

a synopsis of 1 KINGS

“The end justifies the means.” That’s the way a big part of the world operates today—in business, in politics, in sports, in academics, in marriages, in the way you relate to your neighbor. Most of us are infected to some extent with that killer virus—we want what we want when we want it and how we want it (see James 4:2-3).

The book of 1 Kings illustrates this twist in our souls—beginning with King Solomon whose kingship takes up the first eleven chapters of the book. Spiros Zodhiates sums up Solomon’s life like this: “Solomon, David’s son, began his rule with great wealth, glory, and power, but it ended in disgrace...Solomon compromised some of the most sacred spiritual principles in order to achieve his political ends” (see James 3:15-16).

We don’t know who compiled 1 Kings. Some have said Isaiah or Jeremiah. A good prospect would also be Ezra, for the book seems to be concerned with the spirituality (or lack of) that led to the Hebrew nation’s ruin. Whoever the author, he seemed to have access to an abundance of state annals and other historical records existent in his day to which he often referred (see 1 Kings 11:41; 14:19, 29; 15:7,23, 31; 16:5, 14, 27 etc).

A basic outline of 1 Kings might look like this:

- I. Solomon Unites Israel (1:1—11:43)
 - A. His power, wealth, wisdom, temple, and palace (1:1—8:66)
 - B. The magnificent kingdom (9:1—10:29)
 - C. His downfall and death (11:1-43)
- II. The Kingdom Splits (12:1—16:28)
- III. Wicked King Ahab and Jezebel Enter (16:29-34)
- IV. Elijah Makes His Presence Known (17:1—19:21)
 - A. Drought and raising from the dead of the widow’s son (17:1-24)
 - B. Contest with priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel ((18:1-46)
 - C. Elijah troubled by Ahab and Jezebel (19:1-18)
 - D. Call of Elisha (19:19-21)
- V. Ahab’s Wickedness and Death (20:1—22:53)

If there is a key verse in 1 Kings, I think it would be 17:39—And when all the people saw it, they fell face down on the ground and cried out, “The LORD—he is God! Yes, the LORD is God!” No matter what or who gets in the way (including ourselves) God’s rule continues. His purposes will prevail. Now, that’s good news—good news indeed.

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