Notes from Janet Reinke on Feb. 14, 2021 on structure of Samuel and Kings.

Who decided that there would be four books, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, and when?

600-500 BCE: A common scholarly view is that Samuel and Kings were originally written as one work, during or shortly following the Babylonian exile. They were separated into two books, Samuel and Kings, for the practical reason that the quantity of Hebrew text required two scrolls. Other scholars hold that Samuel and Kings were originally separate books.

300-100 BCE: Hebrew is more compact than Greek. When the Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek (LXX), Samuel and Kings each required two scrolls. The four scrolls were called I, II, III, IV Kingdoms in the Greek translation.

383 CE: When Jerome translated the scriptures into Latin, he kept the Greek separation into four books, but changed the names to I, II, III, IV Kings.

600-900 CE: Masoretic Hebrew scholars continued with two separate books, using the names Samuel and Kings. The tradition was that the prophet Samuel wrote Samuel and the prophet Jeremiah wrote Kings.

1517 CE: Daniel Bomberg’s publication of the Hebrew Bible used the Hebrew names, Samuel and Kings, but separated each one into two books. This Jewish approach became the basis for most of today’s Bibles.