

2 Samuel 11-12; 1 Kings 3; 6-9; 11 Podcast Quotes and Notes

2 Samuel 11-12: David and Bathsheba

1. "When kings go forth to battle" (2 Sam. 11.1). David is in the wrong place at the wrong time, since "David tarried still at Jerusalem."
2. He sees Bathsheba (v. 2),¹ inquired after her (v. 3), sent for her (v. 4), and "lay with her" (v. 4).²
3. Bathsheba conceives (v. 5), **David then tries to cover his sin** by having Uriah sleep with her (v. 6-13). This is probably all about pride. **It is unlikely that Uriah doesn't know what is going on**, and both men are challenging each other. **Uriah is essentially calling out David's lack of honor (this being an issue of shame/honor in an ancient context)**³ saying "The ark

¹ Like any trap, it is easy to enter but difficult to escape. **Some rationalize that they can casually view pornography without suffering its adverse effects.** They say initially, "This isn't so bad," or, "Who cares? It won't make any difference," or, "I'm just curious." But they are mistaken. The Lord has warned, "And he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not he shall be cast out" (D&C 42:23). That's exactly what happened to David: he looked at Bathsheba, lusted after her, and lost the Spirit. How different the rest of David's life might have been if he had just looked away. **Along with losing the Spirit, pornography users also lose perspective and proportion.** Like King David, they try to conceal their sin, forgetting that nothing is hidden from the Lord (see 2 Nephi 27:27). Real consequences start to accumulate as self-respect ebbs away, sweet relationships sour, marriages wither, and innocent victims begin to pile up. Finding that what they have been viewing no longer satisfies, they experiment with more extreme images. **They slowly grow addicted even if they don't know it** or they deny it, and like David's, their behavior deteriorates as their moral standards disintegrate. Elder L. Whitney Clayton, "[Blessed Are All the Pure in Heart](#)," *Ensign*, Nov 2007.

² We must be cautious of seemingly small thoughts and actions that can lead to large consequences... a few unclean thoughts, or **a little pornography**; one experiment with drugs; a few lies, a little fraud; or a feeling of hate can lead us into the camp of the adversary. Giving just an inch here and there can put us close enough to the line that one slip will take us right over it. Young people who decide to experiment with only one cigarette, one dose of drugs, or one drink of alcohol-only one-often find themselves led into additional use, and in time they become addicted to a substance that controls them and that they can break only with great difficulty. Men and women who decide to flirt with adultery just once can become enmeshed in misery and unhappiness for themselves and their precious families. Few are able to get back on the Lord's side immediately. Too many lose a loving companion, face separation from their children, develop bitterness, lose their economic stability, and lose their eternal blessings unless they repent. The Church has only one acceptable standard of sexual morality, and that is complete chastity for both sexes. I urge you to avoid situations that permit physical feelings to take control of behavior. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, "[The Lord's Side](#)," *Ensign*, Mar. 1993.

³ O'Brien and Richards make a powerful argument here. They assert that the honor culture of David and Uriah are on display in this narrative. They assert, "Now it is clear to everyone, including David, that Uriah will not give David an honorable way out of this mess. **It was customary for Mediterranean kings merely to seize whatever they wanted.** King Ahab wanted Naboth's vineyard, for example, so he took it (1 Kings 21:18). You may recall that David himself refused to do this on another occasion (2 Sam 24:24). In this case, **David takes the low road. He refuses to pay Uriah to divorce his wife; instead, he arranges for Uriah to be killed.** We know the story, but the narrator wants us to notice that more than Uriah (or other mercenaries) died as a result of David's decision: "some of the men in David's army fell" (2 Sam 11:17)... We want you to see that the honor/shame aspect of David's culture determined his conduct. **At every step, he did what was typical for a Mediterranean king at the time in a situation like this.** And according to the honor/shame system of David's day, the matter was resolved... Everyone is satisfied except the Lord. Note how the narrator words it: "After the time of mourning was over, David had her [Bathsheba] brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. *But the thing David had done displeased the Lord*" (2 Sam 11:27, emphasis added). Although David had acted appropriately according to the broader cultural standards of his day, God held him to higher moral standards. Even so, God worked through the

and Israel abide in tents... how can I go into my house and eat and drink and lie with my wife?" (2 Sam. 11.11).

4. David then conspires to murder Uriah (2 Sam. 11.14-15).
5. Uriah is slain (2 Sam. 11.17).
6. Joab sent a full report of the battle to David. He instructed the messenger as follows: "When you finish reporting to the king all about the battle, the king may get angry and say to you, 'Why did you come so close to the city to attack it? Didn't you know that they would shoot from the wall? Who struck down Abimelech son of Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman who dropped an upper millstone on him from the wall at Thebez, from which he died? Why did you come so close to the wall?' Then say: 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite was among those killed'" (2 Sam. 18-21 JPS translation)⁴
7. David replies to Joab (v. 25), then Bathsheba mourns the death of her husband (v. 26), then David takes Bathsheba to wife (2 Sam. 11.27).
8. The parable of Nathan (2 Sam. 12.1-6). The purpose of this parable is so that Nathan will set David up to have an emotional response to what he has just done. The legal case that Nathan presents is used to get David to pass the verdict upon himself unwittingly.⁵
9. "Thou art the man!" (2 Sam. 12.7).
10. Nathan's curse: "The sword shall never depart from thine house (v. 10), "I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, I will take thy wives and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun... I will do this thing before all Israel!" (2 Sam. 12.11-12).
 - a. Bathsheba becomes ill and the child in her womb dies (2 Sam. 12.15-18).
 - b. Bathsheba has another son, *שְׁלֹמֹה* *š'ōmō* (Solomon), also called Jedidiah (could one of these be his throne name?)

2 Samuel 13-20: The Chaos Inside the House of David

1. Amnon son of David and Ahinoam (1 Sam. 25.43 "Ahinoam of Jezreel), desires his half-sister Tamar, daughter of David and Maacah (2 Sam. 3.3 "Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur).⁶

honor/shame system to bring David to repentance." E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, [Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible](#), IVP, 2012, 104-107/225 electronic version.

⁴ David's order to fall back is not carried out, and other officers are killed along with Uriah. Joab knows that he made a fatal mistake, allowing his men to come close to the city wall. In his instructions to the messenger he couches David's anticipated reaction in the form of a series of rhetorical questions. The first and last questions, being similar (ring composition), contain the main argument, whereas the other questions supply the reasons. Joab should have learned from the precedent of Abimelech, who was killed by a (weak) woman. The message that Uriah was one of the killed, however, instead of increasing the king's rage at the unwarranted death of a loyal officer and comrade, will have the (ironic) effect of calming him down. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 637.

⁵ Kings used to perform judicial functions. Therefore it closely corresponds to the actual events, but not completely (cf. Jotham's parable in Judges 9): e.g., whereas the rich man represents David, the poor man Uriah, and the lamb Bathsheba, nobody corresponds to the traveler; moreover, the lamb is slaughtered, instead of being added to the herd. The parable stresses the social aspect of the robbery, the rich man taking the scant property of the poor man. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 638.

⁶ Note that Absalom is the brother of Tamar, and he will have his revenge upon Amnon in this story (2 Sam. 3.3 states that Absalom is the son of Maacah and David).

- a. He feigns illness, tries to lie with her, she objects, and he takes her by force, thus raping his half-sister (2 Sam. 12.3-14). This is the catalyst for the internal strife in the House of David.
2. Absalom murders Amnon for the rape of his sister (2 Sam. 13.23-39).
3. Joab has a woman of Tekoa pitch a tale of the death of one of her sons and the blame the killer has who the clan wants to pay for the bloodguilt. She argues, "Thus they would quench the last ember remaining to me, and leave my husband without name or remnant upon the earth" (2 Sam. 14.7) This is reminiscent of Nathan's tale of the two men and the lamb in 2 Sam. 12.1-7.
4. David instructs Joab to bring Absalom back into his good graces (2 Sam. 14.21).
 - a. Absalom comes home and "bowed himself" to David, and "thanked the king" (2 Sam. 14.22).
 - b. Absalom is the best-looking fella of all time, with amazing hair (2 Sam. 14.25-26).⁷
 - c. Absalom lived in Jerusalem two years, but did not see his father (2 Sam. 14.28).⁸
 - d. Absalom, wanting Joab to take him to the king, finds that Joab ignores him, so he sets Joab's fields of barley on fire (2 Sam. 14.29-32).
 - e. Joab finally listens to Absalom and gets him an audience with the king (2 Sam. 14.33).
5. Absalom rebels against his father David (2 Sam. 15).
 - a. He uses demagogic means to muster political support (2 Sam. 15.1-6).
 - b. Absalom goes to Hebron, where David was first proclaimed king, and then has his men proclaim, "Absalom reigneth in Hebron" (2 Sam. 15.10). "The conspiracy gained strength" (v. 12), and David learns of the plans of Absalom (v. 13-14).
 - c. David flees Jerusalem, leaving 10 of his concubines behind in order to mind the palace (2 Sam. 15.16).
 - d. Zadok comes with the Ark, ready to leave the city.⁹ David tells him to put the Ark back, probably indicating that he sees God's favor as connected to the presence of the Ark of Covenant (2 Sam. 15.25-26).
 - e. David leaves Jerusalem and made the ascent up the Mount of Olives, barefoot and with his head covered, as a sign of mourning (2 Sam. 15.30). Absalom enters the city (2 Sam. 15.37).
 - f. Shimei curses David (2 Sam. 16.5-13).
6. Absalom sleeps with his father's concubines (2 Sam. 16.20-22), thus making public his bid for the throne. This is in direct fulfilment of Nathan's prophecy in 2 Sam. 12.11-12.

⁷ Growing and weighing his hair are signs of Absalom's narcissism. Two hundred shekels, more than two kg (4.5 pounds). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 644. **Absalom was the best-looking guy in all of Israel** -- with some serious hair. He'd let it grow all year and then cut it, which he had to do each year because it got so darned heavy. One year's growth weighed 200 shekels. And how heavy is 200 shekels? Well, **one shekel weighed about 11 grams**. So Absalom's haircut trimmings weighed in at 2.2 kilograms, or about 4.8 pounds. A year. How does this compare with normal human hair? An average head hair has a diameter of about 0.007 cm (70 micrometers) and grows 15 cm per year. And an average head has about 100,000 hair follicles on it. Since human hair has a density of 1.32 g/cm³, we can estimate the weight of an average person's yearly hair production. $\text{Weight} = \pi * (.0035 \text{ cm})^2 * 15 \text{ cm} * 100,000 \text{ hairs} * 1.32 \text{ g/cm}^3 = 76 \text{ g}$. **So an average person produces about 0.076 kilogram of hair annually, about than 1/30th that of Absalom. Of course Absalom wasn't an average person. He was, after all, the best-looking guy in Israel.** So maybe his hair was 30 times as thick or 20 times as dense as normal human hair.

⁸ It would seem that David has allowed him to return home, but still has not forgiven what he did.

⁹ Zadok and Abiathar are both priests, but it appears that Zadok is the one in charge.

7. Joab slays Absalom (2 Sam. 18).
 - a. David says, "Deal gently with Absalom!" (2 Sam. 18.5).
 - b. Battle between Absalom and David's forces, "the wood devoured more people than the sword" (2 Sam. 18.8).
 - c. Absalom's mule went under thick boughs of an oak, and it caught Absalom's hair (2 Sam. 18.10).
 - d. Joab kills Absalom with three darts through his heart (2 Sam. 18.14).
 - i. Ten armor bearers are the ones who "slew him," hinting that Joab didn't finish him off (v. 15).¹⁰
 - e. David, upon hearing that Absalom is slain, cries out, "O my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sam. 18.33).
8. Joab rebukes David for showing kindness to his enemies (2 Sam. 19.5-6).
9. David appoints Amasa as the commander of his armed forces, thus demoting Joab for his killing of Absalom (2 Sam. 19.13-15).
10. David crosses the Jordan River at Gilgal (similar to Joshua's crossing – 2 Sam. 19.15-17).
 - a. Shimei, who previously pelted David and his officials with stones, cursing him saying, "Get out, get out you man of blood, you scoundrel!" (2 Sam. 16.5-13), falls down before David (2 Sam. 19.18).¹¹
 - b. It is suggested that Shimei must die for his crimes, but apparently David is tired of all the killing, stating, "Shall any man be put to death this day in Israel? Thou shalt not die!" (2 Sam. 19.22-23).
11. Sheba, of Benjamine, incites a rebellion against David (2 Sam. 20).
 - a. Amasa is replaced by Abishai, Joab's brother, because of his delay in mustering the troops (2 Sam. 20.4-6).
 - b. Joab kills Amasa (2 Sam. 20.8-10).
 - c. Sheba is slain and Joab is the commander of the armies of Israel (2 Sam. 20.15-23).

2 Samuel 21-24: Appendix

The last four chapters of Samuel include diverse materials. These are somewhat different in character, theological outlook, and language from the main body of the book, and were added later as an appendix. They are arranged in chiastic order: (A) a narrative about a national calamity, (B) short accounts of heroic feats, (C) a poem; (C') a poem, (B') short accounts of heroic feats, with a list of David's heroes, and (A') a narrative about a national calamity. The first narrative looks back to the past, to

¹⁰ The dialogue between Joab and the man who saw Absalom hanging in the tree (2 Sam. 18.11) underscores Joab's deliberate **violation of David's explicit order to deal gently with Absalom**. Though Absalom is finally killed by ten armsbearers, responsibility for his death rests with Joab, who gave the order—just as responsibility for Amnon's death, though carried out by attendants, rested with Absalom (13.28-29). Joab was probably driven by concern for the people and the kingdom, but personal feelings—disappointment and anger at Absalom's ingratitude and violence (14.30-31) may also have been involved. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 651.

¹¹ He said to the king, "Let not my lord hold me guilty, and do not remember the wrong your servant committed on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem; let Your Majesty give it no thought. For **your servant knows that he has sinned; so here I have come down today, the first of all the House of Joseph**, to meet my lord the king." (2 Sam. 19.20-21 JPS translation). Shimei couches his plea in most deferential language. House of Joseph, a designation of northern Israel as opposed to Judah.

events that occurred before David's reign; the last narrative points to the future, to the period of David's son Solomon.¹²

1. Famine in the land (2 Sam. 21) and vengeance versus charity.
 - d. There was a famine during the reign of David, year after year for three years. David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD replied, "It is because of the bloodguilt of Saul and [his] house, for he put some Gibeonites to death" (2 Sam. 21.1).¹³
 - e. The first part of the narrative tells of the Gibeonites' revenge for Saul's violation of the oath promising them preservation of life; the second part describes the acts of charity to the dead performed by Saul's concubine and David (2 Sam. 21.1-14).
2. Heroic feats (2 Sam. 21.15-22).
 - a. The four short accounts of feats performed by David's heroes against Philistine giants resemble each other in content and form. They also show similarities—particularly the third one—with the narrative of David and Goliath (1 Sam. 17). All of them tell of single combats. They probably belong to David's early period.¹⁴
 - b. "Elhannan, a Bethlehemite slew Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam" (2 Sam. 21.19).¹⁵
3. A song of thanksgiving (2 Sam. 22).
 - a. God is portrayed in anthropomorphic terms (2 Sam. 22.8-16).
4. The last words of David (2 Sam. 23.1-7).
5. The heroes (2 Sam. 23.8-39).

¹² *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 658.

¹³ This act of Saul is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible.

¹⁴ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 659.

¹⁵ According to 1 Sam. 17 Goliath of Gath (i.e., the Gittite), whose spear had a shaft like a weaver's bar (1 Sam. 17.7), was killed by David, the Bethlehemite. To resolve the contradiction 1 Chron. 20.5 reads "brother of Goliath." **Rashi** (1040-1105 AD) **assumes that David and Elhanan were one and the same person**. Probably, however, the killing of the giant Goliath was initially attributed to Elhanan, but later the more famous David was credited with it. This was facilitated by the fact that the Philistine killed by David was originally anonymous (only in 1 Sam. 17-4, 23, where he is introduced, is his name mentioned; otherwise he is simply designated "the Philistine"). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 559-660. The Bible tells us Goliath (Heb. גִּלְיָת) was a Philistine warrior from the city of Gath (I Sam. 17:23) who advanced from the ranks of the Philistines when they faced the Israelites in battle in the Valley of Elah (I Sam. 17). Because of Goliath's great size, he is described as a *rafah* (Raphah; II Sam. 21:19–20; I Chron. 20:8), the Rephaim being among the ancient people of Canaan who were regarded as giants (Deut. 2:11)... The most famous parallel to the battle of the champions in I Samuel 17 is found in the third book of the Iliad, in which Paris fights Menelaus. The appearance of Goliath, and his boastful words struck terror into the poorly armed Israelite warriors. In contrast to his armed and experienced opponent, David is armed only with courage, faith, and agility. But young David manages to kill Goliath with a slingstone aimed at the Philistine's forehead (ibid. 17:50). **Some scholars hold that Elhanan was David's original name, which was later changed to David**. (Perhaps David was his "[throne name](#)." See: [Elhanan, Jewish Virtual Library](#)). It is more likely, though, that in the course of time Elhanan's exploit was transferred to the more famous David. There are **significant differences** between the **Hebrew version and the Septuagint**. In addition, whereas the Goliath narrative depicts David as unskilled in battle (I Sam. 17:39) and unknown to the king (I Sam. 17:55–58), the previous chapter had already placed him in Saul's court (I Sam. 16:21–3) as the king's armor bearer. A weak attempt at harmonization was made in I Samuel 17:15. Although the tale of David and Goliath is one of the best-known Bible stories, various linguistic, stylistic, and theological elements point to a post-exilic date for this tradition about David. [Jewish Virtual Library](#), accessed 5.18.2020.

- a. Joshebbasshebeth,¹⁶ Eleazar, and Shammah (2 Sam. 23.8-13).
 - b. These three heroically get David water in the midst of a war with the Philistines.
 - c. More heroes listed (2 Sam. 13.14-39).
 - i. Most of these heroes are from Judah, specifically the area around Bethlehem. Some are from Benjamin and Ephraim, and the last named are of foreign origin.¹⁷
6. Census, plague, and the purchase of the threshingfloor of Araunah (2 Sam. 24).
- a. These three issues are all connected. David, by issuing a census, angers the Lord (2 Sam. 24.1).
 - b. Because of this, the Lord sends a plague (2 Sam. 24.15).
 - c. Gad the seer approaches David (2 Sam. 24.11-14).
 - d. "Rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite!" (2 Sam. 24.18).
 - i. Threshing floors were sacred spaces in antiquity.¹⁸
 - ii. David purchase the ground for 50 shekels, builds an altar, and the plague ceased (2 Sam. 24.19-25).

1 Kings

Kings, the last book of the "Former Prophets," relates the history of Israel from the declining days of David through the beginning of the Babylonian exile. Its last verses describe the release of Jehoiachin, exiled king of Judah, from prison in Babylonia during the reign of Evil-merodach son of Nebuchadnezzar, an event datable through Babylonian sources to 562-561 BCE.

The division of Kings into two books is first attested in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Bible, where it is combined with Samuel into a single four-part composition, *Basileiai* ("kingdoms" or "dynasties" or "reigns"). The division of Kings into two books was later followed in the Latin Vulgate version, and was adopted from there to vernacular Bible translations.

The narrative of Kings falls naturally into three sections followed by two brief appendices. The first section (1 Kings chapters 1-11) narrates the circumstances of Solomon's ascent to the throne and describes the source of his wisdom, his reign over all Israel in a united kingdom, and the building and furnishing of the Temple and other structures; it also evaluates his religious behavior. The second section (1 Kings 12 – 2 Kings 17) begins by recounting the circumstances under which the northern tribes rejected the authority of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, withdrew from his kingdom (henceforth called

¹⁶ This name is not in the Masoretic text. Josheb-basshebeth, an odd name. The Septuagint reads "Ishbosheth" (or "Ish-baal"). Instead of he is העצנו אדונו Adino the Eznite in this text. 1 Chronicles 11.11 reads "he wielded his spear" (see v. 18). Emendation yields "he wielded his ax" (the Semitic word for "ax" is similar in Heb to "the Eznite"). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 664.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 665.

¹⁸ Jaime Waters wrote an entire dissertation explaining this. She writes, "it seems evident that beyond their use as agricultural spaces, threshing floors were considered sacred spaces" (p.16-17). She identifies many characters of the Hebrew Bible that use threshing floors as sacred space: Joseph (note that this is a mourning ritual - Genesis 50.7-11), Gideon (Judges 6.37-40), King David (2 Sam. 6.1-6; 2 Sam. 24.15-25; 1 Chron. 21.18), Ahab, Jehoshaphat and 402 prophets [Zedekiah and Micaiah are named prophets in this section] (1 Kgs. 22.10; 2 Chron. 18.9). [Waters, Threshing Floors as Sacred Spaces in the Hebrew Bible, dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2013, p. 105-113.](#) Accessed 5.10.2022.

Judah), and formed another, called Israel, with a king of their choosing. From that point the narrative provides a synchronistic, overlapping history of the kings of Judah and Israel for almost two centuries until the Northern Kingdom was destroyed by Assyria in 722. The third section (2 Kings 18.1-25.21) describes the reigns of Davidic dynasts in Judah, the Southern Kingdom, until Babylonia conquered Judah, ruined Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, and executed some and exiled others from among its leading citizens in 586. The first brief appendix (2 Kings 25.22-26) tells of the appointment and assassination of Gedaliah, a native Israelite appointed administrator of Judah by the Babylonians; the second (2 Kings 25.27-30) appends a notice that Jehoiachin, the exiled king of Judah, was released from a Babylonian prison in the thirty-seventh year of exile.

Kings is not a history in the contemporary sense of the word, that is, a factual description of past events and an explanation for their occurrence that a modern reader might expect. **It is, in the main, an extended theological essay written by a person or persons with passionately held beliefs, convinced that the destruction of the Northern Kingdom and the fall of the southern one were due to the misguided policies of their kings.** The author described past events selectively, commenting or summarizing them as illustrations of the lessons that he believed they taught.

The author maintained that **the Lord**, the God of history, **made His will known to Israel** with regard to specific key issues, that punishments are preceded by warnings **through prophets**, and that **people are responsible for the consequences of their choices. He further maintained that kings were responsible for the fate of their people.** For him, it was axiomatic that those ruling over the tribes of Israel were obligated to maintain the centrality of the Jerusalem Temple as the unique place where offerings acceptable to God might be made and to eliminate the illegitimate worship of any deity other than the Lord. **The author's composition demonstrated how all northern and most southern kings failed** to meet their obligations and how all adversity, from minor disasters to the final catastrophe, followed as a consequence of this failure. Somewhat contradictorily, he also took pains to note that despite this, the divine promise of **an eternal dynasty to David** (2 Sam. 7.11) **was maintained out of God's love** for David ("for the sake of David," 1 Kings 11.13; 2 Kings 8.19; 19.34).

The author expressed his axiomatic notions, described Josiah (2 Kings 22-23) whom he regarded as best exemplifying what a king should be-and expressed his theme of the uniqueness of the Jerusalem Temple, in language closely tied to that of Deuteronomy 12. Deuteronomy is the only book in the Torah to project an image of the ideal king (Deut. 17.14-20), who bears a striking resemblance to Josiah as depicted in Kings. The author's ideas about how God works in history parallel those of Deut. 28. For these reasons, **contemporary scholarship refers to the author of Kings as a Deuteronomistic historian**, i.e., as one who wrote under the influence and reflecting the concerns and ideology of Deuteronomy. In addition to sharing phrases found in Deuteronomy, **the author also developed some unique expressions** of his own that are repeatedly used throughout Kings: worshipping foreign gods and serving them (1 Kings 9.6; 16.31; 2 Kings 17.35; 21.3, 21); on every high hill and under every leafy tree (1 Kings 14.23; 2 Kings 16.4; 17.10); idolatry as abhorrent (1 Kings 14.24; 2 Kings 16.3; 21.2, 11); detestable things (1 Kings 11.5, 7; 2 Kings 23.24); the city that the Lord has chosen (1 Kings 8.16, 44, 48; 11.13, 32, 36; 14.21; 2 Kings 21.7; 23.27); to build a House for the name of the Lord (1 Kings 3.2; 5.17, 19; 8.17, 18, 19, 20, 44); to sacrifice and offer at the open shrines (1 Kings 3.2, 3; 22-44; 2 Kings 12.4; 14.4; 15.4, 35; 16.4); to revere the Lord, i.e., serve God from a sense of awe (1 Kings 8.40, 43; 2 Kings 17.32, 33, 34, 39, 41).

The author cites by name **three sources** to which the original readers might refer for additional information about the kings discussed: Annals of Solomon (1 Kings 11.41); Annals of the Kings of Israel (1 Kings 14.19); Annals of the Kings of Judah (1 Kings 14.20). The formula used by the author to introduce individual kings in the second section of Kings most likely draws regularly on information from the second and third of these sources: "In the ___ year of king ___ son of ___ of Israel/ Judah, ___ son of ___ became king of Judah/ Israel. He was ___ years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for ___ years. He did what was pleasing/ displeasing to the Lord." The source also includes the names of the mothers of the kings of Judah (the queen mother).

Although no scholarly consensus exists concerning the nature of these documents, the author, by mentioning them, challenged readers to deny the veracity of the facts that he was evaluating and interpreting. In addition to these, he had access to documents bearing on the Davidic court (1 Kings 1-2) and the history of the Temple (1 Kings 6-7; 2 Kings 23), as well as to some form of edited materials by and about the prophet Isaiah (2 Kings 19.20-20.11), and to collections of prophetic stories that he interspersed in his narratives about the Northern Kingdom: Ahijah (1 Kings 11.29-14.18), Elijah (1 Kings 17. 1-2 Kings 2.18), Micaiah (1 Kings 22. 1-40), and Elisha (2 Kings 2.1-13.21). Although no copies of these sources survive, documents that match each type or genre of document are known from other ancient Near Eastern sources.

The author's sustained lesson about God's justice in history continues through the untimely death of Josiah in 2 Kings 23.25. This death stilled his voice. **According to the author's philosophy, Josiah should not have died as he did. The deeds of that good king should have set things right, but did not. A second person, writing during the Babylonian exile, completed the book through 2 Kings 25.26. This writer attributed Josiah's death and every bad thing that happened subsequently to the sins of King Manasseh, a 7th-century Judean monarch.** Passages expressing this notion, combined with a prophetic idea that Israelites as a people bore responsibility for the fate of their kingdoms, were inserted into earlier parts of the book, contradicting the first author's original axiom of royal responsibility (2 Kings 21.10-15; 22.16-17). The second writer continued the narrative, appending terse notices about the last kings but describing only political events, not religious ones. The Annals of Judah are not cited after 2 Kings 24.5 and were most likely not needed; he was noting current events. This writer made no comments and found no lesson to teach in the destruction of Jerusalem.

The combined efforts of the original author and the second writer produced a document relevant to the post-destruction communities in both Judah and Babylonia. Their situation was explained as the outcome not only of the religious policies of their kings, who had violated ancient revealed teachings, but also of the behavior of their own ancestors. The implication of this didactic text was that the very facts of destruction and exile demonstrated the power of God, the validity of His covenant with Israel, and His meticulousness in maintaining it. Therefore, when the punishment of ruin and exile had run its course, His promises of restoration made in Deut. 30.1-5 and by different prophets could reasonably be expected to come to fruition.

At least 25 years after the destruction of Jerusalem, a third person appended a few sentences to the composition, now the last three verses of the book. This person may have hoped that the event recorded, King Jehoiachin's release from prison, was the harbinger of coming changes in the fortunes of his people. Jewish tradition has maintained, on the basis of statements in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. B. Bat.* 14b-15a), that the prophet Jeremiah, who prophesied from the time of Josiah until the exile, but

lived beyond that (Jer. 1.2-3; chapters 40-41), wrote Kings. This tradition may be based on the similarities between the final chapter of Kings and Jeremiah 25 and 52. As noted above, however, **Kings has a much more complex history, and may not be attributed to a single individual; like most ancient Near Eastern compositions, its author is anonymous.**¹⁹

1 Kings 3, 6-9, 11

1. Bathsheba works to make certain Solomon takes the throne (1 Kgs. 2).
2. Solomon “loved the Lord” but the people “sacrificed and burnt incense in high places” (1 Kgs. 3.3).
3. The Lord appeared to Solomon by night (1 Kgs. 3.5).
 - a. Solomon asks the Lord for wisdom (1 Kgs. 3.5-10).
 - b. God is pleased with the request (1 Kgs. 3.11-14). “I have given thee a wise and understanding heart” (v. 12).
4. The two women and their dispute (1 Kings 3.16-28). This is an illustration of Solomon’s wisdom.
5. Solomon builds the temple (1 Kings 6).
6. Solomon builds his house, more description of the temple construction (1 Kings 7).
 - a. Solomon’s house is quite larger than the house he built for the Lord (compare 1 Kings 6.2 and 7.2).
7. The Ark of the Covenant comes to rest in the temple (1 Kings 8).
 - a. It rests in the 7th month (v. 2).
 - b. “two tables of stone” are in the Ark (v. 9).
8. The cloud filled the house of the Lord (1 Kgs. 8.10).
9. Solomon offers a dedicatory prayer for the temple (1 Kings 8.22-54).²⁰
 - a. Solomon’s requests:
 - i. “Hear thou in heaven” (1 Kgs. 8.30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49).
 - ii. Defend us! (1 Kgs. 8.44, 46).
 - iii. Forgive us! (1 Kgs. 8.50).
 - iv. Have compassion on us! (1 Kgs. 8.50).
 - b. Note the Deuteronomistic conception of God, “heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have built?” (1 Kgs. 8.27).
 - c. “My name shall be there” (1 Kgs. 8.29, 44).
10. Israel offers sacrifice (1 Kgs. 8.62).
 - a. 22,000 oxen (v. 63).
 - b. 120,000 sheep (v. 63).
11. Solomon marries outside of Israel, thus leading his heart to follow other gods (1 Kgs. 11).
 - a. Elder Dallin H. Oaks spoke about how our strengths can become our downfall.²¹

¹⁹ Ziony Zevit, *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 668-671, emphasis added.

²⁰ Joseph Smith used this dedicatory prayer as a model for the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland temple.

²¹ He said, “Like the fabled Achilles, who was immune to every lethal blow except to his heel, many of us have a special weakness that can be exploited to our spiritual downfall. For some that weakness may be a taste for liquor. For some it may be an unusual vulnerability to sexual temptation or a susceptibility to compulsive gambling or reckless speculation. For others it may be a craving for money or power. If we are wise, we will know our special weaknesses, our spiritual Achilles’ heels, and fortify ourselves against temptations in those areas. But our weaknesses are not the only areas where we are vulnerable. Satan can also attack us where we think we are strong—in the very areas where we are proud of our strengths. He will approach us through the greatest talents

- b. 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kgs. 11.3).
 - c. The promise of the Davidic dynasty continues (1 Kgs. 11.13- see also 2 Kgs. 8.19; 19.34. Remember that this originated with Nathan's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7, "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever... thy throne shall be established forever!" 2 Sam. 7.16).
12. Adversaries rise up to contend with Solomon (1 Kgs. 11.14-33).
- a. Hadad of Edom (v.14-22).
 - b. Rezon (v. 23-25).²²
 - c. Jeroboam (v. 26-40). Jeroboam will eventually lead the northern tribes in a revolt against the dynasty of David's house, and the kingdom will split between the north and south after the death of Solomon (1 Kings 12).

and spiritual gifts we possess. If we are not wary, Satan can cause our spiritual downfall by corrupting us through our strengths as well as by exploiting our weaknesses. I will illustrate this truth with a score of examples." Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "[Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall](#)," *BYU Speeches*, June 7, 1992.

²² Rezon, a victim of David's victories over the Arameans, eventually wrested Damascus from Israelite control (2 Sam. 8.6). He may have threatened Israel with the very chariots that had been sold to him by Solomon. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 699.