solomon appeared as a wise, devout, and successful king who reigned in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, except at the end of his life when he fell into idolatry. However, when compared to deuteronomic ideals, Solomon fell far short, and subtle details in the text indicate this. The narrator did not intend to praise Solomon, but rather condemn him (along with all the successive kings who will likewise fail to produce covenant fidelity) and show how the exilic audience must wait expectantly for the coming king who truly would fulfill the Davidic Covenant.

---

[24] Items of bronze, נְחֹשֶׁת, are referenced no fewer than eight times in 2 Kings 25.

[25] J. Daniel Hays, "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him? Narrative Subtlety in 1 Kings 1–11," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 28, no. 2 (December 1, 2003): 159.

[26] Hays, "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him?," *JSOT* 28: 158.

No sooner has the narrator proclaimed, "The kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon" (1 Kgs 2:46) than Solomon intermarried with the Egyptian Pharaoh (1 Kgs 3:1) and offered sacrifices and incense at the high places (1 Kgs 3:2). Although politically expedient, intermarriage was a flagrant violation of the law (Deut 7:3). In Israel's national memory, Egypt represented their time of bitter slavery and Yahweh had commanded them never to return (Deut 17:16). Burning incense remained the exclusive domain of the High Priest, and usually resulted in death by fire for anyone else who offered it.[27] Furthermore, Yahweh only permitted incense to be burned in a legitimate location like the tabernacle sanctuary or the temple. Yahweh despised the high places of Canaan (Lev 26:30) and commanded the Israelites to destroy them (Num 33:52; Deut 12:2–3). As Solomon lived in Jerusalem and the ark and tabernacle were located there, why would Solomon leave the vicinity to worship elsewhere?[28] Lastly, any Israelite found offering a sacrifice an at illegitimate location—like Solomon's high places—was guilty of bloodshed and deserved death (Lev 17:3–4). Thus, the reader of Kings informed by the Torah is shocked that Solomon isn't burned to a crisp. Laudatory proclamations of the establishment of Solomon's throne and his obedience (1 Kgs 3:3) are thus verbal irony. His later love for foreign women (1 Kgs 11:1) will conflict (and contrast by juxtaposition) with his initial love for Yahweh (1 Kgs 3:3). Whereas Solomon asked for a לֵב שֹׁמֵעַ, a "hearing heart" to discern good and evil (1 Kgs 3:9), his wives turned his heart away from Yahweh after other gods (1 Kgs 11:3–4). The fact that Yahweh had granted his request makes his apostasy all the more heinous because he understood and could correctly discern evil.[29] The account of Solomon's life is replete with violations of the Law. Table 3 below identifies the actions of Solomon and how they violate Mosaic Law.

Table 3: Solomon's violations of the Mosaic Law

Solomon's action	Mosaic Law
Married Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kgs 3:1)	Prohibition against intermarriage (Deut 7:3–4) Prohibition against returning to Egypt (Deut 17:16)
Married Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites (1 Kgs 11:1)	Prohibition against intermarriage (Deut 7:3–4)
Multiplied wives who turned his heart away from Yahweh (1 Kgs 11:1–3)	Prohibition against the king multiplying wives lest his heart be led astray (Deut 17:17)
Offered sacrifices at the high places (1 Kgs 3:3–4)	(1) Sacrifices only to be offered at legitimate locations approved by Yahweh (Exod 20:24; 29:42; Lev 1:3; 4:4)

[27] In the Pentateuch, there is no explicit indication that anyone other than the High Priest may burn incense (Exod 30:7). Possible references to the Levitical priesthood in general (and not the High Priest in particular) burning incense is found in Moses' poetic blessing of Levi (Deut 33:10) and in the account King Uzziah burning incense (2 Chron 26:16–21). Both cases, however, produce ambiguity around whether the permitted referent is the High Priest alone, or any "son of Aaron" who is a priest. Nadab and Abihu overstepped their roles and were killed for it (Num 10:1–2). Korah and his 250 rebels who burned incense perished. The narrator there contrasted those 250 incense-burners against Aaron alone—the text does not mention any other Levitical in this trial (Num 16). Yahweh struck King Uzziah with leprosy because he offered incense (2 Chron 26:16–21). It appears possible, then, that *only* the High Priest was to offer incense and no one else.

[28] Hays, "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him?," *JSOT* 28: 162.

[29] Hays, "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him?," *JSOT* 28: 163–64.

	(2) The Israelite offering a sacrifice an at illegitimate location was guilty of bloodshed and deserved death (Lev 17:3–4) (3) Mosaic Law demanded the destruction of the high places in Canaan (Num 33:52; Deut 12:2–3) (4) Yahweh despised the thought of Israelites worshiping at high places (Lev 26:30) (5) Yahweh commanded the destruction of Canaanite cultic objects (Deut 7:5)
Burned incense (1 Kgs 3:3; 9:25)	Only the High Priest may burn incense morning and evening (Exod 30:7) and on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:12)
Burned incense *at the high places* (1 Kgs 3:3)	(1) Incense could only be offered in a legitimate location like the tabernacle sanctuary (Exod 30:7–8), and eventually, the temple (2) Mosaic Law demanded the destruction of the high places in Canaan (Num 33:52; Deut 12:2–3) (3) Yahweh despised the thought of Israelites worshiping at high places (Lev 26:30)
Administering justice among two prostitutes (1 Kgs 3:16)	Prostituting daughters of Israel forbidden (Lev 19:29)
Accumulated horses (1 Kgs 5:6 MT [4:26]; 9:22; 10:26)	Kings forbidden from acquiring many horses (Deut 17:16)
Accumulated chariots 1 Kgs (5:6 MT [4:26]; 9:22)	Kings forbidden from acquiring many horses (Deut 17:16), and by logical extension, chariots
Imported horses from Egypt (1 Kgs 10:28)	King forbidden from going to Egypt for horses (Deut 17:16)
Made a treaty with Hiram of Tyre (1 Kgs 5:26 MT [5:12])	Forbidden from making treaties with Canaanites (Exod 34:12, 15; Deut 7:2)
Gave Israelite territory to Hiram of Tyre (1 Kgs 9:11)	Israel to drive out the Canaanites and possess their land, not give it back to them (Deut 7:1–2)
Conscripted as slaves the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (1 Kgs 9:20)	Israel to defeat and utterly destroy the Canaanites without mercy (Deut 7:1–2)
Accumulated silver and gold (1 Kgs 9:14, 28; 10:2, 10, 11, 14, 22, 25, 27)	Kings forbidden from accumulating silver and gold (Deut 17:17)
Worshiped Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh, and Molech (1 Kgs 11:5–7)	(1) Worship of other gods forbidden (Exod 20:1–2; 23:24; 34:14; Lev 19:4; Deut 4:23; 5:7–9; 6:14;[30] 8:19) (2) Death penalty for going after other gods (Exod 22:20; Deut 13:6–10; 17:2–6) (3) Israelites not even to mention the names of foreign gods (Exod 23:13) (4) Israelites to utterly demolish foreign gods (Exod 23:24; Num 33:52)
Built high places for foreign gods (1 Kgs 11:7–8)	(1) Mosaic Law demanded the destruction of the high places in Canaan (Num 33:52; Deut 12:2–3)

[30] "You shall not go after other gods" לֹא תֵלְכוּן אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים (Deut 6:14) is the exact violation Solomon committed: "Solomon went after [the other gods]" וַיֵּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה אַחֲרֵי (11:5).

	(2) Yahweh despised the thought of Israelites worshiping at high places (Lev 26:30) (3) Yahweh commanded the destruction of Canaanite cultic objects (Deut 7:5; 12:2–3) (4) Death penalty for going after other gods (Deut 13:6–10; 17:2–6)
Went "back to Egypt" by having slave labor, building store cities, sailing the יַם־סוּף, "Reed Sea," marrying Pharaoh's daughter, and accumulating horses and chariots (1 Kgs 9:15–28)	Kings forbidden from "going back" to Egypt (Deut 17:16)
Sold part of the Promised Land to the Canaanites (1 Kgs 9:11)	(1) Ordered to exterminate the Canaanites (7:1–2) (2) Yahweh gave the Promised Land as an eternal inheritance to Israel () (3) Land was not to be sold permanently (Lev 25:23) (4) Levitical land never to be sold (Lev 25:34)[31]
No mention of Solomon writing a copy of the Torah and read it every day of his life	Kings to write a copy of the Torah and read it all the days of his life (Deut 17:18–20)

Solomon's judging between two prostitutes (1 Kgs 3:16–28) ostensibly served as proof of his wisdom to execute justice (1 Kgs 3:28). Ironically, however, true justice was not served. The Torah forbade prostitution (Lev 19:29; Deut 23:18–19 MT [23:17–18]), and Solomon in no way remedied that situation but rather permitted what Moses warned of: "lest the land be prostituted and the land fill up with depravity" (Lev 19:29). In this way, Solomon's failure to address the issue of prostitution rightly foreshadows his eventual filling of the land with *spiritual* harlotry.

The account of Solomon's administration of the kingdom (1 Kgs 4:1–36) also supposedly painted a glorious picture of his rule. However, Solomon's reign—in ways that Saul and David never did—actually fulfilled Samuel's warning about the king's judgment (מִשְׁפָּט) in oppressing the people (1 Sam 8:11–18). His sizeable bureaucracy and even the daily provisions for his court placed a weighty burden on the common people, something they complained about to Rehoboam as a heavy yoke and harsh labor (1 Kgs 12:4), and ultimately led the kingdom to the verge of civil war (1 Kgs 12:16).[32] Indeed, mention of Solomon's 30,000 conscripts for forced labor comes not long after (1 Kgs 5:27 MT [5:13]). The peoples' complaint also contradicts the statement about their ostensible happiness (1 Kgs 4:20). Even the grandiose statement that Solomon ruled over everything from the Euphrates to Egypt (1 Kgs 5:1 MT [4:21]) is verbal irony: *Pharaoh* attacked Gezer and killed the Canaanites living there (1 Kgs 9:16) in order to give it as a wedding present for his daughter. This implies that Israel did not have control over the entire land. Neither did Solomon experience peace on all sides during his lifetime (1 Kgs 5:5 MT [4:25]), for Yahweh raised up three adversaries in Hadad the Edomite, Rezon son of Eliada, and Jeroboam son of Nebat (1 Kgs 11:14–40).

---

[31] While admittedly tenuous because the narrator does not mention the names of the twenty Galilean cities sold to Hiram, what are the chances that none of them were Levitical cities? At least one city in Galilee was assigned as a Levitical city (Josh 21:32), and Yahweh had prohibited the sale of Levitical lands (Lev 25:34).

[32] Hays, "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him?," *JSOT* 28, 165.

Likewise, the author's account of building and dedicating the temple (1 Kgs 5:15 MT [5:1]—8:66) paints a grand picture on the surface, but a troubling one underneath. First, Solomon mischaracterized David's inability to build the temple as being due to the warfare around him (1 Kgs 5:17 MT [5:3]). Actually, Yahweh had brought peace on all sides in David's lifetime (2 Sam 7:1, 9), and *then* David thought of building the temple. The chronicler added that David would not build the temple because of his bloodshed (1 Chron 22:8). The note of rest in Solomon's day and lack of any רע, "evil occurrence" (1 Kgs 5:18 MT [5:4]), is dramatic and situational irony because Solomon himself, supposedly wise in discerning between good (טוב) and evil (רע) had already committed grievous evils and would continue to do so. Second, Solomon easily identified himself as the son and "seed" mentioned in the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:12–14), but he conveniently misquoted the promise in two ways: (1) the covenant actually said nothing about "Your son, whom I will set in your place on your throne" (1 Kgs 5:19 MT [5:5]), and (2) he avoided mention of the punishment for doing wrong (2 Sam 7:14). Third, Solomon's allusion to the covenant as requiring a cedar temple is ironic because Yahweh had said quite the opposite: how he never demanded a house of cedar be built for him (2 Sam 7:7). Fourth, the forced labor of 30,000 Israelites without mention of wages—in contrast to the wages of those repairing the temple in Josiah's day (2 Kgs 22:3–7)—is situational irony because of its close proximity to the narrator's mention of the Exodus from Egypt (1 Kgs 6:1). Fifth, Yahweh's only recorded speech reminded Solomon that his presence with him depended on Solomon's obedience (1 Kgs 6:11–13). Implicitly, the temple was not a requirement for Yahweh's presence among his people. As the reader already knows of Solomon's disobedience, the entire effort in temple construction became a great act of irony. Sixth, Solomon spent nearly double the time constructing his own house (בַּיִת) as he did Yahweh's house (בַּיִת) (1 Kgs 6:38–7:1). By placing these two schedules back-to-back, the narrator subtly condemned Solomon's misplaced priorities. Seventh, the great amount of wealth Solomon invested in the temple and its furnishings will, ironically, be stripped away by pagans throughout the rest of the narrative. Eighth, while the work of constructing the temple completed in the eighth month after seven years of building efforts (1 Kgs 6:38), the actual dedication occurred a minimum of eleven months later (without explanation) in the seventh month (1 Kgs 8:2). As the *year* of dedication is not mentioned, a gap of several years could potentially have lapsed between completion and dedication. These eight elements in the narrative subvert the ostensible grandeur of the accomplishment.[33]

Solomon's speech / prayer (1 Kgs 8:12–61) has several notable features. First, Solomon engaged in revisionist history. He claimed that Yahweh said to David, "Because you desired to build a house for my name, you did well in that it was within your heart" (1 Kgs 8:18). However, such a statement is not only absent from 2 Samuel, but actually runs contrary to the emphasis of the Davidic Covenant where Yahweh was far more concerned about building David a house. Solomon also misquoted other parts of Yahweh's speech: "However, you will not build the house, but your son who has come from your loins, he shall build the house for my name" (8:19), whereas the actual words of the covenant were, "I will raise up your offspring (זֶרַע) after you who will go out from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam 7:12–13). Second, Solomon's prayer of dedication bears significant ironies:

---

[33] See Hays, "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him?," *JSOT* 28, 166–69.

- "There is no god like you" (1 Kgs 8:23) is ironic in light of Solomon's idolatry.
- "… keeping the covenant and the loyal love for your servants who are walking before you with all their heart" (1 Kgs 8:23) is ironic in light of Solomon's heart turning to evil (1 Kgs 11:1–6).
- The request for Yahweh to keep his promise to David regarding always having a descendant on the throne "if only your sons [David's sons] keep their ways to walk before me just as you [David] have walked before me" (1 Kgs 8:25) is ironic in light of Solomon's apostasy, and indeed, the failure of almost all the kings of Judah and Israel.
- The request to bring a repentant Israel back to their land following their great sin (1 Kgs 8:33) is ironic because it essentially contradicts other elements of the prayer regarding a perpetual dynasty, as it implies an exile has taken place because of sin. The prayer exhibits language reminiscent of the curses of Deuteronomy 28—lack of rain (1 Kgs 8:35–36; Deut 28:24), plague, blight and mildew (1 Kgs 8:37; Deut 28:21–22), locusts (1 Kgs 8:27; Deut 28:38, 42), disaster (1 Kgs 8:37; Deut 28:59, 61), and so on.
- Solomon's note that "there is not a person who does not sin" (1 Kgs 8:46) is deeply ironic in light of his apparent expectations for the dynasty and his own sinful heart.
- Solomon's request that Yahweh incline the Israelites' hearts to obedience (1 Kgs 8:58) and his closing, "Let your heart be completely with Yahweh our God by walking in his statutes, by keeping his commands" (1 Kgs 8:61) is ironic given that his own heart already turned from Yahweh's commands and would continue to do so.
- Solomon's prayer that "all of the people of the earth may know that Yahweh, he *is* God; there is none other" (1 Kgs 8:60) is ironic because the people of the earth—specifically his foreign wives—will convince him that Yahweh is not the only deity worthy of worship.

The prayer would resonate deeply with an Israelite audience in captivity, who would likely recognize the intense irony. They could identify precisely with the situation of exile due to sin, and they would know the required remedy as offering prayers of repentance towards Jerusalem—the prophet Daniel would actually do this (Dan 9:4–19)—and they could expect their captors to show them mercy (1 Kgs 8:50), a reality that began with Jehoiachin's release in 2 Kings 25.

Third, in his prayer Solomon boasted no fewer than six times about *his* part in constructing this magnificent temple (1 Kgs 8:13, 20, 27, 43, 44, 48). While the author made no direct comparison or allusions, Solomon's arrogance significantly contrasts with the humility displayed by David when bringing the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6). Yahweh's response to Solomon's prayer exhibits an underwhelming view of the temple itself, although he did consecrate it (1 Kgs 9:3), and instead focused on the need for Solomon to walk with integrity of heart (1 Kgs 9:4) and a warning about cutting Israel off from the land and making the temple a heap of ruins should Solomon or his descendants turn away from him (1 Kgs 9:6–8). The audience would recognize such promises as "history written in advance." Moments after the

temple dedication, its destruction was foretold.[34] In this way, the author justified the exile on the basis of Solomon's and other kings' sinful actions.

Other narrated details of Solomon's reign (1 Kgs 9:10–28) continue to portray him negatively:

- Solomon's selling part of the Promised Land to Hiram of Tyre in exchange for cedar, juniper, and gold (1 Kgs 9:11) is situational irony because if the Israelites had obeyed the Law and wiped out the Canaanites, there wouldn't be Canaanites to sell it to anyways. Also, Yahweh gave the land to the Israelites as an eternal possession, so selling off the Promised Land violated Yahweh's purposes. Naboth's question to Ahab possibly serves as a *post-hoc* rebuke of Solomon: "Yahweh forbid that I should give the inheritance of my ancestors to you" (1 Kgs 21:3).[35]
- Solomon's accumulation of gold (1 Kgs 9:28) violated the Law (Deut 17:17).
- The burning of incense, as noted previously, was solely for the High Priest, yet Solomon engaged in it (1 Kgs 9:25).
- Various lexical and conceptual repetitions connect Solomon with Egypt: (1) mention of Pharaoh and his daughter who married Solomon (1 Kgs 9:16, 24), (2) Solomon's use of slave labor (1 Kgs 9:21–22), (3) Solomon's building of storage cities (מִסְכְּנוֹת, Exod 1:11), (4) Solomon's accumulation of chariots and horses such that he needed towns for them (1 Kgs 9:22), (5) Solomon's ships sailing across the יַם־סוּף, "Reed Sea," (1 Kgs 9:26), and even the mention of failure in exterminating the peoples of Canaan to whom the Israelites were to show no mercy, recalls the Exodus from Egypt (Deut 7:1–2). As Hays remarked on the Egyptization of Solomon:

> Israel no longer needs Yahweh in order to deal with the ים סוף. Solomon's ships sail freely across it to bring him more gold. Thus in this section Solomon has given away part of the Promised Land, accumulated chariots in violation of Deuteronomy 17, married the daughter of the hated Pharaoh of Egypt, constructed store cities with forced labor, and then sailed back across the ים סוף.[36]

The author's account of the visit by the Queen of Sheba (1 Kgs 10:1–13) likewise employed narrative subtlety to negatively characterize Solomon. First, the Queen's note of the happiness of Solomon's men (although the LXX textual variant says γυναῖκές σου, "your wives") and his servants who stand before him (1 Kgs 10:8) avoids mention of the common people, including the conscripted laborers. Such happiness apparently did not extend to all, as would become evident in the peoples' complaint to Rehoboam after Solomon's death. Second, her proclamation that Yahweh placed Solomon on the throne in order to execute justice and righteousness (1 Kgs 10:9) is situational irony in view of his violations of the law and *failure* to execute justice and righteousness. Lastly, that the Queen of Sheba, and indeed, "all the earth"

---

[34] See Hays, "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him?," *JSOT* 28, 169–71.

[35] Hays, "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him?," *JSOT* 28, 171.

[36] Hays, "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him?," *JSOT* 28, 171–72.

sought an audience with Solomon (1 Kgs 10:24) takes the reader back to Israel's purpose of being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod 19:6). The Gentiles were intended to recognize the greatness of Israel and her God based on Israel's wisdom, which Yahweh tied directly to their keeping the Law: "And you must observe them [the laws] diligently, for that is your wisdom and your insight before the eyes of the people" (Deut 4:6). But instead of being praised for their wisdom regarding keeping the just laws of Yahweh, the Queen praised Solomon for the extravagance of his wealth—the very accumulation of gold and silver which broke the Law (Deut 17:17)—rather than his administering of justice (1 Kgs 10:4–7). Because Yahweh associated true wisdom with adherence to the Law (Deut 4:6), any praise of Solomon's ostensible "wisdom" must be understood in light of his failure to keep the Law.

The narrator's account of the end of Solomon's life (1 Kgs 11:1–43) removes any pretense of glory: Solomon was an abject failure. While he initially loved Yahweh (1 Kgs 3:3), now he loved many foreign women (1 Kgs 11:1)—a double violation of the Law. Furthermore, while Solomon initially asked for a לֵב שֹׁמֵעַ, a "hearing heart" to discern good and evil (1 Kgs 3:9), his wives turned his heart away from Yahweh after other gods (1 Kgs 11:3–4). The fact that Yahweh had granted his request makes his turning away all the more scandalous because he had the ability to discern good and evil. Solomon's establishment of high places for, and his worship of, Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh, and Molech (1 Kgs 11:5–7) broke numerous laws (including the first law in the Ten Commandments), necessitated the death penalty (Exod 22:20; Deut 13:6–10; 17:2–6), and represented a failure to utterly demolish foreign gods and their cultic objects (Exod 23:24; Num 33:52; Deut 7:5; 12:2–3). Mention of Yahweh raising up three enemies against Solomon (1 Kgs 11:14–40) reveals that the supposed peace was not as universal as initially portrayed (1 Kgs 5:4–5 MT [4:24–25]), and sets the stage literarily for the coming divide between the Northern and Southern kingdoms.

Absent from the entire account of Solomon's life is any mention of him writing out and reading the Torah. Moses' instruction for kings included the necessity of writing his own copy of the Law in the presence of the priests (Deut 17:18), and reading of the Law every day of his life (Deut 17:19). These instructions existed "so that he [the king] may learn to revere Yahweh your God by diligently observing all the word of this law and these rules, so as not to exalt his heart above his countrymen and not to turn aside from the commandment to the right or to the left, so that he may reign long over his kingdom, he and his sons in the midst of Israel" (Deut 17:19–20). Solomon's failure to write and read the Law directly led to the outcome anticipated by Moses: Solomon indeed exalted his heart above his countrymen with lavish living at the expense of forced labor, and he indeed turned aside from the commandments. As a result, his son and further descendants would not have an enduring rule.

Thus, with the author's account of Solomon's reign (1 Kgs 3:1–11:43), the author used extensive verbal irony (saying one thing while meaning another) to "boast" of Solomon's greatness while actually "boasting" of Solomon's great ability to disobey the Law. The remainder of the narrative of Kings will describe the descent of the nation into rebellion, civil war, and apostasy. It might be tempting for the exilic audience to look back to Solomon's time as a glorious high point in Israel's history: "We need a king like Solomon or David." Yet the book of Samuel described David's failure, while Kings portrayed Solomon's (and every successive king's) failure as well. Continued disobedience through the period of the kings culminated in the Babylonian exile. The exilic audience could (1) recognize the failure of the judges, priests, kings, and prophets in producing covenant fidelity in Israel, and (2) understand their need to maintain covenant fidelity while waiting for the promised priest-king-prophet-judge. The account of

Solomon contributes to this message by showing that even at its pinnacle, and despite King Solomon's (incorrect) understanding of himself as the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, Israel failed to maintain covenant fidelity. Thus, the audience should accept the reasons for exile as being just, and await the true fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant with Yahweh's chosen Davidic king.

In his account of **idolatrous Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:1–14:31)**, the author portrayed Rehoboam as Pharaoh and Jeroboam as both Moses and Aaron.[37] Just as Solomon had taken many steps toward Egypt (see section above), his son Rehoboam acted like Pharaoh: increasing the burden of forced labor after the peoples' request for alleviation. Jeroboam thus acted like Moses in liberating Israel from the tyrant. However, his creation of two illicit worship sites with golden calves in Bethel and Dan (1 Kgs 12:29) unfortunately echoes Aaron's lowest point as well. Jeroboam's actions reveal an extended echo effect from the golden calf incident of Aaron at Sinai. Table 4 identifies the parallels contributing to the extended echo effect.

Table 4: Extended echo effect between the golden calf incidents of Aaron and Jeroboam[38]

Parallel	Aaron	Jeroboam
Fashioned a golden calves at the behest of others	Exod 32:1–4	1 Kgs 12:28–29
Said, "These / here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt"	Exod 32:4	1 Kgs 12:28
Built an altar	Exod 32:5	1 Kgs 12:32
Offered sacrifices without priestly status	Exod 32:6	1 Kgs 12:32
Accused of leading Israel in the sin *par excellence*	Exod 32:21, 30, 31	1 Kgs 12:30; 14:16; 15:26, 30, 34, etc.
Provoked divine displeasure with an intent to destroy	Exod 32:10; Deut 9:18, 20	1 Kgs 13:34
Died naturally despite threats of destruction	Num 20:28	1 Kgs 14:20
Intercession made for the sinners (using the rare verb חלה)	Exod 32:11 (Deut 9:20 for Aaron)	1 Kgs 13:6
Slaughter of illicit "priests"	Exod 32:26–29	1 Kgs 13:2; 2 Kgs 23:16
Aaron's calf / Jeroboam's altar burned and then crushed to fine dust	Exod 32:20	2 Kgs 23:15
Yahweh struck (נגף) the people / Jeroboam	Exod 32:35	2 Chron 13:20
Aaron's sons named Nadab and Abihu; Jeroboam's sons named Nadab and Abijah	Exod 6:23	2 Chron 14:1, 20
Aaron's sons died early, unnatural deaths; Jeroboam's sons died early, unnatural deaths	Lev 10:2	1 Kgs 14:17; 15:27
All Israel wept / mourned for Aaron's sons; All Israel wept for Abijah	Lev 10:6	1 Kgs 14:18
Aaron's sons called "close to God;" Yahweh found a good thing in Abijah	Lev 10:3	1 Kgs 14:13

[37] Wray Beal, *1 & 2 Kings*, 186.

[38] Moses Aberbach and Leivy Smolar, "Aaron, Jeroboam, and the Golden Calves," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86, no. 2 (1967): 129–40.

The parallels may be more or less convincing individually. But taken as a whole, they exemplify intentional narrative design. If Jeroboam had walked faithfully, he could have been a "Moses" with an enduring "house" like David (1 Kgs 11:38). Instead, his institution of high places, an illicit feast, an unapproved priesthood, and two golden calves (1 Kgs 12:28–33) made him an "Aaron" as he led Israel into idolatry.

The visit by the unnamed Judean man of God (1 Kgs 13:1–33) functioned to demonstrate to Jeroboam (and the audience) the necessity of obedience. First, his sign of the altar splitting (1 Kgs 13:5) demonstrated the validity of his word and authority in proclaiming the illegitimacy of the northern kingdom's cult. Second, his disobedience to Yahweh on account of the old prophet in Bethel resulting in his death (1 Kgs 13:19–24) revealed the serious nature of disobeying Yahweh: hence why the account concluded with, "Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways" (1 Kgs 13:33). The unnamed man of God's disobedience was intended to serve as an illustration to Jeroboam of the cost of disobedience. The presence of lions in the land who kill people demonstrates that a covenant curse had been enacted (Lev 26:6, 22). That the lion didn't eat the prophet's body or attack the donkey (1 Kgs 13:24–28) shows the lion did not attack out of hunger, but more likely at the command of Yahweh as a curse upon the disobedient prophet. Elsewhere in Kings, lions will continue to kill both Israelites (1 Kgs 20:36) and foreigners (2 Kgs 17:25–26) who do not follow Yahweh's ways.

Jeroboam, however, failed to see / heed the warning from the man of God. Thus, Yahweh's offer to Jeroboam of an enduring house would fail because it hung on the conditionality of Jeroboam's obedience (1 Kgs 11:38). Ahijah's confronting of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 14:1–20) validates this understanding, especially 14:8–10 which highlighted his failure to obey like David and pronounced the doom of Jeroboam's house. The prophet's speech to Jeroboam (via his wife) would speak directly to the exilic audience as well: their exile beyond the Euphrates had been foretold centuries before, and the reason given was turning from Yahweh to idolatry (1 Kgs 14:15–16). The author intended his audience to recognize that while Solomon had failed on behalf of David's house, incorporating the leadership of another "house" was not the solution, for they failed as well. Rehoboam likewise led Judah in committing evil (1 Kgs 14:21–31). The only hope lay in Yahweh's faithfulness to provide the promised king in the line of David as per the Davidic Covenant. Judah and Israel had become just like the Canaanite nations whom Yahweh had driven out (1 Kgs 14:24)—a statement of situational irony because the Israelites had *failed* to drive them out (despite Yahweh's faithfulness), and now the whole nation had become like the idolatrous Canaanites. Thus, the audience should accept the reasons for exile as being just, and await the true fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant with Yahweh's chosen Davidic king.

With the **intermediate failed kings (1 Kgs 15:1–16:28)**, the author employed narrative time to accelerate the pace of the story. Whereas he offered an extended treatment of Solomon's reign, relatively brief accounts are given for lengthy periods of time covering the intermediate kings. The divided kingdom period was plagued with coups and civil war. Abijah's failed reign in Judah (1 Kgs 15:1–8) hardly bears mention by the narrator except for a reminder of Yahweh's faithfulness to the Davidic Covenant (1 Kgs 15:4–5). This remark affirms Yahweh's faithfulness to Israel despite Israel's infidelity. The author abruptly broke the positive evaluation of Asa's reign (1 Kgs 15:9–14) by noting the ongoing civil war (1 Kgs 15:16–17) and his forming a treaty with Ben-Hadad with a bribe paid for from the temple treasury (1 Kgs

15:18–22). The evil kings of Israel—Nadab (1 Kgs 15:25–32), Baasha (1 Kgs 15:33–16:7), Elah (1 Kgs 16:8–14), Zimri (1 Kgs 16:15–20), and Omri (1 Kgs 16:21–28)—certainly didn't establish covenant fidelity. However, neither did the "good" kings of Judah. Even a Judahite king like Asa meriting a positive overall evaluation still broke the Law on numerous points: forming forbidden treaties (1 Kgs 15:19) and not removing the high places (1 Kgs 15:14). David's reign typifies the model against which the other kings are assessed (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:3, 11), but even David failed (1 Kgs 15:5). This section thus identified the ongoing failure of either the Southern or Northern kings to effect righteousness in Israel. Instead, both kingdoms persisted in covenant infidelity. Thus, the audience should accept the reasons for exile as being just, and await the true fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant with Yahweh's chosen Davidic king.

In his account of the reigns of **idolatrous Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kgs 16:29–2 Kgs 10:36)**, the author demonstrated the depths of depravity propagated by those in leadership, and how even the faithful prophets and actions of a few decent kings did not produce lasting results. Both kingdoms continued idolatrous practices which would ultimately lead to their respective exiles. On account of his wife Jezebel, Ahab introduced Baalism to Israel and was guilty of other covenant violations (coveting, murder, false witness, etc.). Despite Yahweh's faithfulness to his covenant people through the ministry of the prophets, including Elijah winning a contest against Baal (1 Kgs 16:29–19:21) and Micaiah against Ahab (1 Kgs 20:1–22:40), covenant fidelity never endured in the nation.

In his account of the prophets against Baal (1 Kgs 16:29–19:21), the author demonstrated Yahweh's faithfulness to his people through the ministry of the prophet Elijah, who is portrayed as a Moses-like figure (see Table 6). Ahab's introduction of Baalism to Israel (1 Kgs 16:31–32) resulted in Elijah's pronouncement of drought (1 Kgs 17:1) as a covenant curse (Deut 28:23–24) *and* as a polemic against Baal. Baal ostensibly had "power over clouds, storm and lightning … As the god of wind and weather Baal dispenses dew, rain, and snow … and the attendant fertility of the soil … Baal's rule guarantee[d] the annual return of the vegetation."[39] The drought thus showed Baal's impotence, and as demonstrated in Table 5 below, Elijah's ministry showed Yahweh's superior power in each of Baal's domains.

Table 5: Elijah's ministry countering Baal's domain

Baal's Domain	Elijah's Ministry
Rain	No rain, no dew (1 Kgs 17:1)
Harvest	Fed by ravens (1 Kgs 17:2–6) Sustained a widow's household (1 Kgs 17:7–16)
Life	Revived the widow's son (1 Kgs 17:17–24)
Lightning (fire from heaven)	Contest on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18:24–38)

[39] W. Herrmann, "Baal," eds. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 134.

The contest between Yahweh and Baal at Carmel (1 Kgs 18:1–46) functioned as an indictment on Israel's idolatry and showed Yahweh's faithfulness in answering the prayer of a single prophet in contrast to Baal's silence for hundreds of his. The double proclamation of, "Yahweh, he is God!" (1 Kgs 18:39), the slaughter of Baal's priesthood (1 Kgs 18:40), and Ahab's obedience in eating a covenant renewal meal (1 Kgs 18:41–42) exemplify obedience to the prophet and resulted in immediate rain (1 Kgs 18:45). Although Obadiah is a secondary character with minimal impact on the plot, his example of faithfulness to Yahweh while serving an idolatrous king would encourage the exilic audience to covenant fidelity. No doubt idolaters surrounded the audience in Babylon, and they would likely connect with Obadiah's situation. Ironically, the defeat of the storm-god Baal and his prophets led to the return of rain in the land (1 Kgs 18:45). Nevertheless, even the ultimate destruction of Jezebel and Ahab's house by Jehu (2 Kgs 9–10) would not end the Northern Kingdom's idolatry.

Elijah's meeting Yahweh at Horeb (1 Kgs 19:1–18) solidified his status as a Moses-like figure. Various features connecting Elijah to Moses are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Elijah portrayed as Moses[40]

Similar acts	Moses	Elijah
Fed with bread and meat	Exod 16:8–12	1 Kgs 17:6
Urged Israel to choose their God	Exod 32:26	1 Kgs 18:21
Prepared an altar of twelve stones	Exod 24:3–8	1 Kgs 18:31
Slaughtered those leading Israelites away from Yahweh	Exod 32:27–28	1 Kgs 18:40
Met Yahweh at Sinai / Horeb	Exod 3:1–2	1 Kgs 19:8
Forty days and forty nights associated with Horeb / Sinai	Exod 34:28; Deut 9:9, 18	1 Kgs 19:8
No food or drink for forty days and forty nights	Deut 9:18	1 Kgs 19:8
Requested death from Yahweh	Num 11:15	1 Kgs 19:4
Elijah in a cave / Moses on a cleft at Sinai / Horeb	Exod 33:22	1 Kgs 19:9
Stood before Yahweh on Sinai / Horeb	Exod 33:21–22	1 Kgs 19:11
Yahweh passed by (עבר) the prophet	Exod 33:22	1 Kgs 19:11
Had an apprentice (Joshua / Elisha)	Exod 24:13	1 Kgs 19:19–21
Parted a body of water	Exod 14:21–22	2 Kgs 2:7–8

These parallels functioned to portray Elijah as a prophet like Moses, mediating the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. Although long dead by the time of the exile, the author used Elijah's Moses-like voice and prophetic ministry to urge the exiles to walk in covenant faithfulness. Like Obadiah, the seven-thousand in Elijah's day who did not worship Baal (1 Kgs 19:18) would encourage the exilic audience to maintain covenant fidelity despite being the minority.

In his account of the prophets against Ahab (1 Kgs 20:1–22:40), the battles with Ben-Hadad and Ahab function as the backdrop for Ahab's disobedience.[41] That the Syrians (1) identified the kings of Israel as those with loyal love, חֶסֶד (1 Kgs 20:31) and (2) entered into a covenant with Ahab as vassals (1 Kgs 20:34–34) reveals situational irony. While חֶסֶד and

[40] See Wray Beal, *1 & 2 Kings*, 229–57.

[41] A significant textual variant at the chapter level arises here in the LXX. Wray Beal explains: "While the LXX places ch. 21 after ch. 19 and thus provides a continuous narrative of Elijah's ministry, MT places ch. 21 in the context of the Aramean wars and alongside that of unnamed prophets (chs. 20; 22). These unnamed prophets represent the faithful remnant of 1 Kgs 19:18" (*1 & 2 Kings*, 261).

covenant loyalty may characterize Ahab positively, the unnamed prophet revealed such actions as disobedience worthy of death (1 Kgs 20:42). The release of Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 20:34) thus becomes the impetus for Ahab's punishment, announced via the unnamed prophet (1 Kgs 20:42).

Ahab's coveting of Naboth's vineyard and subsequent murder (1 Kgs 21:1–16) characterizes him as a wanton covenant violator and even worse than the Amorites (1 Kgs 21:26). These sins serve as grounds for Elijah's (1 Kgs 21:17–29) and Micaiah's (1 Kgs 22:17–28) prophecies of his doom. That Ahab's death occurred "according to the word of Yahweh" (1 Kgs 22:38) is one of the narrator's many statements of prophetic fulfillment, and thus served as one example of the authority of Yahweh through the prophets, and so contributing to the author's argument that Yahweh's anger at Judah and subsequent exile (2 Kgs 23:27) is truthful and justified. Indeed, the author expected his audience to agree with their guilt and justified punishment (judicial rhetoric). But by doing so, the author also employed the rhetoric of entrapment, because Judah (particularly during the reign of Manasseh) committed the same sins. Thus, the audience cannot condemn Ahab and Jezebel without likewise condemning Judah. The author thus forced the audience to agree that the exile was justified. In these ways, this sections contributed to the author's overall deliberative purpose that the exilic Judeans (1) agree with the author's assessment of their guilt and the nation's justified exile, and (2) live in covenant fidelity to Yahweh while trusting his faithfulness to establish the king foretold in the Davidic Covenant.

This section of the paper will look longitudinally at the cumulative effects of (1) the southern kingdom of Judah, and (2) the northern kingdom of Israel.

In the **southern kingdom of Judah**, covenant fidelity was never achieved even by the best of their kings. Table 7 below traces the presence of high places in Judah through the reigns of the southern kings. The presence (or absence) of high places may serve as a proxy for the spiritual health of Judah. Yahweh only permitted incense to be burned in a legitimate location like the tabernacle sanctuary or the temple. He despised the high places of Canaan (Lev 26:30) and commanded the Israelites to destroy them (Num 33:52; Deut 12:2–3). Any Israelite found offering a sacrifice an at illegitimate location—like Solomon's high places—was guilty of bloodshed and deserved death (Lev 17:3–4). Thus, worship at high places ranked as a capital offense according to Moses.

Table 7: Tracing the worship at high places in Judah

Judahite King	Assessment of the narrator	Relationship to High Places
Rehoboam	Evil (1 Kgs 14:22)	Built high places in Judah (1 Kgs 14:23)
Abijah	Evil (1 Kgs 15:3)	Worshiped at the high places (1 Kgs 15:3)
Asa	Good (1 Kgs 15:11)	Did not remove the high places (1 Kgs 15:14)
Jehoshaphat	Good (1 Kgs 22:43)	Did not remove the high places (1 Kgs 22:43)
Jehoram	Evil (2 Kgs 8:18)	No mention of high places, but presumably continued
Ahaziah	Evil (2 Kgs 8:27)	No mention of high places, but presumably continued
Joash	Good (2 Kgs 12:2)	Did not remove the high places (2 Kgs 12:3)
Amaziah	Good (2 Kgs 14:3)	Did not remove the high places (2 Kgs 14:4)
Azariah	Good (2 Kgs 15:3)	Did not remove the high places (2 Kgs 15:4)
Jotham	Good (2 Kgs 15:34)	Did not remove the high places (2 Kgs 15:35)
Ahaz	Evil (2 Kgs 16:2-3)	Worshiped at the high places (2 Kgs 16:4)
Hezekiah	Good (2 Kgs 18:3)	Removed the high places (2 Kgs 18:4)

Manasseh	Evil (2 Kgs 21:2)	Rebuilt high places (2 Kgs 21:3)
Amon	Evil (2 Kgs 21:20)	No mention of high places, but presumably continued
Josiah	Good (2 Kgs 22:2)	Defiled and destroyed the high places (2 Kgs 23:5–20)
Jehoahaz	Evil (2 Kgs 23:32)	No mention of high places
Jehoiakim	Evil (2 Kgs 23:37)	No mention of high places
Jehoiachin	Evil (2 Kgs 24:8)	No mention of high places
Zedekiah	Evil (2 Kgs 24:19)	No mention of high places

As per Table 7 above, the audience could readily expect that evil kings like Rehoboam and Abijah built and worshiped at high places. But even six good kings like Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, and Jotham *did not remove* the high places. This shows that even a king meriting a favorable assessment by the narrator did not necessarily elicit the covenant faithfulness required of the Law. On the contrary, they openly permitted grievous offenses worthy of capital punishment. Hezekiah, potentially the "best" of the kings of Judah (2 Kgs 18:5–8), finally removed the high places. Despite his lengthy tenure, however, he could not produce a lasting righteousness in the nation as evidenced by his son Manasseh rebuilding the high places and committing more evil than all the kings before him. Even Josiah, another Hezekiah-like figure, effected significant religious reforms but righteousness did not prevail since four evil kings succeeded him. In the end, the author intended the audience to recognize that none of the kings met the deuteronomic ideals. None could fulfill the Davidic Covenant. Perhaps the audience might think that the inability to fulfill the Davidic Covenant rested upon faults within the house of David. Perhaps another dynasty could achieve the covenant fidelity required by Moses.

However, the history of the **northern kingdom of Israel** would dispel such thinking. Table 8 below demonstrates how Jeroboam I's golden calves at Bethel and Dan lasted throughout the entire history of the northern kingdom.

Table 8: The sins of Jeroboam throughout the northern kingdom's history

Dynasty	King of Israel	Golden Calves (the sin of Jeroboam)
Jeroboam	Jeroboam I	Built golden calves in Bethel and Dan (1 Kgs 12:28–30)
	Nadab	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (1 Kgs 15:26)
Baasha	Baasha	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (1 Kgs 15:34)
	Elah	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (1 Kgs 16:13)[42]
Zimri	Zimri	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (1 Kgs 16:19)
Omri	Omri	Did more evil than all the kings before him (1 Kgs 16:25) Continued in Jeroboam's sin (1 Kgs 16:26)
	Ahab	Did more evil than all the kings before him (1 Kgs 16:30) Continued in Jeroboam's sin (1 Kgs 16:31)
	Ahaziah	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (1 Kgs 22:53 MT [22:52])
	Jehoram	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (2 Kgs 3:3)
Jehu	Jehu	Removed Baalism from Israel, but continued in Jeroboam's sin (2 Kgs 10:28–31)

[42] This verse does not explicitly state that Elah continued in Jeroboam's sins. However, the narrator placed Elah and his father Baasha side-by-side in committing the same sin, and Baasha did explicitly continue in Jeroboam's sin (1 Kgs 15:34). Furthermore, the phraseology of causing Israel to commit sin (1 Kgs 16:13) is similar, if not identical, to how the narrator speaks of various kings causing Israel to commit the sin of Jeroboam (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:34; 16:19; 22:53 MT [22:52]; 2 Kgs 3:3; 10:29, etc.).

	Jehoahaz	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (2 Kgs 13:2)
	Jehoash	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (2 Kgs 13:11)
	Jeroboam II	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (2 Kgs 14:24)
	Zechariah	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (2 Kgs 15:9)
Shallum	Shallum	Narrator leaves no comment; he only reigned for one month
Menahem	Menahem	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (2 Kgs 15:18)
	Pekahiah	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (2 Kgs 15:24)
Pekah	Pekah	Continued in Jeroboam's sin (2 Kgs 15:28)
Hoshea	Hoshea	Not explicitly mentioned, but did evil in Yahweh's eyes (2 Kgs 17:2)

As shown in Table 8, Jeroboam I initiated the great idolatrous sin of Israel by creating the golden calves in Bethel and Dan. The narrator explicitly noted fifteen of the eighteen kings following in Jeroboam I's sin. Worship of the golden calves continued even in the best of the northern kings—Jehu—who warranted the positive assessment of not just the narrator, but Yahweh himself: "You have done well by doing right in my eyes" (2 Kgs 10:30). Beyond Elah, only for Shallum and Hoshea does the narrator remain silent. Elah reigned only for one month, so it's reasonable to conclude he continued in the same sin. Under Hoshea, the northern kingdom faced collapse and deportation, so it's unlikely he had time to focus on implementing religious reforms.

Thus, the complete failure of the northern kings over nine successive dynasties to amend their progenitor's golden calves shows the complete inability of another "house" to elicit righteousness in Israel. Many of these dynasties ended with coups and assassinations. The problem lay not with the house of David, for nine other dynasties had failed and David's house, while ultimately a failure, nevertheless had the "best" track record of success. The audience, then, could recognize that the solution lay not outside the house of David, but rather with the promised Davidic king who would fulfill the Davidic Covenant.

With Elijah clearly being portrayed as a prophet like Moses, Elisha then assumed Elijah's mantle and is portrayed as a prophet like Elijah. Table 9 identifies the parallels between the ministries of Elijah and Elisha.

Table 9: Parallels between Elijah and Elisha

Elijah	**Elisha**
Multiplied flour and oil for a widow (1 Kgs 17:14–16)	Multiplied oil for a widow (2 Kgs 4:1–7)
Raised a woman's son from death (1 Kgs 17:21–22)	Raised a woman's son from death (2 Kgs 4:32–37)
Enemies destroyed by fire (2 Kgs 1:10–12)	Enemies mauled by bears (2 Kgs 1:23–24)
Parted the Jordan river (2 Kgs 2:7–8)	Parted the Jordan river (2 Kgs 2:14)
Surrounded by chariots of fire (2 Kgs 2:11)	Surrounded by chariots of fire (2 Kgs 6:17)

After Elijah had been taken up to heaven surrounded by chariots of fire in a whirlwind (2 Kgs 2:11) Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak, thus assuming his prophetic office. The parallels in Table 9 show how the narrator portrayed Elisha as a prophet like Elijah. Elisha's request for a double portion of Elijah's spirit (2 Kgs 2:9) was answered through Elisha's prophetic ministry which included double the number (fourteen) of recorded miracles as Elijah (seven). Elisha is also portrayed as a Moses-like figure for (1) parting a body of water (2 Kgs 2:14), (2) purifying

undrinkable water (2 Kgs 2:21–22), (3) providing water for Israelites in a desert (2 Kgs 3:8–20), and (4) multiplying food for hungry Israelites (2 Kgs 4:42–44).

In his account of Naaman (2 Kgs 5:1–27), the narrator employed situational irony. Through his healing from leprosy, Naaman would come to know that Elisha was a true prophet in Israel (2 Kgs 5:8) and "that there is no God in all of the world except in Israel" (2 Kgs 5:15). Ironically, a pagan Gentile came to this realization while Israel as a nation still suffered from Baalism and an idolatrous, illegitimate form of Yahwism at Bethel and Dan.

The presence of leprosy (2 Kgs 5), famine (2 Kgs 4:38; 6:25; 8:1), sieges (2 Kgs 6:24; 16:5; 17:5; 18:9), and lions (2 Kgs 17:25) are all covenantal curses from the Torah (Lev 26; Deut 28), and indicate the failure of the northern kingdom to maintain covenant loyalty. The covenantal curses should come as no surprise to the audience informed by the Torah, as the northern kingdom persisted in Jeroboam I's sin throughout their entire history. Ahab and Jezebel introduced Baalism to the nation. Despite their many miraculous works, the ministries of Elijah and Elisha did not rid Israel of Baalism. That task required the might of Jehu, the warrior king. The prophets' inability actually demonstrated the failure of the prophetic office to elicit covenant fidelity. Not that Jehu ultimately fared much better—despite ending Baalism in the northern kingdom (2 Kgs 10:28), he continued to permit worship of Jeroboam I's golden calves at Bethel and Dan. And just as he countered Baalism in the northern kingdom, it blossomed in Judah under Jehoram (2 Kgs 8:18). Only on account of the Davidic Covenant did Yahweh not destroy Judah at this time (2 Kgs 8:19).

Thus, the narrator's account of idolatrous Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kgs 16:29–2 Kgs 10:36) ultimately demonstrates the inability of both the kings and the prophets to provoke the twelve tribes to covenant fidelity. Despite the introduction and expurgation of Baalism in the northern kingdom, and limited revivals and religious successes in the south, both kingdoms at last persisted in idolatry. The Davidic dynasty did not fail in this alone; nine other dynasties in the north had likewise failed. Thus, the issue was not the "house." Such failure contributed to the author's argument that the exile was justified by showing the unfaithfulness of both kingdoms that led to Yahweh's ultimate covenant curse of exile. The exilic audience could know that their punishment was justified, and that following other gods leads to nothing but disaster. While they await the king to fulfill the Davidic Covenant, they should live faithfully according to the Mosaic Law.

In the narrator's second account of **failed intermediate kings (2 Kgs 11:1–17:41)**, he portrayed the downfall of the northern kingdom as their kings excelled in evil and encountered a national deportation under Assyria. The author employed the judicial rhetoric and the rhetoric of entrapment—engendering the audience's condemnation of Israel and its just exile for covenant infidelity. But by doing so, the (primary Judahite) exilic audience in Babylon could not escape condemning themselves since the Southern Kingdom had likewise followed the unfaithful ways of the north, and even exceeded them.[43]

Athaliah's usurping of the Judean throne and attempt at cutting off the Davidic line (2 Kgs 11:1–3) is an example of one who is ruling on earth with the serpent (Gen 4:7). She nearly

---

[43] Ezekiel, for example, pictured Israel and Judah as two harlot sisters (Ezek 23). From Ezekiel's perspective in the early sixth century, Samaria had already been judged for her harlotry (Ezek 23:5–10), and since Jerusalem was even *more* a harlot than Samaria (Ezek 23:11), her judgment would soon arrive (Ezek 23:22, 28–29, 34, 35, 49). Thus for Ezekiel, the proof of Jerusalem's coming judgment was the past judgment of Samaria because Jerusalem was all the more deserving of it due to her spiritual infidelity.

succeeded, except for one infant boy—Joash—who was secretly rescued from the regicide (2 Kgs 11:2). Her execution at the "entranceway of the horses to the palace" (2 Kgs 11:16) portrayed her as another "Jezebel" who also faced execution in proximity to horses (2 Kgs 9:33). Following Athaliah's death, religious reforms in Judah under Jehoiada the priest and Joash the king (2 Kgs 11:17–18) ultimately failed (2 Kgs 12:3), thus showing the continuing inability of kings to lead the nation into covenant fidelity.

The evil reigns of Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 13:1–9) and Jehoash (2 Kgs 13:10–24) in Israel only function to demonstrate Yahweh's extension of mercy to the northern kingdom on account of the Abrahamic Covenant. Even up to this point, Yahweh remained unwilling to cast them away from his presence (2 Kgs 13:23). However, after the reigns of Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:23–29), Zechariah (2 Kgs 15:8–12), Menahem (2 Kgs 15:17–22), Pekahiah (2 Kgs 15:23–26), Pekah (2 Kgs 15:27–31), and Hoshea (2 Kgs 17:1–6) in Israel, Yahweh was indeed willing to cast them from his presence (2 Kgs 17:18). The narrator's theological interpretation of the rationale for exile (2 Kgs 17:7–17) is actually a form of rhetorical entrapment for the mainly Judean exilic audience. The author expected the audience to rightly condemn Israel and recognize the justification for their exile. However, the sins highlighted of the northern kingdom became sins of the southern kingdom as well. Indeed, Yahweh would identify Manasseh's sins with Ahab's (2 Kgs 21:3) and their exceeding the sins of the Amorites (2 Kgs 21:9, 11) as justification for the coming disaster upon Jerusalem (2 Kgs 21:12–16). The audience, then, could not censure Israel without likewise condemning Judah. In this way, the author forced them to admit the fairness of Judah's exile.

It is situational irony that the expatriates settling in Israel (2 Kgs 17:24) recognized the need to follow Yahweh's laws on account of the covenant curse (in this case, lions) which threatened them (2 Kgs 17:26). With further irony, the king of Assyria ordered a priest of Israel to teach the expatriates about Yahweh's requirements (2 Kgs 17:27), although his living in Bethel raises questions given the city's association with idolatrous worship.

The note of the expatriates' syncretistic worship with Yahweh and their own national gods (2 Kgs 17:29–33) also functions as entrapment for the audience. The author rightly expected his audience to condemn such syncretism as a violation of the Law, because Yahweh demanded exclusivity of worship (Exod 20:2–5). But that forced the audience to likewise condemn Israel and Judah who committed the same kind of syncretistic worship. The foreign expatriates, then, functioned as a picture or type for Israel and Judah. In the end, Israel had broken their covenant by going after foreign gods (2 Kgs 17:35–41) and were no different than the pagan nations surrounding them. Thus, the second account of the failed intermediate kings (2 Kgs 11:1–17:41) demonstrated the guilt of Judah through rhetorical entrapment using the examples of the Northern Kingdom and the Gentile expatriates who were resettled in Israel. In this way, this section contributed to the author's overall deliberative purpose that the exiles would (1) agree with the author's assessment of their guilt and the nation's justified exile, and (2) live in covenant fidelity to Yahweh while trusting his faithfulness to establish the king foretold in the Davidic Covenant.

In his account of the **final failed kings of Judah (2 Kgs 18:1–25:30)**, the narrator's portrayal of Hezekiah's successful resistance against the Assyrians showed that the northern kingdom's exile was not purely due to Assyrian might. Rather, Yahweh was stronger than the Assyrians (2 Kgs 19:35–36), but he allowed the northern kingdom's exile because of their covenant infidelity. As demonstrated in Table 7 which traced the worship at high places through

the kings of Judah, Rehoboam built the high places, and their presence continued unabated until Hezekiah's time. Even the six "good" kings prior to Hezekiah did not remove them. Hezekiah was thus the first king in Judah's history to remove the high places (2 Kgs 18:4). His breaking of the pattern sets up the audience with hopeful expectations for his reign. Indeed, the narrator pointed to Hezekiah's unique faithfulness among all the kings (2 Kgs 18:5–6) and his attendant successes (2 Kgs 18:7–8). His regaining of Philistine territory (2 Kgs 18:8) even pointed to him succeeding in places where Joshua had failed. The narrator's contrast between Hezekiah's faithfulness (1 Kgs 18:1–8) and the northern kingdom's exile due to transgressing the covenant (2 Kgs 18:9–12) established tension regarding the Assyrian attack on Judah (2 Kgs 18:13ff): how would Judah fare against an overwhelming military force? Ultimately, Hezekiah's faithfulness resulted in divine protection and the destruction of Assyrian forces (2 Kgs 19:35–36), demonstrating to the audience that Northern Kingdom's exile occurred not due to military might, but to covenant infidelity. This contrast between Samaria's fall and Hezekiah's protection thus contributes to the author's argument on the justification of the exile due to the nation's unfaithfulness.

Intriguingly, Sennacherib allured the Israelites, "Make peace with me and come out to me. Then each of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig tree and drink water from your own cistern, until I come and take you to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Choose life and not death!" (2 Kgs 18:31–32, NIV). The language of vine and fig tree is a regular OT motif for peace and prosperity. Each Israelite had their own vine and fig tree under Solomon (1 Kgs 4:25), and the prophets used the motif to speak of the kingdom age (e.g., Mic 4:4; Zech 3:10). The mention of grain and new wine and honey echoed Moses' words of blessing for Israel in the Promised Land (Deut 33:29), as did Sennacherib's exhortation to live and not die (see Deut 30:19; Exod 3:8; Deut 6:3, 11:9, etc.). In other words, Sennacherib ostensibly offered to Israel the equivalent of covenant blessings *without* covenant obedience, what God had already promised to Israel *through* covenant obedience.

Isaiah's word from Yahweh (2 Kgs 19:21–34) against Sennacherib foretold Jerusalem's deliverance on account of the Davidic Covenant (2 Kgs 19:34). Everything appeared to be falling into place for Hezekiah as the fulfillment of that covenant, but after his illness (2 Kgs 20:1–11), his pridefulness before the Babylonian envoy (2 Kgs 20:12–13) resulted in Isaiah's prophetic word of the coming exile. Throughout the book of Kings, the words of the (legitimate) prophets of Yahweh always come true (see Table 2). Furthermore, despite all indications of the greatness of Hezekiah, he too failed to fulfill the Davidic Covenant. The author intended his audience, then, to recognize the continued failure of the kings and the justified necessity of the exile.

Indeed, Hezekiah's successes were followed by two evil kings, Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:1–18) and Amon (2 Kgs 21:19–26). The narrator rated Manasseh as the worst king in the history of Judah (2 Kgs 21:2–16) whose sins even exceeded the Amorites (2 Kgs 21:11). Manasseh's failure shows how even the greatest king (Hezekiah) could not produce a lasting righteousness, as Hezekiah's own son was the greatest failure, and his grandson likewise failed. While Manasseh's wickedness served ostensibly as the reason Yahweh cast Judah out of the Promised Land (2 Kgs 21:12–14), ultimately the cumulative evil committed by Israel since the time of Exodus justified the exile (2 Kgs 21:15).

After the hope of Hezekiah and disappointment of his son and grandson, the reign of Josiah (2 Kgs 22:1–23:30) proffered another Hezekiah-like figure. Yet according to the (always

true) words of Yahweh's prophets, Josiah's faithfulness, his extensive reforms, and his covenant renewal ceremony (2 Kgs 23:1–3) only served to *postpone* the exile, but not rescind it (2 Kgs 22:15–20). Despite the glowing evaluation of Josiah (2 Kgs 23:25), (1) Yahweh's anger still burned against Judah because of Manasseh and the punishment of exile would surely come (2 Kgs 23:26–27), and (2) Josiah the great king foolishly got himself killed by meddling in international affairs unrelated to Israel (2 Kgs 23:29–30). If the narrator identified Hezekiah as the greatest king of Judah, and Josiah surpassed even him but ended his life through unwise actions, then Josiah could not be the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant for that demanded an eternal king (2 Sam 7:13). Additionally, Josiah's reign was followed by four evil kings: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 23:31–24:20). The national fidelity during Josiah's lifetime brought about from his covenant renewal ceremony immediately broke after his death. Thus, even the greatest of Judean kings could not achieve lasting righteousness. The author intended his exilic audience to recognize the failure of *all* the kings of Judah and Israel. Their failure contributed to the justification for the exile in Babylon, and the only hope for the nation lay in the promised son of David, the coming king.

The Babylonian invasions and exiles (2 Kgs 24:1–25:30) represented a covenant curse: disobedience to the laws of Yahweh would result in being uprooted from the Promised Land and made captive by other nations (Deut 28:32, 41, 63–64). Yahweh permitted the Babylonian victory because he desired to remove the nation of Israel from his presence (2 Kgs 24:3). The narrator's note of Egypt's impotence because Babylon had taken all the territory from the Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt (2 Kgs 24:7) is situational irony at the level of the biblical metanarrative for two reasons. First, such were the precise borders of the land promised to Israel in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 15:18), and second, Yahweh had shown the impotence of Egypt during the Exodus. It was not Babylon, but *Israel*, whom Yahweh intended to have the power to hold Egypt (and all the other Gentile nations) at bay.

During the Babylonian invasions and exiles, the narrator also shifted his time references. Whereas he previously measured time by the reign of Israelite kings, now he reckoned time according to Nebuchadnezzar's reign (2 Kgs 25:8) and the length of the Judean exile (2 Kgs 25:27). This shift indicated a significant change has occurred, namely the end of the reigns of Israelite kings. Ishmael's revolt against Gedaliah (2 Kgs 25:25–26) represented the line of David attempting to take back the kingdom by force. With situational irony, after failing, they fled to Egypt (2 Kgs 25:26). The Exodus had thus come full circle with Israelites rushing back to Egypt for safety.

The narrator's sevenfold reference to articles of bronze (2 Kings 25:13–17), the "poorest of the land" (2 Kgs 25:12), and a burned temple (2 Kgs 25:9) constitute a disastrous reversal of fortunes for national Israel. Compared to the days of David and Solomon with the new temple, the riches of gold and silver, and peace in the Promised Land, the glory of Israel had truly departed. The narrative of Kings is thus a tragedy without any resolution. None of the kings or prophets had succeeded in eliciting covenant fidelity in the nation, and their unfaithfulness had resulted in the exile. The exilic Judean audience of 1–2 Kings could only reach the conclusion that Yahweh had justifiably exiled the nation in Babylon. The release of Jehoiachin in his thirty-seventh year of exile (2 Kgs 25:27–30) offered the audience a slight glimmer of hope, however. The line of David had not yet been extinguished. Even while in exile themselves, the audience should maintain their hope in the promised king who would fulfill the Davidic Covenant.

The author had thus fulfilled his dual purposes: judicially, he sought for his exilic Judean audience to recognize and condemn both Israel and Judah for their guilt in idolatry. Both kingdoms had abandoned Yahweh and his laws. Logically, then, the audience must agree that the exile of both kingdoms was justified. Deliberatively, the author intended the narrative to persuade his audience to be loyally committed to Yahweh. Going after foreign gods resulted in nothing but covenant curses culminating in the exile. The exilic audience's only hope was for the coming king who would fulfill the Davidic Covenant, and the author wanted his audience to live faithfully while waiting for the promised one.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aberbach, Moses, and Leivy Smolar. "Aaron, Jeroboam, and the Golden Calves." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86, no. 2 (1967): 129–40.

Bauckham, Richard. *God and the Crisis of Freedom: Biblical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. *Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook*. Edited by David M. Howard, Jr. Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006.

Harrison, R. K. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969.

Hays, J. Daniel. "An Evangelical Approach to Old Testament Narrative Criticism." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166 (2009): 3–18.

Hays, J. Daniel. "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him? Narrative Subtlety in 1 Kings 1–11." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 28, no. 2 (Dec 2003): 149–74.

Herrmann, W. "Baal." Edited by Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.

Kennedy, George A. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Studies in Religion. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

Klingler, David R. "Bible Exposition Template and Instructions." Unpublished manuscript, 2023.

Klingler, David R. "Validity in the Identification and Interpretation of a Literary Allusion in the Hebrew Bible." PhD Diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2010.

Longman, Tremper, III, and Raymond B. Dillard. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.

Ryken, Leland. *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.

Wray Beal, Lissa M. *1 & 2 Kings*. Edited by David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham. Vol. 9. Apollos Old Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.