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# *Kings*

## *(Master Theology Students)*

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Dear ACOM family,

### KINGS – ACOM

My father, the late Dr. G.D. James, had a passion for evangelism. He also had a passion for training Christians locally. In a number of places he established a “School of Missions and Evangelism”. In 1977 he founded “The Tamil Bible Institute” in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. However, due to the ill health of the Principal the Institute closed in 1993. In 2000, I recommended to a number of TBI alumni, that the Bible Institute be re-established in a new form, and so ACOM was born with intensive classes commencing in Johor Bahru in 2001. Soon ACOM commenced in Kathmandu, Nepal and Yangon, Myanmar.

Until recently almost all of the teaching was done by international visiting lecturers, but from now on most of the teaching will be done by local teachers. Ideally these people will be bi-lingual. The teaching is to be given in the language of the students, but if the lecturer can read English much more resource materials are available.

To help in this way, the AEFI Board is making available a lot of helpful material such as that below. It starts with the SUBJECT DESCRIPTION. All lecturers must abide closely by this. It sets out the requirements of the ACOM Board of Regents for the subject. If, for any reason, you want to change any of it, please contact me as quickly as possible with your suggestions, so that I can discuss it with the Board and get back to you with their reply.

Following the Subject Description, we have added typical Subject Plans. These will save you a lot of time and energy. They set out, e.g., seminar topics that have been used previously. Remember, however, that all material given to the students **must** be in their own local language. Also included are Course Notes that have been given to students previously and material that will help you in your preparation.

Kings also has a separate document called *Supplementary Lecturer’s Notes* that you as the lecturer may find helpful.

AEFI International is deeply indebted to **Dr Alan Meers** who dedicated many years in leading the development and growth of ACOM and in particular the production of these documents.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr.) Jonathan D. James  
International Executive Director

## KINGS – SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

### RATIONALE

#### Purpose

This subject provides an in depth study of the Books of Kings from the aspects of their historicity, socio-cultural background, literary genres, main themes, text, and issues of current interpretation. It also includes an overview of the OT Historical books. The historical books of the Old Testament not only provide the background for the poetical and prophetic books, but the former prophets also reveal the working of God in history.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PROGRAMME

Since the Bible forms the basis of all Christian theology, life-style and ministry a sound knowledge of this book, both Old and New Testaments, is essential for all students. As well as students understanding the history of the Kings, it also helps them further develop their skills in biblical exegesis.

#### LOCATION IN COURSE

This is a Bachelor-level subject and assumes students have completed some previous O.T. exegesis studies at Diploma-level.

#### STATUS

To obtain their Bachelor's degree, all students must complete at least five biblical exegesis subjects. This is one of the subjects offered. As all pastors and missionaries need to be competent in biblical exegesis and exegetical oral presentation, assessment in Bachelor-level exegetical subjects emphasize these skills.

#### WORKLOAD

This subject consists of about 20 hours face-to-face teaching (consisting of twelve lectures and eight seminar groups) and a further 100 hours work to be done by each student at home.

#### CREDIT

This subject carries 3 hours of credit toward the Bachelor of Theology degree (which requires a total of 36 hours of credit, including at least 15 hours of biblical exegesis subjects).

#### PRE-REQUISITES

Students commencing the Bachelor of Theology degree programme must have previously completed a Diploma in Theology programme, preferably with some O.T. exegesis subjects.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the completion of this subject, the students will be able to:

- 1 Describe the geographical, cultural, political, and religious background of the OT Historical books;
- 2 Describe the theology of these books;
- 3 Identify the main theological and ethical emphases of the books;
- 4 Explain how the abiding lessons of the books can be applied to Christians and to churches today.
- 5 Explain the main spiritual lessons of the books and how they could apply them in their own lives; and
- 6 Exegete the text of 1 and 2 Kings.

### SUMMARY OF CONTENT

This subject surveys the action of God in the history of his people, from their conquest of Palestine to their return from Babylonian exile. It gives an exegesis of the Books of Kings within the framework of Old Testament historiography. The subject includes an overview of the historical, political and socio-economic background of the period, literary and theological aspects, and current issues in academic discussion of the books.

**CONTENTS**

This subject includes topics such as:

- 1 The cultural milieu of Israel and its ancient Near Eastern neighbours between 1100 - 931 BC;
- 2 The concept of history and historiography in relation to the biblical writings;
- 3 An introduction to, and survey of each of, the historical books;
- 4 The historicity of the books of Kings on the basis of biblical and extra-biblical sources;
- 5 Exegesis of the text of the books of Kings;
- 6 Current critical approaches to the books of Kings;
- 7 The genres used in the OT historical books;
- 8 Archaeological excavations and Biblical interpretation;
- 9 The Israelite conquest of Palestine and the time of the Judges; the kingdom of Israel under Saul, David and Solomon; the kingdoms of Israel and Judah; the captivities; and the post-exilic era; and
- 10 The theology of the historical books.

**ASSESSMENT METHODS**

All of the above learning outcomes will be assessed together in each of the three assessment methods used in this subject:

- 1 A Seminar paper and Presentation 30%;
- 1 A Major written Research Paper 30%; and
- 2 A Three-hour final written Examination 40%.

**STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS**

To pass this subject students must:

- 1 attend at least 85% of all classes, excluding approved absences,
- 2 obtain at least 40% of the marks in each of the above assessment items, and
- 3 obtain a total grade of at least 50% in the subject.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES**

The subject will include a variety of teaching and learning processes, including lectures, seminars, discussions, PowerPoint and research assignments.

**CONDITIONS**

Learning will take place in the classroom and other suitable study environments. For the assignments students will have access to reference books, journals and the inter-net, etc. However, in the examination no resources, apart from an unmarked Bible and an unmarked Dictionary, can be used.

**LECTURER****TEXTBOOKS**

Meers, A.F. (2008). *Kings Course Notes*. Duncraig, WA: Asia College of Ministry.

Meers, A.F. (Ed.). (2008). *Kings Course Reader*. Duncraig, WA: Asia College of Ministry.

**REFERENCES**

Anderson, B.W. (1988). *The living world of the Old Testament*. (4th Ed.). London, UK: Longman.

Archer, G.L. (1974). *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Moody, Chicago.

Hamilton, V.P. (2001). *Handbook on the historical books*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Harrison, R.K. (1970). *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: The Tyndale Press.

Howard, D. (1993). *Introduction to the Old Testament historical books*. Chicago, IL: Moody.

Hubbard, R.L. Jr. (1991). *First and Second Kings*. (EBSC) Chicago, IL: Moody.

**A TYPICAL MASTER SUBJECT PLAN****ASIA COLLEGE OF MINISTRY**

The training arm of Asia Evangelistic Fellowship

**MASTER PROGRAMME****KINGS****SUBJECT PLAN – \_\_\_\_\_, 2015****INTRODUCTION**

It is important that you carefully read this Subject Plan as soon as you receive it. It explains what the subject offers and what is expected of you.

**RATIONALE****PURPOSE**

This subject provides an in-depth study of *the Books of Kings* from the aspects of their historicity, socio-cultural background, literary genres, main themes, text, and issues of current interpretation. It also includes an overview of the OT Historical books. The historical books of the Old Testament not only provide the background for the poetical and prophetic books, but the former prophets also reveal the working of God in history.

**RELATIONSHIP OF THIS SUBJECT TO THE ACOM MASTER PROGRAMME**

Since the Bible forms the basis of all Christian theology, life-style and ministry; a sound knowledge of this book, both Old and New Testaments, is essential for all students. As well as students understanding the history of the Kings of Israel, it also helps them further develop their skills in critical thinking and biblical exegesis.

**LOCATION IN COURSE**

This is a Master-level subject and assumes students have completed some previous biblical exegesis studies at Bachelor-level.

**STATUS**

To obtain their Master's degree, all students must complete at least five Biblical exegetical subjects. This is one of the subjects offered. All pastors and missionaries need to be competent in critical thinking; biblical exegesis and exegetical oral presentation, so assessment in Master-level exegetical subjects emphasize these skills.

**WORKLOAD**

This subject consists of about 20 hours face-to-face teaching (consisting of twelve lectures and eight seminar groups) and a further 100 hours work to be done by each student at home.

**CREDIT**

This subject carries 3 hours of credit toward an ACOM Master degree (which require a total of 36 hours of credit, including at least 15 hours of biblical exegesis subjects).

**PRE-REQUISITES**

Students commencing an ACOM Master programme must have previously completed a Bachelor of Theology programme.

**LECTURER**

Dr. Alan F. Meers, Director of Training, Asia Evangelistic Fellowship International.

**LECTURE TIME-TABLE**

This course will be taught at \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_, 2015. (DV). *Please note these dates carefully and plan to be at the venue on time each day.* It is essential that you have read all of the *course notes*, and *the course reader* before the lectures. Remember to bring note paper, pens, this subject Plan, *the course notes*, *the course reader* and your Bible to every class session.

**NEXT COURSE**

The subject to follow *Kings* will be \_\_\_\_\_ to be taught by \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_, 2015 (DV). *Note these dates in your diary now!*

**SYLLABUS**

DAY	SESSION	CONTENT:	
DATE:	NO:		
Monday	1	Joshua	
10 <sup>th</sup> Feb	2	Judges & Ruth	
	3	Samuel	
	4	Chronicles	
Tuesday	5	Introduction to Kings	
	11 <sup>th</sup> Feb	6	1 Kings 1-7
		7	1 Kings 8-14
		8	1 Kings 15-22
	Wednesday	9	2 Kings 1-7
12 <sup>th</sup> Feb		10	2 Kings 8-13
		11	2 Kings 14-19
12		2 Kings 20-25.	

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the completion of this subject, you will be able to:

- 1 Describe the geographical, cultural, political, and religious background of the OT Historical books;
- 2 Describe the theology of these books;
- 3 Identify the main theological and ethical emphases of the books;
- 4 Explain how the abiding lessons of the books can be applied to Christians and to churches today.
- 5 Explain the main spiritual lessons of the books and how they could apply them in their own lives; and
- 6 Exegete the text of 1 and 2 Kings;

**CONTENTS****SUMMARY OF CONTENT**

This subject surveys the action of God in the history of his people, from their conquest of Palestine to the Babylonian exile. It gives an exegesis of the Books of Kings within the framework of Old Testament historiography. The subject includes an overview of the historical, political and socio-economic background of the period, literary and theological aspects, and current issues in academic discussion of the books.

**CONTENTS**

This subject includes topics such as:

- 1 The cultural milieu of Israel and its ancient Near Eastern neighbors between 1100 & 931 BC;
- 2 The concept of history and historiography in relation to the biblical writings;
- 3 An introduction to, and survey of each of, the historical books;
- 4 The historicity of the books of Kings on the basis of biblical and extra-biblical sources;
- 5 Exegesis of the text of the books of Kings;
- 6 Current critical approaches to the books of Kings;
- 7 The genres used in the OT historical books;
- 8 Archaeological excavations and Biblical interpretation;
- 9 The Israelite conquest of Palestine and the time of the Judges; the kingdom of Israel under Saul, David and Solomon; the kingdoms of Israel and Judah; the captivities; and the post-exilic era; &
- 10 The theology of the historical books.

## ASSESSMENT METHODS

There are three assessment items in this subject:

- 1 One Seminar paper and presentation 30%,
- 2 One Major written Research paper 30%, and
- 3 One Exegetical paper and presentation 40%.

## STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

To pass this subject, students must:

- 1 attend at least 85% of all classes, excluding approved absences;
- 2 obtain at least 40% of the marks allocated in each of the above assessment items; and
- 3 obtain a total grade of at least 50% in this subject.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES

The subject will include a variety of teaching and learning processes, including lectures, seminars, discussions, PowerPoint, white-board and research assignments.

## CONDITIONS

Learning will take place in the classroom and other suitable study environments. For the assignments, students will have access to reference books, the internet, and journals, etc.

## SCALING OF MARKS

Please note that your final grade may be scaled (upward or downwards), so that the final grade is not necessarily a simple addition of marks in each assessment item. Scaling of grades may be necessary to ensure equity. Your final grade will appear on your Academic Transcript at the end of the year.

## SEMINAR PAPER AND PRESENTATION

Each student must choose one topic (from the list below) and make an individual presentation on it to the class on the date shown above. Talk to the ACOM Registrar (as soon as possible) to indicate your preference, as every student must present a different topic. At the beginning of your presentation, you will give each class member a one-page (may be double-sided) A4-size handout (in *Language*, typewritten if possible), and submit a typed paper of 2,000 words (in English, for M.Th. students) on the topic to the Lecturer. Your oral presentation is to be in *Language*. Be sure to attach a “*Written Paper Cover Sheet*”, an “*Oral Presentation Evaluation Form*” **and** copy of your class handout at the front of your written submission.

## SEMINAR TOPICS

- 1 Who wrote the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles? What was the purpose for writing each of these books? Show how the authors achieved their purposes.
- 2 Samuel felt that God had chosen Saul as king (1 Sa 10:1). In the light of Saul’s subsequent history, did Samuel (or, God) make the wrong choice? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Saul’s reign.
- 3 Discuss the reasons David chose Jerusalem as his capital. In the light of the subsequent history of Judah, do you think this was a good choice?
- 4 Describe the significance of the Temple of Solomon within the biblical canon of Old Testament scripture.
- 5 Explain the causes of the Schism. (The division of the nation into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah).
- 6 Explain the causes of the captivity of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) to Assyria.
- 7 Explain the causes of the captivity of Judah (the Southern Kingdom) to Babylon.
- 8 Compare and contrast the lives of Elijah and Elisha paying particular attention to their contribution to the spiritual life of Israel (the Northern Kingdom),

In preparing your presentation:

- 1 Read widely and critically on the topic. Focus on the main points. Be selective in what you present, bearing in mind the learning outcomes and level of this subject.
- 2 Prepare a carefully structured one-page A4 handout for each class member to help them understand the subject. Be selective in what you include. Decide on the most appropriate format for the greatest clarity and impact. The handout should be referenced.
- 3 Prepare an oral presentation which identifies at least two major issues, critically analyses them and argues for a position on each of them. Allow 15-20 minutes for your presentation.
- 4 You can choose the delivery style which you feel will maximize the impact of your presentation and help all class members think through the issues raised. Encourage all class members to participate, by preparing one or two questions for them to consider. As far as possible your oral presentation should be supported by appropriate visuals, e.g. use of white board or paper charts, diagrams, etc.

*Grades are based on both the oral presentation and the written paper. In grading the following criteria is used:*

*Oral Presentation: Carries: 10%. Marks will be allocated for:*

- 1 understanding of the topic;
- 2 selection of the major issues;
- 3 argument for position taken; and
- 4 style and quality of presentation.

**Written paper: Carries: 20%. Marks will be allocated for:**

- 1 level of understanding of the topic;
- 2 adequate coverage of major issues;
- 3 critical analysis of key issues;
- 4 development of arguments for position taken; and
- 5 clarity of expression, structure of paper, correct referencing, etc.

*Seminars are assessed holistically rather than according to an itemized breakdown.*

#### **LATE SEMINAR PAPERS**

If special circumstances apply, a student presenting a seminar may be granted a deferral of the submission of the written seminar paper. If the seminar paper is not submitted by the normal time (or extended date) without such approval, the student will automatically fail the subject.

#### **EXEGETICAL PRESENTATION**

Assessment at master-level biblical exegesis subjects requires the student to present a thirty-minute exegetical lecture to the class. The aim of this assessment item is:

- (a) to exegete a particular portion of the book being studied, and
- (b) to learn how to teach the Bible.

All students are required to select a passage of at least ten verses (not more than twenty) from 1 Kings and make an individual presentation on it to the class at the time listed above. At the beginning of your presentation you will give each class member a one-page (may be double-sided) A4-size handout in *Language* (typewritten, if possible), and submit a typed paper of 2,000 words (in English for M.Th. students) on the topic to the lecturer. Attach a “*Written Paper Cover Sheet*”, an “*Oral Presentation Evaluation Form*” **and** a copy of your class hand-out at the front of your written paper. Your oral presentation should be in *Language*.

#### **PREPARATION**

In preparing their presentation the student should:

- 1 read widely and critically on the passage. Summarize and highlight the main points. Be selective in what you present, bearing in mind the level of the subject, and the subject’s learning outcomes,

- 2 prepare a carefully structured single-sided one-page A4 handout for each class member to help their understanding of the passage. Be selective in what you include. Decide on the most appropriate format for the greatest clarity and impact. The handout should be appropriately referenced, and
- 3 prepare an oral presentation which:
  - (a) identifies and summarizes the major points,
  - (b) carefully exegetes the text, and
  - (c) considers the implications of the material.

You can decide on a delivery style that you feel will maximize the impact of your presentation, and help the other class members understand and think through the issues raised. As far as possible, your oral presentation should be supported by appropriate visuals. You should also provide a number of thought-provoking questions to stimulate discussion on the topic. Such questions may help identify concerns, clarify issues, consider applications, and/or stimulate further reflection. Your presentation is limited to 30 minutes. While the main emphasis is on the lecture component, you should also try to engage the other class-members in some discussion.

Before your oral presentation, you must:

- (a) study the set portion in detail using all available resources,
- (b) prepare a single A4 size page typed handout, which will:
  - (i) give a detailed outline of the section and/or summary of the section, and
  - (ii) give relevant exegetical notes.
- (c) prepare appropriate visual aids (where suitable),
- (d) prepare detailed lecture notes (for your own use).

*Grades are based on both the oral presentation and the written paper. In grading the following criteria is used:*

*Oral Presentation: Carries: 20%.* Marks will be allocated for:

- (a) understanding of the passage,
- (b) identification of the major issues,
- (c) clear, thorough exegesis of the text,
- (d) implications raised,
- (e) style and quality of presentation, and
- (f) involvement of class members.

Note, however, that 10% will be given by the lecturer and the other 10% by your fellow students.

*Written paper: Carries: 20%.* Marks will be allocated for:

- (a) level of understanding of passage,
- (b) adequate coverage of major issues,
- (c) clear, thorough exegesis of the text,
- (d) evidence of wide, current, relevant reading, and
- (e) clarity of expression, overall structure of paper, correct referencing, etc.

*Presentations are assessed holistically rather than according to an itemized breakdown.*

## **PRESENTATION**

In the oral presentation to the class, you should aim to teach an over-view of the passage, then go into whatever additional detail time permits.

## **LATE EXEGETICAL PRESENTATIONS**

If special circumstances apply, a student giving an exegetical presentation may be granted a deferral for the submission of the written exegetical paper. If the paper is not submitted by the normal time (or extended date) without such approval, the student will automatically fail the subject.

**MAJOR WRITTEN RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT****DUE:** \_\_\_\_\_, **00 a.m. on** \_\_\_\_\_, **2015. CARRIES: 30%**

Assignments are to be given to the Lecturer at the time and date shown above. Each student is required to submit a typewritten paper of 2,000 words (in English for M.Th. students) on the following topic:

*Thompson (1908) called Solomon, "Man of wisdom and foolishness". Evaluate his assessment of King Solomon. Be sure to illustrate your answer with specific examples from the biblical text.*

Remember that we will be seeking to assess your ability in analysis, synthesis, and evaluation and not just knowledge, comprehension and application. Research papers must show evidence of consulting a number of references and give a clear understanding and critical appraisal of the topic.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments submitted after the normal (or extended date) without approval normally incur a penalty of 10% of the value of that assignment per day. For any assignment submitted one week or more late (unless negotiated differently) the mark will be 0%, with the result that the student will automatically fail this subject.

**TEXT BOOKS**

Meers, A.F. (2013). *Kings Course Notes*. Duncraig East, WA: Asia College of Ministry

Meers, A.F. (Ed.). (2013). *Kings Course Reader*. Duncraig East, WA: Asia College of Ministry

**Web Sites**

<http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/>

<http://www.ntgateway.com>

<http://www.tyndalehouse.com/>

<http://www.tynecat.com/>

**IMPORTANCE OF THIS SUBJECT**

This is a very important subject. Plan to spend about 8 hours each week in study – a total of at least 100 hours!

### “THINK LIKE A HEBREW”

The Bible (especially the Old Testament) was written in Hebrew thought form. Thus, it becomes necessary to approach the Bible with the Hebrew way of thinking. This is especially important, since our Western way of thinking is basically Greek in orientation and background. If we see the difference between these two thought patterns, it will help us to understand the Bible.

**Hebrew Religious in orientation** (Asks the question, “What does it mean?”)

**Greek Scientific in orientation** (Asks the question, “How did it happen?”)

**Hebrew Concrete imagery (eye gate)** E.g., “The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge” (Ezek 18:2); “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” (Jer 13:23).

**Greek Abstract terminology (ear gate)** The same ideas in Greek would be something like this, “If parents fail in their responsibility, you will see the evil effects in the waywardness of their children” (Eze 18:2); “Man is unable by himself to effect an inner change in his being or character” (Jer 13:23).

**Hebrew Accepts paradox** Hebrews accept paradox because they are true to life and experience, e.g., the Bible teaches that God is sovereign. It also teaches that man has free choice. Since both are Biblical and touch needs in our life, it is accepted as a Biblical paradox. An attempt is made to key each in a proper Biblical balance of emphasis.

**Greek Attempts to systematize** On the other hand, Greeks attempt to systematize because logic is all-important. Thus it struggles with the paradoxes of Scripture. It sees contradiction between the sovereignty of God, on the one hand, and the free will of man, on the other hand. It seeks to arrive at a rational solution to the paradox.

**Hebrew Uses a variety of literary media** Hebrews use a variety of literary media to express its message. Is adaptable to interpretation suited to the media - not bound to a literal interpretation, e.g., Judges 9:8-15; 2 Sa 12:1-7.

**Greek Uses mainly historical reporting** Greek uses mainly historical reporting because it lends itself to scientific and philosophical thinking. As such, it is accustomed to literal interpretation.

### CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE PROPHETS

	<b>Prophet</b>	<b>Approx. date</b>	<b>To Whom</b>	<b>Theme</b>
1	Joel	835-796 B.C.	South Kingdom	The day of the Lord
2	Jonah	784-722 B.C.	Nineveh	God’s concern for Gentiles
3	Amos	764-755 B.C.	North Kingdom	Judgment and sin’s consequence
4	Hosea	755-714 B.C.	North Kingdom	God’s enduring love in spite of sin
5	Isaiah	745-680 B.C.	South Kingdom	Glorious future for God’s remnant
6	Micah	740-698 B.C.	S. and N. Kingdom	Present sins and future hopes
7	Nahum	648-620 B.C.	Nineveh	Judgment and Nineveh’s fall
8	Zephaniah	634-625 B.C.	South Kingdom	Jerusalem’s sin and doom
9	Jeremiah	626-580 B.C.	South Kingdom	Lamenting Jerusalem’s destruction
10	Habakkuk	625-610 B.C.	South Kingdom	A call to faith
11	Daniel	605-530 B.C.	Remnant	World kingdoms; God’s Kingdom
12	Ezekiel	592-570 B.C.	Remnant	Israel’s judgment and glory
13	Obadiah	586 B.C. (?)	Edom	Edom’s doom
14	Haggai	520 B.C.	Remnant	Put God first – rebuild the Temple
15	Zechariah	520-518 B.C.	Remnant	Present needs and future glory
16	Malachi	450-400 B.C.	Remnant	A rebuke for selfishness

## JOSHUA

### TITLE

The book is named after the principal character, *Joshua*, the son of Nun (**Jos 1:1**, "After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to *Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide*"). Joshua is the Hebrew form of 'Jesus' (cf. **Heb 4:8**, "For if *Joshua [Jesus, AV] had given them rest*, God would not have spoken later about another day") and means 'Jehovah is Salvation' (cf. **Mt 1:21**, "give him the name *Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins*"). Joshua has been called "a man of faith, courage, enthusiasm, fidelity to duty and leadership". In the Hebrew, the word has four forms, *yehoshua* (Deut 3:21); *yehoshu'a* (Josh 1:1); *hoshe'a* (Deut 32:44); and *yeshu'a* (Neh 8:17). In the LXX the name appears as *Iesous Naus*, (= Joshua the son of Nun) and the Vulgate renders it *Liber Joshue*.

### PLACE IN CANON

The Syriac Old Testament places Job between Deuteronomy and Joshua on the theory that Moses wrote Job. The Hebrew Old Testament however places Joshua after Deuteronomy. The Hebrew Old Testament is in three main divisions: The Torah, The Nebi'im (Prophets) and the Ketubim (Writings). The Prophets are divided into 4 Former Prophets and 4 Latter Prophets with Joshua standing as the first of the former prophets.

Joshua is preceded by Deuteronomy. This is a natural place because where Deuteronomy ends, Joshua begins. The tribes are still camped on the East side of the Jordan. Joshua commences with "after the death of Moses" (Jos 1:1; cf. Deut 34:5). Joshua is, in fact, transitional. It has a natural link back to the Pentateuch (CLIMAX). The promises made to Abraham in Gen 12:7; 15:18-21 are fulfilled in the conquest of Canaan. It also has a natural link forward to the Historical Books (COMMENCEMENT). The conquest is not an end but a beginning - the beginning of the history of the Jewish people in their national homeland.

Joshua is followed by Judges. Again this is the natural location as Judges commences with "after the death of Joshua" (Jos 1:1; Cf. Jud 24:29). Judges describes the leaders of Israel from the time "of the elders who outlived him" (Jos 24:31) until the time of the Monarchy.

### AUTHORSHIP

Jewish tradition assigned the book to Joshua himself (cf. **24:26**, "*Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God*"), however, most scholars regard it as anonymous, e.g. Harrison (1970) wrote, "There is no significant reason why the book should not be dated at the beginning of the monarchy, perhaps about 1045 B.C., and thus written during the lifetime of Samuel, who may actually have contributed in some manner to its compilation" (p. 673). Those who hold to Joshua as the author, feel that his death (24:29) "might have been written by Eleazar, the son of Aaron or some other writer" (Chanthiran, 2007, p. 17).

However, note the following points:

- 1 Eyewitness details e.g. 5:1, 6; 15:4
- 2 Written not long after the events, e.g. 6:25; 8:28-29; 9:27; 10:27; 13:13; 14:14
- 3 Some language is inappropriate before the Monarchy, e.g. 15:63; 16:10
- 4 Joshua could not have written it all, e.g. 24:29-33
- 5 The bulk of it is by one author - unity of style and organisation.
- 6 Archaeology points to an early date of writing, e.g. Jos 17:2-3. Recent Samaritan excavations show place names which are given genealogically. List of towns (e.g. chps. 20-21) include those subsequently destroyed (and forgotten?)
- 7 Use of existing genuine sources (e.g. 10:12-13; 18:6, 9; 24:26) then extant, now lost.

**DATE OF WRITING****EXTENT**

Covers about 25 years (from about 1220 B.C. to 1200 B.C.)

**DATE**

About 1400 B.C.

**PLACE OF WRITING**

The Promised Land – The people are settled in Canaan. The author seems to have been an eyewitness of most of the events recorded in the book so he was probably an elder writing in one of the Levitical cities.

**PURPOSE IN WRITING**

- 1 Joshua continues the history contained in the Pentateuch and then traces the history of the theocracy under Joshua.
- 2 To show how Israel was settled in Canaan according to the promises of God.
- 3 To show how, by destroying the Canaanites, God punishes people for their sin.
- 4 To show that God's people are the final heirs to earth and that finally the wicked will be destroyed.

**DIVISIONS****1:1-12:24 The History of the Conquest (POSSESSION)**

- 1:1-9 Joshua's Commission
- 1:10-5:12 The Entry into Canaan
- 5:13-12:24 The Conquest of Canaan

**13:1-22:34 The Division of Canaan (PARTITION)**

- 13:1-19:51 Allocation to the Tribes
- 20:1-21:45 Cities of Refuge and cities of Levites appointed
- 22:1-34 Return of eastern tribes and setting up of the altar of witness.

**23:1-24:33 Joshua's Farewell (PARTING)**

- 23:1-16 First Address
- 24:1-18 Second Address and renewal of the Covenant
- 24:29-33 Joshua's Death and Burial.

**CONTENT**

The History of Israel from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua. The Conquest, division and settlement of the land. "Joshua, under the leadership of God, captures the Promised Land and divides it among the people (5:13-15)" (Chanthiran, 2007, p. 17).

**THEME**

The redeemed people possessing their possessions - resting in the Lord for victory.

**LESSONS**

Jahweh is a God of War - showing His attitude to Sin and His standard to Holiness.  
Disobedience brings defeat, but obedience brings victory (7:1-26)

**TEXT**

"The Hebrew text is in quite good condition and seldom requires emendation" (Harrison, 1970, p. 678).

**KEYS**

**KEY WORD** Possession

**KEY VERSE** 18:3, "How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you?"

## JUDGES

### TITLE

The book takes its title from the leading characters, '*the judges*' (2:16 *shophetim* in Hebrew). The LXX *kritai* means the same, as does the Vulgate. However, the *judges* were more than judicial arbiters, they were 'rulers', 'deliverers', 'saviours' (3:9).

### PLACE IN CANON

Judges naturally follows Joshua. This the natural location as Judges commences with "after the death of Joshua" (Jos 1:1; Cf. Jud 24:29). Judges describes the leaders of Israel from the time "of the elders who outlived him" (Jos 24:31) until the time of the Monarchy.

Judges is followed by the book of Ruth because the events in Ruth occurred during the times of the Judges (Ruth 1:1). ("In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab").

In Judges "there was no king in Israel" (Jud 21:25), but in Ruth a king is introduced to us (Ruth 4:17). ("The women living there said, "Naomi has a son." And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David").

### AUTHORSHIP

Jewish tradition says the author was Samuel ("Samuel wrote the book . . . of Judges and Ruth", *Baba Bathra*, 14b). There is evidence the book is very ancient (Cf. Jud 1:21) and must have been edited before David captured Jerusalem (2 Sa 5:6). It seems the book was written during the early part of the monarchy (either during the reign of Saul or the early days of David) by an unknown author who used both oral and written sources.

### DATE OF WRITING

#### EXTENT

450 years (Ac 13:20) of which about 336 years were spent at rest and 114 years in servitude.

#### DATE

The date would be about 1040-1020 B.C., however Jud 18:30 ("until the time of the captivity of the land") is a problem, as it suggests the passage was written after 732 B.C. However, '*land*' could refer to a deportation which took place during the period of the judges. Alternatively, '*land*' may have originally read, '*ark*'.

### PURPOSE

Showed Israel the need for a centralised hereditary righteous King. Illustrated the principle: 'Obedience brings life and peace: Disobedience results in hardship, oppression and death.'

### CONTENT

Israel's failure as a theocracy to keep true to the covenant even under the leadership of men chosen by God to deliver them from their pagan oppressors.

### DIVISIONS

Judges falls into three main divisions:

#### A THE OCCASION OF JUDGES 1:1 - 3:6

1:1-2:5 Conditions in Canaan following Joshua's death.

2:6-3:6 The religious characteristics of the period.

#### B THE TWELVE JUDGES 3:7 - 16:31

Seven oppressions and seven deliverances

#### C APPENDICES 17:1 - 21:25 (not in chronological order)

17:1-18:31 Micah the Ephraimite's idolatry and Danite migration.

19:1-21:25 The crime at Gibeah and the Israelite crusade.



## RUTH

### TITLE

The book takes its name from the leading character, Ruth the Moabitess (2:2), but the book is really the story of Naomi. It starts and finishes with her. In the LXX the name appears as *Routh*.

### PLACE IN CANON

Originally Ruth seems to have been placed after Judges, as in the LXX. Josephus apparently counted Ruth with Judges and Lamentations with Jeremiah when he spoke of 22 books of Scripture. Jerome also implies that Jews placed Ruth with Judges, but says that some place Ruth and Lamentations in the *Hagiographa* (the *writings*), and this is where it is today. However, in the Vulgate and English versions it follows Judges. Ruth is the eighth book and so suggests a new beginning.

### THEME

Rest in the Redeemer (3:18). It illustrates the importance of family relationships and the obligations of godliness within the family.

### AUTHORSHIP

Jewish tradition says the author was Samuel, however, the author is really unknown but it was probably written during David's reign (cf. 4:22, 17), and the absence of Solomon's name seems to support that view. Manley (1949) commented, "Ruth is a masterpiece of descriptive writing with a wonderful economy of language. Only one acquainted with the customs of the age and steeped in its lore could have produced so vivid a picture of Israelitish life. Clearly the author is describing a life with which he was familiar" (p. 165).

### DATE OF WRITING

#### EXTENT

The book occupies about eleven or twelve years (Cf. 1:4) near the close of the period of the Judges (1:1), either in the days of Gideon (so Keil & Ussher) or Jephthah (so Josephus).

#### DATE

While the story took place during the time of the Judges, it seems the book was written during the reign of King David, about 1011 to 971 B.C.

### OUTLINE

#### **A Ruth's Decision 1:1-22**

1: 1-13 Naomi widowed and bereft of sons decides to return home.

1:14-22 Ruth firmly resolves to go with Naomi.

#### **B Ruth's Industry 2:1-23**

2: 1-17 Ruth gleanes all day in Boaz's field.

2:18-23 Ruth continued to glean until the end of harvest.

#### **C Ruth's Appeal 3:1-18**

3: 1-15 Ruth asks for redemption/

3:16-18 Naomi assures her of Boaz's integrity.

#### **D Ruth's Reward 4:1-22**

4: 1-17 Ruth is redeemed and married.

4:18-22 Genealogy from Perez to David.

### MAIN FEATURES

In Judges there is "no King in Israel" (Jud 21:25), but in Ruth, a King (David, 4:22) is introduced with a Gentile ancestress (Ruth). Thus Ruth provides a link between the Theocracy and the Monarchy.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of Ruth seems to be to show how a non-Israelite was included in the family line of King David. It also illustrates the principle, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom 10:13; Cf. Ruth 1:16; 4:10).

## LESSONS

In the plan of God to send His Messiah into the world, Ruth, a Moabite girl played an important part. This shows us that the plan of salvation is not just for a particular nation, but for all people who put their faith in Him.

"Another key term in the story is "*kindness*," meaning covenant loyalty (1:8; 2:20; 3:10). Ruth and Boaz illustrate what covenant righteousness and loyalty are in an era when "*everyone did what was right in his own eyes*" (Jud 21:25). This loyalty is expressed in the same terms as those describing God's covenant relationship with His people.

The providence of God is also highlighted. Although the book describes common people in common settings, they were being guided by the mysterious hand of God, who was using their uncommon faith to prepare the way for Israel's greatest king, David (4:22). The name of God occurs twenty-three times in the eighty-five verses of Ruth. No event in the life of God's people is insignificant, because He is constantly involved" (Nelson, 1993, p. 86).

Perhaps the most important lesson of all is the function of the *goel*, the kinsman-redeemer, which serves as a Messianic type. He must be:

- 1 A blood relative,
- 2 Able to pay the price. He must have the money to buy the forfeited inheritance,
- 3 Willing to pay the price to buy back the inheritance, and
- 4 Willing to marry the wife of the deceased kinsman.

## KEYS

**Key Word:** Kinsman-redeemer (*'goel'* x 30)

**Key Verse:** "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! (4:14)

## NOTES

**1:1, "Bethlehem"** - 'House of Bread' [*Bet, Beit, Beth = house*]. Despite Moab's refusal to allow Israel to travel through their land during the exodus (Ju 11:17), Moses was forbidden to attack them (Deut 2:9).

Moabites were excluded from Israel (Deut 23:3-6), but commercial contact was allowed (Deut 2:28-29).

**1:2, "Elimelech"** -="my god is King" (Melech = king & El is a name for God)

**"Naomi"** = "God is sweetness" (*I* is an abbreviation for *Jah (Yahweh)* + pleasant, happy, sweet).

**"Ephrath"** = "fruitful". An ancient name for Bethlehem (Cf. Gen 35:19).

**1:4, "Ruth"** = "Rose", friendship, beauty, satisfied, companion.

**1:8, "kindness"** – *hesed*, rendered "loving kindness" (RSV), 'unfailing love' (Ex 15:13), 'covenant of love' (Deut 7:9).

**1:20, "Mara"** = "bitter", sorrow.

**"Almighty"** – *Shaddai*. Underlies human powerlessness and speaks of the God who can change situations of human helplessness.

**"the LORD"** – *YHWH, Jehovah*. The covenant keeping God.

**4:1, Redeemer** – *Goel* – The near relative that bought back family property (Lev 25:25). The Levirate marriage (Deut 25:5-10) extended to him. Ruth 4:4 shows that although the *goel* possessed the right to redeem, he was under no obligation to do so.

## 1 & 2 SAMUEL

### TITLE

#### THE HEBREW TITLE

1 Samuel and 2 Samuel (also 1 & 2 Kings, and 1 & 2 Chronicles) were originally only one book in the Hebrew MSS, called *Samuel*, the name of the leading character

#### THE GREEK TITLE

The book was divided into two in the LXX (the Greek OT), and called the First and Second Book of Kingdoms. This pattern was followed in the Latin (Vulgate) where the books were called 1 & 2 Kings. This division followed in the Hebrew in 1516.

#### SAMUEL, THE MAN

Samuel was the last of the Judges (1 Sa 7:15; Act 13:20) and the first of the Prophets (Act 3:24) through whom God spoke to the people, rather than through the priesthood which had failed (1 Sa 3:11-14).

### PLACE IN CANON

This book is transitional from Theocracy to Monarchy. Samuel follows Judges. This is a natural location as Samuel was the last Judge (1 Sa 7:15, "Samuel continued as judge over Israel all the days of his life"; Act 13:20, "After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet"). Samuel is followed by Kings. This too seems natural as Samuel anointed the first king (1 Sa 10:1) and the second king (1 Sa 16:13).

### AUTHORSHIP

The books are anonymous. Jewish tradition says that Samuel himself was the author (Cf. 1 Sa 10:25 but since 2 Sa basically continues until the death of David, 1 Sa 25:1) this seems impossible. However, Samuel may have been the primary author with Nathan and Gad adding the final sections (Cf. 1 Chr 29:29). Others have suggested the author was Jasher (2 Sa 1:18).

### DATE OF WRITING

#### EXTENT

About 160 years (from the birth of Samuel to the death of David).

### DATE OF WRITING

In 2 Samuel there is no mention of the death of David and so it is believed that this book might have been written during David's lifetime. This would place it about 1000 B.C.

### DIVISIONS

#### 1 Sa 1-12 The Career of Samuel

The last Judge (1-7)

The rise of the Kingdom (8-12)

#### 1 Sa 13-31 The Reign of Saul (The First King)

Saul's decline (13-15)

The choice of David (16)

The last days of Saul (17-31)

#### 2 Sa 1-25 The Reign of David

David's reign over Hebron (1-4)

David's reign over all Israel (5-24)

### CONTENT

#### THE BEGINNING OF THE KINGDOM, and

#### THE TRANSITION FROM THEOCRACY TO MONARCHY

The children of Israel demanded a King as God had anticipated (Deut 17:14-20), and Samuel anointed the first and second Kings of Israel. The nation had been a Theocracy (rule by God), but now by requesting a King, they were really rejecting God.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose is to tell the story of the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy. It therefore includes:

- (a) the career of Samuel, the king-maker;
- (b) the career of Saul, the first, and unfaithful, king, and
- (c) the career of David, who founded the permanent and valid dynasty.

See "*The purpose of Samuel and Chronicles*" (page 21) for additional details.

**LESSONS**

God's judgement and decree as spoken by Samuel and Saul's rise and fall.

**THE MAIN CHARACTERS**

Samuel 1-12

Saul 13-31

David 16-31

**FEATURES****DUPLICATE ACCOUNTS**

One of the main features is the "Duplicate Accounts" or pairs of very similar stories,

e.g., David sparing Saul's life (Chapters 24; 26);

Prophecy of fall of Eli's house (2:31-36; 3:11-14);

Yahweh's rejection of Saul (Chapters 13; 15);

David's introduction to Saul's court (16:17-22; 17:55-18:5);

David flees to Achish (Chapters 21; 27), etc.

The repetition emphasises points the writer wishes to make. In this way, he stresses that it was not an accident that Eli's house was rejected or that Saul was put aside by God. It was no mere chance that brought David to Saul's court and not a passing whim of David's that saved Saul's life. The divine hand and purpose in history are thus unmistakably shown to the readers.

**THE TEXT**

For some reason the text of Samuel is more poorly preserved than any other OT book. The LXX seems to have preserved a more accurate text than the Hebrew Masoretic version as is shown by comparison with a number of Qumran fragments.

**KEYS**

**KEY VERSE:** 1 Sa 10:25, "Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship; and he wrote them in a book and laid it out before the Lord".

**KEY WORD:** Kingdom

**ADDITIONAL NOTES**

Extra information on a number of important topics is included later:

**"THE PURPOSE OF SAMUEL AND CHRONICLES"** See page 21;

**"SAUL"** See page 26; and

**"ABNER AND JOAB"** See Page 28.

## 1 & 2 KINGS

### TITLE

#### THE HEBREW TITLE

Like Samuel, 1 Kings and 2 Kings were originally only one book in the Hebrew MSS, called, “*Kings*” because they primarily dealt with the history of the early Jewish kings.

#### THE GREEK TITLE

The book was divided into two in the LXX (the Greek OT). This was followed in the Latin (Vulgate) and in 1448 also in Hebrew. The LXX and Vulgate emphasized the relationship between Samuel and Kings by calling them, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Book of Kingdoms and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Book of Kings, respectively. The place of the division between the two books is arbitrary but appropriate: 1 Kings ending shortly after the death of Ahab (Israel) and Jehoshaphat (Judah).

### PLACE IN THE CANON

In the Hebrew canon, Kings follows Samuel and is the last of the “Former Prophets”. It is followed by Isaiah, the first of the “Latter Prophets”. The order of the groups of books in the Hebrew canon indicates the stages at which each was accepted as canonical.

In our Bibles, Kings also follows Samuel but is followed by Chronicles and then the final three historical books. This also is a logical place as historically Kings follows on from Samuel, and Chronicles covers much of the same material as is contained in Samuel and Kings.

### AUTHORSHIP

The Jewish book *Baba Bathra* 15a says, “Jeremiah wrote his own book, the Book of Kings and Lamentations”. Jeremiah ministered during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah and exposes the apostasy of both the Kings and the nation. There is much in Kings that resembles Jeremiah and, in fact, 2 Kings 24:18-25:30 is identical with parts of Jeremiah, e.g., 2 Ki 24:18-20 and Jer 52:1-3. Even though the last two chapters of 2 Kings seem to have been written in Babylon this does not automatically disqualify Jeremiah, as those chapters could have been added later. However very few people today accept Jeremiah as the author.

Others think the author was either Ezra or Nehemiah who wrote it during the Babylonian exile. But probably the book was written by an unknown contemporary of Jeremiah, and because much of the book describes events that occurred long before his birth, used existing (now, non-extant) written sources, e.g.:

- 1 “The Book of the Annals of Solomon” (1 Ki 11:41);
- 2 “The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel” (1 Ki 11:19); and
- 3 “The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah” (1 Ki 14:29).

He may also have used other records including, e.g., “The records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer” (1 Chr 29:29; etc).

### DATE OF WRITING

#### EXTENT

Kings covers period of **about 400 years** - Kings commences with the reign of Solomon (971 BC) and ends with the exile of Judah (587 BC). 1 Kings occupies about 125 years, and 2 Kings about 275 years.

### DATE OF WRITING

The first edition of the book seems to have been compiled about the time of Josiah’s death (2 Ki 23:29; 609 BC). The author does not know of the captivity and speaks of certain things that continued in existence and “are still there today” (e.g., 8:8; 9:20-21, etc.). So the writer was writing in Judah in the pre-exilic period. The final editing of the book must have been in Babylon sometime between Jehoiachin’s release from prison (2 Ki 25:27-30) and the end of the Babylonian captivity (538 BC).

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Under David the kingdom had been firmly established and consolidated. Kings begins with David, now 80 years of age, weak and infirm. Privately he had told Bathsheba that her son, Solomon, was to succeed him as King (1 Ki 1:17-18, 30), but he made a serious error in not publicly stating this. So Adonijah, David's fourth and, probably, his eldest living son (2 Sa 3:4; 13:30-32; 18:15) tried to usurp the throne (1 Ki 1:5-10). During the reign of David, the great world powers, Egypt (in the South) and the Hittites (in the North) had been seriously damaged by war with the Sea Peoples (of whom the Philistines were a branch). Assyria was weak and Babylonia had not yet begun to emerge as an empire. David left Solomon, his successor, with a very strong army which Solomon, however, did not have to use as no other nation was in a position to threaten him.

**PURPOSE IN WRITING**

Kings seems to have been written to teach the people that loyalty, faithfulness and obedience to God and His ordinances ensures prosperity, whilst the opposite results in loss, disaster and punishment. Kings is a careful accurate history, written from a religious point of view, but his concern was not just to teach the great lessons to be learned from the past but, more importantly, to present God's view of the history of His people. All else is subordinated to this principal aim. Kings gives a verdict of each King according to their religious policies and not according to their political achievements.

**OUTLINE****1 Kings 1-11            The Reign of Solomon**

The United Kingdom (1-11)            Strength and Expansion

**1 Ki 12 to 2 Ki 17    The Divided Kingdom**

The Disrupted Kingdom (12)            Severance and Dissension

The Divided Kingdom (13-22)            Struggle and Decline

**2 Kings 18-25        The Kingdom of Judah**

The Divided Kingdom (1-16)            Disobedience and Decline

Israel into Captivity (17)                Dispersion

The Surviving Kingdom (18-24)            Disobedience and Decline

Judah into Exile (25)                      Dispersion

**CONTENT****1 KINGS SHOWS THE HEIGHT AND DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM****2 KINGS SHOWS THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE KINGDOM**

The Divided Kingdom resulted from Solomon's sins (1 Ki 11:31-35) and Rehoboam, (Solomon's son) was the first of twenty kings of one Dynasty in the Southern Kingdom (Judah), with Jerusalem as the Capital. Jeroboam (Solomon's servant) was the first of nineteen kings of nine different dynasties in the Northern Kingdom (Israel) with Samaria as the Capital.

**FEATURES**

From 1 Ki 12 onwards the narrative more or less alternates between the reigns of the Kings of Israel and the Kings of Judah. Whereas only one dynasty comprising 20 kings reigned in Judah, Israel was ruled by 20 kings from 9 dynasties. The capitals of the Kingdoms were Jerusalem in the South and Samaria in the North.

The prophets Elijah and Elisha and miracles that featured in their ministries are recorded from 1 Ki 17-2 Ki 13. The ministries of several other prophets of God are also described. Most of the "writing prophets", whose names do not feature in 1 or 2 Kings, lived during this period.

As the kings regarded the Lord - so did the people. The various kings are seen as a barometer of the nation. It is no wonder that Israel in the North is taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. (2 Ki 17). What does surprise us however is that Judah did not learn from all these events and they too are carried into exile by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. (2 Ki 25). So we come to the end of the Monarchy with the whole of the nation in exile - for the next 48 years we have silence.

**THE TEXT**

“The Hebrew text of Kings contains numerous corruptions, and for purposes of reconstruction the LXX version is an invaluable aid, since it is shorter than the MT. It preserves more reliable variants and in general can be said to have been based upon a purer form of the Hebrew than that which is now extant (Harrison, 1970, p. 737).

**KEYS**

**Key Words** 1 Kings “*Division*”

2 Kings “*Dispersion*”.

**Key Verses** 1 Kings 11:11, “So the LORD said to Solomon, “Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates”.

2 Kings 23:27, “So the LORD said, “I will remove Judah also from my presence as I removed Israel, and I will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose, and this temple, about which I said, ‘There shall my Name be.’”

## 1 & 2 CHRONICLES

### TITLE

#### THE HEBREW TITLE

Like Samuel, 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles were originally only one book in the Hebrew MSS, called, “*Divere hayyamim*” (= words of the days). The term is used in sense of “annals” (cf. 1 Chr 27:24).

#### THE GREEK TITLE

The book was divided into two in the LXX, where they were called “*Paraleipomena primus*” and “*Paraleipomena secundus*” (= things omitted or passed over) respectively. Jerome felt they were really a chronicle of the entire Divine history and so called them, *chronicon totius divinae historiae*, whence the English title, “Chronicles”.

### PLACE IN THE CANON

In the Hebrew canon, Chronicles is the final book of the OT, following Ezra-Nehemiah. The order of the groups of books in the Hebrew canon indicates the stages at which each was accepted into the canon. Chronicles seems to have been written in the latter half of the fifth century BC and was one of the last books to be added to the canon.

In our Bibles, Kings is followed by Chronicles, which is followed by the final three historical books. This also is a logical place as historically Chronicles covers the same history as 2 Sa and 1 & 2 Kings. Ezra commences “in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia (Ezra 1:1), the year that Chronicles ends (2 Chr 36:22).

### AUTHORSHIP

The Jewish book, *Baba Bathra* 15a says, “Ezra wrote the genealogy of Chronicles unto himself”. It seems that Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles were originally one work so whoever wrote the former books also wrote Chronicles, and it is possible that Ezra was the author. (Cf. 2 Chr 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2). A comparison of the edicts (listed above) suggests that Chronicles is earlier than Ezra, but this is not conclusive. The Chronicler seems to have used a number of written sources - the Pentateuch, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, a commentary on Kings (2 Chr 24:27), the prophet Iddo (2 Chr 13:22), and a number of ‘collections’ (2 Chr 9:29; 29:29).

### DATE OF WRITING

#### EXTENT

Chronicles covers the same period of Jewish history as 2 Samuel to 2 Kings (about 460 years).

#### DATE OF WRITING

Chronicles has been variously dated. Some see traces of having been compiled in the Greek period (332 B.C. onwards), but the evidence is weak. 1 Chr 3:17-24 which carry on the pedigree of the descendants to David to the 6<sup>th</sup> generation after Zerubbabel may be a later addition. The language of Chronicles shows that it comes from the general time of Ezra and may be dated in the latter half of the fifth century B.C., probably between 450-425 B.C.

### CONTENT

The sacred History of the Kingdom

#### DIVISIONS

Genealogies -	1 Chr 1-9
Reign of David -	10-30
The Reign of Solomon -	2 Chr 1-9
The Kingdom of Judah -	10-36

## THE PURPOSE OF CHRONICLES

Chronicles was written to the returned remnant who were rebuilding Jerusalem following their seventy-year Babylonian captivity. Because the returning exiles were originally from Judah, the religious and national heritage and history of the Southern kingdom (Judah) is presented by showing its unbroken connection with the patriarchal beginnings.

Chronicles is written from a priestly perspective. The primary historical theme centers around the priestly worship of Judah, from the time of Saul until the return of the Jewish nation to the land following the decree of Cyrus (538 B.C.). This religious history depicts the faithfulness and promises of God to His people, the power of the Word of God, and the central role of worship in the lives of God's people.

The temple in Jerusalem is the major unifying theme of 1 and 2 Chronicles. Much of the material found in Samuel and Kings is omitted from Chronicles because it does not develop this theme. For example, the kings of the northern kingdom are left out because of their rejection of temple worship at Jerusalem, while prominence is given to the reigns of Judah's temple restorers (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah). The temple symbolizes God's presence among His people and reminds them of their high calling. It provides the spiritual link between their past and future.

The line and dynasty of David, recipient of the promises of the Davidic Covenant (1 Chr 17:3-15), is important to Chronicles. The genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1-9 place a disproportionate emphasis on the tribes of Judah and Benjamin because Chronicles is not concerned with the Northern Kingdom but with the Southern Kingdom and the Davidic dynasty. They demonstrate God's keeping of His covenant promises in maintaining the Davidic line through the centuries. In keeping with the priestly interest of Chronicles, special attention is also paid to the tribe of Levi.

The whole book of 1 Chronicles, like 2 Samuel, is dedicated to the life of David. It begins with the genealogy of the royal line of David (chs. 1-9) before surveying key events of the reign of David (chs. 10-29).

## THE TEXT

“It is a fact that the Hebrew text of chronicles has been transmitted reasonably well, and as a whole is considerably less corrupt than some of the other Old Testament canonical books.” (Harrison, 1970, p. 1169).

## KEYS

### Key verses:

1 Chr 14:15, “As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move out to battle, because that will mean **God has gone out in front of you** to strike the Philistine army”

2 Chr 11:16, “Those from every tribe of Israel who **set their hearts on seeking the LORD**, the God of Israel, followed the Levites to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the LORD, the God of their fathers.

## THE MIDDLE EASTERN KINGS

### ISRAEL (UNITED KINGDOM)

Saul  
David  
Solomon

#### SOUTHERN KINGDOM (JUDAH) (20 kings)

Rehoboam	930-913
Abijam	913-910
Asa	910-870
Jehoshaphat	870-845
Joram	851-842
Ahaziah	842-841
Athaliah	841-836
Joash	836-796
Amaziah	796-767
Uzziah	791-739
Co-regent	791-767
Alone	767-739
Jotham	749-733
Co-regent	749-739
Alone	739-733
Ahaz	733-727
Hezekiah	727-698
Manasseh	698-643
Amnon	643-641
Josiah	641-609
Jehoahaz	609
Jehoiakim	609-598
Jehoiakin	598
Zedekiah	598-587

#### *Deportation*

#### NORTHERN KINGDOM (ISRAEL) (19 kings)

Jeroboam I	930-909
Nadab	909-908
Baasha	908-885
Elah	885-884
Zimri	884
Omri	884-873
Ahab	873-852
Ahaziah	852-851
Jehoram	851-841
Jehu	841-814
Jehoahaz	814-798
Jehoash	798-782
Jeroboam II	793-753
Co-regent	793-782
Alone	782-753
Zechariah	753-752
Shallum	752
Menahem	752-742
Pekahiah	742-740
Pekah	740-730
Hoshea	730-721

#### *Deportation*

### THE LATER KINGS OF ASSYRIA

Tiglath-pileser	745-727	(Pul of Babylon)
Shalmaneser	727-721	
Sargon II	721-705	
Sennacherib	705-681	
Esarhaddon	681-668	
Ashurbanipal	668-626	

**THE LATER KINGS OF BABYLONIA**

626-605	Nabopolassar	(Nabu-apal-usur)
605-562	Nebuchadnessar	(Nabu-kudur-usur)
562-560	Evil-Merodach	(Amel-Marduk).
560-556	Nergal-Shar-Usur	(Nerigilassar, who reigned only four years)
556	Labashi-Marduk	(who reigned only 9 months)
556-539	Nabonidus	(Nabaniad, who obtained the throne by conspiracy)
	Belshazzar	('crown-prince', 'son of the king').

**THE LATER KINGS OF PERSIA**

539-530	Cyrus II	(Ez 4:5)
530-522	Cambyses	(Ahasueras) (Ez 4:6)
522	Smerdis	(Artaxerxes) (Ez 4:7)
522-486	Darius I	(Hystapes) (Ez 4:5)
486-465	Xerxes I	(Ahasuerus) (Est 1:1)
465-423	Artaxerxes	(Longimanus) (Neh 2:1)
423	Xerxes II	
423-404	Darius II	(Nothus)
404-359	Artaxerxes II	(Mnemon)
359-338	Artaxerxes III	(Ochus)
338-336	Arses	
336-331	Darius III	(Condomannus)
331-323	Alexander	(of Macedon)

**LATER KINGS OF SYRIA**

312-281	Seleucus I	(Nicator)
281-261	Antiochus I	(Soter)
261-246	Antiochus II	(Theos)
246-226	Seleucus II	(Callinicus)
226-223	Seleucus III	(Soter)
223-187	Antiochus III	(The Great)
187-175	Seleucus IV	(Philopater)
175-163	Antiochus IV	(Epiphanes)
163-162	Antiochus V	
162-150	Demetrius I	
150-146	Alaxender Balas	
146-139	Demetrius II	
139-129	Antiochus VII	(Sidetes)

**LATER KINGS OF EGYPT**

323-282	Ptolemy I	(Soter)
282-246	Ptolemy II	(Philadelphus)
246-222	Ptolemy III	(Euergetes)
222-205	Ptolemy IV	(Philopater)
205-180	Ptolemy V	(Epiphanes) [4 yrs old when came to throne]
180-	Ptolemy VI	(Philometer)
146-	Ptolemy VII	(Physcon)

## CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF MATERIAL

### INTRODUCTION

Modern readers assume that all history is written in strict chronological order, but often biblical history is not presented in strict chronological order, as shown below.

- 1 **Jud 18:30**, “Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses” (‘Manasseh’, KJV), however Jud 20:28 read, “Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron”. These two men must have been contemporaries, and must have lived earlier in the period of the judges. This would suggest that Judges 17-21 are stories of the conquest and are not chronological.
- 2 **Jud 17:6**; 18:1; 19:1 & 21:25 read, “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit” so it seems the author has selected stories to illustrate the conditions that existed, i.e., chapters 17-21 are arranged topically and not chronologically.
- 3 **From Joshua to Samson (Jud 16)** the material appears to be in chronological order. This being so, the destruction of Benjamin (**Jud 20**) may well fit in earlier and this would explain how by **1 Sa 9** (Saul the Benjaminite selected as the King), the Benjaminites appear to have recovered sufficiently so as to be able to provide a King.
- 4 **1 Sa 16-17** is apparently not in chronological order. For 1 Sa 16:21 reads, “David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers”, yet in 1 Sa 17 neither Saul nor Abner recognise him (e.g., 1 Sa 17:55, “whose son is that young man?”). Apparently the events are told here to emphasise the fact that the Spirit of the Lord had left Saul and had come on David.
- 5 **1 Sa 18** does not appear to be arranged chronologically. Verses 1-5 tell of the love of David and Jonathan and David's promotion by Saul, who "gave him a high rank in the army" (‘set him over the men of war’, KJV). Yet in verses 13-15 Saul is afraid of David and "made him his captain over a thousand" (‘gave him command over a thousand men’, KJV)”. This latter account seems to be out of the natural order.
- 6 **2 Sa 21-24** consists of six appendices, so as not to interrupt the history of David. Ch 21 is one example. Mephibosheth would naturally come after 2 Sa 9, but before 2 Sa 16. This being so it would explain Shimei's outburst (2 Sa 16:5-7).

### CONCLUSION

When the record departs from a strict chronological sequence we should try to determine why the writer presented his facts in a different order. It may be to highlight certain similarities between two events, to teach us important lessons, etc.

**TRANSITION TO THE MONARCHY (1 SAMUEL 1-15)**

**1 LOOSENING OF INTER-TRIBAL TIES (AMPHICHYONY, a league of states)**

**Causes:**

- 1 Scattering (Settling down);
- 2 Failure (Canaanite culture and religion); and
- 3 Distortion of the truth faith.

**2 THE MOVE FOR UNITY (1 SA 1-8)**

**Contributing factors:**

- 1 Ark captured (1 Sa 4:11);
- 2 Samuel – Priest & Prophet (1 Sa 3:20);
- 3 External Pressures (1 Sa 4:3);
- 4 Example of Neighbours (1 Sa 8:20); and
- 5 Common faith and origin of the 12 tribes.

**3 THE CHOICE OF A KING**

- 1 Dissatisfied with Samuel (1 Sa 8:5,7);
- 2 Wanted to be like Neighbours (1 Sa 8:5);
- 3 Samuel’s no-good sons as judges (1 Sa 8:5);
- 4 Deuteronomy had provided for a king (Deut 17:14-20); and
- 5 Samuel warned them about what would happen (1 Sa 8:11-18).

**4 THE SELECTION OF SAUL (1 SA 9-12)**

- 1 “an impressive young man” (1 Sa 9:2);
- 2 Charismatic gift (1 Sa 10:10); and
- 3 Defeated the Ammonites (1 Sa 11:11)

**5 SAUL’S DECLINE (1 SA 13-15)**

- 1 Disobedience (1 Sa 13);
- 2 Impetuosity (1 Sa 14); and
- 3 Disobedient regarding Amalek (1 Sa 15).

<b>Samuel &amp; Kings</b>	<b>Chronicles</b>
The continuation of Israel’s history from the united kingdom to the two captivities	Focus on the southern kingdom and the Davidic line (JUDAH)
Political history	Religious history
Prophet authorship: emphasizes the prophetic ministry and moral concerns	Priestly authorship: emphasizes the priestly ministry and spiritual concerns
Written by authors soon after the event	Written by Ezra many years after the events
More negative—rebellion and tragedy	More positive—apostasy, but hope in spite of tragedy
Message of judgment	Message of hope
Man’s fallings	God’s faithfulness
Emphasizes kings and prophets	Emphasizes the temple and the priests

## THE PURPOSE OF SAMUEL AND CHRONICLES

### SAMUEL

1 Samuel presents the weakness of Israel in the time of the Judges, the foundation of the Kingdom by Saul and his failure. 2 Samuel presents David's reign. The books of Samuel were written soon after the events happened. Their purpose was to give a general history of the Kingdom.

### CHRONICLES

Chronicles deals mainly with ecclesiastical history and shows the greatness of David and of the Kingdom of Judah and records information regarding the temple, Jehovah worship and the house of David. Events that are likely to discredit David are omitted. Chronicles was probably written by Ezra the priest **after** the return from exile. His purpose is to record information relevant to the people in his own day.

- 1 Parallels** - 1 Chronicles 1-9 present genealogies. While these details were well known and therefore not so important in the early days, after the exile the people needed to know these genealogies in order to know which land they owned, and in order to know who were to be the priests and Levites, etc. The lists are selective and related to the position of the captives returning from Babylon. 1 Chr 11-29 is almost parallel with 2 Samuel (2 Sa 5-10 is parallel with 1 Chr 11-20).
- 2 David's mighty men** - At the end of 2 Samuel we are told who David's mighty men were, but in Chronicles this information is given to us early as the writer knew beforehand who they were.
- 3 Uriah the Hittite** - The incident of David and Bath-Sheba and David's murder of Uriah the Hittite are recorded in full length in Samuel as these show what type of man David was and explain some of the contemporary events. But in Chronicles this part of David's life is purposely omitted, as it would discredit David and his Kingdom.
- 4 Reign at Hebron** - The 7½ years of David's reign over Judah only at Hebron is not mentioned in Chronicles. As Chronicles gives the appearance that David just succeeded Saul and was accepted by all the people from the start. The incident of the rebellion of Absalom is also omitted as it too shows David in a poor light.
- 5 Preparation for Temple** - Chronicles goes into details about the materials that David prepared for the temple and the instructions given to Solomon. As these were the details that the people returning from Babylon needed to know so that they could again restore the temple and the worship of the Lord.

## A COMPARISON OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES

A BRIEF COMPARISON:	1-2 SAMUEL & 1-2 KINGS	1-2 CHRONICLES
<b>Extent</b>	102 chapters	65 chapters
<b>Period</b>	585 years	460 years
<b>Contents</b>	Political History	Religious History
<b>1 Religious</b>	Prophets	Priests
<b>2 Political</b>	Judah & Israel	Judah only
<b>3 Personal</b>	Prominent Kings	Good Kings

A large part of Chronicles deals with the same history as the book of Kings, yet the two books are very different. The writers of Kings and Chronicles each sought to interpret the history of their nation, but their outlook was different and so their interpretation is also very different.

## **KINGS**

Kings is a careful accurate history, written from a religious point of view. Yet his concern was not just to teach the great lessons to be learnt from the past but, more importantly, to present God's view of the history of His people. All else is subordinated to this principal aim. Kings is one of the Former Prophets and gives a verdict of each King according to their religious policies and not according to their political achievements. Kings was written before the exile. Kings is mainly occupied with the 10 Northern tribes (Israel) and the conflict between the true prophets and the false gods, rather than mere historically important events, e.g., historically Omri was one of Israel's most important kings and yet his reign receives only six verses (1 Ki 16:23-28).

## **CHRONICLES**

The purpose of the Chronicler was to show the exiles who had now returned from Babylon, the true glory of their nation, the true spiritual foundation of their theocracy, and the importance of the Davidic Dynasty. Chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew O.T., being one of the Writings. It was written after the exile. It does not continue the history where Kings finished, as might be expected, but covers the same historical ground as 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings. He deals mainly with the history of the Southern Kingdom, Ecclesiastical history, and the history of the Davidic dynasty. He selects only those incidents which are significant from a religious and particularly a priestly point of view, e.g., in the specifications of the temple much of the detail is omitted, as this does not contribute to this aim and no-one was concerned about such details after the Exile.

## **OMISSIONS**

True to his purpose, the Chronicler omits (from David onward) all that is not strictly connected with the Davidic dynasty. The 10 Northern tribes (Israel) are only alluded to as they come in contact with the 2 Southern Tribes (Judah), partly because they had ceased to exist; but mainly because they contribute nothing to his aim, e.g., the setting up of the calf-worship (1 Ki 12:25-13:32) is omitted. Stories likely to discredit David's house are omitted, e.g.,

- \* The rebellion of Absalom (2 Sa 15);
- \* Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter (1 Ki 1:1-3:4);
- \* Other houses built by Solomon (1 Ki 7:1-12);
- \* Solomon's failure and the promise to Jeroboam (1 Ki 11).

These stories do not contribute anything to the building up or the preservation of the theocracy. However, it should also be noted that there is almost nothing that deals solely with the private lives of David or Solomon, e.g., David generosity to the house of Saul (2 Sa 9) and Solomon's wisdom and glory (1 Ki 3-4).

## **ADDITIONS**

Chronicles has some additional material, these chiefly refer to David's dynasty, the temple and its ritual, and the priests and Levites who served in the temple, e.g., 2 Chr 11:13-23, the note that many of the priests and Levites moved to Judah during the rebellion of Jeroboam. The genealogies (1 Chr 1-9) were important to establish the rights of claimants to the priesthood and the Kingly Line.

## **DISCREPANCIES**

There are a number of discrepancies, mostly in numbers & figures, which are probably due to copyists' errors. Other discrepancies appear to be due to the differences in aim.

## BAALISM IN ISRAEL

### INTRODUCTION

- 1 The history of Baalism in the land commences immediately after the death of Joshua, when the people “forsook the Lord, and served Baal and the Ashtoreths” (Jud 2:13).
- 2 This false worship was largely destroyed in the period of the Judges and has little mention until Ahab (873-852), King of Israel.

### BAALISM IN ISRAEL

- 1 Ahab (873-852) married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal King of the Zidonians, and adopted Baalism, the Phoenician religion. “He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole” (1 Ki 16:31-33).
- 2 As a result, Elijah was raised up to condemn the King. A drought of 3½ years (Jas 5:17) brought the people to the point of decision. When they were all gathered together on Mount Carmel, Elijah put forward his proposition, “If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him” (1 Ki 18:21). But the people said nothing. As a result of the contest, the 450 prophets of Baal were slain.
- 3 Jezebel had cut off the prophets of the Lord, except 100 which Obadiah had hidden (1 Ki 18:4). She had appointed 400 prophets of the groves, as well as 450 prophets of Baal. (1 Ki 18:19). But the Lord told Elijah that He had 7000 in Israel, who had not bowed to Baal (I Ki 19:18).
- 4 On Ahab's death, Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead. "He served and worshiped Baal and provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger, just as his father had done” (1 Ki 22:51-53).
- 5 "Joram (Jehoram) son of Ahab became king” on the death of Ahaziah. “He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, but not as his father and mother had done. **He got rid of the sacred stone of Baal** that his father had made” (2 Ki 3:1-3). However, this does not imply the destruction of Baalism.
- 6 Elisha had Jehu anointed King over Israel. Jehu conspired against Jehoram and slew him. He then had Ahab's 70 sons gathered together and beheaded, and also had Jezebel destroyed. Then, on the pretence of some vast Baal assembly, he gathered all the worshippers of Baal together into the house of Baal where all were slain. "So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel. However, he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan” (2 Ki 10:28-29).
- 7 From the time of Jehu (841-814) there is little mention of Baalism till Hoshea, the last King of Israel (730-721) when we are told that one of the reasons that Israel was removed was that "they forsook all the commands of the LORD their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger” (2 Ki 17:16).

**BAALISM IN JUDAH**

- 1 **Jehoshaphat** King of Judah (870-845) reigned at the same time as Ahab, but we are told that "he walked in the ways his father David had followed. He did not consult the Baals" (2 Chr 17:1-4).
- 2 Jehoshaphat was followed by **Jehoram** (851-842), who "walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD" (2 Chr 21:5-6).
- 3 He was followed by **Ahaziah** (his youngest son). "His mother's name was Athaliah, a granddaughter of Omri. He too walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done" (2 Chr 22:1-4).
- 4 Ahaziah was slain by Jehu and **Athaliah** destroyed all the seed-royal (except Joash) and seized the throne. She reigned six years, but in the seventh **Joash** was proclaimed King, and she was slain. "All the people went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars" (2 Chr 22:7-23:17).
- 5 During her reign "that wicked woman Athaliah, had broken into the temple of God and had used even its sacred objects for the Baals" (2 Chr 24:7). The King now had the temple repaired and perfected.
- 6 From the time of Joash (836-796) there is little mention of Baalism till **Ahaz** (733-727) when we are told "Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and also made cast idols for worshipping the Baals" (2 Chr 28:1-2).
- 7 **Hezekiah**, his son, followed the Lord.
- 8 **Manasseh**, his son, "did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had demolished; he also erected altars to the Baals and made Asherah poles" (2 Chr 33:1-2).
- 9 **Ammon**, his son, trespassed more and more (2 Chr 33:21-25).
- 10 The last mention of Baalism is when **Josiah** "began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles, carved idols and cast images. Under his direction the altars of the Baals were torn down; he cut to pieces the incense altars that were above them, and smashed the Asherah poles, the idols and the images . . . so he purged Judah and Jerusalem" (2 Chr 34:3-5).

**SUMMARY OF BAALISM****ISRAEL (10 Northern Tribes)****AHAB**

Introduced Baalism

**AHAZIAH**

Served Baal

**JEHORAM**

Put away the image of Baal

**JEHU**

Destroyed Baal out of Israel

**HOSHEA**

Served Baal

Fall of Samaria 722 B.C.

**JUDAH (2 Southern Tribes)****JEHOSHAPHAT**

Sought NOT Baalim

**JEHORAM**

Walked in the way of the Kings of Israel

**AHAZIAH**

Walked in the way of house of Ahab

**ATHALIAH**

Followed Baal

**JOASH**

Broke down the house of Baal

**AHAZ**

Made images for Baal

**HEZEKIAH**

Broke down the High Places

**MANASSEH**

Built again the High Places

**AMNON**

Trespassed more and more

**JOSIAH**

Broke down the altars of Baal

## JOSHUA, THE MAN

### 1 A PICTURE OF CHRIST

The word *Joshua* comes from two Hebrew words meaning '*Jehovah*' and '*salvation*', and means, e.g., *Salvation is of the Lord, Jehovah saves*, or similar, cf. **Mt 1:21**, "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" & **Heb 4:8**, "For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day". Originally his name was '*Hoshea*' (i.e., *Salvation/saviour*) but was renamed by Moses (**Num 13:16**, "Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua"). He led his people into the promised land.

### 2 HE IS A PICTURE OF US

He was born a slave in Egypt (Cf. **Psa 51:5**, "*I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me*"). He was redeemed (cf. **Num 32:11**, "not one of the men 21 years old or more who *came up out of Egypt* will see the land I promised - not one except Caleb and *Joshua son of Nun*, for they followed the LORD wholeheartedly").

### 3 LESSONS FROM HIS EARLIER LIFE

**1 FIRST MENTION OF JOSHUA** is at the war with Amalek (**Ex 17:9**, "Moses said to *Joshua*, 'Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands'"). A picture of the war of the flesh against the spirit - Amalek attacked from the rear (**Deut 25:17-18**, "Remember what the *Amalekites* did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and *cut off all who were lagging behind*; they had no fear of God"). The people had been redeemed out of Egypt (the world) but Amalek (the flesh) still made war (cf. **Rom 7:23**, "*I see another law at work in the members of my body*, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members").

**2 MOSES' AIDE SINCE A YOUTH** (**Num 11:28**, "*Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth*").

**3 HE HAD SEEN SOME WONDERFUL THINGS, E.G.:**

**1 He was with Moses when God gave him the instructions about how to build the tabernacle.**

(**Ex 24:13**, "Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain").

**2 He was with Moses when the law was given** (**Ex 32:16-17**, "The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, 'There is the sound of war in the camp'").

**3 Joshua was the caretaker of the first "Tent of Meeting"** (**Ex 33:7-11**, "Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the 'tent of meeting . . . The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but *his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent*").

**4 He was there when the 70 elders prophesied** (**Num 11:28**, "Joshua . . . spoke up and said, 'Moses, my lord, stop them!'").

**5 Joshua & Caleb were the only 2 adults that left Egypt that entered the Promised Land** (**Num 32:12**, "no one except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they followed the LORD wholeheartedly").

**6 He (along with others) was entrusted with the division of the land** (**Num 34:17**, "These are the names of the men who are to assign the land for you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and *Joshua son of Nun*").

**7 He learned PATIENCE and MEEKNESS from his master, Moses.**

40 years learning to be a some-body;

40 years learning to be a no-body;

40 years learning what God can do with a no-body.

**Rephidim** Moses struck the rock and the water flowed (**Ex 17:6**, "'I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.' So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel").

**Moses the meekest man in all the earth** (**Num 12:3**, "Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth").

**Kadesh** Moses strikes the rock again (**Num 20:12**, "the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them'").

**Mt Nebo** Moses saw the promised land but could not go in to it.

## SAUL

## THE CHOICE OF A KING

- 1 In the days of the judges "Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit" (**Jud 21:25**) - as result of this anarchy, they were oppressed by foreign powers.
- 2 When God raised up Gideon who delivered them from the Midianites, the people offered him the Kingship. "The Israelites said to Gideon, 'Rule over us - you, your son and your grandson - because you have saved us out of the hand of Midian'" (**Jud 8:22**), but Gideon refused and said, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you" (**Jud 8:23**). (A Theocracy).
- 3 In **Deut.17:14-20** God gave the laws regarding the King. The choice of a king was optional, but the requirements for a king were strict. The existence of a human king does not conflict with the ideal of the theocracy. The King was to have been a direct representative of the Lord - neither a political symbol nor an absolute worldly monarch.
- 4 What the people were now proposing looked very much like a transfer of faith from an Almighty invisible God to a visible, if imperfect, King. ("They said to him, 'You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.'" **1 Sa 8:5**).
- 5 Eli had been a good priest but his sons were wicked. God raised up Samuel who judged the people wisely, but his sons turned aside after money, and received bribes and perverted judgment. So the people justly wanted a new leader.
- 6 But their reasons were:
  - 1 The people wanted to be like all the other nations (**1 Sa 8:5**)
  - 2 They had rejected God as their ruler (**1 Sa 8:7**).
- 7 Samuel patiently warned them of what would happen to their freedom if a ruler were placed in power. But they continued their clamor, and the Lord consented to their wish (**1 Sa 8:22**).

## SELECTION OF SAUL

- 1 God revealed the choice of a King to Samuel - it was Saul the Benjaminite. "A Choice young man, and goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people" (**1 Sa 9:2**).
- 2 Saul searching for his father's asses, turns into the house of the Seer for advice. Samuel tells him the asses are safe and then anoints him secretly. "The Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance" (**1 Sa 10:1**).
- 3 Saul met the company of prophets and "the Spirit of God came on him" (**1 Sa 10:10**)
- 4 A short while later Samuel called all the people together to Mizpeh. And then apparently by casting lots they agreed upon Saul the Benjaminite as their King. "And the people shouted God save the King", but some were far from pleased, saying, "How shall this man save us!" (**1 Sa 10:24**).
- 5 The Ammonites attacked Jabesh-Gilead who sent to Saul and asked for aid. Saul rallied the people of Israel who then defeated the Ammonites. This was followed by the formal acceptance. Sacrifices were offered to God in Gilgal. (**1 Sa 11:13-15**).

## SAUL'S FAILURE

- 1 Sa 13** - In rallying his forces at Gilgal and preparing to march against the Philistines; Saul, deeply worried, committed the first of two Serious, costly errors. Samuel told Saul to wait for an appointed time. After Samuel had not come in seven days Saul offered the burnt offering. Saul's sin in making the sacrifice probably lay in the fact that he disobeyed Samuel's instruction to wait for the appointed time (Cf. **1 Sa 10:8**).
- 1 Sa 14** – Saul's impetuosity and foolishness in taking an entirely unnecessary oath on the spur of the moment. Jonathan ate the honey. Saul to keep face said that Jonathan would have to die, but the people rescued Jonathan so that he did not die. (vv 24, 27).
- 1 Sa 15** - Saul's second error was his failure to obey God and was not long delayed. Samuel charged him to utterly destroy Amelek, but Saul spared all the "best" (v9). Samuel tells Saul, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord; He hath also rejected thee from being King" (vv 23-24). Saul said, "I have sinned, yet honour me now I pray thee . . . before Israel" (v24). There was no true repentance. He desired to please men rather than God.

- 1 Sa 16** - "The Spirit of the Lord came on David . . . and the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil (sad) spirit from the Lord troubled him." Saul's illness and David's refreshment of Saul (v14).
- 1 Sa 17** – Saul's dismay and fear of Goliath (v11), contrasted to David's confidence in God (v32).
- 1 Sa 18** - Saul's violent jealousy (v11). Saul became "afraid of David and Saul; became David's enemy continually" (v 29).

## **DEFEAT OF SAUL**

- 1 Sa 28** - Saul accepted battle against the Philistines in the plain of Jezreel. His confidence was badly shaken. He had totally lost contact with God, and felt he was about to suffer serious defeat, perhaps losing his throne or even his life. Earlier in his life Saul had sought to destroy all the spiritists, now he seeks counsel from the witch of Endor. She calls Samuel who foretells both Saul's and his son's deaths.
- 1 Sa 31** – "The battle went sore against Saul and the Archers hit him." He had lost his faith in God, he sees his Kingdom fast departing from him, so, coward as he is, he commits suicide (v5). This story illustrates, "a choice young man", who departed from the Lord, and went his own way! (Ct. the story in 2 Sam 1:10)

## **SAUL'S END**

### **1 SAUL TRAVELLING NORTH (1 SA 28:4-8)**

Saul's journey to the witch (passing through Philistine held territory) shows how desperate he was. The reason for his terror was that the Philistines used a new strategy. They were now on level ground (in the plain of Jezreel) and had chariots as well as infantry. They had separated the Southern and the Northern tribes and so had cut off Saul from help from the north.

### **2 THE CHOICE OF JEZREEL (1 SA 28:4; 29:1)**

Jezreel provides total visual coverage of the Harod Valley, The Hill of Moreh and most of the Jezreel Valley. Behind Jezreel, Mount Giboa rises to almost 500 metres providing a natural rear-guard for Saul and his men. So Jezreel was a very strategic location and gave Saul a significant advantage in the battle.

### **3 SAUL AND THE WITCH AT ENDOR (1 SAM 28:8-25)**

Saul appears to have consulted the medium with a view to calling up Samuel because:

- 1 He was estranged from the Lord and was not performing the role of a true theocratic King (1 Sa 28:6), and so could receive no communication from the Lord;
- 2 He seems to have sensed disaster in the forthcoming battle (1 Sa 28:5).

### **4 SAUL'S BURIAL (1 SA 31:11-13)**

The men of Jabesh-Gilead risked their lives to bury Saul and Jonathon as an expression of their gratitude to them for being willing to rescue the city (1 Sa 11:11) at a time when, it seemed, no one was willing to take sides with them,

### **5 THE SPARING OF DAVID (1 SA 28:1; 29:1-11)**

David's arrangement with Achish shows the loose relationship between the Israelites and the Philistines. David became a vassal of Achish (1 Sa 27:6) and this involved military service. David was preserved from fighting against Saul, however, by the fears of the Philistine commanders (1 Sa 29:8-10). This then enabled him to recover the captives after the Amelakites' raid (1 Sa 30).

**ABNER AND JOAB**

- 1 Sa 14** - Abner is introduced to us as the Captain of Saul's Army and also his cousin (vv 50-51).
- 1 Sa 17** - When Saul and Abner saw David go out against Goliath they did not know him. After Goliath's death, Abner brought David to Saul (vv 55-58).
- 1 Sa 26** - Abner should have been guarding Saul, but he was sleeping with the rest when David stole Saul's spear and water bottle. The next morning David mocked Abner (vv5-20).
- 2 Sa 2** - The Conflict between Abner and Joab (vv 12-32).
- 2 Sa 3** - The quarrel between Ish-bosheth and Aber who evidently aspired to the throne (vv6-11). The agreement between Abner and David (vv 12-21). Joab slew Abner outside the gate of Hebron (a city of refuge). Abner trusted Joab and died as a fool - defenseless! (vv22--27). David disclaimed the deed and lamented Abner's death (vv28-39).
- 2 Sa 8** - Joab is noted as being over the hosts of Israel (v16).
- 2 Sa 10** - David's ambassadors insulted by the Ammonites (vv1-5). Joab and his brother sent and defeat Ammon and Syria (vv6-19).
- 2 Sa 11** - Joab obeys David by executing Uriah the Hittite (vv14-21).
- 2 Sa 12** - Joab captures Rabbah and made its people slaves (vv26-31).
- 2 Sa 14** - The story of Joab's stratagem to secure the return of Absalom (vv1-33).
- 2 Sa 18** - Even after being personally asked by David to spare the life of Absalom, Joab slew him in cold blood (vv5-17).
- 2 Sa 19** - Joab rebukes David because of his excessive mourning the death of Absalom (vv1-8). David promises the people to make Amasa Captain instead of Joab. Obviously, this was an attempt to reunite Israel (vv 9-15).
- 2 Sa 20** - Joab slays Amasa, whose attitude to David was in doubt. (vv4-15). The wise woman has Sheba slain for Joab (vv16-22).
- 2 Sa 23** - Joab omitted from the list of David's mighty men.
- 2 Sa 24** - Joab carries out the census (vv1-9).
- 1 Ki 1** - Joab takes sides with Adonijah who wanted the throne (vv7, 41).
- 1 Ki 2** - Benaiah at Solomon's command (and at David's suggestion) slays Joab because he supported Adonijah and because of his murder of both Abner and Amasa (vv 5-6, 29-34).



**SOLOMON**

“Peaceful”, also called *Jedidiah (beloved of the Lord)*.

**RISE TO POWER**

Solomon was the first dynastic ruler. Saul & David were charismatic rulers. Adonijah conspired to be king

**THE MASTER SAGE**

He was an academic collecting and cataloguing flora and fauna, and writing 3000 proverbs & 1005 songs, however, *Corporate personality* (when one member acts others may be viewed as taking part in the act) was very strong, and must be taken into consideration in matters of authorship.

**Wisdom** (1 Ki 3:9-15; 4:29-30, 34; 5:12). Wisdom includes both **Prudence** (ability to discern) and **Discernment** (insight into the true nature of things). It is “Mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense”, and while being religious it is intensely practical. It is the art of being successful.

Wisdom is the property of God (**Pr 1:7**, “The fear of the LORD is *the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom* and discipline”)

Christ was filled with wisdom (**Lu 2:40**, “the child grew and became strong; *he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God* was upon him”)

We need wisdom for:

- 1 Effective church leadership (**Col 1:28**, “We proclaim him, admonishing and *teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect* in Christ”)
- 2 Ability to face trials (**Jas 1:2-5**, “whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously* to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him”).
- 3 Walking worthy of the Lord (**Col 1:9**, “we have not stopped praying for you and *asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding*”).
- 4 Knowing the Lord (**Eph 1:17**, “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, *may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better*”).

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

1 Ki 8:22-61

**THE IRON RULER**

He maintained control and was a successful administrator, but a big spender. Increased taxation (1 Ki 4:7) and the labour *corvee* (1 Ki 5:13, etc) were resented. He gave 20 cities to Hiram in return for financial aid and this added to the resentment. He accomplished monumental feats but at an exorbitant price (good-will & loyalty of his own people).

**THE ENTERPRISING MERCHANT**

He capitalized on the vital location of Israel as the “land-bridge”. Sheba’s visit seems for commercial purposes as his sea ventures would undermine the trade routes through her land. Chariots went north and horses came south.

**THE PEACEFUL EMPEROR**

No major military campaigns are known. His net-work of commercial treaties, and extensive standing army coupled with the power vacuum left by weak Egypt and Assyria kept him at peace.

He built a ring of fortifications in strategic locations near his borders.

But peace was marred by two incidents:

- 1 Hadad (1 Ki 11:14-22); and
- 2 Rezon who established an independent city-state in Damascus (Aram).

**THE FATAL FLAW**

Marriage to foreign wives (sealing treaties), but violating God’s law (Deut 17:17).

**SYNCRETISM**

1 Ki 11:4, “turned his heart after other gods”

## ABSALOM

### BACKGROUND

- 1 **David's 'house'** in Jerusalem was so grand, it began to take on the intrigue and low morality typical of such Eastern palaces.
- 2 **His family** had grown to include a wide assortment of wives and concubines and an array of children.
- 3 As power and wealth accumulated, so did strife and contention in the family.
- 4 David was a rather indulgent and too easy going.
- 5 He is now growing older. His health is failing. His grasp on the empire and on family affairs has lost some of its firmness.

### HISTORY

- 2 **Sa 13** - Absalom has Amnon (his half brother) 'executed'. David should have pursued him and had him executed, but as Absalom was following his father's bad example, David could not.
- 2 **Sa 14** - Following Joab's plan, David allows Absalom to return to Jerusalem. Two years later, on Joab's intercession, Absalom receives a complete pardon.
- 2 **Sa 15** - Absalom steals the hearts of the people. He knew how to use craft and flattery to win popular favour. With chariots, horses, and fifty runners he gave the impression of a good prince. Within four years he won the hearts of the people, and set up his throne at Hebron.

### REASONS FOR SUCCESS

- 1 David was overwhelmed with too much work, and had no deputy. Absalom offered to hear any suit, and give justice.
- 2 There was much discontent because of the arrogance of Joab. Absalom was handsome, agreeable and ambitious.
- 3 David's fall with Bath-Sheba caused lack of confidence in him.

### HIS DEFEAT

- 2 **Sa 15** - David with remarkable foresight leaves Jerusalem to save the city from destruction and give time to organise his forces. On the top of Olivet he meets the aged counsellor, Hushai, whom he persuades to return to Jerusalem, in order to frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel.
- 2 **Sa 16** - Absalom enters Jerusalem and Ahithophel advises him to take possession of his father's harem. This was an emphatic act of sovereignty, and was the greatest insult that could be offered to David. This made reconciliation impossible,
- 2 **Sa 17** - Ahithophel's plan to pursue David relentlessly would, no doubt, have given victory to Absalom. Hushai ventured to suggest that this time Ahithophel's counsel was not good. He recalled David's military experience, his courage, and his now infuriated warriors. Absalom follows Hushai's advice to make a general levy. Meanwhile Hushai advises David of the plan.
- 2 **Sa 18** - David divides his soldiers into three companies, but the people insisted that he personally must stay behind. During the fighting, Absalom fled on mule-back, but was caught by the head in the tangled branches of a great oak. Joab, without scruple, murders him.

## JEROBOAM AND THE SCHISM

- 1 **BACKGROUND** - Jeroboam was in charge of Solomon's whole labor force (1 Ki 11:28).
- 2 **FLIGHT** - The prophet, Ahijah, forecast that Jeroboam would become King of ten tribes. On hearing this, Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam who fled to Egypt until Solomon's death (1 Ki 11:29-40).
- 3 **CAUSES OF THE SCHISM**
  - 1 **SOLOMON'S PERSONAL FAILURE** - Marriages resulted in turning him away from God (1 Ki 11:4);
  - 2 **RELIGIOUS APOSTASY** - Shrines and High Places countered the unifying effect of the Central Sanctuary (1 Ki 11:7);
  - 3 **SIZE OF THE KINGDOM** - Foreigners now included (1 Ki 10:20-21). They sought release from Israel overlordship (2 Sa 10:19; 1 Ki 4:21-22).
  - 4 **ANCIENT JEALOUSY** - Judah favoured in taxing. Northern cities ceded.
  - 5 **TAXES** - Temple costly but willingly supported. Houses, palaces armies and navies not so willing.
  - 6 **CORVEE** - The conscript of forced labour was the final straw (1 Ki 4:6; 5:13-14; 12:18; 2 Sa 20:24).
  - 7 **PROVOCATION** - Contemporaries advice was unwise!
- 4 **INTERVIEW** - Hearing that Rehoboam reigned, Jeroboam returned, and faced him in Shechem, demanding a lighter yoke. Rehoboam acted on the advice of his contemporaries and threatened a heavier yoke (1 Ki 12:1-15).
- 5 **REBELLION** - "To your tents, O Israel!" Rehoboam sent his tax-collector to threaten them but escaped for his life when the tax-collector was murdered (1 Ki 12:16-24).
- 6 **IDOLATRY** - God had promised Jeroboam ten tribes (1 Ki 11:35) but he turned from God and used his own way to keep them.
  - 1 **NEW CAPITALS** - He chose Shechem as his capital, and also established a second alternate capital at Penuel (1 Ki 12:25).
  - 2 **NEW WORSHIP** -
    - 1 **Objects** - Two golden calves: "Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt" (1 Ki 12:28,32);
    - 2 **Centre** - Bethel and Dan: so as not to go up to Jerusalem (1 Ki 12:31);
    - 3 **Priesthood** - Lowest people, not Levites (who fled to Judah, 1 Ki 12:31; 13:33; 2 Chr 11:13-17).
    - 4 **Altar** - He set up new altars on which to sacrifice to the calves (1 Ki 12:33);
    - 5 **Time** - His feast was an imitation, and so he changed the time of worship to the 8<sup>th</sup> month, in opposition to God (1 Ki 12:32-33).
- 7 **JUDGEMENT** - A prophet from Judah came and prophesied against the calf worship, saying that Josiah would destroy it. To show his words were authentic Jeroboam's hand was withered and then restored. His prophecy that the altar would be broken and the ashes poured out, was fulfilled. Despite this, Jeroboam did not return from his evil ways (1 Ki 13:1-10, 33-34).
- 8 **PUNISHMENT** - God punished Jeroboam for his wickedness by sending Baasha who cut off all his seed (1 Ki 15:29-30).

## THE CAPITALS OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

### INTRODUCTION

#### Samaria's Natural Defenses

Samaria is a very mountainous region with very few easy access routes. No international highways pass through the area.

#### Samaria's Sphere of Influence

Militarily, Samaria was very important, as it was located between Judah and Galilee. It was in the hill country surrounded by plains on every side.

#### Samaria was a closed area

The area around Samaria is a region closed to trade and invasion. The reason for this is primarily because of its very mountainous terrain with very few easy access roads.

From Trans-Jordan to Tirzah offers a fairly obstacle-free route from Adam to Tirzah, and provides access to Eastern Samaria.

The Beth-Shan to Tirzah connection is useful but crosses several rivers and about 10km of mountainous paths.

The mountains of Central Samaria (due West of Tirzah) make travel difficult although there is a natural pass to Dothan and from there to the International Highway.

The route from Tirzah to Shechem rises some 275m in just 10km and runs parallel to a deep canyon.

The most significant feature of the area, however, is the fact that Samaria is NOT on any of the International Highways joining Egypt to Mesopotamia.

All of the routes from Samaria to the South are also difficult.

These factors resulted in Samaria being a closed area.

### THE CAPITAL CITIES

1 **SHECHEM** – In 920 B.C. Jeroboam established his capital in Shechem as did Nabab.

**Location** - An important city on the North-South route and controlled an important route to the Coastal highway too.

**Potential Threats** - Was safe as it was in a mountainous terrain away from main roads.

**Significance of location** - Little significance. It was in the centre of an area and had almost no influence on its neighbours

2 **TIRZAH** – Baasha established his capital in Tirzah as did all of his followers until Omri.

**Location** - An important city which controlled one route from the Trans-Jordan Highway to the Coastal highway (E-W). It also controlled the route from Beth-Shan to Jerusalem (N-S).

**Potential Threats** - Was safe as it was in a mountainous terrain away from main roads.

**Significance of location** - Little significance. It was in the centre of an area and had almost no influence on its neighbours

3 **SAMARIA** – Omri purchased the hill of Shemer, re-named it Shemer or Samaria and established his capital there.

**Location** - An important city which controlled an important Highway intersection on the route from Shechem to the Coastal Highway.

**Potential Threats** - Was safe as it was in a very mountainous area with few access roads. No international highways pass through the area.

**Significance of location** - Little significance. It was in the centre of an area and had almost no influence on its neighbours

**Military Influence** – It was located between Judah and Galilee. It was in the hill country surrounded by plains on three sides (except due South).

**HISTORY OF THE AREA**

Shechem was great in the Middle Bronze Age (2200-1550 BC) and again in the Amarna Age (1400-1350 BC) when Labayi moved out North to Shunem, West toward the Coastal Highway and South to Jerusalem. It is also significant that Jeroboam set up his base in Samaria, firstly in Shechem and later in Tirzah. The move was, no doubt, for security reasons.

The sieges by Syria were inevitable, as they could not go South without first destroying Samaria or the Samaritans would have been a thorn in their side, attacking their caravans, etc., in the plains and then fleeing back to their mountainous villages. This same principle seems to have motivated Shalmaneser V.

**SAMARIA AND THE BIBLE**

**Amos** alludes to the city of Samaria's position on a lone hill surrounded by higher hills (Amos 3:9) and describes Israel's false sense of security they obtained when they gained control of the Jezreel Valley and the Trans-Jordan Highway (6:13-14). **Isaiah** alludes to the constant rivalry between Israel and Judah over this central buffer zone (Isa 11:13-14).

**INTERNATIONAL COASTAL HIGHWAY**

Samaria controlled 50km of this important highway giving it a significant sphere of influence in the region, but the Philistines in the South posed a threat. An alliance with Philistia would be advantageous to both nations both politically and economically.

Phoenicia controlled the highway north of Samaria, so an alliance with them would also be advantageous.

**TRANS-JORDAN HIGHWAY**

The Trans-Jordan Highway was an important trade route and access to it via Beth-Shan provided trade opportunities.

## JEHOSHAPHAT

### **2 Chr 17 - Obedience to God results in Prosperity and Peace**

- vv 1-6      He sought the Lord and had riches in abundance.
- vv 7-9      He sent out Levites to teach the people the Word of God.
- vv 10-19    His neighbours brought him presents and he had peace.

### **2 Chr 18 - Alliance with Ahab** (Israel, 873-852)

Jehoshaphat formed an alliance with Ahab to attack Ramoth-Gilead, on the east of Jordan. The 400 prophets of Baal said that God would give them the victory, but Micaiah, prophet of Jehovah, said they would be defeated. During the battle, Ahab was fatally wounded.

### **2 Chr 19 - Administration of justice**

He appointed Judges, Levites and Priests to administer justice and to teach the people.

### **2 Chr 20 - War with Moab and her allies**

When he heard that certain enemies were to attack him he fasted and prayed. Jahaziel prophesied that God would give him the victory. When they went to the battleground they found that their enemies had killed each other and they only had to gather the spoil.

### **2 Chr 20 - Alliance with Ahaziah** (Israel, 852-851)

- vv 31-37    He made an alliance with Ahaziah to make ships and to trade, but God punished the alliance by destroying the ships before they ever left harbour.

### **2 Ki 3 - Alliance with Jehoram** (Israel, 851-841)

- vv 6-9      After Ahab's death, Moab rebelled and so Jehoram made an alliance with Jehoshaphat and Edom to go against them.
- vv 10-20    Lack of water led to the appeal to Elisha who ordered their digging of the ditches which were filled with water by the morning.
- vv 21-27    The Moabites thought that the allies had fallen out and advanced on the spoil. They were defeated and the sacrifice of the king's son increased the anger against Israel.

### **2 Chr 21 - Joram (Jehoram, Judah, 851-842)**

- vv 1-4      Jehoshaphat gave his sons great gifts which caused jealousy. Joram solved the problem by executing his brothers and other princes.
- vv 5-7      Jehoshaphat's friendship with Ahab resulted in Joram marrying Athaliah Ahab's daughter. This re-introduced Baalism into Judah and almost resulted in wiping out of David's line.

## THE POLITICAL WORLD OF HEZEKIAH

- 1 During the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., Assyria became the dominant world power.
- 2 In 722 B.C. Assyria captured the capital city of Samaria, which caused the northern kingdom of Israel to fall. Some say as many as 27,000 Jews were taken to northern Assyria as captives. They never returned.
- 3 The southern kingdom of Judah was also attacked by the Assyrians in 701 B.C. By the close of the century, **Hezekiah** joined a coalition against Assyria. The armies of Sennacherib advanced to attack the Judean king, but God intervened and crushed the invading armies. This provided Judah and Jerusalem a century-long reprieve.

During the battles, Sennacherib laid waste to most of the cities in Judah and deported thousands of its citizens. It was during these dramatic times that Isaiah alternated between condemning and encouraging the spiritual condition of the rulers and people of Israel. However, Isaiah looked beyond these situations and saw the rise of the Chaldean kingdom of Babylon. He also spoke of the fall of Babylon in 612 B.C. at the hands of Cyrus's Median and Persian armies. This shows Isaiah prophetically interacting with three major empires, showing their impact on Israel and Judah and showing how they fit into the sovereign plan of God.

### A BRIEF PERIOD OF PROSPERITY IN ISRAEL

About 800 B.C. King Adadnirari III of Assyria weakened the power of Damascus, which in turn reduced the pressure the Syrians had on Israel. This allowed **Jeroboam II** of Israel and **Uzziah** of Judah to enjoy a period of enriched prosperity from 790-750 B.C. During this period of prosperity in Israel, more than Judah saw an increase in idol worship, materialism, and oppression of the poor. Judah did not waste time in quickly becoming much like her northern relatives in these respects.

### ASSYRIA GAINS POWER UNDER TIGLATH-PILESER III

- 1 Tiglath-Pileser III reigned from 745-727 B.C. and began to regain Assyria's power over Syria and Palestine. He attacked the northern states of Syria in 740 B.C. and by 738 B.C. he was receiving payments from Damascus and Israel. In 735 B.C. he attacked a coalition of armies (including Israel) which had hoped Egypt would join and penetrated as far as the border of Egypt.
- 2 A year later, Damascus attempted to organize another revolt against Assyria. Leaders wanted the support of Judah, and pressured **Jotham** (and later his son Ahaz) to help. In 734 B.C. Syria and Israel besieged Jerusalem in an attempt to overthrow **Ahaz**. When Ahaz learned of the invasion he was deeply worried, being reminded of his heavy losses in previous battles with these kings. Isaiah came to calm Ahaz's fears and assure him that Rezin and Pekah would not prevail against him. If Ahaz trusted God would protect Judah.
- 3 2 Ki 16:7-9 indicates Ahaz requested help from Tiglath-Pileser, sending him silver and gold as payment. The Assyrians captured Damascus and killed Rezin. Most of the cities of Israel were captured and many people deported. As a result, the northern territory of Israel was annexed by Assyria.
- 4 Ahaz traveled to Damascus to thank Tiglath-Pileser and was fascinated by a pagan altar and had Uriah the priest build one like it in Jerusalem. Therefore, Ahaz began to worship the gods of Damascus, bringing Judah into the idolatry which Isaiah hated so much.

### THE VICTORIES OF SHALMANESER V AND SARGON

Following the death of Tiglath-Pileser III in 727 B.C., Shalmaneser V became king. **Hoshea** joined a revolt against him and was imprisoned by the Assyrians. Samaria also fell in 722/21 B.C. Both Shalmaneser and his successor Sargon are credited with the capture of Samaria.

**THE INVASION AND DEFEAT OF SENNACHERIB**

- 1 Sargon died in 705 B.C. His successor, Sennacherib had to deal with an uprising that reached from Babylon to Syria and Palestine. Egypt agreed to support the insurgents and this time Hezekiah joined the alliance. Sennacherib quickly defeated the armies of Elam and Babylon. All of Babylonia was restored to Assyrian control by 703 B.C. Many cities of Syria and Phoenicia renewed their allegiance to him by 701 B.C.
- 2 The invasion of 701 B.C. was very successful for Sennacherib. Many cities surrendered as he moved down the coast. Seeing the danger, Hezekiah submitted to the Assyrians and paid them with silver and gold. However, Sennacherib demanded the surrender of Jerusalem and sent a large army to Jerusalem. In one night, the angel of the Lord killed the bulk of his army, 185,000 soldiers. Sennacherib had to leave the campaign and return home.

**THE RISE OF THE CHALDEANS IN BABYLON**

- 1 Babylon and the Chaldeans are mentioned many times by Isaiah. In Babylonia the Chaldeans occupied the marshland in the extreme south. Because of the terrain and their independent spirit, the Chaldeans proved difficult for the Assyrians to control, even during the height of their empire. Chaldean leader Merodach-Baladan held power until Sennacherib drove him out.
- 2 With the rise of Nabopolassar in 626 B.C. Chaldean power steadily increased. Supported by the Medes, the Chaldeans captured Nineveh in 612 B.C. crushing the Assyrian Empire. The persistence of the Chaldeans was a sign of their coming greatness. What the Assyrians came so close to accomplishing in 701 B.C. was achieved by the Chaldeans in 587 B.C.

**THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CYRUS THE PERSIAN**

- 1 During the rule of Nabonidus (556-539 B.C.) the Medes cut off trading routes from the east. This was a serious blow to Babylon's economy. Toward the end of the reign of Nabonidus, the Medes leader, a dynamic Persian prince named Cyrus came to power. He held great influence among the Medes and was successful in military conquests. One of those conquests was the defeat of Assyria and Babylonia.
- 2 Cyrus developed a reputation for treating conquered nations with unusual kindness. Some viewed him as more of a deliverer than an invader. His restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem is a high point in the message of Isaiah's comforting words of 44:24-28 and 45: 1-2, 13.

## HEZEKIAH

### INTRODUCTION (2 Ki 18-20; 2 Chr 29-32; Isa 36-39)

Hezekiah began to reign when he was 25 years old, and he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord (2 Ki 18:1-3; 2 Chr 29:1-2).

### REFORM MOVEMENT (2 Ki 18:4-6; 2 Chr 29:3-31:21)

- 1 **Revival** - He immediately began religious reforms. In Jerusalem, the high places and all else that tended to idolatry was destroyed, including the brazen serpent to which incense was burned (2 Ki 18:4). On the positive side, he kept the commandments and was blessed (2 Ki 18:5-6).
- 2 **Levites** - He summoned and addressed the Priests and Levites, who then sanctified themselves and cleansed the temple (2 Chr 29:3-19).
- 3 **Temple** - The Temple was ceremonially re-opened and the sacrifices, required by law, offered (2 Chr 29:20-36).
- 4 **Passover** - As the reform movement spread, Hezekiah invited all Israel and Judah to attend the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It could not be held in the first month, when it should have been celebrated, as the people were unclean (2 Chr 30:1-27).
- 5 **High Places** - After this the high places outside of Jerusalem were destroyed (2 Chr 31:1).
- 6 **Worship** - The Temple worship was then completely reorganized (2 Chr 31:2-21).

### FIRST ATTACK (2 Ki 18:13-16; 2 Chr 32:1-8; Isa 36:1)

- 1 **Vassalage** - Hezekiah inherited the position of vassal to Assyria from his father Ahaz. Almost immediately after his accession, he destroyed the idols, this indicating a repudiation of the claims of vassalage (2 Ki 18:1-8).
- 2 **Israel** - In the fourth year of his reign (723 B.C.), Shalmanesser, King of Assyria, besieged Samaria, finally destroying it three years later. Judah was not attacked as it was still regarded as a vassal state (2 Ki 18:9-12).
- 3 **Alliances** - Hezekiah tried to obtain alliances with Egypt and Philistia against Assyria, but these attempts failed (2 Ki 18:7). Isaiah denounced the attempted Egyptian alliance (Isa 30:1-7).
- 4 **Ashdod** - In 713 B.C. the Philistines of Ashdod, at Egyptian instigation, organised a conspiracy against Assyria in which Philistia, Judah, Edom and Moab took part. Sargon sent his Supreme Commander against them and crushed the conspiracy (Isa 20:1).
- 5 **Water** - Hezekiah took the precaution of stopping the fountains outside of the city and channeling the water inside (2 Chr 32:1-8).
- 6 **Capture** - It seems that the country area of Judah was also captured (Isa 36:1; 2 Chr 32:1; 2 Ki 18:13).
- 7 **Tribute** - Hezekiah sent a statement reaffirming his allegiance and paying enormous tribute (2 Ki 18:14-16).

### SICKNESS (2 Ki 20:1-19; 2 Chr 32:24-31; Isa 38:1-39:8)

- 1 **Prayer** - About this time Hezekiah became sick and Isaiah told him he was going to die, but Hezekiah prayed that his life would be extended (Isa 38:1-3; 2 Ki 20:1-3; 2 Chr 32:24).
- 2 **Sign** - In answer to his prayer, God promised him an additional 15 years of life. Hezekiah was then given the sign in confirmation of Isaiah's good news when the shadow returned 10 steps on the stairway of Ahaz (Isa 38:4-8; 2 Ki 20:4-11).
- 3 **Embassy** - Soon after his recovery Merodach-Baladan, King of Babylon, sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah congratulating him on his recovery (Isa 39:1; 2 Ki 20:12).
- 4 **Alliance** - The true mission, however, was to invite Hezekiah to join an alliance against Assyria. The King was delighted and took the officials on a tour of inspection of the royal treasures (Isa 39:2; 2 Ki 20:13).
- 5 **Prophecy** - Hezekiah's imprudent act aroused heavenly displeasure and Isaiah prophesied that the remaining treasure would some day be carried off to Babylon (Isa 39:3-8; 2 Ki 20:14-19; 2 Chr 32:31).
- 6 **Result** - In spite of the warning, Hezekiah joined the alliance (2 Chr 32:31).

**2ND ATTACK (2 Ki 18:17-37; 2 Chr 32:9-23; Isa 36:2-37:38)**

- 1 **Lachish** - In 14<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (701 B.C.). Sennacherib turned his attention to Syria, Judah and Egypt, all of which had been conspiring against him. He marched down the coast, reducing Sidon, subduing Philistia, and then besieging Lachish (2 Ki 18:17; 2 Chr 32:9; Isa 36:2)
- 2 **Warning** - From there he sent his Supreme Commander, his chief officer and his field commander to Jerusalem with a dire warning to Hezekiah's officers. The place of meeting was by the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, which is on the road of the Waterman's Field (2 Ki 18:17-25; 2 Chr 32:9-15; Isa 36:2-10).
- 3 **Speech** - The Assyrians were asked to speak in Syriac, but shouted their abuse in Hebrew. Their comments show they were aware of Hezekiah's reform movement, but show complete ignorance of the worship of Jehovah (2 Ki 18:26-37; 2 Chr 32:18-19; Isa 36:11-22).
- 4 **Repentance** - Hezekiah was very troubled, displayed signs of his repentance, and appealed to Isaiah for God's help and a sign (2 Ki 19:1-5; 2 Chr 32:20; Isa 37:1-5).
- 5 **Prophecy** - Isaiah sent a message of comfort saying that Sennacherib's army would be destroyed, and he himself would return home only to be murdered (2 Ki 19:6-7; Isa 37:6-7).
- 6 **Rumour** - The Field Commander returned, only to find Sennacherib now fighting at Libnah. He then heard that Tirhakah, King of Egypt, was coming to fight against him (2 Ki 19:8-9; Isa 37:8-9).
- 7 **Letter** - He then sent a letter to Hezekiah who spread it before the Lord (2 Ki 19:9-19; 2 Chr 32:17; Isa 37:10-20).
- 8 **Another Prophecy** - Isaiah then prophesied that Assyria would be destroyed and Jerusalem spared (2 Ki 19:20-34; Isa 37:21-37).
- 9 **Attack** - Sennacherib then gave Jerusalem his attention. "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold" (Gordon), but God intervened and the angel of the Lord went out and put to death 185,000 of the Assyrian army (2 Ki 19:35). Sennacherib returned to Nineveh, where, shortly after, he was killed (2 Ki 19:35-37; 2 Chr 32:21-23; Isa 37:36-38).

**DEATH (2 Ki 20:20-21; 2 Chr 32:32-33)**

Hezekiah lived a short time after this attack, dying in 698 B.C. Unfortunately his son, Manasseh, was the opposite of his father and did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Ki 21 :2).

**THE CONTRAST BETWEEN AHAZ AND HEZEKIAH.**

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>AHAZ (Isaiah 7)</b>	<b>HEZEKIAH (Isaiah 36-39)</b>
<b>SEIGED BY:</b>	SYRIA – ISRAEL (Isa 7:1)	ASSYRIA (Isa 36:1-2)
<b>ALLIANCE:</b>	Formed alliance with Assyria (2 Ki 16:7)	Tried to obtain Egyptian. Alliance (Isa 30:1-2; 36:6, 9)
<b>VASSALAGE:</b>	Was free, became Assyrian vassal. (2 Ki 16:8)	Hated Assyrian vassalage (2 Ki 18:7)
<b>CAPTURE:</b>	Country area captured (2 Ki 16:5-6)	Country area captured (Isa 36:1)
<b>TRIBUTE:</b>	Sent tribute money to Assyria (2 Ki 16:8)	Sent tribute money to Assyria (2 Ki 18:14-16)
<b>WATER:</b>	Preserved water because of siege (Isa 7:3)	Preserved water because of siege (2 Ki 20:20)
<b>UPPER POOL:</b>	Isaiah met Ahaz there (Isa 7:3)	Assyrian officers met Hezekiah's men (Isa 36:2)
<b>ISAIAH:</b>	Lord sent Isaiah to Ahaz. (Isa 7:3)	Lord sent Isaiah to Hezekiah (Isa 37:21; 38:4)
<b>INTERVIEW:</b>	Ahaz refused the sign (Isa 7:12)	Hezekiah accepted the sign (Isa 37:30; 38:7)
<b>DEPENDANCE:</b>	Depended on human help (	Realized God alone could save (Isa 37:20; 38:3)
<b>FAITH:</b>	Did not believe Isaiah (Isa 7:13)	Believed Isaiah (Isa 38:6)
<b>ATTITUDE:</b>	Ahaz unrepentant (1 Ki 16:12)	Hezekiah repentant (Isa 37:20)
<b>PROPHECY:</b>	The Assyrian Invasion (Isa 7:20; 2 Ki 16:9)	Judah blessed; Assyria destroyed (Isa 37:31-32, 38)
<b>RESULT:</b>	Assyria destroyed Syria and Israel, but Judah also invaded. (2 Ki 17:1-6; 1 Ki 18:17)	Sennacherib slain, but Hezekiah's life extended. (Isa 37:36; 38:9)

## MANASSEH

### A **AHAZ** (733-727) 2 Ki 16; 2 Chr 28; Isa 7-8.

- 1 **Baalism** - He re-introduced Baalism into the land (2 Ki 16:1-4; 2 Chr 28:1-4).
- 2 **Assyrian Altar** - He became an Assyrian vassal and accordingly replaced the brazen altar with a replica of the Assyrian altars, and on it he sacrificed to their gods (2 Ki 16:5-14)
- 3 **Priest** - He commanded the priest to offer sacrifices, and the priest obeyed him (2 Ki 16:15-16).
- 4 **Idolatry** - He also forced the people outside of Jerusalem into idolatry (2 Chr 28:25).
- 5 **Laver** - He had the base removed from the laver, and had it set in the pavement (2 Ki 16:17-18).
- 6 **Reason** - His reason for accepting the heathen gods was on the ground that they had helped their kings win in battle (2 Chr 28: 22-23)

### B **HEZEKIAH** (727-698) 2 Ki 18-20; 2 Chr 29-32; Isa 36-39.

- 1 **Revival** – Hezekiah restored the worship of Jehovah.

### C **MANASSEH** (698-643) 2 Ki. 21:1-18; 2 Chr 33:1-20.

- 1 **Introduction** - Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign, and reigned 53 years in Jerusalem. He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Ki 21:1-2; 2 Chr 33:1-2).
- 2 **Baalism** - He built again the high places, and built altars for Baal (2 Ki 21:3; 2Chr 33:3-4).
- 3 **Asherah** - He set up an image of Asherah in the temple (2 Ki 21:3,7; 2 Chr 33:3,4,7).
- 4 **Stars** - He introduced the Assyro-Chaldean worship of the stars, in accordance with his Assyrian vassalage (2 Ki 21:3,5; 2 Chr 33:3,5).
- 5 **Necromancy** - He “practiced sorcery and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists” (2 Ki 21:6; 2 Chr 33:6).
- 6 **Human Sacrifice** – “He sacrificed his own son in the fire” This would be to Attah-Molech, the Venus star (2 Ki 21:6; 2 Chr 33:6), called *Uzza* in Arabic.
- 7 **Murder** - Those who would not conform to his evil ways were murdered. Tradition records he had Isaiah sawn in half (Heb 11:37; 2 Ki 21:16; 2 Chr 33:9)/
- 8 **Prophecy** - The Lord spoke saying, "Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins . . . I am going to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle . . . I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance and hand them over to their enemies. They will be looted and plundered by all their foes” (2 Ki 21:10-15).
- 9 **Captivity** - Manasseh was taken captive to Babylon and. while there he:
  - 1 REPENTED (2 Chr 33:10-12)
  - 2 and RETURNED to God (2 Chr 33:12-13)
  - 3 He was RESTORED to His Throne (2Chr 33:13)
  - 4 he REBUILT the defences (2 Chr 33:14}
  - 5 he REMOVED the idols (2 Chr 33:15)
  - 6 he REPAIRED the altar (2 Chr 33:16}
  - 7 he RE-ESTABLISHED the temple worship (2 Chr 33:15)
- 10 **Death** - The land apparently had peace from the time of Manasseh’s restoration until his death (2 Ki 21:17-18; 2 Chr 33: 17-20).

**D AMON (643-641) 2 Ki 21:19**

- 1 **Introduction** - Amon was 22 when he began to reign, and reigned two years. in Jerusalem, and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Ki 21:19-20; 2 Chr 33:21-22).
- 2 **Idolatry** - He served the idols that his father had served (2 Ki 21:21; 2 Chr 33:22-23).
- 3 **Apostasy** - He forsook the Lord God of his fathers (2 Ki 21:22; 2 Chr 33:23).
- 4 **Assassinated** - His servants conspired against him and slew him in his own house (2 K. 21:23; 2 Chr 33:24)
- 5 **Revenge** - His murderers were also killed (2 Ki 21:24; 2 Chr 23:25).
- 6 **Replaced** - The people of the land made Josiah his son King in his stead (2 Ki 21:24; 2 Chr 33:25).

**E JOSIAH (641-609) 2 Ki 22:1-23:30; 2 Chr 34:1-35:27).**

- 1 **Revival** – Josiah restored the worship of Jehovah.

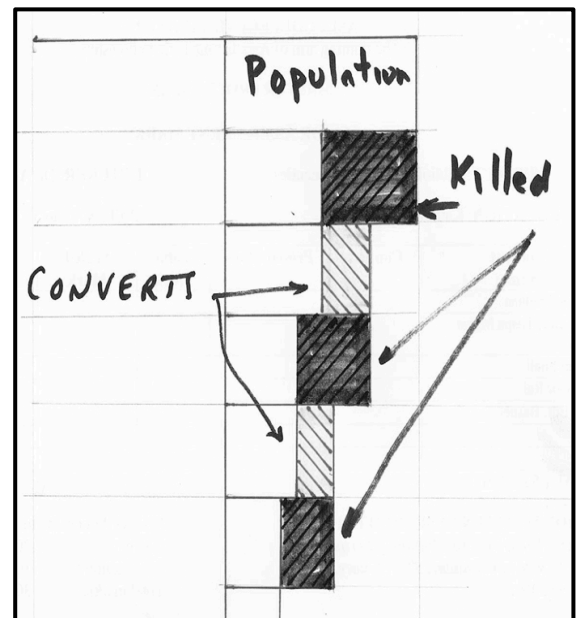
**F JEHOAHAZ (609) 2 Ki 23:31-34; 2 Chr 36:1-4.**

- 1 **Apostasy** - He followed the evil ways of his fore-fathers, not the godly example of his father.

**G CONCLUSION** Because of the good/bad alternation of the Kings (see diagram below) and the destruction of the righteous by the evil kings it meant that each swing of the pendulum had a lessening effect on the people.

**THE SWING FROM EVIL TO GOOD**

AHAZ	Evil
HEZEKIAH	Good
MANASSEH	Evil
MANASSEH	Good
AMON	Evil
JOSIAH	Good
JEHOAHAZ	Evil
Etc.	



## THE CAUSES OF THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL

**JEROBOAM II** (793-753 B.C.) 2 Ki 14:23-29.

The reign of Jeroboam II marked the end of any independence in Israel. He had some military success, in defeating Syria, the Philistines and the land east of Jordan. But Hosea and Amos present a scene of social and economic distress, the luxury of the rich and the bribery of judges. Jeroboam II was followed by a succession of weak kings, mostly usurpers and Israel was finally destroyed in 722 B.C.

**ZECHARIAH** (753-752 B.C.) 2 Ki 15:8-12.

After a brief reign, Zechariah was murdered by Shallum.

**SHALLUM** (752 B.C.) 2 Ki 15:13-15.

After an even briefer reign, Shallum was murdered by Menahem.

**MENAHM** (752-742 B.C.) 2 Ki 15:16-22.

Menahem's reign began with civil war. During his reign Tiglath-Pileser conquered Syria and continued southward taking the Philistine cities, Galilee and Trans-Jordan. Menahem surrendered, without resistance, paying 1,000 talents of silver to keep his throne. He collected this sum by a heavy tax on the wealthy of 50 shekels each (the cost of a pair of oxen).

**PEKAHIAH** (742-740 B.C.) 2 Ki 15:23-26.

After two-years reign, Pekahiah was murdered by Pekah.

**PEKAH** (740-730 B.C.) 2Ki 15:27-31.

During his reign, Rezin King of Syria and Damascus organized a resistance movement and invited all his neighbours to join. Israel did, but Ahaz (Judah) would not. Rezin was determined that Assyria should not have any allies in the area and so his federation attacked Jerusalem. In 734 Assyria destroyed Damascus and advanced on Israel. Although Samaria itself was spared the surrounding area was utterly disrupted and heavily depopulated through deportation. Another conspiracy took place and Hoshea, a puppet of Assyria, assassinated Pekah.

**HOSHEA** (730-721 B.C.) 2 Ki 17:1-6.

On Tiglath-Pileser's death, Hoshea withheld his annual tribute and hastily entered into an alliance with Egypt. Shalmaneser V besieged Samaria for three years. It was only after the death of Hoshea that Samaria fell to Sargon II. The city was destroyed in 721 and the people deported.

### THE REASONS FOR THE CAPTIVITY:

#### (a) Theological Reasons:

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1 Idolatry     | 2 Ki 17:7-12;  |
| 2 Disobedience | 2 Ki 17:13-15; |
| 3 Baalism      | 2 Ki 17:16-18; |

#### (b) Military Reasons

- |                           |                |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| 4 Internal civil disorder | (see above);   |
| 5 Revolt against Assyria  | 2 Ki 17:4; and |
| 6 Alliance with Egypt     | 2 Ki 17:4.     |

## THE CAUSES OF THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

**AHAZ** (733-727 B.C.) 2 Ki 16: 1-20; 2 Chr 28:1-27.

Ahaz a vassal of Assyria which spared him any attack.

**HEZEKIAH** (727-698 B.C.) 2 Ki 18-20; 2 Chr 29-32.

Because Hezekiah was regarded as a vassal he escaped any attack in 721 when Samaria was destroyed. But in 713 he took part in an Egyptian alliance, and came under attack. He surrendered and paid an enormous tribute. In 701 Assyria attacked again but the Lord miraculously preserved Jerusalem (2 Ki 19:35).

**MANASSEH** (698-643 B.C.) 2 Ki 21; 2 Chr 33.

Manasseh continued vassalage to Assyria but was taken prisoner to Babylon for a period, and then released.

**AMNON** (643-641 B.C.) 2 Ki 21:19.

After two years reign, Amnon was assassinated.

**JOSIAH** (641-609 B.C.) 2 Ki 22:1-23:22.

Josiah repudiated vassalage and died fighting Egypt.

**JEHOAHAZ** (609 B.C.) 2 Ki 23: 30-32.

On Josiah's death his son, Jehoahaz, was appointed King, but after Judah's defeat by Necho he was removed.

**JEHOIAKIM** (609-598 B.C.) 2 Ki 23:36-24:7.

Necho put Jehoiakim on the throne. Following the defeat of the Egyptian/Assyrian alliance, the Medes and Babylonians divided all former Assyrian territory. Nabopolassar (Babylon) took all the Southern area including Judah, who faithfully forwarded its tribute to Babylon for a number of years. When they revolted Nebuchadnessar captured Jerusalem.

**JEHOIACHIN** (598 B.C.) 2 Ki 24:8-17.

During the siege Jehoiakim died, and it fell to his son Jehoiachin to surrender and he was then taken captive to Babylon.

**ZEDEKIAH** (598-587 B.C.) 2 Ki 24:18-25:30.

Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, was placed on the throne but after 9 years revolted and Jerusalem was finally destroyed in 587 B.C.

### THE REASONS FOR THE CAPTIVITY (EXILE):

- |                                    |                               |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>1 Hezekiah's Sin</b>            | <b>(Pride)</b>                | 2 Ki 20:17; 2 Chr 32:25-26;   |
| <b>2 Manasseh's Sin</b>            | <b>(Idolatry)</b>             | 2 Ki 21:13; 23:26; 24:3;      |
| <b>3 Josiah's Repentance</b>       | <b>(Punishment delayed)</b>   | 2 Ki 22:20;                   |
| <b>4 Sabbatical Years</b>          | <b>Disobedience punished)</b> | Lev 26:31-34; 2 Chr 36:19-21; |
| <b>5 Rebellion against Babylon</b> | <b>(The political reason)</b> | 2 Ki 24:30.                   |

## ELIJAH AND ELISHA

**ELIJAH** (“The Elijah Cycle” – chronological order of stories is unsure)

### 3 POWERFUL STORIES

- 1 Ki 17 – Elijah confronts Ahab and announced famine. Story shows that even in Phoenicia there was still at least one Yahwistic believer. Elijah learns compassion! (**Lu 4:25-26**, “I assure you that there were *many widows in Israel in Elijah's time*, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to *a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon*”)
- 1 Ki 18 – 3 yrs later, Elijah confronts the 450 prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel. But Baalism was not completely destroyed at this time.
- 1 Ki 21 – Elijah confronts Ahab over Naboth’s vineyard

### 3 PERSONAL STORIES

#### 1 Ki 19 – Elijah’s depression

*1-9 – Elijah flees from Jezebel to Horeb.*

vv1-2 - Jezebel wants to get rid of the trouble-maker.

vv3-4 – Afraid & ran for his life. Vulnerable. Had been trusting in himself. Satan attacks when he least expected it. Beersheba to Sinai (370km), but why 40 days (i.e., less than 9km per day)? Cf. Jonah under the gourd (**Jonah 4:3,8**, “LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live . . . When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live”). Cf. Cleft of the rock (**Ex 23:22**, “If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you”). God supported Elijah, even when he ran away (6-9);

*10-18 – The Lord appears to Elijah at Horeb to encourage him*

Wind, earthquake, fire: is this how God is going to work? But NO, a gentle whisper (12);

“pulled his cloak over his face” (Cf. **Ex 34:6**, “He passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness”). He had to learn that God did not need him!

*19-21 – Elijah calls Elisha*

God gave Elijah a job

God reassured him that there were other faithful believers (15-18).

#### 2 Ki 1 – Elijah’s clash with Ahaziah

#### 2 Ki 2 – Elijah is taken up into heaven

## ELISHA

14 miracles (Cf. 7 by Elijah)

### MIRACLES FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE

Mostly during reign of Joram – show God’s concern for the individual

### MIRACLES FOR THE NATION

2 Ki 5-6

## JOSIAH

### INTRODUCTION

Josiah became king at the age of 8 years when his evil father, Amnon, was assassinated after a rule of just 2 years. He seems to have been “converted” at the age of 16 (his 8<sup>th</sup> yr) and just 4 years later (age 20, 12<sup>th</sup> yr) he introduced sweeping religious reforms (2 Chr 34:3).

### RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

One influence on Josiah was the preaching of the prophet, Zephaniah (Zeph 1:1). Jeremiah began his ministry in Josiah’s early years (Jer 1:1, 3, 6).

Six years after the reforms commenced, at 26 years old (his 18<sup>th</sup> year) he began to restore the Temple and they found the book of the Law (2 Ki 22). He next destroyed all false shrines (even as far north as Naphthali in Galilee) and re-centralized the nation’s worship in Jerusalem (2 Ki 23).

### POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Assyria was now in decline and so he felt able to move into the Northern Kingdom, but Assyria fell to Babylon in 612BC. Necho (king of Egypt) fearing an expansion of Babylon into Egypt set off to help Assyria in their fight against Babylon, but this necessitated him travelling through Judah. Josiah tried to stop him, but he, himself, was killed in the battle of Megiddo in 609BC.

### RESULTS

Unfortunately the reforms were mostly superficial and external and there seems little evidence of genuine spiritual reformation in the nation (Cf. Jeremiah’s preaching), as is shown by their quick relapse into heathen worship following Josiah’s death.

## UZZIAH

### INTRODUCTION

*Uzziah (Yahweh is my strength)*, also known as *Azariah (Yahweh has helped)* is mentioned only briefly in Kings (2 Ki 15:1-6), but was actually a very important king of Judah.

### REIGN

He was freely chosen by the people (2 Ki 14:21) to succeed his father, Amaziah who had been assassinated. However, he was probably co-regent at that time. He reigned 52 years (commencing at age 16).

### LOW POINT

When Uzziah became king, Judah had sunk to its lowest point ever. Judah had been defeated by Israel, Amaziah king of Judah captured, and a large section of the wall of Jerusalem destroyed (2 Ki 14:12-13). Edersheim (1887, p. 519) believed that 1 Ki 15:1 means that Uzziah began his real reign in the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam king of Israel (i.e., Uzziah's 12<sup>th</sup> year, @ age 28).

### PROSPERITY

Under Uzziah, Judah reached the very peak of her economic and military power, due politically to the decline in Assyria's power. 2 Chr 26 gives us a picture of Uzziah's extraordinary accomplishments:

- 1 The modernization of the army;
- 2 He regained control and rebuilt the trade-route seaport city of Elath (formerly Ezion-Geber, 2 Ki 14:22);
- 3 His conquests in the Philistine plain, which put him in control of the main commercial highways;
- 4 He waged successful campaigns against the Ammonites and Assyrians,
- 5 He strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem;
- 6 His commercial expansion into Arabia;
- 7 His development of agriculture ("he loved the soil", 2 Chr 26:10) and pastoral activities.

### HIGH PLACES

*"He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there"* (2 Ki 15:3-4).

### LEPROSY

*"The LORD afflicted the king with leprosy until the day he died, and he lived in a separate house"* (2 Ki 15:5). But Kings gives no details. Why? Because it shows him in a bad light! Chronicles tells us that, "He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success . . . but after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God" (2 Chr 25:5, 16). He entered the temple to offer incense which was the sole prerogative of the priest, and the leprosy was God's punishment on him.

### THE EARTHQUAKE

Neither Kings nor Chronicles mentions a significant earthquake that occurred during his reign ("*two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah*", **Amos 1:1**) and which was still remembered in post-exilic times ("*as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah*" **Zech 14:5**). The Jewish tradition (preserved in Josephus, *Ant.* ix.10.4) may explain why. Josephus says the earthquake occurred at the time of Uzziah's act of sacrilege.

### CO-REGENCY

*"Jotham the king's son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land"* (2 Ki 15:6).

## 1 KINGS ONE

**vv1-27 – ADONIJAH SETS HIMSELF UP AS KING**

David was old and his health was failing. He had to have a nurse with him continually, one of her duties being to lie with him in bed to give him warmth. Although this nurse, Abishag, was not David's concubine, many people apparently thought she was (1-4; Cf. 2:22). Adonijah, David's oldest surviving son, decided to establish himself as king while David was still alive, and so prevent any possible claim to the throne by Solomon later. Once he had gained the support of both the senior priest Abiathar and the army commander Joab, Adonijah thought he could ignore the friends and advisers of David who favoured Solomon (5-10). Those friends of David had more influence in the palace than Adonijah realized. Possibly the most important of them was the prophet Nathan, who apparently knew it was God's will that Solomon should be the next king (Cf. 2 Sa 7:12-17; 12:24-25; 1 Ch 22:6-10). Nathan quickly thought of a plan to prompt David to declare openly that Solomon was to succeed him as king (11-14). First Bathsheba told David what Adonijah had done (15-21), and then Nathan asked David if he approved of Adonijah's action (22-27).

**Verse 1, “well advanced in years”** – 2 Sa 5:4 indicates David died at about 70 years of age (Cf. 1 Ki 2:11).

**Verse 3, “a Shunammite”** – Abishag came from Shunem (2 Ki 4:8; Jos 19:18; 1 Sa 28:4) located near the Plain of Jezreel in the tribal territory of Issachar.

**Verse 4, “no intimate relations”** – The fact that Abishag remained a virgin is significant in regard to Adonijah's request that she be given to him as his wife after David's death (1 Ki 2:17, 22).

**Verse 5, “Adonijah”** – David's fourth son and probably his oldest living son, was about 35 years old at this time (Cf. 2 Sa 13:28; 18:14).

**“So he got chariots”** – “Or *charioteers*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 6, “never interfered”** – David appears to have been constantly neglectful in disciplining his children (Cf. 2 Sa 13:21; 14:33).

**Verse 7, “Joab”** – Joab was a leader in David's army (2 Sa 2:12-17), but was not popular with David (2 Ki 2:5-6).

**“Abiathar”** – A priest, a direct descendant of Aaron in the line of Eli (1 Sa 2:31-33).

**Verse 8, “Zadok”** – A priest loyal to David. Anointed Solomon as David's successor (v 45).

**“Benaiah”** – Commander of the Kerethites and Pelethites (2 Sa 8:18; 20:23). Supported Solomon and eventually replaced Joab as the commander of the army (1 Ki 2:35).

**“Nathan the prophet”** – It was Nathan that earlier had condemned David (2 Sa 12:1-17).

**“Shimei”** – Seems to be the son of Ela (1 Ki 4:18). Not the Shimei of 2:8, 46; 2 Sa 16:5-8.

**“Rei”** – “Or *and his friends*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 9, “at the Stone of Zoheleth”** – “Or *to the Serpent's Stone*; Greek version supports reading *Zoheleth* as a proper name” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>). Also known as “*the rolling stone*”.

**En Rogel”** – “*the spring of Rogel*”, *the spring of the spy*, *the spring of the laundryman*, now called, “*the fountain of the virgin*”.

**vv28-53 - DAVID MAKES SOLOMON KING**

Shocked at what he heard, David declared that Solomon, not Adonijah, would be his successor (28-31). Having been roused to action, David was determined to see Solomon anointed and publicly proclaimed king (32-37). Solomon's appointment won great popular support. It also had the backing of David's personal bodyguard of Cherethites and Pelethites, who were under the command of the tough Benaiah (38-40). Adonijah's celebrations were cut short when he heard what had happened (41-48). He realized that his own claim to the throne now had little chance of success. Therefore, he decided that the wisest thing to do was to acknowledge Solomon as king in return for Solomon's guarantee not to execute him (49-53). The excitement of these events must have given David a sudden renewal of strength just before his death. He arranged a second anointing of Solomon, this time with full regal and religious ceremony, at which he presented Solomon to the people. He wanted to make it clear to all that Solomon was his divinely chosen successor (1 Chr 28:1-10; 29:20-22).

**Verse 38, “the Kerethites and the Pelethites”** – “*the king's body-guard*” (NLT), also in verse 44.

## CHAPTER TWO

**vv1-12 DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON**

As he saw his death approaching, David passed on to Solomon advice aimed at ensuring stability to his reign and good government for God's people. The first and most important point was a reminder to be faithful to God. God's promises of a prosperous kingdom and a lasting dynasty required David and his successors to be obedient to God's will. Without obedience, there was no guarantee of blessing (1-4; Cf. 1 Chr 22:6-16). David's second piece of advice to Solomon was to remove those likely to rebel against him, and reward those who had remained loyal to him. David had for many years known that Joab should have been punished for the murders he had committed (Cf. 2 Sa 3:30; 20:10). He now saw an opportunity to deal with Joab, because he knew that Solomon would not hesitate to execute one who had recently supported Adonijah (5-9).

**Verse 5, “He killed them, shedding their blood in peacetime as if in battle”** – “He pretended that it was an act of war, but it was done in a time of peace” (NLT); “Or He murdered them during a time of peace as revenge for deaths they had caused in time of war” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

**“and with that blood stained the belt around his waist and the sandals on his feet”** – “staining his belt and sandals with innocent blood” (NLT); “As in some Greek and Old Latin manuscripts; Hebrew reads with the blood of war” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 6, “do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace”** – “Don't let him grow old and go to his grave in peace” (NLT); “Hebrew don't let his white head go down to Sheol in peace” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

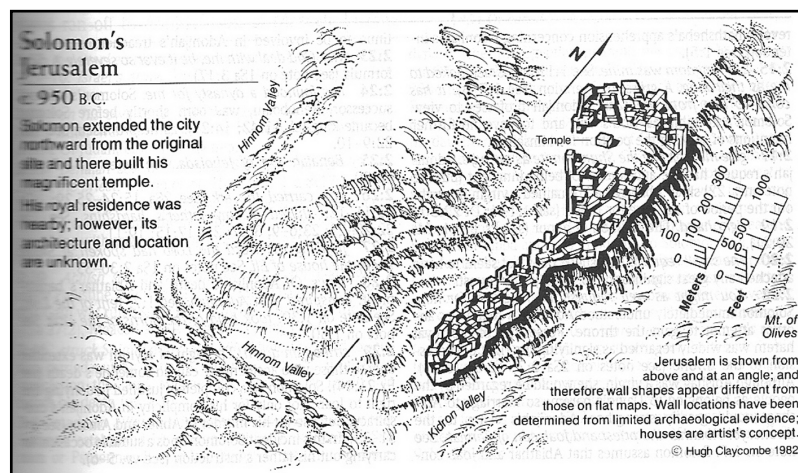
**vv13-46 - SOLOMON'S THRONE ESTABLISHED**

Following the death of David (10-12) Solomon soon found opportunities to get rid of his opponents. Adonijah was first to be killed. Since a new king inherited the concubines of the former king, Solomon considered that Adonijah's request to marry Abishag was an attempt to claim David's throne (13-22; Cf. 2 Sa 3:7; 12:8; 16:22). Adonijah was executed for treason (23-25). Solomon then dealt with the high priest Abiathar, who, with Joab, had supported Adonijah. Abiathar was not executed, but his dismissal brought his priestly work, and the priestly work of Eli's descendants, to an end (26-27, Cf. 1 Sa 2:27-36). Next Joab was executed. He had no right to ask for mercy by clinging to the altar, as he had been guilty of willful murder (28-35; Cf. Ex 21:12-14). Joab was followed by Shimei, a relative of Saul who had always been opposed to the throne of David (Cf. 2 Sa 16:5-14). Solomon lessened Shimei's chances of plotting against him by not allowing him to leave Jerusalem (36-38). When Shimei made a journey to Gath in search of runaway slaves, Solomon saw this as rebellion against his royal authority. Shimei was promptly executed (39-46a). With possible rebels and other opponents now removed, Solomon's position as king was secure (46b).

**Verse 28, “took hold of the horns of the altar”** – *The horns of the altar* indicates that this is the Brazen Altar of the Tabernacle (Ex 27:1-4).

**Verse 32, “The Lord will repay him”** – “Hebrew will return his blood on his own head” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 34, “buried on his own land”** – “Or buried in his tomb” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).



## CHAPTER THREE

**vv1-28 - SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM**

David's power had come through war and conquest; Solomon's came through clever political and commercial agreements with neighbouring countries. Solomon gave impressive public display of his loyalty to God, but he ignored God's warnings when he saw advantages to be gained through foreign alliances. His marriage to Pharaoh's daughter guaranteed peace for Israel in a region where Egypt was the chief power, but it probably required Solomon to pay respect to Egypt's gods (vv1-3; Cf. 11:1-8; Ex 34:12-16). Although David had placed the ark of the covenant [*covenant box*, GNB] in a special tent in Jerusalem, the tabernacle [*Tent of the Lord's presence*, GNB] and the remainder of its articles were still at Gibeon (1 Chr 15:1-3; 16:1,39; 21:29). Soon after being crowned king in Jerusalem, Solomon went to Gibeon for a lavish religious ceremony, as a public exhibition of his devotion to God (v4; Cf. 2 Chr 1:2-6). While there, he had a dream in which God offered to give him whatever he chose. By asking for wisdom to judge between the morally right and the morally wrong, he showed his genuine concern for the just government of God's people (vv5-9). God gave him all that he asked for and more (vv10-15). Back in Jerusalem Solomon soon had to put this wisdom to use, by deciding which of two prostitutes (The Targum euphemistically calls them, '*Inn Keepers*') was the mother of a disputed baby (vv16-22). Solomon knew that both women were of low moral standard, but he did not allow such knowledge to affect his sense of justice. Many of the people of Israel might have been ungodly, but Solomon still had to understand their affairs and act with fairness when settling their disputes (vv23-28).

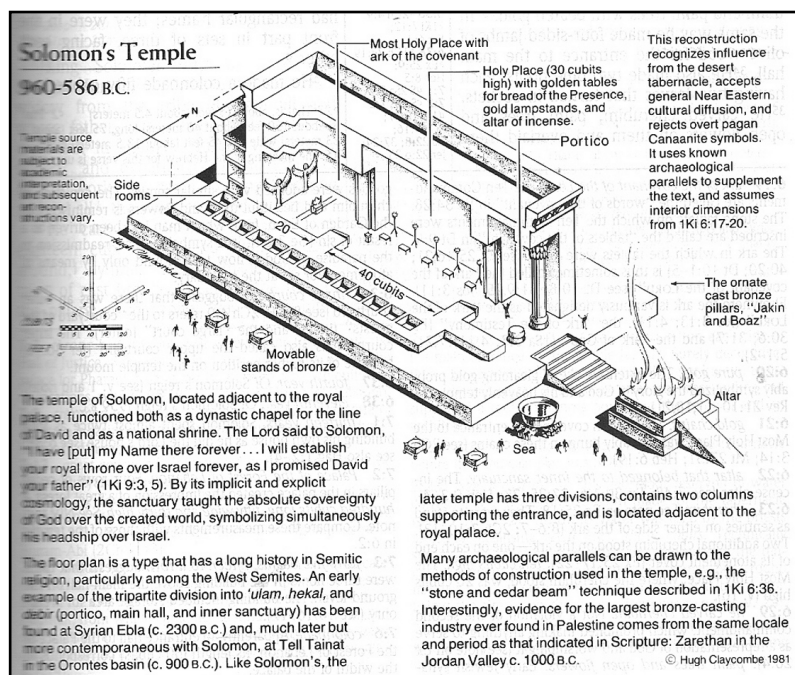
**Verse 1, "made an alliance"** – It seems that Solomon established his marriage alliance with Siamun, one of the last kings of the 21st Egyptian dynasty.

**"to the City of David"** – Technically "*the City of David*" (Jebus, 2 Sa 5:9) refers to Ophel or the Eastern hill (bordering the Southern wall of the Old city), i.e., south of Mount Zion. The Canaanite city was tiny by modern standards (barely 5 hectares in area).

**Verse 2, "sacrificing at the high places"** – Upon entering Canaan, the Israelites often followed the Canaanite custom of locating their altars on high hills, probably on the old Baal sites. The Israelites were forbidden to take over pagan altars and high places and use them for the worship of the Lord (Nu 33:52; Deut 7:5; 12:3).

**Verse 4, "Gibeon"** - The Gibeonites tricked Joshua and Israel into a peace treaty at the time of the conquest (Jos 9:3–27). The city was given to Benjamin and set apart for the Levites (Jos 18:25; 21:17). David avenged Saul's violation of the Gibeonite treaty by the execution of seven of Saul's descendants (2 Sa 21:1–9),

**Verse 15, "and fellowship offerings"** – "Traditionally *peace offerings*" (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).



## CHAPTER FOUR

## vv1-19 - SOLOMON'S OFFICIALS AND GOVERNORS

Details are now given of how Solomon administered Israel. First the leading religious, civil and army officials are listed (vv1-6). Solomon revised the taxation system by dividing the country into twelve zones, each of which had to provide the royal household with all its food supplies for one month of the year. These twelve zones were apparently intended to replace the former tribal areas (vv7-19).

**Verse 11, “in Naphoth Dor”** – “Or in the heights of Dor” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 12, “in all of Beth Shan”** – “all of Beth-shan” (NLT); “Hebrew *Beth-shean*, a variant spelling of *Beth-shan*; also in verse 12b” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 19, “in Gilead”** – “Greek version reads *of Gad*; compare 4:13” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

**“over the district”** – “over the land of Judah” (NLT); “As in some Greek manuscripts; Hebrew lacks of *Judah*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

## vv20-28 – SOLOMON'S DAILY PROVISIONS

Neighbouring nations that had become part of the Israelite empire also paid taxes, and so enriched Solomon further. Israel as a nation enjoyed peace and prosperity (vv20-21). The monthly food supply was enormous, for it had to maintain not only the royal family and government officials, but also the army (vv22-28). The extent of the provisions suggests a ‘household’ of 15,000 to 30,000 people.

**Verse 21, “from the River”** – “That is, *the Euphrates*; also in verse 24” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 22, “thirty cors of fine flour”** – “That is, probably about 185 bushels (*about 6.6 kiloliters*)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>)

**“sixty cors of meal”** – “about 375 bushels (*about 13.2 kiloliters*)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 23, “and choice fowl”** – “choice poultry” (NLT); “Or and *fattened geese*” NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

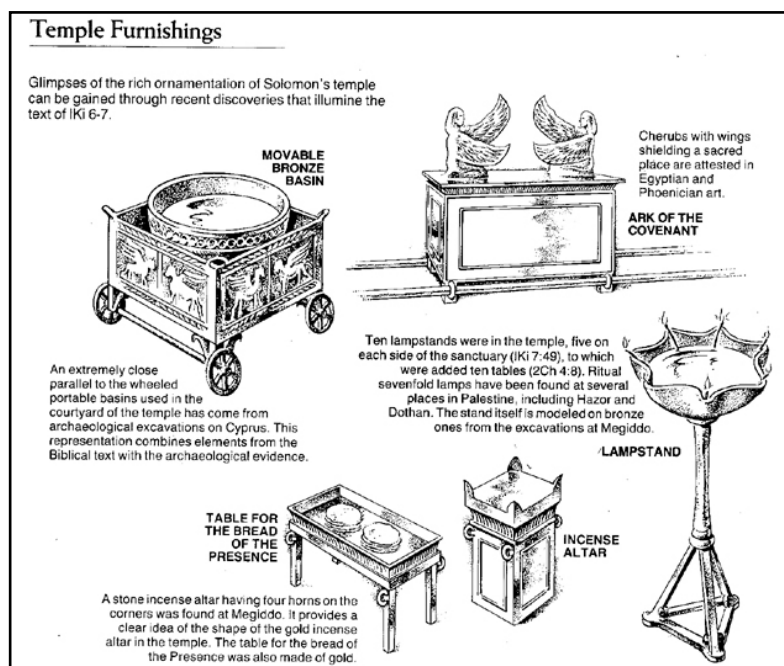
**Verse 25, “each man under his own vine and fig tree”** – “each family had its own home and garden” (NLT); “each family lived under its own grapevine and its own fig tree” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 26, “four thousand stalls”** – “Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 2 Chr 9:25); Hebrew *forty*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**“twelve thousand horses”** - “Or *charioteers*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

## vv29-34 - SOLOMON'S WISDOM

Because of his wisdom, Solomon became famous in countries far and near, and people made extensive collections of his proverbs and songs (vv29-34).



## CHAPTER FIVE

**vv1-18 – PREPARATIONS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE**

When David had shown a desire to build a permanent house for God, he was told that God was more concerned with building a permanent *house* for David, namely, a dynasty. As for a symbolic dwelling place for God, God had already shown his ideal for Israel in the tabernacle. Nevertheless, he would allow Israel to have a temple, though it would be built not by David, but by David's son Solomon (Cf. 2 Sa 7:1-17). Despite God's emphasis on the need to build a godly family, both David and Solomon seem to have been more concerned with building a lavish temple. David may not have been allowed to build the temple himself, but he helped Solomon all he could by preparing the plan and setting aside money and materials for the building's construction. He wanted everything to be ready so that Solomon could begin construction as soon as he became king (Cf. 1 Chr 22:2-16; 28:11). But Solomon had plans for more than a temple. His building program lasted more than twenty years, and included an expensive palace and other impressive buildings to adorn his national capital. (Cf. 1 Chr 22:2-29:30.)

No doubt Solomon intended the building of the temple to be a help to Israel's spiritual life, but the way he carried out the work could easily have had the opposite effect. He obtained the best of materials from Hiram, king of Tyre, but the contract with Hiram almost certainly involved religious ritual and recognition of Hiram's gods (1-9). Solomon agreed to pay for all this material by sending farm produce to Hiram. But Israel's farmers may not have been happy to see their hard earned produce going to a heathen king, especially since it was only being used to pay for a lavish building program in the capital city (10-12). Nor would the people in northern Israel be pleased to see their land handed over to Hiram to pay off Solomon's debts (Cf. 9:11-14). These disadvantages may not have existed had Solomon been more moderate in his plans and materials. There was probably no need for the temple to be any larger than the old tabernacle, and David seems to have left Solomon plenty of materials for its construction (Cf. 1 Chr 22:2-5; 29:1-9). Another of Solomon's policies that created feelings of dissatisfaction and rebellion was that of forced labour (Cf. 12:4). All working men had to give three months work to the king each year, to provide a year-round workforce of 30,000 men. One third of these were sent to Tyre to work in relays, a month at a time, cutting the timber under the supervision of Hiram's men. The timber was then floated down to the Israelite port of Joppa (Cf. vv. 6, 9; 2 Chr 2:8-10, 16). In addition to these part-time Israelite workers, there were 150,000 full-time slaves (mainly Canaanites; 9:20-22) who did the harder work of quarrying and carrying the stone (13-18).

**Verse 1, “Hiram king of Tyre”** – Hiram ruled over Tyre from 979-944 B.C. He had earlier provided timber and workmen for building David’s palace (2 Sa 5:11).

**Verse 3, “he could not build a temple”** – Although David was not allowed to build the temple, he made plans and preparation for it (1 Chr 22:2-5; 28:2; Psa 30).

**Verse 5, “the name of the LORD”** – *Name* signifies God’s revealed character or self-revelation as a person (see 8:16; Ex 20:24; Deut 12:5; 2 Sa 6:2).

**Verse 7, “Praise be to the LORD”** – In polytheistic cultures it was common practice for people of one nation to recognize the deities of another nation (Cf. 1 Ki 10:9; 11:5).

**Verse 9, “I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you specify”** – i.e., Joppa (2 Chr 2:16; 1 Ki 3:1).

**Verse 11, “Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat”** – “About 125,000 bushels (4,400 kiloliters)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**“twenty thousand baths of pressed olive oil”** – “About 115,000 gallons (440 kiloliters)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 13, “King Solomon conscripted laborers from all Israel”** – “King Solomon raised a *levy* out of all Israel; and the *levy* was thirty thousand men” (KJV). This *levy* was probably the origin of the rebellion against Rehoboam (1 Ki 12:16).

**Verse 15, “70,000 carriers and 80,000 stone cutters”** – Conscripted from the non-Israelite population.

**Verse 16, “thirty-three hundred foremen”** – Hebrew, some Septuagint manuscripts, *thirty-six hundred*, Cf. 2 Chr 2:2” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>); “ But note that 1 Ki 9:23 speaks of a further 550 supervisors.

**Verse 18, “and the men of Gebal”** – “That is, *Byblos*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

## CHAPTER SIX

### vv1-38 – SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

Solomon's temple, described simply, was a rectangular stone building with a porch added to the front, and three storeys of storerooms added to the sides and rear. The side and rear walls of the main building were reduced in thickness by one cubit (44 cm, 18”) for the middle storey, and by a further cubit for the top storey. This created ‘steps’ on which the timber beams rested to form the floors for the middle and upper storeys (vv1-6). All stones used in the building were cut and dressed at the quarry, so that they would be as easy to handle as possible. No stone-working tools were used at the temple site (vv7-10). God reminded Solomon that the temple would be a means of blessing to him and his people only if he was obedient to God (vv11-13). Inside the temple the stonework was covered with lavishly carved wood panelling overlaid with beaten gold (vv14-15; Cf. 6:22). A partition divided the main temple into two rooms. The larger front room was called the *nave* or Holy Place; the smaller rear room was called the *inner sanctuary* or Most Holy Place (vv16-18). The Most Holy Place contained the Ark of the Covenant, symbol of God's presence (v19). This room had a lower ceiling than the rest of the building (v20; Cf. 6:2) and unlike the rest of the building, was without windows (Cf. 6:4; 8:12). Its entrance was closed by a curtain, a pair of doors and gold chains hung across the doorway (vv21-22; Cf. 6:31; 2 Chr 3:14). Inside the room were two huge winged creatures (*cherubim*) which side by side stretched across the full width of the room. They were probably symbolic guardians of the ark (vv23-28). The doors to the Most Holy Place were of carved wood overlaid with gold, similar to the temple walls (vv29-32). In the front room were the altar of incense, the table of ‘presence bread’ and ten lampstands, five on each of the two side walls (Cf. 7:48-49). There were folding doors leading from the entrance porch to this room (vv33-35). A walled courtyard surrounded the whole building (v36). The total construction time for the temple was seven years (vv37-38).

**Verse 2, “60 cubits long, 20 wide and 30 high”** – “That is about 90’ (27m) long, 30’ (9m) wide and 45’ (13.5m) high” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). The measurements of the temple are multiples of ten (the number of testimony):

Length	6 x 10 cubits	(6:2)	6 is the number of man;
Width	2 x 10 cubits	(6:2)	2 is the number of witness;
Height	3 x 10 cubits	(6:2)	3 is the number of completion;
House	60x20	(6:2)	Length to width ratio is 3:1;
Holy Place	40x20	(6:17)	Length to width ratio is 2:1;
Holy of Holies	20x20x20	(6:20)	Length to width to height ratio is 1:1:1.

**Verse 6, “The lowest floor was five cubits wide, the middle floor six cubits and the third floor seven”** –

- 5 is the number of human weakness;
- 6 is the number of humanity; and
- 7 is the number of perfection - hence a perfect dwelling.

**Verse 7, “only blocks dressed at the quarry were used”** – Cf. 1 Pe 2:5. The work of Christ is silent and living stones are formed far from the place where the building will finally stand complete.

**Verse 9, “roofing it with beams and cedar planks”** – *Cedar* represents that which is great and beautiful in the earth (Cf. Song 5:15; Ez 31:3). The Hebrew word for *Cedar* comes from a word that means, “to be firm”. The *Cedar* gets its name because of the strength of its roots.

**Verse 15, “planks of pine [fir, KJV]”** – The fir and pine are botanically in the genus *Pinus*, and in the Bible probably refer to two species *Pinus brutia* Tenore and *Pinus halepensis* Mill. These are evergreen coniferous trees native to the hills of Palestine and Lebanon. The wood is excellent for building construction.

**Verse 18, “carved with gourds [knops, KJV]”** – *gourd* comes from a word meaning ‘to burst’ and gives the idea of opening to spread seeds on the ground.

**“and open flowers”** – the meaning is *bright, gleaming, coloured flowers* .

**Verse 23, “he made two cherubim”** – Cherubim are winged creatures who were messengers of God (Cf. Gen 3:24). They were to stand as sentries on either side of the ark. Two additional cherubim were on the ark.

**“olive wood”** – The Hebrew word refers to an entire order of plants (the *Oleaceae*) comprising the ash, the lilac, the privet and other well-known trees and shrubs. The reference here is probably to the narrow-leaved oleaster, *Elaeagnus angustifolia* L., a small tree frequent in Palestine.

**Verse 29, “he carved cherubim, palm trees”** - Date palm, *Phoenix dactylifera* L., a tall, slender, unbranched tree with a tuft of leaves 6-9 feet long at its crown. The palm grows in the Jordan valley.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### vv1-12 – SOLOMON BUILDS HIS PALACE

After finishing the temple, Solomon moved on to the next part of his building program. This was the building of a magnificent palace, which took thirteen years (v1). He also built many other expensive buildings in this national showpiece. The House of the Forest of Lebanon, so called because of its three rows of cedar pillars, was apparently a military headquarters and weapons store-house (vv2-5; Cf. 10:17; Isa 22:8). The Hall of Pillars was probably a meeting hall; and the Hall of the Throne, a judgment court. There was also a separate palace for his queen, the daughter of Pharaoh (vv6-8). All these buildings, along with the temple and Solomon's own palace, were built within the Great Court (vv9-12).

**Verse 1, “It took Solomon thirteen years”** – He spent almost twice as long building his own house as he did building the Lord's house (Cf. 6:8; Hag 1:2-4).

**Verse 2, “100 cubits long, 50 wide and 30 high”** – “about 150' (46m) long, 75' (23m) wide and 45' (13.5m) high” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 5, “The meaning of the Hebrew of this verse is uncertain”** (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 6, “He made a colonnade fifty cubits long”** – This appears to be an entrance hall to the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. Its length was the same as the width of the palace (v2).

**Verse 7, “He built the throne hall”** – It is not clear if the Throne Hall, the Hall of Justice, Solomon's living quarters (v8) and the palace for Pharaoh's daughter (v8) were separate buildings or just different parts of the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

**Verse 9, “cut to size and trimmed with a saw”** – The pinkish-white limestone of Palestine is easily cut with a saw when originally quarried, but gradually hardens with exposure to air.

### vv13-51 – THE TEMPLE'S FURNISHINGS

Israel seems to have lost the spiritual insight and artistic skill that in Moses' time enabled its craftsmen to design and make the decoration for God's dwelling place (Cf. Ex 31:1-6). Solomon therefore hired an artisan from Tyre to do the bronze work and other decorations for the temple, with no apparent concern for the wrong religious ideas this man may have had. By coincidence this hired artisan was named Hiram (GNB: *Huram*), the same as the king (vv13-14; 2 Chr 2:7, 13-14). Hiram the bronze-worker made two bronze pillars that stood in front of the porch but did not support the roof. They appear to have been purely ornamental. The decorations around the bowl-shaped tops of the pillars consisted of large flowers, pomegranates and a network of interwoven chains (vv15-22; Cf. 7:41-42). A new bronze altar was made, much larger than Moses' tabernacle altar, which was now far too small for the great numbers of animals that Solomon sacrificed (Cf. 8:64; 2 Chr 4:1). A bronze laver (GNB: *tank*), in the form of a huge basin supported on the backs of twelve oxen, held water for bathing and other cleansing rites (vv23-26). There were ten additional mobile lavers, each consisting of a bronze basin fixed on top of a trolley, or cart. The basin sat inside a square frame, on the outside of which were attached decorative panels (vv27-39). The writer then lists all the articles made of bronze (vv40-45). The bronze casting was done at a place in the Jordan Valley where the ground was suitable (vv46-47). Other articles were also made, until the temple was finished in every detail and completely equipped for its services (vv48-51).

**Verses 13-14, “brought Hiram, whose mother was a widow from the tribe of Naphtali”** – Hiram's (or Hiram) full name was *Huram-Abi* (2 Chr 2:13). 2 Chr 2:14 tells us his mother came from Dan.

Apparently, she was born in Dan and married a man from the tribe of Naphtali, which was close by. After he died, she married a man from Tyre.

**Verse 15, “He cast two bronze pillars”** – He named the pillar to the south *Jakin* [*he establishes*] and the one to the north *Boaz* [*in him is strength*] (v21). Jer 52:21 tells us the pillars were hollow. The word *bronze* here could also mean *brass* or *copper*.

**Verse 23, “He made the Sea of cast metal”** – The laver was a huge water tank (Cf. Ex 30:17-21; 38:8) used by the priests for cleansing (2 Chr 4:6). The *30 cubits* is either a round number [should be 31.416] or the inside measurement.

**Verse 38, “holding forty baths”** – “That is about 230 gallons (about 880 litres)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### vv1-21 – THE ARK BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE

People came from all over Israel to celebrate the dedication of the temple (Cf. 8:65). The ceremony took place at the time of the mid-year festival season (vv1-2; Cf. Lev. 23:24, 27, 34). In transferring the ark from David's temporary tent to the temple, Solomon, evidently remembering the mistake of his father, was careful to see that the priests and Levites carried the ark and all the holy vessels in the proper manner (vv3-9; Cf. 2 Sa 6:1-7). The procession was accompanied by music and singing provided by the Levites, all of whom were on duty for the special occasion (Cf. 2 Chr 5:11-14). Once the ark had been positioned in its rightful place, God gave the sign of his presence by filling the temple with a cloud of glory. As in the case of the tabernacle, the light of God's presence was so dazzling that human activity in the sanctuary had to cease (vv10-13; Cf. Ex 40:34-35). Amazed at all that had happened, Solomon contrasted that day with the days of their ancestors. Ever since Israel had become a nation, God had refused to choose any city for his dwelling place; but now he had chosen the city of David and his son Solomon (vv14-21).

**Verse 2, “the festival”** – Solomon dedicated the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles (early autumn).

**Verse 4, “the tent of meeting”** – The tabernacle had been kept at Gibeon (1 Ki 3:4; 1 Sa 7:1; 2 Chr 5:4-5).

**Verse 8, “their ends could be seen”** – The carrying poles were always to remain in the gold rings of the ark (Ex 25:15).

**“they are still there today”** – These are the words of the original author not the final compiler.

**Verse 9, “at Horeb”** – Another name for Mount Sinai.

### vv22-61 – SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Solomon then went up on to a specially made bronze platform, knelt down and prayed to God in the presence of the people (Cf. 2 Chr 6:12-13). He admitted that it was only God's grace that allowed his father and himself to fulfill their wish of building God a symbolic dwelling place. He prayed that God's grace would rest likewise upon his royal descendants after him (vv22-26). Solomon knew that there was no necessity for the temple, as God dwells everywhere. But he asked that God would graciously hear his prayer and the prayers of the people when they came to the temple to pray (vv27-30). Since the temple was a place of prayer, Solomon thought of various circumstances when people would go there to pray. He asked that judges, such as himself, would have God's guidance in making legal judgments where evidence was uncertain (vv31-32). He thought of cases where God might punish his people through war, famine, disease or other disasters, and he asked that when they repented, God would forgive them (vv33-40). He desired also that foreigners would come to know God, and that God would answer their prayers as he did those of the Israelites (vv41-43). He asked that God would hear the Israelites when they prayed for success against their enemies in battle (vv44-45). Finally, he asked that God would hear them when they cried for mercy from those whom he sent to punish them (vv46-53). God showed his acceptance of Solomon's prayer by sending fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifices (Cf. 2 Chr 7:1-3). Solomon then prepared to ask God's blessing upon the assembled people (vv54-55). He praised God for his faithfulness to his promises, and asked that God would help his people to obey his law (vv56-61).

**Verse 30, “when they pray toward this place”** – When a Jew is unable to pray in the temple, he must pray facing the place where God had promised to be present among His people (Cf. Dan 6:10).

**Verse 37, “or grasshoppers”** – This refers to attacks by crawling insects; possibly “*caterpillars*” (NLT); but it may refer to another stage in the life-cycle of the locust (Joel 1:4; Deut 28:38, 42).

#### **vv62-66 – THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE**

The ceremony concluded in typical fashion with large numbers of sacrifices (vv62-64), and public celebrations continued for a further week (vv65-66).

**Verse 63, “fellowship offerings”** – “Traditionally *peace offerings*, also in v64” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 65, “a vast assembly, people from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt”** – People came from all over Solomon’s kingdom. *Lebo-Hamath* should read *Lebo of Hamath*, modern Lebweh, 36km (20 miles) SouthWest of Kadesh on the Orontes River. It guarded the southern route to Hamath. *The Wadi of Egypt* is *Wadi el-Arish* in Northeastern Sinai (Cf. Gen 15:18).

### **CHAPTER NINE**

#### **vv1-9 – THE LORD APPEARS TO SOLOMON**

In accepting the temple, God reminded Solomon that the important ‘*house*’ was not the house of God (the temple), but the house of David (those whom God had appointed to govern Israel forever). Again, the fulfillment of God’s promises depended on his people’s obedience (vv1-5). Solomon had built the temple to show that God dwelt among his people. However, if he or his people were disobedient, God would destroy the temple to show his displeasure with them (vv6-9).

**Verse 4, “if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness”** – Cf. 2:4; 8:25. The Lord re-emphasizes to Solomon the importance of obedience to the covenant in order to experience its blessings rather than its curses. This was particularly necessary as Solomon’s kingdom grew in influence and wealth, with all the potential for covenant breaking that prosperity brought (Cf. Deut 8:12-14, 17; 31:20; 32:15).

#### **vv10-28 – SOLOMON’S OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Earlier Solomon had borrowed from Hiram about four thousand kilograms of gold to help finance his ambitious building programs. In payment of these debts, Solomon had given Hiram twenty cities in northern Israel. Hiram was not satisfied with these cities and returned them (which meant that Solomon had to look for other ways to repay the loan) (vv10-14; Cf. 2 Chr 8:1-2). To strengthen Jerusalem’s security, Solomon rebuilt the Millo (some sort of defense fortification) and all the damaged sections of the city wall. He also rebuilt ruined cities, established army bases at strategic points, and equipped selected cities to store the farm produce collected to maintain the government (vv15-19; Cf. 4:7,22-28; 5:11). He made all foreigners slaves. Israelites, though not officially slaves, were treated little better (vv20-24; Cf. 12:4). Solomon kept the covenant requirements in relation to the annual religious festivals. However, his harsh treatment of his subjects showed a disregard for other covenant requirements, such as those that encouraged consideration for people’s well-being (v25; Cf. Ex 23:9, 14-17; Lev 19:13). Always clever and alert in business dealings, Solomon saw the opportunity for further profits by co-operating with Hiram in trade transport. Goods from the Mediterranean were received at Hiram’s port of Tyre, taken overland to the Israelite port of Ezion-geber at the northern tip of the Red Sea, and then shipped east, possibly as far as India. Since the Israelites were not a seafaring people, Solomon hired seamen from Hiram to teach and guide his men. Goods that these ships brought back from the east further enriched the two kings (vv26-28; Cf. 10:11-12, 22). (*Ship of Tarshish*’ was a technical name for a certain type of ocean-going merchant ship. It was not an indication of the port to which or from which a ship was sailing.) Archaeology indicates that Solomon mined and smelted iron and copper in the region of Ezion-geber, from where he shipped the materials east (cf. Deut. 8:9). The strategic and economic importance of Ezion-geber (or Elath) was one of the chief causes of later conflicts between Jerusalem and Edom, the original owners of the port (cf. 2 Ki 14:22; 16:6).

**Verse 15, “the forced labor King Solomon conscripted”** – This is the non-Israelite slave labour of a permanent nature in contrast to the temporary conscription of Israelite workers.

**“Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer”** – Solomon rebuilt these three ancient, strategic towns, strengthening their fortifications. Solomonic gates have been discovered in all three towns.

**“Hazor”** – (= *cattle*) is 24km NW of Tiberias on a branch of the Via Maris. It dominates the Hulah Valley and is the most important fortress in northern Galilee controlling the trade route from the Euphrates to Egypt.

**“Megiddo”** – Megiddo controlled the pass through the Carmel range from the plain of Jezreel to the coastal Plain of Sharon.

**“Gezer”** – Gezer is on the main road from the Judean foothills to the Judean Ridge. It controlled two important trade routes – From Egypt to the north and from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean.

**Verse 17, “Lower Beth Horon”** – “The Beth Horon Ridge Route” was the “high” way into Central Benjamin. Beth Horon controlled this extremely strategic route.

**Verse 18, “Baalath”** – Either *Bealoth* (Jos 15:24) located south of Hebron in the Tribe of Judah OR *Baalath*, southwest of Beth Horon in the Tribe of Dan (Jos 19:44).

## CHAPTER TEN

### vv1-13 – THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON

People of neighbouring nations heard of Solomon's reputation for wisdom, and on one occasion the queen of an Arabian country visited Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. She was amazed not only at Solomon's wisdom but also at the splendour of his court (vv1-9). At the same time both she and Solomon took the opportunity to have some useful trade exchanges (vv10-13).

**Verse 1, “the queen of Sheba”** – Sheba seems to have been a mercantile kingdom in the southwest of the Arabian Peninsula (probably modern *Yemen*). It profited from the sea trade to India by transporting luxury goods north through Damascus and Gaza on caravan routes through the Arabian Desert. Solomon's fleet of ships may have threatened their business.

**“his relation to the name of the LORD”** – The Queen saw a relationship between Solomon's wisdom and the God he served. Later, Jesus used her to condemn the people of his day (Mt 12:42; Lu 11:31).

**Verse 2, “a very great caravan”** - *Caravan* means *a company of men*, i.e., *retinue* (RSV); *a large group of attendants* (NLT).

**“Carrying spices”** – Lit., “*sweet smelling things*”, probably *Balsam* (Song 5:1) and *Frankincense*.

**Verse 8, “How happy your men must be”** – “*your people must be*” (NLT); “Greek, Syriac and Latin Vulgate read *your wives*” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 9, “Praise be to the LORD your God”** – A beautiful statement showing a great understanding of Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh. However, as she was probably polytheistic, it only represents her recognition of Yahweh as Israel's national God.

**Verse 10, “120 talents of gold”** – About 4 metric tons (4 ½ tons). Worth about \$200 million in today's value.

**Verse 11, “almugwood”** – “OR *algumwood*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>); “*red sandalwood*” (NLT). It may mean *Juniper*, *Sandalwood* or most probably, *Red Saunders* which was available in both Lebanon and Ophir (1 2 Chr 2:8).

**Verse 13, “Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for”** – The exchange of “gifts” was probably a trade agreement.

### vv14-29 – SOLOMON'S SPLENDOR

Solomon gained further wealth by taxing all goods that passed through Israel along the international trade routes. He spent much of this wealth extravagantly, to give his palace a splendour unequalled among the nations of the region (vv14-22). Nations that sought his favour also brought him expensive gifts (23-25). Besides building a large horse and chariot force for himself, he became the intermediary in an international horse and chariot trade that further enriched him (vv26-29).

The reign of Solomon saw the beginnings of a strong merchant class in Israel. Previously Israel's economy had been largely agricultural and pastoral, but gradually the merchants gained control over the farmers.

Over the next two hundred years conditions for the farmers worsened and social injustice increased, causing prophets such as Amos and Micah to condemn the corrupt society and announce its coming judgment.

**Verse 14, “Solomon received yearly was 666 talents”** – About 23 tonnes (25 tons) of gold.

**Verse 15, “the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings”** – Tributes (or taxes) from Bedouin sheiks for allowing their caravans into Israelite territory.

**Verse 16, “two hundred large shields of hammered gold”** – These were large rectangular shields that gave much better protection than the smaller round shields, however, these gold shields were for decoration or ceremonial use symbolizing Israel’s wealth and glory. They were probably wooden shields overlaid with gold. Shishak of Egypt carried them off as plunder in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Rehoboam (Cf 14:25-26).

**“six hundred bekas of gold went into each shield”** – About 3.5kg (7 ½ lb) each.

**Verse 17, “with three minas of gold in each shield”** – About 1.7 kg (3 ¾ lb) each.

**Verse 22, “a fleet of trading ships”** – “Hebrew ships of Tarshish” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). Large trading vessels (1 Ki 9:26-28).

**Verse 26, “chariots and horses”** – This was forbidden by the law (Deut 17:6; 1 Ki 4:26).

**Verse 28, “horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue”** – Through his agents, Solomon imported and exported goods all over the world. He seems to have imported horses from the north (Kue is probably Muzur in Cilicia) and exported them to the south. He imported chariots from Egypt and exported them to the north.

**Verse 29, “imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver”** – About 7 kg (15 lb) of silver.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### vv 1-13 – SOLOMON’S WIVES

Although some of Solomon's marriages were for political purposes, most of his wives and concubines were probably given to him as gifts. These women usually brought their own gods into Israel, and it was Solomon's weakness in worshipping these gods that led finally to his downfall (vv1-8). God's judgment on Solomon and Israel was to bring the long-standing friction between northerners and southerners to a climax in the division of the kingdom. Only Solomon's tribe of Judah (which had by this time absorbed Simeon in the south) along with neighbouring Benjamin would be left for Solomon's son to rule. The remaining tribes, led by Ephraim, would form the breakaway northern kingdom (vv9-13).

**Verse 1, “Solomon, however, loved many foreign women”** – Many of Solomon’s marriages were political, i.e., to seal international relationships with various nations. This broke the law for kings (Deut 17:17), and also the law of not marrying foreign people (Deut 7:1-4).

**“Moabites”** – Moab was the sons born to Lot’s older daughter (Gen 19:36-38). The Moabites became bitter enemies of Israel (1 Sa 14:47).

**“Ammonites”** – The Ammonites were descended from Ben-Ammi, the son born to Lot’s younger daughter (Gen 19:36-38). They too were bitter enemies of Israel (1 Sa 14:47; 1 Chr 20:1).

**“Edomites”** – Esau (lit., ‘hairy’), Rebekah’s oldest son, was also called Edom (lit., ‘red’) (Gen 25:24-26). Hostility between Jacob’s descendants (the Israelites) and Esau’s descendants (the Edomites) was continual and bitter.

**“Sidonians”** – Sidon was the firstborn son of Canaan (Gen 10:15). Sidon was an important commercial city on the North-West coast of Canaan.

**“Hittites”** – Canaan was also the father of the Hittites (Gen 10:15). The Hittites were a powerful people, centered in Asia Minor, who dominated Canaan from c.1800-1200 B.C.

**Verse 5, “Ashtoreth”** – Or *Ashtaroth*. A mother goddess with aspects as goddess of fertility, love and war.

**“Molech”** – Hebrew *Milcom*; also in v33” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>); OR *Moloch*. A god worshipped by the Ammonites, whose worship was associated with the sacrifice of children in the fire.

### vv 14-25 – SOLOMON’S ADVERSARIES

By this time the king of Egypt who had been friendly to Solomon (3:1) had died. The new Pharaoh, fearful of Solomon's power, encouraged any rebellion inside or outside Israel that would weaken Solomon. Hadad, crown prince of Edom, had been taken to Egypt in childhood when David had conquered Edom. He grew up in Egypt, and later returned to Edom, from where he carried out guerilla attacks against Israel (vv14-22).

Other enemies used Syria as a base from which to conduct guerilla warfare against Solomon. The leader in this case was Rezon, another who had escaped when David conquered his country (vv23-25; Cf. 2 Sa 8:3, 13).

**Verse 18, “They set out from Midian”** – Midian was the region South of Moab and Edom.

**“and went to Paran”** – Paran was a desert area Southeast of Kadesh in the central part of the Sinai Peninsula.

**Verse 24, “to Damascus”** – *eth-Sham*. Capital of the kingdom of Syria (Amran).

#### **vv 26-43 – JEROBOAM REBELS AGAINST SOLOMON**

Meanwhile the prophet Ahijah revealed that Jeroboam would be the next king. Jeroboam was one of Solomon's most capable administrators, an ambitious hard-working young man whom Solomon had put in charge of the Ephraim-Manasseh workforce (26-33). Ahijah also warned Jeroboam that he had to be obedient to God. But Jeroboam's immediate concern was to gain power and, no doubt, he used his position to influence his fellow northerners against Solomon and so gain a following for himself (34-39). When Solomon tried to kill him, Jeroboam escaped to Egypt, for he knew he could be sure of Pharaoh's support. He stayed there until the death of Solomon, awaiting his opportunity to return and seize the throne of Israel (40-43).

**Verse 27, “the supporting terraces”** – “Or *the Millo*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). “The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>). Seems to refer to the terraces on the eastern slope of Ophel or to a fortified tower.

**Verse 33, “because they have”** – “Hebrew; Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac *because he has*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

#### **vv 1-24 - ISRAEL REBELS AGAINST REHOBOAM**

From the time of the judges, there had been tension between Judah and the northern tribes, particularly Ephraim. Rehoboam apparently knew of the possibility that the northern tribes would break away from him, and therefore he arranged for a special coronation ceremony in Shechem, one of the more important northern cities (v1). Jeroboam decided immediately to test Rehoboam's ability as a leader. He knew that Solomon's forced labour and heavy taxation policies were unpopular, and he used these to stir up the people against Rehoboam (vv2-5). Rehoboam realized the seriousness of the situation, but whether he relaxed or tightened his father's policies, he was doomed to failure. The northern tribes decided to break away from Rehoboam and form their own kingdom (vv6-17). Rehoboam tried to force his authority on the rebels by sending his labour chief, Adoram, to deal with them. Adoram was probably the most unpopular man in the country, and the northerners promptly murdered him. They then invited Jeroboam to be their king (vv18-20). Rehoboam fled to his palace in Jerusalem, from where he planned to establish his rule in the north by military force. To his credit, he changed his mind when a prophet told him that this division was God's will (vv21-24).

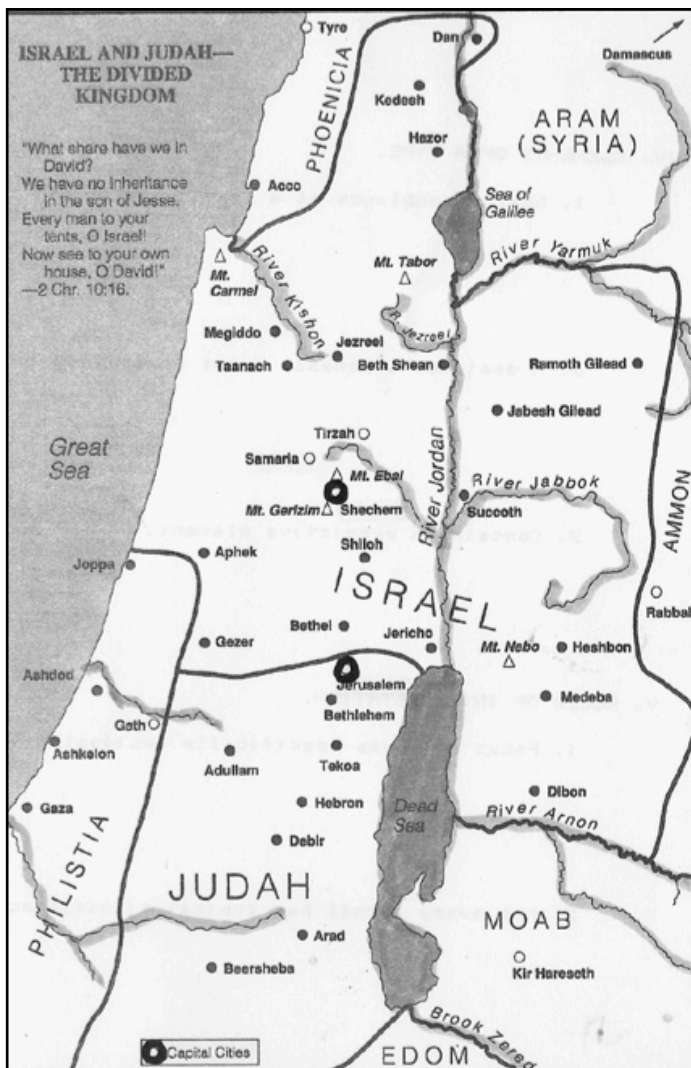
**Verse 1, “Shechem”** – A city of great historical significance located in the hill country of northern Ephraim.

**Verse 11, “scorpions”** – Metal-spiked leather lashes. The punishment for breaking the law will be intensified.

### vv 25-33 – GOLDEN CALVES AT BETHEL AND DAN

With the division of the kingdom, the empire that David and Solomon had built collapsed. One by one, the subject nations regained their independence. Shechem, where Rehoboam had hoped to unite all Israel, now became the capital of Jeroboam's breakaway kingdom. Jeroboam established a second capital at Penuel, east of Jordan, probably with the aim of holding the allegiance of the two and a half eastern tribes

(v25). Later he moved his capital to Tirzah, which remained the capital during the reigns of several kings (Cf. 14:17; 15:21, 33). Jeroboam saw that his people might be tempted to transfer their allegiance to Rehoboam if they went to Jerusalem for sacrifices and feasts. He therefore set up his own shrines at Bethel (near his southern border) and Dan (near his northern border), complete with his own order of priests, sacrifices and feasts. This new religion included many ideas taken from the religions of Canaan and neighbouring countries. It was a rebellion against God for which the writer of Kings repeatedly condemns Jeroboam. It led Israel into increasing moral and religious decay over the next two centuries (vv26-33).



(Jud 18:30-31).

**Verse 25, “Peniel”** – “Hebrew *Penuel*, a variant of *Peniel*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). Located in Transjordan, a city of strategic importance for defense against the Arameans of Damascus and the Ammonites.

**Verse 29, “in Bethel”** – 20km North of Jerusalem. An important crossroad where the road from the foothills via Beth-Horon and onto Jericho crosses the main Judean Ridge Route.

**“the other in Dan”** – In the far north, near Mount Hermon. Similar pagan worship was conducted here during the time of the Judges

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### vv 1-34 - THE MAN OF GOD FROM JUDAH

God soon showed that this new form of religion was totally unacceptable to him. A prophet from Judah came to Bethel and, by bold words and dramatic actions, condemned both people and king. The prophet condemned the calf-worship. The altar was split apart (v5), and Jeroboam's arm shriveled up (v4). As the immediate prophecy was fulfilled (vv3, 5), so the prophecy concerning Josiah (v2) in the distant future was also to be fulfilled (Cf. Deut 18:22) (vv1-10). However, there was another prophet, a much older man, who lived in Bethel and who had apparently not spoken out against Jeroboam's wrongdoing. The old prophet seems to have been jealous of the prophet from Judah, and decided to tempt him to disobey God's command. By using lies and deceit, he was successful. The old prophet was morally wrong, and the man from Judah should not have listened to him. He did not ask for proof and none was offered (vv11-19). As the prophet from Judah was returning home, he was killed by a lion in punishment for his disobedience (vv20-26). When the people of Bethel saw the lion standing quietly beside the body of the man it had killed, without either eating the body or attacking the man's donkey, they realized that this was no ordinary death. The old prophet also was shocked, and

expressed his admiration for the younger man's boldness (vv27-32). But in spite of these warnings of God's judgment, Jeroboam did not change his ways (vv33-34). 2 Chr 11:13-23 adds a note that many of the priests of the Lord, Levities and others who loved the Lord, moved into Judah.

**Verse 1, “a man of God”** - This was a common term for a “Prophet” (Cf. 1 Ki 12:22, etc).

**“came from Judah to Bethel”** – God sent the prophet from the Southern Kingdom to the Northern Kingdom. Possibly this was to show that the political division of the country (appointed by God, 1 Ki 11:31-32) was not intended to set up two rival religious systems. About 200 years later God sent Amos from the Southern Kingdom to the Northern Kingdom to pronounced judgment on it (Amos 7:10-11).

**Verse 2, “A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David”** – Josiah was not to be born for about 300 years after this prophecy.

**“he will sacrifice the priests of the high places”** – This prophecy was literally fulfilled (Cf. 2 Ki 23:15-20).

**Verse 3, “day the man of God gave a sign”** – The fulfillment of a short-term prophecy was evidence that the long-term prophecy would also be fulfilled (Cf. Deut 18:21-22).

**Verse 5, “its ashes poured out”** – Visibly demonstrating God’s power to fulfill the words of the prophet (v3) and providing a clear sign that Jeroboam’s offering was unacceptable to the Lord (Lev 6:10-11).

**Verse 6, “Intercede with the LORD your God”** – This does not necessarily mean that Jeroboam did not consider the Lord to be his God, Cf. Moses’ use of “*your God*” (Deut 1:10) and “*my God*” (Deut 4:5).

**Verse 7, “Come home with me”** – Jeroboam attempted to renew his prestige in the eyes of the people by creating the impression that there was no fundamental break between him and the prophetic order.

**Verse 20, “the word of the LORD came to the old prophet”** – Note the clear distinction between true and false prophecy. False prophecy comes from one’s own ideas (Jer 23:16; Eze 13:2, 7), while true prophecy comes directly from the Lord (Ex 4:16; Deut 18:18).

**Verse 24, “the donkey and the lion standing beside it”** – The fact that the donkey did not run away, nor did the lion attack the donkey nor eat the prophet’s body clearly showed that this was a divine judgement. These signs were soon told abroad (v25) and proved to be another sign to authenticate the prophet’s earlier message, but Jeroboam was still not moved to repentance (v33).

**Verse 30, “laid the body in his own tomb”** – The old prophet did the only thing left for him to do in order to make amends for his deliberate and fatal deception (v22).

**Verse 31, “grave where the man of God is buried”** – The old prophet chose in this way to identify himself with the message that the man of God from Judah had given at Bethel.

**Verse 32, “in the towns of Samaria”** – As the capital of the Northern Kingdom, Samaria gave its name to the entire territory of the northern tribes. The title, “*Samaria*”, however, did not come into use until about 50 years after this, when Omri built a town and gave it this name (2 Ki 16:24-25). The use of the name here reflects the perspective of the author. See Gen 14:14 for a similar use of the name “*Dan*”.

**Verse 34, “sin”** – The sin in 1 Ki 12:30 was the establishment of a paganized worship; but here it refers to the persistence in this worship with all its attendant evils.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

**vv 1-20 – AHIJAH’S PROPHECY AGAINST JEROBOAM**

When his son fell ill, Jeroboam sent to the prophet Ahijah for help (vv1-5). Ahijah was the person who had first told Jeroboam that he would become king. Now he told him that God would remove him and his descendants from Israel's throne, because he had led the nation into idolatry (vv6-11). Jeroboam received immediate assurance that this prophecy would come true when his son died, as Ahijah had foretold (vv12-18). Before the predicted judgment fell on Jeroboam personally, he and his people suffered much in a long battle with Judah, which by that time was under the rule of Rehoboam's son Abijah (vv19-20; Cf. 2 Chr 13:2-20).

**Verse 1, “At that time Abijah . . . became ill”** – This is a vague expression but probably indicates it happened not long after the events of chapter 13.

**“Abijah”** – Means, ‘My father is the Lord’. This suggests that Jeroboam wanted to be seen as a worshipper of Yahweh

**Verse 2, “Go, disguise yourself”** – Jeroboam’s attempt to mislead the prophet into giving a favourable prophecy suggests:

- 1 He felt guilty;
- 2 He was superstitious, and
- 3 He actually believed in the power of the Lord’s prophet.

**Verse 3, “Take ten loaves of bread with you”** – This was a gift of an ordinary person (Cf. 1 Sa 9:7-8); rather than then gift of a king (Cf. 2 Ki 8:7-9).

**Verse 6, “Come in, wife of Jeroboam”** – Ahijah’s recognition of the woman and the purpose of her visit served to show his message was truly a message from the Lord.

**Verse 9, “You have done more evil than all who lived before you”** – i.e., Saul, David and Solomon. He organized pagan worship for the whole of the Northern Kingdom.

**Verse 11, “Dogs will eat . . . birds of the air will feed on”** – This prophecy is repeated in 1 Ki 16:4. The covenant curse of Deut 28:26 is applied to all of Jeroboam’s male descendants.

**Verse 12, “the boy”**– We cannot be sure how old the boy was. This term is used for a wide range of ages, Cf. 1 Ki 12:8 where the word is translated as ‘young men’.

**“will die”** – Although the death of Abijah was a severe disappointment to Jeroboam and his wife, it was an act of God’s mercy to the prince, sparing him the disgrace and suffering that were to come on his father’s house (Isa 57:1-2).

**Verse 13, “All Israel will mourn for him and bury him”** – This suggests he was the crown prince and loved by the people. He was the only one of Jeroboam’s descendants to have a proper burial.

**Verse 15, “like a reed swaying in the water”** – i.e., unstable, Cf. John the Baptist, “A reed swayed by the wind?” (Mt 11:11)

**vv 21-31 – REHOBOAM KING OF JUDAH**

The story returns to the kingdom of Judah. Following the division of the kingdom, Rehoboam quickly strengthened the defenses on his southern border, for he knew that Egypt was likely to support Jeroboam (Cf. 11:40; 2 Chr 11:5-12). For three years, Rehoboam carried on the true worship of Yahweh. This was mainly because of the help he received from a number of priests and Levites from the north who fled to Judah rather than co-operate in Jeroboam's idolatry (Cf. 2 Chr 11:13-17). During this time, Rehoboam ruled wisely and trained his sons as administrators. The new kingdom of Judah was strong and well organized (Cf. 2 Chr 11:18-12:1). Unfortunately, Rehoboam's pride increased with his power, and he tried to show himself independent of God by copying the Canaanite religions (vv21-24). As a judgment on Judah for this sin, God allowed Egypt to invade the land, capture the defense cities that Rehoboam had built, invade Jerusalem, and carry off much of the gold that Solomon had carefully stored up. Only a last minute confession of sin from Rehoboam and his governors saved Judah from complete destruction (vv25-31; Cf. 2 Chr 12:2-16).

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

**vv1-8 – ABIJAH KING OF JUDAH**

Both Rehoboam and his son Abijam (Abijah) who succeeded him were unfaithful to God, though not to the extent that Jeroboam was. False religion had official recognition in the north through the new system that Jeroboam had established, but in the south, it was rather a corruption that existed alongside the orthodox worship of God (vv1-5). Abijam thought that, because Judah still practiced the ancient religion that God had given Israel through Moses, this would guarantee God's help in giving him victory in a war with Jeroboam. He did, in fact, defeat Jeroboam, but this was because his soldiers fought in genuine reliance on God, not because God was in any way obliged to help him (vv6-8; Cf. 2 Chr13:1-22).

**Verse 1, “In the 18<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Jeroboam”** – This is the 1<sup>st</sup> of numerous notes to synchronize the Kings of Israel and the Kings of Judah (Cf. vv 9, 25, etc.).

**vv 9-24 – ASA KING OF JUDAH**

Judah's new king, Asa, spent the first ten years of his reign getting rid of Canaanite religious practices and strengthening the nation's defenses. Strong faith and a strong fighting force enabled him to defeat a huge army that invaded Judah from the south. Plunder seized at the time enriched Judah considerably (2 Chr 14:1-15). A prophet pointed out how this victory proved that, as in the time of the judges, God blessed those who trusted in him in their distress (2 Chr 15:1-7). This encouraged Asa to move ahead more zealously with his reformation. He destroyed the remaining idols and invited all the people to sacrifice to the Lord and swear their loyalty to him. Those who joined in Asa's reforms included the faithful from the north who had migrated to Judah (2 Chr15:8-15). Asa then removed the queen mother, who was one of the main supporters of the false religion. He also drove out the religious prostitutes, but he did not remove all the local Baal shrines (vv9-15). While Asa was busy dealing with enemies from the south, the Israelite king Baasha took the opportunity to move into Judah's territory and build a fort at Ramah, a few kilometres north of Jerusalem (vv16-17). Asa took what was left of his reserve funds to bribe Syria to break its treaty with Israel and attack her. Syria was easily bribed, and gained an additional prize by seizing much of Israel's northern territory. Then, while Israel was fighting Syria to the north, Asa attacked Ramah. He destroyed the fort and carried away the materials to build two forts for his own kingdom as protection against Israel (vv18-22). This policy of trusting in foreign nations showed a weakening of Asa's trust in God, and brought him into conflict with the prophet Hanani. It was a failure of faith that repeated itself just before his death. When suffering from a disease in the feet, he looked for healing through pagan sorcerers instead of trusting in God (vv23-24; 2 Chr 16:7-14).

**Verse 10, “His grandmother's name was Maacah daughter of Abishalom”** – *Abishalom* (Cf. v 1) is another way of spelling, ‘*Absalom*’. *Maacah* was the name of Absalom's mother, but this *Maacah* was probably his grand-daughter, the daughter of his daughter, Tamar.

**Verse 13, “made a repulsive Asherah pole”** – It seems that Maacah's action was a deliberate attempt to counter Asa's reform.

**vv 25-32 – NADAB KING OF ISRAEL**

As predicted by Ahijah, Jeroboam's dynasty soon came to an end. His son Nadab was murdered by Baasha, one of his army generals, who then declared himself king.

**Verse 27, “he struck him down at Gibbethon”** – A town between Jerusalem and Joppa, near Gezer. This Levitical town (Jos 21:23) probably fell to the Philistines during the Judges.

**vv 33-16:7 – BAASHA KING OF ISRAEL**

Baasha quickly removed all possible rivals by destroying Jeroboam's entire family (vv25-34; Cf. 14:11-14).

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

**vv1-7 – BAASHA KING OF ISRAEL**

However, Baasha was no better than Jeroboam. Because he followed Jeroboam's policies, he would suffer Jeroboam's fate (vv1-4). Just as Baasha brought Jeroboam's dynasty to an end by murdering Jeroboam's son and wiping out the rest of his family, so Baasha's own dynasty came to an end when another army general murdered his son and wiped out his family (vv5-7).

*Verse 7, “becoming like the house of Jeroboam - and also because he destroyed it”* – Although Baasha fulfilled God’s purpose in destroying the house of Jeroboam (1Ki 14:10, 14), he was responsible for the violent way he did it (Cf. Gen 50:20; Isa 10:5-7).

**vv 8-14 – ELAH KING OF ISRAEL**

Just as Baasha brought Jeroboam's dynasty to an end by murdering Jeroboam's son and wiping out the rest of his family, so Baasha's own dynasty came to an end when another army general murdered his son and wiped out his family (vv8-14).

*Verse 11, “whether relative or friend”* – ‘friend’ seems to be an official title for the King’s most trusted advisor (Cf. 1 Sa 15:37 & 1 Ki 4:5 where the Hebrew ‘king’s friend’ is translated, ‘personal advisor to the king’.)

**vv 15-20 – ZIMRI KING OF ISRAEL**

The new military dictator, Zimri, misjudged the support he would receive from the army, and lasted only a week. When he saw that the army preferred the commanding officer Omri, Zimri committed suicide (vv15-20).

*Verse 15, “Zimri reigned in Tirzah seven days. The army was encamped near Gibbethon”* – Tirzah, a Canaanite city just North of Shechem, was the capital of the kings of Israel from Baasha to Omri. Gibbethon was just North of the Philistine city of Ekron.

**vv 21-28 – OMRI KING OF ISRAEL**

Confusion followed Zimri's death. Omri seized the throne but was challenged by Tibni. There was civil war for four years (Cf. vv 15, 23) before Omri was officially crowned king. Two years later, he moved his capital from Tirzah to Samaria, which remained the capital until the end of the northern kingdom. It was an excellent site for a capital and enabled later kings to withstand fierce attacks and strong sieges (vv21-24). During the remaining six years of his reign, Omri brought some stability to Israel, though religiously he was worse than former kings (vv25-28). He established a dynasty that lasted four generations. Only Jehu's dynasty, which succeeded it, lasted longer.

*Verse 24, “He bought the hill of Samaria”* – Located 11km NW of Shechem, it was an ideal location for a capital city. From then on, the Northern Kingdom was often called Samaria.

**vv29-34 – AHAB BECOMES KING OF ISRAEL**

In a new political alliance, Ahab, the new king of Israel, married Jezebel, daughter of the king-priest of Phoenicia. Ahab not only accepted his wife's Baalism, but also gave it official status in Israel by building a Baal temple in the capital (vv29-33). The Baalism imported by Jezebel was of a type far more evil and far more dangerous to Israel's religion than the common Canaanite Baalism practiced at the high places. Jezebel's Baalism (as we shall refer to it, to distinguish it from the common Baalism) was that of the great god Melqart, whose dwelling place was the Tyre-Sidon region of Phoenicia where Jezebel came from. Jezebel then set about making this the official religion of Israel. The rebuilding of Jericho further demonstrated the spirit of rebellion against God that characterized Israel. The project was in direct opposition to God's clear command (v34; Cf. Josh 6:26).

*Verse 34, “rebuild Jericho”* – This does not necessarily mean that Jericho had remained uninhabited since its destruction by Joshua (Jos 18:21; Jud 1:16; 3:13; 2 Sa 10:5), but that it had remained an unwalled town.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

**vv 1-6 – ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS**

Israel's religious life was in such danger that God intervened with an unusually large number of miracles and judgments. First he sent the prophet Elijah to announce a drought throughout the land (v1). This showed the powerlessness of Baal, who was supposed to be the God of nature and fertility. At the same time, it showed the power of Yahweh, who was still God of Israel. Elijah was no doubt unpopular because of the drought, so God directed him to hide near a certain stream in his home territory of Gilead, east of Jordan. No one knew where he was, and it was not even necessary for him to go out and look for food, as God provided it miraculously (vv2-6).

**Verse 1, “Elijah the Tishbite”** – *Elijah* means “*The LORD is my God*” and this was his essential message (Cf. 1 Ki 18:21, 39).

**“from Tishbe in Gilead”** – Gilead is in the Northern Trans-Jordan area. *Tishbe* may mean, “of the settlers” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). If it is the name of the place, the actual location is unknown.

**“whom I serve”** – Lit., ‘*before whom I stand*’ is a technical term for a person who stands in the service of the king.

**“neither dew nor rain”** – Baal was the god of fertility and lord of the rain clouds. The drought would show that Baal was powerless in the face of Yahweh.

**“in the next few years”** – In fact, James tell us that, “it did not rain on the land for three and a half years” (**Jas 5:17**).

**Verse 3, “the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan”** – Better, “*overlooked the Jordan*”. The location of “*the brook Cherith*” (KJV) is uncertain but it was probably the Wadi Qelt, west of Jericho.

**Verse 4, “I have ordered the ravens to feed you”** – He was fed in the desert just as Israel had been during the time of Moses. One strange thing here is that the raven was “*detestable*” (Lev 11:13-15). I wonder did Elijah react like Peter (Act 10:14) or like Paul (“I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself”, Rom 14:14)?

**vv 7-24 – THE WIDOW AT ZAREPHATH**

When Elijah's water supply dried up (v7), God sent him to Zarephath in Phoenicia. This was Baal's home territory, but the drought there was just as severe. The miraculous feeding of Elijah, the widow and her household showed that God's power was greater than Baal's even in Baal's home country; and, unlike Baal's, it could work independently of nature. The events showed also that faith, not nationality, was the basis for God's blessing (vv8-16; Cf. Lu 4:25-26). The healing of the widow's son confirmed her faith in God, and assured Elijah of God's presence and power in the lonely and dangerous days ahead (vv17-24).

**Verse 9, “Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon”** – A coastal town between Tyre and Sidon in the area ruled by Jezebel's father, Ethbaal (1 Ki 16:31).

**“a widow in that place to supply you with food”** – This time God's instrument was to be another human, but not any person: a widow, a foreigner, a pagan.

**Verse 12, “As surely as the LORD your God lives”** – Was this a genuine expression of her knowledge and faith?

**Verse 13, “first make a small cake of bread for me”** – Elijah made her a promise of food, but it required her to trust God first. The Lord makes this same promise (Lu 14:26-33) to us.

**Verse 15, “did as Elijah had told her”** – Her trustful obedience to God's word brought her life, while her neighbours were dying.

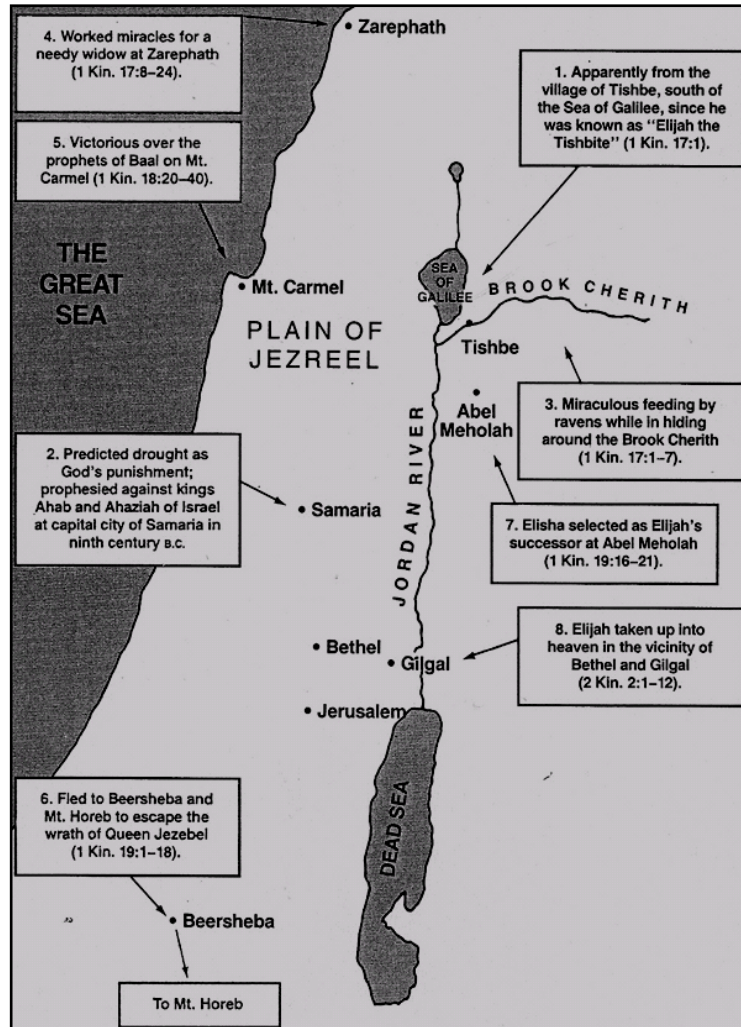
**Verse 21, “my God, let this boy's life return to him”** – Moved by faith like that of Abraham (Rom 4:17; Heb 11:19), he prayed that the child might live and in this way the truth and trustworthiness of God's word would be demonstrated.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

## vv 1-15 – ELIJAH AND OBADIAH

After three years unbroken drought, God told Elijah that the time had come to make Ahab and Israel decide clearly whether they would follow him or Baal (vv1-2). Ahab was concerned about the effect of the drought on Israel's trade and defense (for he was in danger of losing his mules and horses), but he was not so concerned about the religious condition of the country: He still tried to serve both God and Baal. While his queen attacked God's prophets, his God-fearing manager of the royal household tried to protect them (vv3-6). Upon returning to Israel, Elijah demanded that he meet Ahab (vv7-15).

**Verse 1, “3<sup>rd</sup> year”** – i.e., of the drought. Jewish tradition says the drought lasted 3 ½ years, but this may be symbolic, i.e., a drought cut short, ½ of 7 years.



## vv 16-46 – ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL

Elijah declared clearly to Ahab that divided loyalty was in God's sight disloyalty. This was Ahab's sin and the cause of Israel's troubles (vv16-18). So zealous was Jezebel in establishing her own religion in Israel that she now had hundreds of Baal prophets working for her. Elijah challenged Ahab to take the prophets of Baal to Mt Carmel (believed to be a sacred Baal site) for a public contest to reveal which was the true God (vv19-24). Baal was supposed to be the god of nature, but he was shown to be powerless (vv25-29). Yahweh showed himself to have total power over nature, by defeating Baal in a victory that involved lightning, fire and water (vv30-39). When the people acknowledged Yahweh's victory, Elijah took advantage of the favourable circumstances to destroy Baal's prophets (v40). Elijah gave final proof that God, not Baal, was the controller of nature by announcing that God would now end the drought. As Ahab raced his chariot home to escape the approaching storm, Elijah, in the strength of God, ran before him in triumph (vv41-46).

**Verse 19, “Mount Carmel”** – A high ridge next to the Mediterranean where the effects of the drought would be least apparent (Amos 1:2) and the power of Baal to nurture life strongest.

**Verse 24, “the god who answers”** – Both the LORD and Baal were said to ride on the thunderstorm as their divine chariot (Psa 104:3); thunder was their voice (Psa 29:3-9) and lightening their weapon (Psa 18:14). Elijah's challenge was direct!

**Verse 27, “deep in thought”** – Elijah ridicules but also shows a knowledge of the Baal myths.

**“until their blood flowed”** – Self-inflicted wounds were symbolic of self-sacrifice as an extreme method of arousing their god into action. Such mutilation of the body was strictly forbidden in the Mosaic Law (Lev 19:28; Deut 14:1).

**Verse 36, “prayed”** – Elijah's simple but earnest prayer stands in sharp contrast to the frantic shouts, ‘dancing’ and self-mutilation of the prophets of Baal.

**“God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”** – An appeal to the LORD to remember His ancient covenant with the patriarchs and to Israel to remember all that the Lord has done for them since the days of their forefathers.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### vv1-9 – ELIJAH FLEES TO HOREB

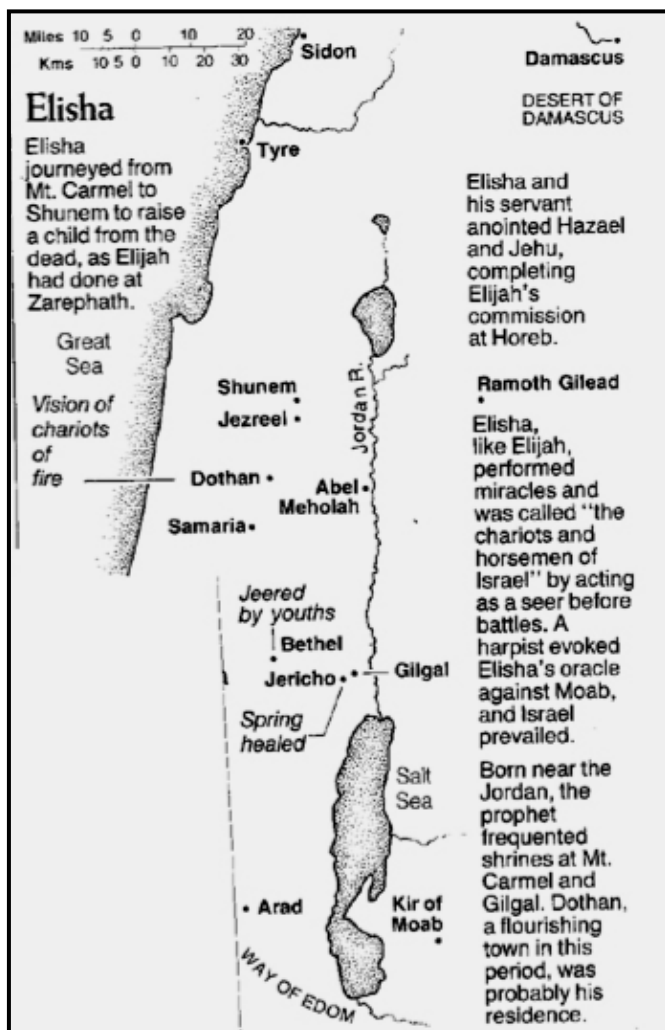
When Jezebel heard that Elijah had killed her prophets, she threatened to do the same to him. She still had great power over the people, who, despite Elijah's victory at Mt Carmel, soon returned to their idolatrous ways (vv1-2; Cf. v 10). Elijah fled south through the barren regions of Judah where, overcome with despair, he wanted only to die. But by miraculous feeding, God enabled him to keep moving south until he reached Mt Sinai, the place where God had first made his covenant with Israel (vv3-8). Elijah doubted whether the covenant had any more meaning for Israel. The people as a whole had repeatedly rebelled against its commands, and they had remained spiritually unaffected by the drought and its spectacular removal (v9).

### vv 10-18 – THE LORD APPEARS TO ELIJAH

God then showed Elijah that, while violent and spectacular events had some use, there would be truly lasting benefits only as people listened to the voice of God in their hearts and responded accordingly (vv10-14). Through the work of an enemy king Hazael, an Israelite king Jehu and the prophet Elisha, violent and spectacular events would occur as punishments on Israel; but there would always be those who listened to the voice of God and remained faithful to him (vv15-18).

### vv 19-21 – THE CALL OF ELISHA

With renewed confidence, Elijah returned to Israel. Elisha showed his willingness to succeed Elijah by killing his oxen (his previous source of income) and using them to provide a farewell dinner for his family and friends.



**Verse 3, “Came to Beersheba”** – From Jezreel to Beersheba is about 160km (100 miles).

**Verse 4, “broom tree”** – *Retama raetam* Forssk. Webb is a desert shrub common in the Sinai and northwards, growing to a height of about 3m (10’), hence large enough to offer some shade.

**Verse 8, “forty days and forty nights”** – Sustained by the Lord as Moses had been earlier for the same length of time (Ex 24:18) & as Christ would be later (Mt 45:2, 11).

**“reached Horeb”** = Mount Sinai (Ex 19:1-3) traditionally *Jebel Musa* in south Sinai, 2200m (7363’) high, about 400km (250 miles) from Beersheba, but it could be *Qudairat*. It is thought of as “the mountain of God” (Ex 3:1).

**Verse 15, “the Desert of Damascus”** – The *Wilderness of Damascus* or the Syrian Desert is just south of the city of Damascus, 260km (160 miles) north of Beersheba. He was to return east of the Dead Sea. In fact, all three anointings take place east of the Jordan.

**Verse 16, “Elisha”** = “God is salvation” cf. Joshua = “The Lord saves”. Elijah is given someone to finish his work just as Moses was. Elisha channels the covenant blessings to the faithful in Israel just as Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land. In the

N.T. John Baptist (Elijah, Mt 11:14) was followed by Jesus (Joshua, Mt 1:21).

**“Abel Meholah”** – *Tel el-Hilu*, just west of the Jordan, 20km (12 miles) north of Beth Shean, and scene of Gideon’s victory (Jud 7:22).

**Verse 18, “7000 men”** – A round number symbolic of the fullness or completeness of the divinely preserved godly remnant (Rom 11:2-4), although Elijah thought he was the only faithful one.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### vv 1-12 – BEN-HADAD ATTACKS SAMARIA

Ahab appeared to be in deep trouble when a combined army of Syria (Aram) and various neighbouring states besieged the Israelite capital Samaria and demanded a payment of money. Ahab at first submitted (vv1-4), but when they increased their demands, Ahab changed his mind and decided to fight (vv5-12).

**Verse 1, “Ben-Hadad king of Aram”** – This is Ben-Hadad II, either the son or grandson of Ben-Hadad I. The events of this chapter span parts of two years (Cf. vv 22-26). This was followed by three years of peace between Israel and Aram (Cf. 22:1).

**“Accompanied by thirty-two kings”** – Tribal chiefs or city-state kings who were vassals of Ben-Hadad II.

**Verse 4, “I and all I have are yours”** – Ahab’s submission to the terms of vassalage means that he saw no hope of a military victory. This negotiated settlement would mean the end of the siege, saving Ahab’s life and no plundering of the city, but it meant paying an annual tribute.

**Verse 11, “One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off”** – This seems to be a well-know proverb meaning, ‘don’t boast about something that has not yet happened!’

**Verse 12, “the kings were drinking in their tents”** – Or ‘drinking in *Succoth*’, also in verse 16 (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

### vv 13-34 – AHAB DEFEATS BEN-HADAD

A prophet encouraged Ahab with the assurance that God would give the Israelites victory (vv13-15). Ahab’s plan, based on the prophet’s advice, was to send a large group of young men ahead to distract the Syrians, and then follow up with a surprise attack by his fighting forces. Ahab won a decisive victory, but was warned to be ready for a further battle the following spring (vv16-22). The Syrians improved the combined fighting force by replacing the allied commander-kings with their own professional soldiers. They also thought they had a better chance of victory by changing the location of the battle to a region where their gods were stronger. Again, Israel won, proving to the Syrians (and to Ahab) that it was a mistake to think that God’s power was limited to only certain places (vv23-30). Ahab captured the enemy king Ben-Hadad, but let him go after Ben-Hadad agreed to give back to Israel territory that Syria had previously seized. The two kings also made a trade agreement that was very favourable to Israel. This co-operation with Syria was probably intended to give the two countries combined strength against any possible invader. However, it would not have been necessary had Ahab trusted in God, as his recent victory should have taught him (vv31-34).

**Verse 15, “232 men . . . 7,000 in all”** – Not a large military force but one that showed that victory was from the Lord (Cf. Jud 7:2).

**Verse 22, “next spring the king of Aram will attack”** – “Hebrew *at the turn of the year*; similarly in 20:26. The first day of the year in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in March or April” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>). The unknown prophet warned Ahab about self-confidence. This warning should have caused Ahab to turn to God who had revealed Himself on Mount Carmel (1 Ki 18) and in the recent victory.

**Verse 26, “Aphrek”** – This *Aphrek* (*El Fig*, modern *En Ger*) is about 6km (4miles) east of the Sea of Galilee near the junction of the Yarmuk and Jordan Rivers. Serious entry into Israel was thus prevented.

**Verse 34, “cities my father took”** – Perhaps Ramoth Gilead (1 Ki 22:3) along with some of the cities that Ben Hadad I had taken from Baasha (1 Ki 15:20) at an earlier time.

**vv 35-43 – A PROPHET CONDEMNS AHAB**

A young prophet acted a parable to show Ahab that, because he had rejected a God-given opportunity to destroy the enemy once and for all, that enemy would return and bring increasing suffering upon Israel (vv35-43).

**Verse 35, “sons of the prophets”** – Members of prophetic companies (2 Ki 2:3-15, etc.). *Son* here is **not male child** or *descendant* but a *member of the group*.

**Verse 39, “a talent of silver”** – About 34 kg (75 pounds).

**Verse 42, “I had determined should die”** – “*the man I said must be destroyed*” (NLT); “The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration [irrevocable giving over] of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or giving them as an offering” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

**CHAPTER TWENTY ONE****vv 1-29 – NABOTH’S VINEYARD**

It has been clearly seen that Ahab's religious, military and trade policies were all contrary to God's will. The means by which he gained Naboth's vineyard shows that he was equally ungodly in the matter of common justice. Ahab at first made an honest offer to buy Naboth's vineyard. Naboth refused, as land inherited from ancestors was an Israelite's most valued possession (vv1-4). Jezebel therefore arranged to have Naboth falsely accused and executed. People could be easily bribed, local officials were corrupt, and there was no one to uphold the law on behalf of the ordinary citizen (vv5-16). As Ahab took possession of the vineyard, Elijah met him. The prophet announced God's judgment on Ahab, and particularly on his murderous wife, Jezebel (vv17-24). Ahab and Jezebel had done lasting damage to Israel. Two of their sons would reign over Israel, but then the dynasty of Omri would come to an end (vv25-29).

**Verse 1, “close to the palace of Ahab”** – Ahab had a palace at Jezreel as well as his official palace in Samaria (Cf. 1 Ki 18:45; 2 Ki 9:30).

**“king of Samaria”** – *Samaria* here means the entire Northern Kingdom (Cf. Isa 10:10; Amos 6:1)

**Verse 2, “Let me have your vineyard”** – Canaanite kings could confiscate property, but the power of kings of Israel was limited by covenantal law (Cf. Deut 17:14-20; 1 Sa 10:25).

**Verse 3, “the inheritance of my fathers”** – The land was the Lord's, and each Israelite family was given a permanent (perpetual) lease as their inheritance in the Promised Land.

**Verse 4, “went home, sullen and angry”** – “*heavy and displeased*” (KJV); “*sullen and vexed*” (NASB); “*resentful and sullen*” (NRSV); Lit., “*turned his face to the wall*”. An indication of Ahab's real character.

**Verse 7, “Is this how you act as king over Israel?”** – This is a sarcastic comment. Cf. Samuel's attitude and the use of his civil power (1 Sa 12:3-4).

**Verse 9, “Proclaim a day of fasting”** – To give an impression that God would punish the people unless the person who sinned was punished (Cf. Jud 20:26; 1 Sa 7:5-6; 2 Chr 20:2-4).

**Verse 10, “two scoundrels”** – “*sons of Belial*” (KJV). The Hebrew means either men “*without worth*” OR “*wicked men*”. *Belial* was later used of Satan as the personification of wickedness. The law required two witnesses (Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15).

**“have them testify”** – To give the appearance of a legitimate legal proceeding (Cf. Ex 20:16; 23:7; Lev 19:16).

**“he has cursed both God and the king”** – The punishment was death (Lev 24:15-16).

**Verse 13, “has cursed both God and the king”** – The Hebrew text reads, “*Naboth has blessed both God and the King*” which is a euphemism, to avoid anyone reading an impious expression.

**“they took him outside the city”** – As the law required (Lev 24:14; Num 15:35-36). (Cf. Heb 13:12, “*Jesus also suffered outside the city gate*”).

**Verse 19, “murdered a man and seized his property”** – Ahab went along with Jezebel's plan and so was equally guilty.

**“In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood”** – Because of Ahab's repentance (v 27), parts of the prophecy were postponed (v 29). Ahab was killed in battle (1 Ki 22:29-37) and the dogs licked his blood from the chariot (22:38).

**Verse 21, “slave or free”** – This expression means there would be no exceptions (Cf. 1 Ki 14:10; 2 Ki 9:8; 14:26).

**Verse 22, “like that of Jeroboam”** – Cf. 1 Ki 14:10; 15:28-30.

**“like that of Baasha”** – Cf. 1 Ki 16:3-4, 11-13.

**Verse 23, “Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel”** – “Most Hebrew manuscripts; a few Hebrew manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac (see also 2 Ki 9:26) *the plot of ground at*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 24, “birds of the air will feed on those”** – Cf. Deut 28:26; 1 Ki 14:11; 16:4.

**Verse 25, “urged on by Jezebel”** – Cf. 1 Ki 16:31; 18:4; 19:1-2; 21:7.

**Verse 26, “by going after idols”** – “*worshipping idols*” (NLT); “The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>).

**“like the Amorites”** – This means the whole Canaanite population (Cf. Gen 15:16; Deut 1:7).

**Verse 27, “put on sackcloth”** – Sackcloth was like Hessian. Wearing such coarse cloth and uncomfortable clothes was a sign of mourning. (Cf. Mk 1:6, “John wore *clothing made of camel's hair*”).

**Verse 29, “in the days of his son”** – The judgement was postponed but not cancelled (Cf. v 19).

## CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

### vv 1-28 – MICAIAH PROPHECIES AGAINST AHAB

Three years after making his peace agreement with Benhadad, Ahab broke it. He saw the chance to retake the border town of Ramoth-gilead, and persuaded Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to help him (vv1-4; Note: Jehoshaphat had previously made an alliance with Ahab by having his son Jehoram marry Ahab's daughter Athaliah; Cf. 2 Ki 8:16-18, 25-26; 2 Chr 18:1). The professional prophets in Ahab's court were more concerned with pleasing Ahab than with telling him God's will. Jehoshaphat was not impressed with them and asked Ahab to send for another prophet, Micaiah (vv5-12). Micaiah, having been warned by the messenger to agree with the court prophets, simply repeated their words. But even Ahab saw that he was not speaking what he believed (vv13-16). Micaiah therefore decided to announce God's truth plainly: the prophets had been lying and Israel would be defeated (vv17-23). When one of the court prophets objected to this accusation, Micaiah suggested he spend some time alone seeking God's will instead of simply trying to impress the king. The king responded to this rebuke by throwing Micaiah into jail (vv24-28).

**Verse 3, “Ramoth Gilead”** – *Tell ar-Ramith*. 51km (32 miles) east of *Beth Shan*, near Waddi Yarmuk, in Transjordan. A border city between Israel and Aram. Had been an Israelite city since the time of Moses (1 Ki 4:13; Deut 4:43; Jos 20:8).

**Verse 17, “These people have no master”** – So the Hebrew text. “*Their master has been killed*” (NLT).

**Verse 24, “the spirit from the LORD”** – “Or, ‘*the Spirit of the Lord*’” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 34, “chariot driver”** – A war chariot normally carried only two men (a fighter and a driver).

Sometimes there was a third man who seems to have been the officer who commanded the chariot unit. These officers are literally called, ‘*the third*’ (1 Ki 9:22; 2 Ki 9:25; Ex 14:7; 15:4).

**“Wheel around”** – “Hebrew *turn your hand*” (NLT<sup>mg</sup>); “*Turn the horses*” (NLT).

**Verse 38, “a pool in Samaria (where the prostitutes bathed)”** – “Or, ‘*a pool in Samaria and cleaned the weapons*’” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 48, “a fleet of trading ships”** – “Hebrew, ‘*a fleet of ships of Tarsish*’” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 52, “in the ways of his father and mother”** – See 1 Ki 16:30-33.

**“in the ways of Jeroboam”** – See 1 Ki 12:28-33.

### vv 29-40 – AHAB KILLED AT RAMOTH GILEAD

Foolishly ignoring Micaiah's prophecy, Ahab went to war with Syria. He tried to escape death by disguising himself as an ordinary soldier, but his efforts were not successful. He was wounded early in the battle, but with great courage remained at the battle scene all day to encourage his men. He died that evening (vv29-36). Elijah's prophecies were beginning to come true (vv37-40; Cf. 21:19).

### vv 41-48 – JEHOSHAPHAT KING OF JUDAH

In spite of the reforms by Asa and Jehoshaphat, the people of Judah did not remove all the Baal shrines from the local high places. But this did not weaken Jehoshaphat's determination to reform his country. He

gathered together a number of selected priests, Levites and administrators, and sent them to teach God's law throughout Judah (vv41-43; Cf. 2 Chr 17:1-9). In addition he strengthened Judah's army, so that surrounding nations thought it wise to encourage his friendship (Cf. 2 Chr 17:10-19). Other notable achievements of his reign were his reform of the judicial system and his remarkable defeat of a huge enemy army through faith in God (Cf. 2 Chr 19:4-20:30). Jehoshaphat's foolishness in going with Ahab to battle spoiled an otherwise good reign (vv44-46; Cf. 2 Chr 19:1-3). In accordance with his policy of co-operation with Israel, he decided to join Ahab's son Ahaziah in operating a shipping line. When the ships were wrecked, Jehoshaphat realized that it was not God's will for him to continue this close association with the wicked Ahaziah (vv47-48).

#### **vv 49-53 – AHAZIAH KING OF ISRAEL**

When his ships were wrecked, Jehoshaphat realized, as a prophet had previously pointed out, that it was not God's will for him to continue this close association with the wicked Ahaziah (vv49-53; Cf. 2 Chr 20:35-37).

## 2 KINGS CHAPTER ONE

**vv 1-18 – THE LORD’S JUDGMENT ON AHAZIAH**

Ahab's son, Ahaziah, had not reigned long when he was injured in a fall. When he sent messengers to ask foreign gods whether he would recover, Elijah met them along the way. He sent them back with a message that the king would die, because he had forsaken the true God for foreign gods (1-10). Ahaziah sent soldiers to arrest Elijah, apparently with the intention of killing him because of his bold words. The ungodly king lost a hundred soldiers before he realized that he could neither silence nor kill the man whom God had sent to rebuke him (11-18).

**Verse 1, “Moab rebelled”** – Moab had been subdued by David (2 Sa 8:2), but when the Northern and Trans-Jordan Tribes made Jeroboam King (1 Ki 12:20), political domination of Moab seems to have moved to the northern kingdom. The *Mesha Stele* (Moabite Stone) tells us that the King of Moab rebelled against a “son” of Israel’s king Omri and freed the area around Medeba from Israelite control.

**Verse 2, “consult Baal-Zebub”** – The most popular gods of the Philistines were *Dagon* and *Baal-Zebul*. *Baal-Zebul* means, ‘*Baal the prince*’, but followers of Yahweh deliberately changed it to *Baal-Zebub* (‘*lord of the flies*’), Cf. Mt 10:25; 12:24).

**“the god of Ekron”** – Ekron was the Northernmost of the five Philistine cities (Cf. Jos 13:3; 1 Sa 5:10).

**“if I will recover from this injury”** – Ahaziah was not seeking healing but a message.

**Verse 3, “the angel of the LORD”** – ‘*angel*’ means, ‘*messenger*’. Sometimes the heavenly messenger was the pre-incarnate Christ. Normally the Lord spoke directly to the consciousness of the prophet (Cf. 1 Ki 17:2, 8). The messenger of the Lord contrasts the messengers of Ahaziah.

**Verse 5, “Why have you come back?”** – He knew the messengers could not have travelled to Ekron and back so quickly.

**Verse 8, “a garment of hair and with a leather belt”** – Elijah’s cloak was probably made from camel’s hair tied with a leather thong (Cf. John Baptist, Mt 3:4, 11:8,14). His dress contrasted to that of wealthy people (Cf. Jer 13:1) and seems to have been a protest against their materialistic attitude (Cf. Lu 7:24-26).

**Verse 9, “he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men”** – A common belief was that a curse could be reversed if the statement was withdrawn or the person killed.

**Verse 10, “fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men”** – Earlier the Lord had brought judgment by fire (Cf. Lev 10:2; Num 16:35; 1 Ki 18:38). This was a message to Ahaziah that the Lord was the one true God. Later, Jesus’ disciples wanted to do similarly (Lu 9:51-56), but the Lord rebuked them. This does not mean that Elijah was wrong. The two situations were quite different.

**Verse 14, “have respect for my life”** – The third captain realized that Elijah was a prophet of the Lord and bowed humbly before him.

**Verse 17, “So he died, according to the word of the LORD”** – Ahaziah was punished because he turned from the Lord to false gods. The word of the Lord was shown to be reliable and beyond the power of any king to change.

**“Joram succeeded him as king”** – “Hebrew, *Jehoram*, a variant of *Joram*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). Joram was Ahaziah’s younger brother (Cf. 2 Ki 3:1; 1 Ki 22:51).

**“in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat”** – The reign of Jehoram overlapped with that of his father, Jehoshaphat. He was a co-regent for 5 years (2 Ki 8:16). The reference here is to the second year of his co-regency.

**Verse 18, “the book of the annals of the kings of Israel”** – A non-canonical record of the reigns of the kings of the northern kingdom used the author of 1 & 2 Kings.

## CHAPTER TWO

**vv 1-22 – ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN**

Assured of this divine protection, Elijah saw that it was a fitting time to pass on his work to Elisha. Together they visited some of the major centres where young prophets and other faithful Israelites lived. (Schools for prophets had been established in some of these towns as early as the time of Samuel.) This was a test for Elisha, who could easily have been tempted to stay at one of the schools of the prophets instead of continuing with Elijah (1-6). Elisha knew that since he was Elijah's spiritual heir, he had to remain with Elijah to the end, in order to receive the spiritual power to carry on his work. The mark of the heir was that he received a double portion of the father's inheritance (7-10; Cf. Deut 21:17). When Elijah was suddenly taken away, Elisha knew that, in this one man, Israel had lost a defender equal to a whole army of horses and chariots. But he soon had clear proof that God's special power had now passed from Elijah to him (11-14). Back in Jericho, the young prophets did not believe the report of Elijah's spectacular departure, until they had spent three fruitless, days looking for him (15-18).

**Verse 2, “I will not leave you”** – Elisha knew that Elijah’s ministry was almost finished (v 5) and was determined to be with him when the Lord called him home. His commitment to Elijah was unfailing (v 9, Cf. 1 Ki 19:21).

**Verse 3, “The company of the prophets”** – Lit., ‘*the sons of the prophets*’. The term described members of a group of prophets. ‘*son*’ is not to be understood in the normal way but as a member of the group and one who had the characteristics of a prophet (Cf. Mt 5:45; Act 4:36). There were groups of prophets at Bethel (here), Jericho (v 5) and Gilgal (2 Ki 4:38).

**Verse 7, “Fifty men of the company of the prophets”** – These men were to witness the miracle as Elijah and Elisha crossed the River.

**Verse 8, “Elijah took his cloak . . . and struck the water with it”** - Cf. Moses use of his staff in crossing the Red Sea (Ex 14:16, 21, 26).

**Verse 9, “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit”** – The law of inheritance gave a double portion of the father’s possessions to the first-born son (Cf. Deut 21:17), which was a sign of succession. This seems to be what Elisha had in mind.

**vv 19-22 – HEALING OF THE WATER**

Elisha's first two miracles symbolized respectively blessing and cursing, the two characteristics of his future ministry. At Jericho, where people were distressed through an unhealthy water supply, he brought healing.

**Verse 20, “put salt in it”** – salt was used to symbolize the “*covenant of salt*” (Lev 24:7-8), which required faithfulness to the Lord (Lev 2:13; Num 18:19; 2 Chr 13:5).

**Verse 21, “I have healed this water”** – Any idea of magic is removed by Elisha’s clear statement that the Lord had performed this miracle. In spite of their disobedience the Lord was still merciful (Cf. 2 Ki 13:23).

**vv 23-25 – ELISHA IS MOCKED**

At Bethel, where the chief shrine of Israel's corrupt religion was situated, he brought God's curse on those who deliberately rejected his message.

**Verse 23, “Go on up”** – These youths seem to have assumed that Elisha was going up to Samaria to continue the struggle against royal apostasy, as Elijah had done.

**“you baldhead!”** – Baldness was uncommon and long hair was a sign of strength and vigor (Cf. 2 Sa 14:26). So this mocking suggests that they felt he had no power.

**Verse 24, “called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD”** – This is similar to the curse of Lev 26:21-22. The judgment was a warning to the whole nation (Cf. 2 Chr 36:16).

## CHAPTER THREE

**vv 1-27 – MOAB REVOLTS**

Joram (or Jehoram) succeeded his brother Ahaziah in Israel. He was not as bad as his father Ahab, and at least showed some displeasure with Baal worship by removing a sacred pillar that his father had built (1-3). After Ahab's death, Moab had revolted against Israelite rule and refused to pay tribute, but Ahaziah had done nothing about it (Cf. 1:1). Joram tried to recover this valuable source of income by a military attack in which he had the support of Judah and Edom, both of whom would benefit if Moab were weakened. The army marched around the southern end of the Dead Sea and approached Moab from the deserts of Edom (4-8). When, after a week's march, the army had no water, Joram blamed God. Jehoshaphat knew God better and asked him through the prophet Elisha what they should do (9-13). Elisha felt no obligation to help Joram, but for Jehoshaphat's sake, he announced that God would supply enough water to meet all their needs. They were then to attack and devastate Moab. That night, probably as a result of a storm in the distant red hills of Edom, water flowed down the dry creek bed beside which the army was camped (14-20). Next day the refreshed allies slaughtered the falsely confident Moabites. They seemed certain of complete victory when suddenly, while approaching the last stronghold, they saw the Moabite king sacrifice his son. This must have so inspired the Moabites and terrified the Israelites that Israel's army was forced to retreat and finally return home. The Moabites then rebuilt their country and organized guerilla attacks against Israel (21-27; Cf. 13:20).

**Verse 1, “Joram son of Ahab became king of Israel”** – “Hebrew, *Jehoram*, a variant of *Joram*; also in verse 6” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**“eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat”** – See note on 2 Ki 1:17

**Verse 2, “He got rid of the sacred stone of Baal”** – Cf. 1 Ki 16:32-33, however, it seems this idol was later reinstated, perhaps by Jezebel (Cf. 2 Ki 10:27).

**Verse 4, “a hundred thousand lambs and with the wool of a hundred thousand rams”** – The heavy annual tribute that Israel required from Moab as a vassal state.

**Verse 7, “Will you go with me to fight against Moab?”** – Joram wanted to attack Moab from the rear (v 8), but to do this he had to go through Judah.

**“I am as you are, my people as your people”** – Jehoshaphat had been condemned for making alliances with Israel (Cf. 2 Chr 18:1; 19:1-2; 20:35-37) yet he agreed. Perhaps he felt that Moab was a growing threat to Judah (Cf. 2 Chr 20).

**Verse 8, “Through the Desert of Edom”** – i.e., South of the Dead Sea. Edom was subject to Judah (Cf. 2 Ki 8:20) and so could not attack. This route enabled them to avoid the strong fortifications in the North of Moab.

**Verse 11, “He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah”** – “That is, he was Elijah’s personal servant” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 16, “this valley will be filled with water”** – The Israelite armies were camped in the Arabah (a broad valley) South of the Dead Sea with the mountains of Moab on the East and the mountains of Judah on the West of them.

**Verse 20, “water flowing from the direction of Edom”** – A flash flood in the mountains of Edom caused water to flow North through this normally dry valley toward the Dead Sea.

**Verse 23, “slaughtered each other”** – When they saw what they thought was blood, they thought it was the result of conflict between Israel and Judah.

**Verse 25, “Only Kir Hareseth was left”** – The capital city of Moab (Cf. Isa 16:7), present day, *Kerak*, 17km (11 miles) East of the Dead Sea and 24km (15 miles) South of the River Arnon.

## CHAPTER FOUR

**vv 1-7 – THE WIDOW’S OIL**

The widow of one of the prophets was in desperate trouble. She had hardly any food left and was about to lose her only means of income, for her sons were to be taken from her in payment for a debt. Elisha's miraculous provision of oil for the family preserved a few of God's faithful in days of extreme hardship (1-7).

*Verse 1, “his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves”* – Slavery as a way of paying a debt was permitted under the law (Ex 21:1-2; Lev 25:39-41; Deut 15:1-11) but was often abused (Cf. Neh 5:5,8; Amos 2:6; 8:6).

*Verse 4, “go inside and shut the door behind you”* – The miracle was to be in private to show God’s mercy and grace to this widow (Cf. Ps 68:5).

**vv 8-37 – THE SHUNAMMITE’S SON RESTORED TO LIFE**

Another of the faithful was the wife of a wealthy landowner. She recognized Elisha as God's representative and offered him hospitality as often as he needed it. As with the poor widow of the previous story, Elisha was able to provide for the woman's future, in this case by promising her a son (8-17). Some years later the son died. The woman, still strong in faith, reasoned that if the prophet had given her the son in the first place (even though she had not asked for a son), it was the prophet's responsibility to correct what had gone wrong. He was God's representative and she would speak with no other (18-31). Her faith was rewarded when Elisha brought her son back to life (32-37).

*Verse 8, “Elisha went to Shunem”* – See 1 Ki 1:3.

*Verse 12, “He said to his servant Gehazi”* – Gehazi served Elisha just as Elisha had served Elijah, but the character of the two men was drastically different (Cf. 2 Ki 5:19-27; 6:15).

**vv 38-41 – DEATH IN THE POT**

Elisha moved around the schools of the prophets to instruct and encourage the faithful. At one of the schools, during a time of famine, food was so scarce that the men had to eat wild plants. In these circumstances, it was a serious loss when one of their meals was ruined because somebody had mistakenly cooked a poisonous plant. God again provided for them through Elisha (38-41).

*Verse 38, “Gilgal and there was a famine in that region”* – Gilgal was on the Jordan near Jericho. Famine was an evidence of God’s anger on the people (Cf. Lev 26:19-20, 26; Deut 28:18, 23-24; 1 Ki 8:36-37). This may be the famine mentioned in 2 Ki 8:1.

*Verse 39, “a wild vine. He gathered some of its gourds”* – Probably *colocynth* (wild cucumber) which has a bitter taste and could be fatal if eaten in large quantities.

*Verse 41, “Get some flour”* – The flour, itself, did not make the stew edible. It was just the means the Lord used. Cf. the salt in 2 Ki 2:20.

**vv 42-44 – FEEDING OF A HUNDRED**

God's care for the faithful was shown on another occasion when a farmer brought an offering of food that was miraculously multiplied to feed Elisha and a hundred of his followers (42-44).

*Verse 42, “bread baked from the first ripe grain”* – The firstfruits of the new harvest were to be given to God (Lev 2:14; 23:15-17; Deut 18:3-5), but instead of giving it to the false priests at Bethel and Dan (1 Ki 12:28-31), the people seem to have given it to Elisha.

*Verse 43, “this is what the LORD says”* – The bread was multiplied at the word of the Lord directly through Elisha (Cf. v 41, Cf. Mk 6:35-43).

## CHAPTER FIVE

## vv 1-27 – NAAMAN HEALED OF LEPROSY

Syria was Israel's most powerful neighbour during Elisha's lifetime, and was a constant source of trouble around Israel's borders. When the Syrian army commander Naaman approached the king of Israel with a request to be treated for leprosy, the king of Israel interpreted this as a trick by Syria aimed at creating war (1-7). Elisha, however, saw it as an opportunity to reveal God's power to the military commander whom God was preserving to lead the Syrian armies against Israel (8-14). Naaman's knowledge of the one true God was still imperfect, but at least he had a more sincere faith than many of the Israelites (15-19; cf. Lu 4:27). Elisha had refused payment for the healing, as he was God's servant, not a wonder-worker looking for money (see v.15-16). But since most of the prophets lived in poverty, Gehazi could not resist the temptation to get some financial benefit from the miracle. Fittingly, he was punished by receiving Naaman's leprosy (20-27).

**Verse 1, “the king of Aram”** – Probably Ben-Hadad II (*Hadadezer, Hadadidri*), 860-843 B.C. A contemporary of King Ahab, Cf. 1 Ki 20:1.

**“the Lord had given victory”** – Notice how the writer sees the victory was the work of God (Cf. Eze 30:24; Amos 2:1-3; 9:7).

**“he had leprosy”** – “The Hebrew word was used for various diseases affecting the skin – not necessarily leprosy; also in verses 3,6,11, and 27” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 2, “bands from Aram”** – Although Israel and Aram has signed a peace treaty (1 Ki 20:34), there were minor fights between the two from time to time.

**“taken captive a young girl from Israel”** – This young girl contrasts the king of Israel. She knows the saving presence of God, and willing shares this with her captors.

**Verse 3, “the prophet who is in Samaria”** – Elisha kept a residence in Samaria (2 Ki 2:9; 2:25; 6:19).

**Verse 5, “I will send a letter”** – The king of Israel was Joram (Cf. 2 Ki 1:17; 3:1; 9:24). The official peace treaty was still in existence.

**“ten talents of silver”** – “That is, about 340 kilograms (750 pounds)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). Omri had only paid 2 talents for the hill of Samaria (1 Ki 16:24).

**“six thousand shekels of gold”** – “That is, about 70 kilograms (150 pounds)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 6, “so that you may cure him of his leprosy”** – Ben-Hadad believed the prophet was subject to the king. He thought he could buy the blessings from the Lord.

**Verse 7, “he is trying to pick a quarrel with me”** – Joram thought that this was an attempt by Ben-Hadad to declare war. He was completely blind to Elisha's presence.

**Verse 8, “Why have you torn your robes?”** – This was a sign of fear. Joram was terrified (Cf. 1 Sa 17:11), but failed to call of Elisha (Cf. 2 Ki 3:13-14).

**Verse 9, “with his horses and chariots”** – A sign of his pride. He thought his worldly wealth and position would ensure his healing.

**Verse 10, “seven times in the Jordan”** – This would be very humbling and show Naaman that healing comes only by the Lord's power. It reminds us of what Israel had done (Cf. Joshua chapters 3 & 4).

**Verse 18, “the temple of Rimmon”** – *Rimmon* (also known as *Hadad*, or *Baal*) was the god of storms (*rimmon* = thunderer). Naaman seems convinced the Lord was the only true God, but seems to put his political position (life?) before worshipping the Lord.

**Verse 22, “a talent of silver”** – “That is about 34 kilograms (75 pounds)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 26, “Is this the time to take money”** – Gehazi wanted to use his position for his own material advantage, i.e., *Simony*, Cf. Act 8:18; 2 Co 2:17.

**“money”** – Here and throughout the early history of Israel, *money* refers to various weights of gold or silver, not coins, which were introduced much later.

## CHAPTER SIX

**vv 1-7 – THE AXEHEAD FLOATS**

In one of the schools of the prophets, the accommodation needed rebuilding, but during the work, a borrowed axe head was lost. This was an unfortunate accident, particularly for people who could not afford an axe in the first place. Again, God met their need, showing that they could always depend on him (1-7).

**Verse 2, “*build a place there for us to live*”** – Some believe that all of these people lived in a single building, but 2 Ki 4:1-7 seems to indicate they all had their own houses. In addition, the Hebrew could mean, “*a place for us to sit*”, i.e., some type of assembly hall.

**Verse 5, “*it was borrowed*”** – An iron axe-head was very expensive, if it were lost this man would probably have to work the debt off as a bond-slave.

**Verse 6, “*cut a stick and threw it there*”** – The Lord shows His concern for his people. Cf. Elisha’s use of salt (2 Ki 2:20) and flour (2 Ki 4:41).

**vv 8-33 – ELISHA TRAPS BLINDED ARAMEANS**

The remaining stories of Elisha concentrate on his dealings with the rulers of Israel and Syria. God was going to use Syria to punish Israel for its sin during the period of the Omri dynasty, but first he had various lessons to teach the two nations. On one occasion when Israel and Syria were fighting each other, Elisha repeatedly warned Israel's king of Syrian ambushes (5-10). The Syrian king was furious when he found out why his ambushes failed, and sent an army to capture Elisha. Instead, Elisha took control of the Syrian soldiers and led them to the Israelite capital, Samaria (11-19). Israel's king thought it a perfect opportunity to slaughter the enemy, but Elisha directed him to feed them and release them. As a result, peace was temporarily restored between Israel and Syria. The whole story was a lesson to both countries that God controlled their destinies (20-23). Sometime later, the Syrians returned and besieged Samaria. With people dying of starvation and no help from God in sight, the king blamed Elisha for the crisis and tried to murder him (24-33).

**Verse 8, “*was at war with Israel*”** – Not outright war but border clashes (Cf. 2 Ki 5:2). The strength of Ben-Hadad’s army is seen in the fact that he could send his forces to Dothan (2 Ki 6:13-14), just 17km (11 miles) north of Samaria.

**Verse 11, “*which of us is on the side of the king of Israel*”** – i.e., a *mole* – someone who gives information to the other side.

**Verse 13, “*He is in Dothan*”** – Dothan was on a hill halfway between the royal residences at Jezreel (2 Ki 8:29) and Samaria (2 Ki 3:1).

**Verse 16, “*more than those who are with them*”** – Elisha knew there was greater strength in the unseen forces of heaven than the visible forces of Aram (Cf. 2 Chr 32:7-8; 1 Jn 4:4).

**Verse 17, “*open his eyes so he may see*”** – Cf. Psa 34:7; 91:11-12; Mt 18:10; 26:53.

**Verse 19, “*This is not the road and this is not the city*”** – Technically, this was not untrue. These soldiers were looking for Elisha and he accompanied them to his hometown.

**Verse 25, “*eighty shekels of silver*”** – “That is about 1 kilogram (2 pounds)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

“*a quarter of a cab*” – “That is probably about 0.3 litre (1/2 pint)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

“*seed pods*” – “Or, *dove’s dung*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

“*five shekels*” - .”That is, about 55 grams (2 ounces)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

**vv 1-20 – THE SIEGE LIFTED**

Elisha assured the king that there would be plenty of food the next day (1-2), but when a report reached the king that it had arrived; he was slow to believe (3-12). The report was true, and at least one man was trampled to death as people rushed to buy (13-20).

**Verse 1, “Elisha said, “Hear the word of the LORD”** – Elijah had no knowledge of how the prophecy would be fulfilled, but trusted God that it would happen (Cf. Heb 11:1-2).

**“a seah of flour”** – “That is, probably about 7.3 liters (7 quarts); also in verses 16 and 18” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>.)

**“for a shekel”** – “That is about 11 grams (2/5 ounce); also in verses 16 and 18” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**“two seahs of barley”** – “That is, probably about 15 liters (13 quarts); also in verses 16 and 18” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). This was about double the normal price, but a big improvement.

**Verse 2, “The officer on whose arm the king was leaning”** – Then king was not actually there. The expression means *a close adviser* to the King, Cf. 2 Ki 5:18.

**“open the floodgates of the heavens”** – Describing heavy rain, Cf. 2 Ki 7:19; Gen 8:2; Isa 24:18. Notice how the Hebrew idiom uses the plural, ‘*heavens*’ not the singular.

**Verse 3, “four men with leprosy”** – Traditionally, Gehazi (Cf. 2 Ki 5:27) and his three sons.

**“at the entrance of the city gate”** – The law stopped lepers from living in the city (Lev 13:46; Num 5:2-3).

**Verse 6, “the Lord had caused the Arameans to hear”** – Cf. hearing in 2 Sa 5:24 and seeing in 2 Ki 2:22-23. We do not know whether God caused an actual sound (apparently, the inhabitants of the city heard nothing), or if was a sound in their ears. Some have suggested they *heard a rumour*.

**“hired the Hittite . . . kings”** – Syro-Hittites - Kings of small city-states ruled by dynasties of Hittite origin, which had arisen in northern Aram after the fall of the Hittite empire in 1200 B.C.

**“Egyptian kings to attack us”** – Egypt (*misrayim*) is more likely to have read, *musri* (as in 1 Ki 10:28). Musri was Cappadocia, a neighbour of the Syro-Hittites (Cf. 1 Ki 10:28), who later, under Ben-Hadad III, features as an ally of Syria.

**Verse 7, and abandoned their . . . horses”** – It seems strange they left their horses behind. Did they think there was no time to harness their horses, or were they afraid the sound of the horses would attract the attention of the enemy army?

**Verse 9, “punishment”** – The Hebrew word can mean both ‘*sin*’ and ‘*punishment*’, suggesting that it is not possible to separate the sin from its punishment.

**“will overtake us”** – Or, ‘*catch up with us*’. Cf. Num 32:23.

**Verse 12, “what the Arameans have done”** – Joram would not accept that Elisha’s prophecy was fulfilled, and so decided the report was part of an Aramean war strategy.

**Verse 14, “two chariots with their horses”** – “*they took two mounted men*” (RSV). This is not a contradiction of verse 13 (“*Have some men take five of the horses*”), as the mention of five horses was only a suggestion.

**Verse 18, “as the man of God had said to the king”** – Notice the repetition of this idea (verses 16, 18, 19, 20) emphasizing the trustworthiness of the prophetic word spoken by Elisha. Those that accepted the word were blessed; those that rejected the word were judged (Cf. verses 2, 17).

## CHAPTER EIGHT

**vv1-6 – THE SHUNAMMITE’S LAND RESTORED**

In spite of the divine judgment that was beginning to fall on Israel, God was still caring for those who were faithful to him. The wealthy woman whose son had been raised to life (Cf. 4:8-37) was saved from poverty by being warned in advance of a famine that would devastate Israel. She went and lived elsewhere during the famine, but by God's control of events she received back all her original property when she returned to Israel (1-6).

**Verse 1, “the LORD has decreed a famine”** – The people should have known that this was a punishment because of their sin (Cf. 2 Ki 4:38).

**“that will last seven years”** – It is not clear if the famine started before or after the Aramean siege (Cf. 2 Ki 4:38; 6:24-7:20).

**vv 7-15 – HAZAEL MURDERS BEN-HADAD**

Meanwhile God was continuing to prepare Syria to be his instrument to punish Israel. The king Ben-Hadad was seriously ill, but would have recovered had not Hazael murdered him. Hazael then became king. Elisha wept when he saw the terrible suffering that Hazael would bring upon Israel (7-15; Cf. 1 Ki 19:15).

**Verse 9, “a gift forty camel-loads of all the finest wares”** – Damascus was the centre for trade between Egypt and the north. Ben-Hadad thought a generous gift would ensure a favourable prediction.

**Verse 10, “Go and say to him, ‘You will certainly recover’; but”** – “The Hebrew may also be read *Go and say, ‘You will certainly not recover, for’*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**vv 16-24 – JEHORAM KING OF JUDAH**

The writer now returns to his historical account of the kings of Judah and Israel. Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram, who was married to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, became king of Judah after his father's death. Through Athaliah, Jezebel's Baalism spread to Judah. Jehoram made sure that no one challenged his right to do as he pleased by killing all likely rivals. Because of this and his support for Jezebel's Baalism, he was assured of a horrible death (16-19; Cf. 2 Chr 21:4, 11-15, 18-20). For David's sake God did not yet destroy Judah, though the nation certainly weakened. Edom to the southeast and Libnah on the Philistine border were able to free themselves from Judah's rule, while the Philistines and Arabs raided and plundered with great success (20-24; Cf. 2 Chr 21:16-17).

**Verse 16, “In the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Joram”** – Jehoram had been co-regent with his father since 853 B.C. (Cf. 2 Ki 1:17), but now he began reign as the sole king.

**Verse 17, “he reigned in Jerusalem 8 years”** – Jehoram's sole reign was 848-841 B.C.

**vv 25-29 – AHAZIAH KING OF JUDAH**

During one of these raids most of Judah's royal family was killed. Jehoram's sole surviving son, Ahaziah, became king after his father's death (Cf. 2 Chr 22:1), but in his short reign, he proved to be no better than his father. He was dominated by his mother Athaliah, along with relatives of hers from the north whom she had brought into the Jerusalem palace (Cf. 2 Chr 22:3-4). He joined his uncle Joram (or Jehoram) of Israel in war against Hazael of Syria. When Joram retreated to the summer palace at Jezreel to recover from wounds received in battle, Ahaziah went to visit him (25-29).

**Verse 25, “In the twelfth year of Joram”** – 841 B.C. In 2 Ki 9:29, his 1<sup>st</sup> year is counted as his accession year, and his 2<sup>nd</sup> year as the 1<sup>st</sup> year of his reign, whereas here his accession year is counted as the 1<sup>st</sup> year of his reign.

**Verse 29, “inflicted on him at Ramoth”** – “Hebrew *Ramah*, a variant of *Ramoth*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

## CHAPTER NINE

**vv 1-13 – JEHU ANOINTED KING OF JUDAH**

Elisha saw that the time had come for him to carry out his last major responsibility, which was to anoint Israel's army commander Jehu as king. Jehu's job was to rid Israel of the entire family of Ahab and Jezebel (1-10; Cf. 1 Ki 19:16). On hearing of Jehu's anointing as king, Jehu's senior officers swore immediate allegiance (11-13).

*Verse 3, "I anoint you king over Israel"* – Cf. 1 Sa 2:10; 9:16; 1 Ki 19:16.

*Verse 9, "like the house of Jeroboam"* – Cf. 1 Ki 14:7-11; 15:27-30.

*"like the house of Baasha"* – Cf. 1 Ki 16:1-4, 8-12 and 1 Ki 21:21-24.

**vv 14-29 – JEHU KILLS JORAM AND AHAZIAH**

Without allowing time for news of the rebellion to leak out, Jehu set off for Jezreel (14-16). When Jehu approached the city, Joram and Ahaziah, unaware of the rebellion, went out to meet him. Joram was killed on the spot, appropriately at Naboth's vineyard (17-26; Cf. 1 Ki 21:17-19). Ahaziah was killed after a chase (27-29).

*Verse 15, "don't let anyone slip out of the city to go and tell the news in Jezreel"* – For the success of Jehu's revolt, and to avoid a civil conflict, it was important to take Joram totally by surprise.

*Verse 16, "rode to Jezreel"* – About 70km (45 miles) from Ramoth Gilead.

*Verse 26, "Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth"* – "See 1 Kings 21:19" (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

*"in accordance with the word of the LORD"* – Jehu saw himself fulfilling the Lord's prophecy (1 Ki 21:18-24). Even though Ahab's own blood was not shed on Naboth's field (1 Ki 21:29), Jehu saw in Joram's death the fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy (1 Ki 21:19).

*Verse 27, "he fled up the road to Beth Haggan"* – "Or fled by way of the garden house" (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**vv 30-37 – JEZEBEL KILLED**

Jehu quickly went on to Jezreel to deal with the queen mother Jezebel. Knowing she could expect the same fate as Joram, she prepared herself to meet the executioner with royal dignity. She died a horrible death, as the prophet had foretold (30-37; Cf. v 10).

*Verse 31, "Have you come in peace, Zimri, you murderer of your master?"* – Or "Did Zimri have peace, who murdered his master?" (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). It seems that Jezebel called Jehu by the name Zimri in bitter sarcasm. About 45 years earlier, Zimri had seized the throne by assassinating Elah and destroying the house of Baasha (Cf. 1 Ki 16:8-20).

*Verse 36, "This is the word of the LORD that he spoke through his servant Elijah"* – In the manner of Jezebel's death, the word of the Lord was confirmed; the word she had defied during her life (Cf. 1 Ki 21:23).

*"dogs will devour Jezebel's flesh"* – "See 1 Kings 21:23" (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

## CHAPTER TEN

**vv 1-17 – AHAB’S FAMILY KILLED**

The massacre continued. After having the seventy surviving male descendants of Ahab murdered in Samaria, Jehu displayed their heads as a warning to any likely rebels (1-8). He tried to make the people believe that the seventy had been killed directly by God, but it is unlikely that they were convinced. They well knew that the only way Jehu could make his throne safe was to kill all Ahab's descendants. God's earlier announcement of judgment on the family of Ahab gave Jehu the opportunity to carry out his plans (9-11; Cf. 9:7-9). Since the late Ahaziah was a descendant of Ahab, Jehu killed Ahaziah's relatives as well (12-14). Jehu next put into operation a plan to rid Israel of all Jezebel's Baal-worshipping followers. In this he had the co-operation of Jehonadab, a man who had led his people to give up the agricultural life (possibly because of its tendencies to Baal worship) and go back to the simple way of life followed by Abraham and the early Israelites (15-17; Cf. Jer 35:6-10).

**Verse 1, “to the officials of Jezreel”** – “Hebrew: some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate *officials of the city*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). Officers appointed by the king (Cf. 1 Ki 4:1-6).

**“the elders”** – Lit., ‘*bearded ones*’, reflecting their age, wisdom and experience. They were local leaders (Cf. 2 Sa 3:17).

**“the guardians of Ahab's children”** – Those entrusted with the care and training of the king's children.

**Verse 5, “the palace administrator”** – In charge of the palace and manager of the king's properties (Cf. 1 Ki 4:6; 16:9; 18:3; 2 Ki 18:18, 37; 19:2).

**“the city governor”** – Appointed by the king to command the militia of the capital city.

**vv 18-36 – MINISTERS OF BAAL KILLED**

Through cunning, deceit and butchery, Jehu wiped out Jezebel's Baal worshippers (18-27). However, Jehu did not remove the idol worship established earlier by Jeroboam. This further indicates that his anti-Baal campaign resulted from political, rather than religious, motives. Nevertheless, he succeeded in destroying the dynasty of Omri along with its particular form of Baal worship, and for this God rewarded him. His dynasty would last longer than any other in the northern kingdom (28-31). However, Jehu had gone far beyond what was necessary to bring God's judgment on the dynasty of Omri. His needless butchery, still talked about a century later, would be the reason why his own dynasty would come to a bloody end (Cf. Hosea 1:4). Jehu's massacre of all Israel's leading administrators left the nation's internal government weak and unstable (Cf. 10:11). The slaughter of Jezebel's descendants brought the long-standing treaty with Tyre and Sidon in the north to a sudden end. The murder of Judah's king and his relatives lost Israel the support of her sister nation to the south. The withdrawal of Israel's troops from Ramoth-Gilead to support Jehu in his revolution weakened Israel's eastern border (Cf. 9:4-5, 11-14). The Syrian king Hazael was quick to attack, and over a period seized most of Israel's territory east of Jordan. Elisha's prophecy was coming true (32-36; Cf. 8:12).

**Verses 26-27, “burned it. demolished the sacred stone”** – ‘It’ seems to refer to the *Asherah* pole (Cf. 1 Ki 14:15) which usually accompanied a sacred stone (Cf. 1 Ki 16:32-33).

**Verse 32, “the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel”** – During the reign of Jehu, the northern kingdom began to experience the beginning of God's curse (Cf. Lev 26; Deut 28) which was finally fulfilled in 2 Ki 17:7-18.

**“Hazael overpowered the Israelites”** – All of Trans-Jordan fell to Hazael and the Arameans. The *Black Obelisk* says that Jehu paid tribute to Assyria soon after coming to the throne in 841 B.C.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

**vv 1-21 – ATHALIAH AND JOASH**

Ahaziah, king of Judah, had been assassinated the day of Jehu's revolt (Cf. 9:27). His mother Athaliah showed herself a true daughter of Jezebel when she killed all her grandchildren (except one who escaped), seized the throne for herself, and established her mother's Baalism in Judah. The one who escaped was the baby Joash, who was rescued by his aunt (a princess married to the high priest; Cf. 2 Chr 22:11) and hidden for six years in the temple (1-3). When Joash was seven years old, the high priest Jehoiada, with the support of the palace and temple guards, claimed the throne for him. The coup was carefully planned to occur on a Sabbath day, when the changing of the guard ensured that a much larger group of guards than usual would be at the temple (4-8). All went according to plan without bloodshed, apart from the execution of Athaliah (9-16). Because Athaliah had broken the line of Davidic kings, the restoration of the Davidic king to the throne was accompanied by a renewal of the covenant. It was a great day in Jerusalem. The people went wild with joy, and quickly destroyed Athaliah's Baal temple and everything associated with it (17-21).

**Verse 1, "Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah"** – Athaliah, Jehoram's wife, was a daughter of Ahab, but probably not of Jezebel (2 Ki 8:18, 26; 2 Chr 18:1). Athaliah's influence on Jehoram was like that of Jezebel on Ahab (Cf. 1 Ki 16:31; 18:4; 19:1-2; 2 Chr 21:6).

**"her son was dead"** – Cf. 2 Ki 9:27.

**"she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family"** – So she could take the throne of Judah for herself. It seems she had in mind her own grandchildren. However, to completely destroy the Davidic dynasty was an attack on God's messianic plan (Cf. 2 Sa 7:11, 16; 1 Ki 8:25).

**Verse 2, "Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah"** – Jehosheba was a daughter of Jehoram, but not of Athaliah. She was a ½ sister of Ahaziah and wife of the High Priest, Jehoiada (Cf. 2 Chr 22:11).

**"him and his nurse"** – The child was less than 1 year old and had not been weaned (Cf. 2 Ki 11:3, 21).

**Verse 4, "In the seventh year"** – i.e., the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Athaliah's rule.

**"commanders of units of a hundred"** – 2 Chr 23:1 lists the names of the 5 commanders – all Israelites.

**"the Carites"** – Mercenary soldiers from Caria in SouthWest Asia Minor who served as royal bodyguards.

**"the guards"** – 2 Chr 23:2 includes the Levites and family leaders from Judah in this conspiracy.

**Verse 8, "Anyone who approaches your ranks"** – "Or approaches the precincts" (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 12, "presented him with a copy of the covenant"** – The covenant could have been:

- 1 The Ten Commandments ,
- 2 The whole Book of Moses, or more likely
- 3 A document dealing with the duties of a king (Cf. Deut 17:14-20; 1 Sa 10:25).

**"They anointed him"** – In Israel, three people were anointed:

- 1 Priests Ex 28:41; 29:21, 29; Lev 4:3;
- 2 Prophets 1 Ki 19:16; Psa 105:15;
- 3 Kings 1 Sa 2:10; Jud 9:8, 15;

**Verse 14, "standing by the pillar"** – One of the two bronze pillars (Jakin and Boaz) which stood at the entrance of the Temple (Cf. 2 Ki 23:3; 1 Ki 7:15-22; 2 Chr 23:13).

**Verse 15, "Bring her out between the ranks"** – "Or out from the precincts" (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

## CHAPTER TWELVE

**vv 1-21 – JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE**

Under the influence of Jehoiada, Joash encouraged the worship of Yahweh (1-3). However, his project for repairing the temple (damaged by Athaliah and her followers; Cf. 2 Chr 24:7) was hindered by the priests. They lacked enthusiasm and were inefficient, and possibly dishonest, in handling the finances (4-8). Joash therefore separated the funds for the priests' personal use from the funds for the temple repairs, and placed the latter under the supervision of an official of the royal treasury. He then hired workers who had a desire to do the work properly and honestly (9-16). After Jehoiada's death, Joash, no longer under the strong priestly influence of his life-long adviser, soon turned to idolatry. When rebuked by the new high priest Zechariah, Joash had Zechariah murdered (Cf. 2 Chr 24:15-22; Mt 23:35). Judgment on Joash was swift and severe. Hazael led his troops across Israel and south into Judah as far as Gath. He then turned to attack Jerusalem, and Joash saved the city only by robbing the temple treasury and sending the money to Hazael (17-18; Cf. 2 Chr 24:23-24). However, he could not buy off the judgment that was to fall on him personally. Soon after the battle he was assassinated by some of his officers, and was not even given a royal burial (19-21; Cf. 2 Chr 24:25-27).

*Verse 1, “In the seventh year of Jehu”* – 835 B.C.

*“Joash became king”* – “Hebrew *Jehoash*, a variant of *Joash*; also in verses 2, 4, 6, 7 and 18” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

*“he reigned in Jerusalem forty years”* – 835-796 B.C.

*Verse 2, “all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him”* – After Jehoiada died, Joash turned away from the Lord (Cf. 2 Chr 24:17-27).

*Verse 9, “The priests who guarded the entrance”* – Three high-ranking priests guarded the entrance to the temple from unlawful entry (Cf. 2 Ki 25:18; Jer 52:24).

*Verse 10, “the royal secretary”* – Joash arranged direct royal supervision. Cf. 2 Sa 8:17. The secretary kept records of important political events and various administrative functions.

*Verse 11, “the men appointed to supervise”* – The whole matter is taken out of the hands of the priests.

*Verse 13, “The money brought into the temple was not spent”* – All the money was used for the restoration of the temple building. Later, when the restoration was completed, funds were used for the furnishings and vessels (Cf. 2 Chr 24:14).

*Verse 17, “Hazael king of Aram”* – Cf. 2 Ki 8:7-15; 10:23-33; 13:3, 22.

*“attacked Gath”* – A Philistine city (Jos 13:3) that David had conquered (1 Chr 18:1). Later, however, the Arameans were able to advance against the Philistines and Judah with little resistance.

*“turned to attack Jerusalem”* – Cf. 2 Chr 24:23-24.

*Verse 20, “at Beth Millo”* – *Beth* = house; *Millo* comes from a word meaning ‘to fill’, suggesting an earthen mound (Cf. Jud 9:46 where Beth Millo seems to = *stronghold*). In 2 Sa 5:9 *Millo* is translated as “supporting terraces”. So the meaning here seems to be to army barracks built on the *Millo* in the old City of David. The king may have been staying here with his troops, as 2 Chr 24:25 tells us that he was killed “in his bed”.

*“on the road down to Silla”* – The road from the City of David to the Kidron Valley.

*Verse 21, “The officials”* – Sons of Ammonite and Moabite mothers (2 Chr 24:26) suggesting they were mercenaries.

*“buried with his fathers”* – Cf. 2 Chr 24:24-27.

*“Amaziah his son succeeded him as king”* – See 2 Ki 14:1-22.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

**vv 1-9 – JEHOAHAZ, KING OF ISRAEL**

Jehu's son, Jehoahaz, followed the sins of earlier Israelite kings, and so did his people. The Syrian attacks that Elisha had foreseen were so severe that, had God not mercifully intervened, the whole population would have been left homeless and the entire army destroyed.

**Verse 1, “In the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Joash, Jehoahaz became king”** – 814 B.C.

**“he reigned 17 years”** – 814 to 798 B.C.

**Verse 3, “Ben-Hadad his son”** – Ben-Hadad began to reign in 806 or 796 B.C. Cf. v 24.

**Verse 5, “provided a deliverer for Israel”** – The Lord’s deliverer was either:

*Adadnirari III* (810-783 B.C.) of Assyria whose attacks on Damascus in 806 & 804 enabled the Israelites to break the Aramean control over their territory (see v 25);

*Jehoash son of Jehoahaz* (see vv 17, 19, 25), or

*Jeroboam II* who was able to extend Israel’s boundary northward (see 14:25, 27).

**Verse 6, “the Asherah pole remained standing”** – “That is, a symbol of the goddess Asherah; here and elsewhere in 2 Kings” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 7, “except 50 horsemen, 10 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers”** – In 853 B.C., Ahab had contributed 2,000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers to the army that fought the Assyrians at the battle of Qarqar (Cf. 1 Ki 22:1). That was just one part of Ahab’s army, but this is Jehoahaz’s entire army.

**vv 10-25 – JEHOASH, KING OF ISRAEL**

The next king, Jehoash, learnt from Elisha that he would win three battles against Syria. He would have won more, had he not been so lacking in faith in God (10-19). During Jehoash's reign Elisha died, but dramatic events at Elisha's tomb showed that the God who had worked through him was still alive and powerful (20-21). Jehoash won three battles as Elisha had foretold, and thereby regained some of Israel's lost territory (22-25).

**Verse 10, “In the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash became king”** – 798 B.C.

**“he reigned 16 years”** – 798 to 782 B.C.

**Verse 14, “Elisha was suffering from the illness”** – We last heard of Elisha in 2 Ki 9:1, 43 years previously. Elisha must be about 80 years old by now.

**“The chariots and horsemen of Israel”** – recognition by Jehoash that Elisha was of great significance for Israel’s military success than Israel’s military forces (Cf. 2 Ki 2:12; 6:13, 16-23).

**Verse 17, “Open the east window”** – The East window faced Transjordan which was controlled by the Arameans (Cf. 2 Ki 10:32-33).

**“at Aphek”** – This *Aphek* was located a few miles East of the Sea of Galilee, near the junction of the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers. About 60 years earlier King Ahab had won a decisive victory over the Arameans and Ben-Hadad II there (Cf. 1 Ki 20:26-30).

**Verse 23, “To this day”** – That is, until the day the redactor compiled his account of this event (Cf. 1 Ki 8:8; 2 Ki 14:7; 2 Chr 5:9).

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

**vv 1-22 – AMAZIAH, KING OF JUDAH**

Following the murder of his father Joash, Amaziah came to the throne of Judah. Once firmly in control, he executed his father's murderers (1-6). He planned to attack Edom, but when a census of his army revealed that he had not enough soldiers, he hired trained men from Israel. A prophet told him to send the Israelites back, for God would not give Judah's army victory while it contained men from the ungodly northern kingdom. Angry at missing the chance to raid the Edomites, the northerners raided the cities of Judah instead. Amaziah, meanwhile, attacked and defeated Edom (v 7; Cf. 2 Chr 25:5-13). Foolishly, Amaziah brought back to his palace some of the idols of the defeated Edomites. His military victory had given him such self-assurance that he thought he could act independently of God and ignore the warnings of God's prophets (2 Chr 25:14-16). Confident in his increased military experience, he decided to attack Israel. The Israelite king warned him that Judah would be defeated, but Amaziah persisted. Judah was defeated, Amaziah was taken captive and Jerusalem was plundered (8-16; Cf. 13:12). Later he was allowed to return to his throne, but apparently he was unpopular and, like his father, was assassinated (17-22).

**Verse 1, “In 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Jehoash, Amaziah began to reign”** – 796 B.C.

**Verse 2, “he reigned in Jerusalem 29 years”** – 796 to 767 B.C. Amaziah's 29 year reign included a 24 year co-regency with his son, Azariah (Cf. 2 Ki 14:21; 15:1-2).

**Verse 6, “each is to die for his own sins”** – “See Deut 24:16” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 7, “the Valley of Salt”** – The *Arabah* directly South of the Dead Sea.

**“Sela in battle, calling it Joktheel”** – *Sela* means ‘Rock’ and is generally identified with *Petra* (Greek for ‘Rock’) (Cf. Jud 1:36; Isa 16:1; 42:11; Obad 1:3). *Joktheel* seems to mean, “obedient to God”.

**Verse 13, “a section about six hundred feet long”** – “Hebrew *four hundred cubits* (about 180 meters)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 19, “he fled to Lachish”** – A fortress city in S. Judah, 24km (15 m) W of Hebron.

**Verse 21, “the people of Judah took Azariah”** – “Also called *Uzziah*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 22, “rebuilt Elath”** – Elath was the important port city on the Gulf of Aqaba.

**vv 23-29 – JEROBOAM II, KING OF ISRAEL**

During the long reigns of Jeroboam II in the north and Azariah (or Uzziah) in the south, Israel and Judah experienced political stability and economic development such as they had not known since the days of David and Solomon. This was possible partly because political conditions in the region were favourable to Israel and Judah. Syria had been used by God to punish Israel for its sins in following Baal. With the death of Hazael, Syrian power had declined and Israel had regained some lost territory (Cf. 13:24-25). Events further favoured Israel when Assyria, the rising power in the region, became involved in a struggle with enemies to its north and for forty years did not bother Israel and Judah. Under these conditions, Jeroboam II was able to expand his kingdom from Hamath in the north to the Dead Sea in the south, as foretold by the prophet Jonah. This gave him control over many trade routes, which helped increase Israel's wealth further. However, religiously he was a failure, and the evils of his reign were condemned by the prophets Amos and Hosea (23-29; Cf. Amos 1:1, 7:10-11; Hosea 1:1, 7:1-3).

**Verse 23, “In 15<sup>th</sup> year of Amaziah, Jeroboam became king”** – 782 B.C. This was the start of his sole reign. He had already served as co-regent with his father.

**“he reigned 41 years”** – 793 to 753 B.C. (including the co-regency with his father).

**Verse 25, “from Lebo Hamath”** – “Or from the entrance to Hamath” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**“the Sea of the Arabah”** – “That is, the Dead Sea” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 28, “had belonged to Yaudi”** – “Or Judah” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

**vv 1-7 – AZARIAH, KING OF JUDAH**

Azariah (or Uzziah) in Judah began his reign well, mainly because of the godly instruction that he received from his teacher Zechariah (1-3; Cf. 2 Chr 26:1-5). He spread his rule west to the Mediterranean Sea, east over Ammonite territory, and south as far as the Red Sea and Egypt. This gave him control over important land and sea trade routes (Cf. 14:22; 2 Chr 26:6-8). He fortified Jerusalem, improved agricultural and pastoral conditions in every region of the country, built up the armed forces and equipped his troops with the most modern weapons (2 Chr 26:9-15). His big mistake was to think that he could become religious head of the nation as well. God punished him with leprosy, and his son Jotham had to act as joint ruler until Uzziah's death (4-7; 2 Chr 26:16-23).

*Verse 5, “he lived in a separate house”* – “Or in a house where he was relieved of responsibility” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**vv 8-12 – ZECHARIAH, KING OF ISRAEL**

The long and prosperous reign of Jeroboam II brought political as well as social and religious troubles. When Jeroboam died, Israel entered a time of political chaos, as ambitious men fought to seize power. The nation lost its stability, and Assyria soon began to show interest in adding Israel to its rapidly expanding empire. Jehu's dynasty, which had begun bloodily, ended bloodily when the fifth king of the dynasty was murdered after a reign of only six months (8-12; cf. 10:30; Hosea 1:4; Amos 7:9).

*Verse 10, “in front of the people”* – “Hebrew, some Septuagint manuscripts in *Ibleam*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

*Verse 12, “to the fourth generation”* – “See 2 Kings 10:30” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**vv 13-16 – SHALLUM, KING OF ISRAEL**

The assassin, Shallum, reigned only one month before he was murdered by Menahem, who then seized the throne (13-16).

**vv 17-22 – MENAHEM, KING OF ISRAEL**

Menahem survived ten years, but only by buying the protection of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (also known as Pul) at great economic cost to Israel. This policy weakened Israel's independence and opened the way for eventual conquest by Assyria (17-22).

**vv 23-26 – PEKAHIAH, KING OF ISRAEL**

Israel's army commander Pekah was opposed to this pro-Assyrian policy. After Menahem died and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, Pekah murdered Pekahiah and made himself king (23-26). The plots, assassinations and sudden changes of policy in external affairs were repeatedly condemned by God's prophets (Hosea 5:13, 7:3, 7, 11, 8:4, 10:3-4, 12:1).

**vv 27-31 – PEKAH, KING OF ISRAEL**

The writer of Kings records the Assyrian attack mentioned above. Pekah's policy had proved fatal and he was assassinated by Hoshea, a sympathizer with Assyria. Hoshea then became king and won temporary relief for Israel by submitting to Assyria's control (27-31).

**vv 32-38 – JOTHAM, KING OF ISRAEL**

Before speaking further of Hoshea, the writer returns to the time before Pekah was assassinated. Pekah's program for the conquest of Judah had begun during the latter part of Jotham's reign, but reached its climax during the reign of Jotham's successor Ahaz. The aggression of Syria and Israel, and the constant threat from Assyria, prompted Jotham to build defense fortifications throughout Judah. He also made his borders more secure by taking control of the neighbouring country of Ammon (32-38; 2 Chr 27:3-6).

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

**vv 1-20 – AHAZ, KING OF JUDAH**

Because of his lack of faith in God, Ahaz had a disastrous reign. Apart from the great damage he did to Judah by following other gods, he almost ruined the nation's economy by his policies in the war with Israel and Syria. Buying Assyrian aid did not save him from heavy losses in the war, and he would have suffered even heavier losses had not the Israelites released the war prisoners they had taken from Judah. His weakened country suffered further at the hands of invading Edomites from the east and Philistines from the west. In addition, he lost control of the important Red Sea port of Elath (Ezion-geber) (1-9; 2 Chr 28:5-18). Earlier, after losing a battle with Syria, Ahaz had turned from Yahweh to worship the 'victorious' Syrian gods. He had even closed the temple to Yahweh in Jerusalem and built altars to foreign gods throughout Judah (2 Chr 28:22-25). However, Assyria, in response to Ahaz's request, had now conquered Syria (see v. 9) and established both its religion and its administration in Damascus. Ahaz therefore replaced the Syrian religion with the Assyrian, and built a copy of their altar in Jerusalem (10-16). Ahaz's hiring of Assyria was so costly that he had to remove valuable metal from parts of the temple to have enough to pay Tiglath-pileser (17-20). (It was after this conquest of Syria that Tiglath-Pileser overran eastern and northern Israel as recorded earlier; Cf. 15:29.)

**Verse 1, “In the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Pekah, Ahaz began to reign”** – 735 B.C. The reign of Ahaz apparently overlapped the reign of Jotham, with Ahaz serving as the senior partner beginning in 735 B.C.

**Verse 2, “Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king”** – This seems to be the time when Ahaz became a senior co-regent with his father, Jotham. Jotham had been co-regent with his father, Uzziah, from 750-740 B.C. (Cf. 2 Ki 15:530-37). Jotham, however, continued to live until at least 732 B.C.

**“he reigned 16 years”** – This seems to be the number of years that Ahaz reigned after the death of Jotham, i.e., 732-715 B.C.

**Verse 3, “and even sacrificed his son in the fire”** - “Or even made his son pass through the fire” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 8, “sent it as a gift”** – Lit. ‘as a bribe’.

**Verse 12, “and presented offerings on it”** – “Or and went up on it” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 13, “the blood of his fellowship offerings”** – “Traditionally his peace offerings” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 15, “for seeking guidance”** – This refers to the practice of fortune telling for divining by reading the livers and other internal organs of animals.

**Verse 18, “He took away the Sabbath canopy”** – “Or the dais of his throne (see Septuagint)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>). This was probably a sheltered colonnade used by the priests in the Temple.

**Verse 20, “Hezekiah his son succeeded him as king”** - Since Ahaz offered his own children in the fire to Molech, Judah was fortunate to have a royal heir left. In the Talmud, there is a tradition that his son Hezekiah, who followed him on the throne, had survived because his mother smeared his body with the blood of a salamander before the wicked king sacrificed him in the flames. According to the legend, the blood somehow prevented the fire from consuming young Hezekiah and he was spared to reign in his father's place.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

**vv 1-6 – HOSHEA, LAST KING OF ISRAEL**

Sometime after Shalmaneser V succeeded Tiglath-pileser III as king of Assyria, the Israelite king Hoshea attempted to show himself independent of Assyria by refusing to pay the annual tribute. Hoshea thought that with Egyptian support this rebellion would be successful. Shalmaneser's response was to invade Israel and besiege Samaria. After three years, Israel's defense collapsed, and Shalmaneser's successor, Sargon II, captured Samaria and carried off the survivors into captivity (722 BC). This was the end of the northern kingdom (1-6).

**Verse 1, “In the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz, Hoshea became king”** – 732 B.C.

**“he reigned 9 years”** - 732 to 723 B.C.

**Verse 3, “Hoshea had been Shalmaneser's vassal”** – Hoshea had become a vassal to Assyria under the rule of Tiglath-Pileser III, who was followed by Shalmaneser V (727-722 B.C.).

**Verse 4, “sent envoys to So king of Egypt”** – Or to Sais, to the king of Egypt; So is possibly an abbreviation for Osorkon” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 5, “laid siege to it for three years”** – 725 to 722 B.C. Samaria was strongly fortified and extremely hard to conquer (Cf. 1 Ki 16:24).

**Verse 6, “In the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Hoshea”** – 722 B.C.

**“captured Samaria”** – Shalmaneser V died in December 722/721, and the Assyrian throne was seized by Sargon II (722/21 to 705 B.C.) who claims he captured Samaria.

**“deported the Israelites to Assyria”** – Sargon II says he deported 27,290 Israelites.

**“in Gozan on the Habor River”** – Gozan was a small town on a tributary of the Euphrates River.

**“in the towns of the Medes”** – Towns in the area South of the Caspian Sea and Northwest of the Tigris River.

**vv 7-23 – ISRAEL EXILED BECAUSE OF SIN**

The fact that Israel's nineteen kings were spread over nine dynasties shows how unstable the northern kingdom was. At this point, the writer comments at length on the reason for the fall of Israel, namely, the spiritual failure of the people as a whole. Although Jeroboam I had been responsible for changing the official religious policy, the real cause of the failure lay with the common people, who readily copied local religious practices. This was open disobedience to God's covenant commands given by Moses and repeated by the prophets (7-17). In the end, God punished the people by making them captives in a foreign land, as they had once been in Egypt. Only Judah was left, but it too was turning away from God (18-23).

**Verse 12, “You shall not do this”** – “See Exodus 20:4-5” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 17, “They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire”** – “Or made their sons and daughters pass through the fire” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**vv 24-41 – SAMARIA RESETTLED**

Following their normal policy, the Assyrians resettled people from other parts of their Empire into cities of the northern Israelite kingdom (which now became known as Samaria). These people tried to avoid punishment from Israel's God by combining the worship of Yahweh with their own religious practices. They also intermarried with Israelite people who had been left in the land. Their descendants, known as Samaritans, being of mixed blood and mixed religion, were despised by the Jews (24-33; Cf. Jn 4:9; 8:48). The presence of all these religions in the land God had given to Israel was in sharp contrast to God's plan, which was for Israel to worship him alone (34-41).

**Verse 29, “the people of Samaria”** – The foreigners intermarried the peasants who were left. Their religion was syncretistic – a mixture of worship of Yahweh and their pagan ways.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

**vv 1-16 – HEZEKIAH, KING OF JUDAH**

With the destruction of the kingdom of Israel in the north and the disastrous reign of Ahaz in the south, Assyrian influence in Palestine was at its peak. In spite of this, the young newly crowned king Hezekiah set out on the bold task of reforming Judah's religion and freeing Judah from Assyrian power. He destroyed all the local idolatrous shrines (something that no king since David had been able to do), and because of this the writer of Kings regarded him as Judah's greatest king (1-6). (For Hezekiah's extensive religious reforms, see 2 Chr 29:1-31:21. The reforms, however, were largely external, being concerned mainly with temple services and ceremonies. There is no evidence of any lasting change in either the rulers or the people, and no direct reference to the reforms by the prophets of the time, Isaiah and Micah.) Hezekiah realized that once he reversed his father's policy in relation to Assyria, the Assyrian army would attack Jerusalem. He therefore prepared for possible siege by strengthening Jerusalem's defenses and improving its water supply (Cf. 20:20; 2 Chr 32:5). As soon as he was assured of military support from Egypt, he revolted against Assyria by refusing to pay further tribute. Isaiah opposed this dependence on Egypt, just as during the reign of Ahaz he had opposed dependence on Assyria. What Judah needed was not military help from Egypt but quiet faith in God (7-8; Isa 30:1-3, 15). Assyria's recent conquest of the northern kingdom should have been a warning to Hezekiah (9-12). When news reached Hezekiah that the Assyrian army, under the new leader Sennacherib, was heading for Jerusalem, he quickly prepared the defenses of the city. He also cut off any water supply outside the city that might be of help to the besieging armies. Above all, he encouraged his troops to trust in God for victory (v 13; Cf. 2 Chr 32:1-8). However, on seeing the strength of the siege, Hezekiah began to repent of his rebellion and offered to pay whatever money Sennacherib demanded (14-16).

**Verse 2, “His mother's name was Abijah”** – “Hebrew, *Abi*, a variant of *Abijah*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 4, “It was called Nehushtan”** – “Or *He* called it *Nehushtan*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**“Nehushtan”** – “*Nehushtan* sounds like the Hebrew for *bronze* and *snake* and *unclean thing*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 14, “three hundred talents of silver”** – “That is about 10 metric tons (about 10 tons)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**“thirty talents of gold”** – “That is about 1 metric ton (about 1 ton)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 24, “chariots and horsemen”** – “Or *chariots* and *charioteers*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**vv 17-37 – SENNACHERIB THREATENS JERUSALEM**

After taking a large sum of money from Hezekiah, the Assyrian king showed that he intended to punish him anyway. He sent three senior officers to demand that Hezekiah surrender. Unknowingly, these officials agreed with Isaiah (though for different reasons) in pointing out how useless it was to depend on Egypt for help (17-21; Cf. Isa 30:1-3; 31:1-3, 8). In any case, they claimed, it was Yahweh who had sent the Assyrians to punish Jerusalem (22-25). On seeing that the Jerusalem officials were troubled by their words, the Assyrian officials spoke even more boldly. They tried to persuade the people of Jerusalem to surrender unconditionally, and guaranteed that they would be treated well in the lands to which the Assyrians would take them (26-32). The Assyrians' big mistake, however, was to insult Yahweh by claiming that he was no stronger than the gods of other nations whom the Assyrians had conquered (33-37).

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

## vv 1-14 - JERUSALEM'S DELIVERANCE FORETOLD

When Hezekiah sent to enquire about the situation from Isaiah, the reply made it clear that God would not tolerate the Assyrians' mockery (1-7). The Assyrians temporarily withdrew from Jerusalem to deal with an enemy attack elsewhere, but sent a letter renewing their threats and challenging God to resist them (8-14).

**Verse 2, "the leading priests"** – Lit., 'the elders of the priests'. Elders in Israel were of two kinds, one performing primarily civil functions (generally rendered simply as *elders*, Cf. Jer 19:1), and the other primarily religious functions. These seem to have been the oldest members of the various priestly families. The present crisis involved not only the city of Jerusalem but also the Temple.

**Verse 8, "Lachish"** – About 50km (30 miles) Southwest of Jerusalem guarded the main road to Jerusalem from that area

**"Libnah"** – A strong military fortress, close to the Philistine border near Lachish.

**Verse 9, "Tirhakah"** – At this time he was still a prince (brother of Pharaoh Shebitky, who had sent him to help Hezekiah. By the time of writing, he had become the king.

**"the Cushite king"** – "That is, from the upper Nile region" (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**"of Egypt"** – Note: the words *of Egypt* are not in the original text, but have been added by the translators to give it better meaning.

**Verse 12, "Gozan"** – Cf. 2 Ki 17:6

**"Haran"** – A flourishing caravan city where the moon-god was worshipped.

**"Rezepth"** – Northeast of Hamath, South of the Euphrates.

**"Eden"** – A district along the Euphrates, South of Haran.

**"Tel Assar"** – Unknown

**Verse 13, "Hamath"** – Cf. 1 Ki 8:65.

**"Arpad"** – Near Hamath, and taken by the Assyrians in 740 B.C. (Cf. 2 Ki 18:34).

**"Sepharvaim"** – In Aramean territory, near Damascus & Hamath (2 Ki 17:24; 18:34)

**"Hena"** – Seems to be close to Arpad and Ivvah (Cf. 2 Ki 18:34)

**"Ivvah"** – Seems to be the same as *Avva* (2 Ki 17:24), in Syria near Sepharvaim.

## vv 15-19 – HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

Hezekiah then presented the whole matter to God, who, being the only true and living God, was the only one who could save Jerusalem (15-19).

## vv 20-37 – ISAIAH PROPHECIES SENNACHERIB'S FALL

Isaiah brought God's reply. It condemned the Assyrians for mocking God and boasting of their achievements, especially when they had only been God's instruments in carrying out his judgments. God would therefore punish the Assyrians and save his people (20-28). Fields not sown because of the enemy's siege would become productive again, and the number of truly faithful believers in Judah would increase (29-34). Having announced his plans, God then acted. The Assyrian army was almost completely destroyed (701 BC), and although Sennacherib escaped home, he was later assassinated (35-37).

**Verse 29, "This year you will eat what grows by itself"** – Apparently Sennacherib attacked about harvest time and destroyed the crops. The people would only get a second, self-sown, crop that came from seeds dropped from the previous harvest (Cf. Lev 25:5).

**"the second year what springs from that"** – Sennacherib's departure would have been too late for the people to sow a new crop (normally September-October).

**"in the third year sow and reap"** – The following year life would return to normal.

**Verse 36, "He returned to Nineveh"** – The capital of the Assyrian empire.

**Verse 37, "his god Nisroch"** – *Nisroch* is unknown, but he may be *Nusku*, the sun god.

**"the land of Ararat"** – A mountainous region N of Mesopotamia and East of Turkey.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

**vv 1-11 – HEZEKIAH’S ILLNESS**

It seems that the events recorded in this chapter occurred before those recorded in 18:13-19:37. Hezekiah was about to die, but, in answer to his prayer, God promised to extend his life. This was for the purpose of bringing Judah through the time of conflict with Assyria that has just been described (1-7). God gave Hezekiah a miraculous sign to prove that he would do what he had promised (8-11).

**Verse 1, “In those days”** – Hezekiah’s illness (vv 1-11) and his reception of the envoys (vv 12-19) must have preceded the Assyrian campaign (601 B.C., Cf. 2 Ki 20:6; 12-13).

**“you are going to die”** – He was 25 years of age when he became king in 715 B.C. (Cf. 2 Ki 18:2). Hezekiah died in 686 B.C. Since 15 years were added to his life (v 6), this event must have taken place in about 702 B.C., when Hezekiah was about 37 years old.

**Verse 3, “with wholehearted devotion”** - (*with a perfect heart*, KJV). Lit., *with a whole heart*, i.e., *with a loyal heart*. There was no duplicity or deceit in his faith.

**Verse 5, “I will heal you”** – God is sovereign (Psa 139:16; Eph 1:11), but this does not remove the need for prayer, as both prayer and God’s sovereign response to prayer are part of the mystery of God (Cf. 1 Ki 21:29).

**Verse 7, “a poultice of figs”** – A poultice like this was used on both humans and animals to draw poison from a wound. Did God use this poultice to heal him, or was it like Elisha’s use of salt (2 Ki 2:20) and flour (2 Ki 4:41)?

**Verse 10, “go back the ten steps it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz”** – Was this a sundial or a staircase? The KJV renders it, ‘*dial*’, but the Septuagint says it was an actual flight of steps arranged so that the shadow on them could tell the time. How did the miracle happen? We don’t know. Did the sundial move? Was the light reflected off some object?

**vv 12-21 – ENVOYS FROM BABYLON**

At this time, Babylon was increasing in power and was looking for allies to help it overthrow Assyria. Hezekiah's illness gave the Babylonian king an excuse to send representatives to Jerusalem, in the hope that they could encourage Hezekiah to join with Babylon against Assyria. Hezekiah was proud of the prosperity he had brought to his kingdom, and was willing to co-operate (12-13; 2 Chr 32:25, 31). Again, Isaiah condemned this willingness to enter into foreign alliances. He saw that it would result eventually in conquest by the allied nation (14-21).

**Verse 12, “Merodach-Baladan”** – Means, *the god Marduk has given me a son*. He ruled Babylon from 721-710 B.C., before being conquered by Assyria. However, after Sargon’s death he regained his independence until Sennacherib forced him to flee in 703 B.C.

**“sent Hezekiah letters and a gift”** – This seems to have been to entice Hezekiah to join a military alliance against Assyria.

**Verse 20, “how he made the pool and the tunnel”** – He built a tunnel from the Gihon Spring (outside the city wall, 1 Ki 1:33, 38) to a cistern inside the walls (2 Chr 32:30). The tunnel, cut through solid rock is 590m (1,700’) long and varies from 1.1m (3.6’) to 3.5m (11.5’) high and averages 61cm (2’) in width.

## CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

**vv 1-18 – MANASSEH, KING OF JUDAH**

Hezekiah's reforms had cleansed Judah of the outward forms of foreign religion, but there was no real change in the inward spiritual condition of most of the people. The faithful remnant was still small (Cf. 19:30-31). Possibly, under pressure from Assyria, Manasseh reversed his father's religious policy and with almost fanatical zeal reintroduced foreign religious ideas of every kind. Fifty-five years under his rule left Judah in a worse spiritual condition than that for which God had destroyed the original Canaanites (1-9). For this reason, God announced that he would punish Judah as he had punished Israel. No later king was able to correct fully the evil that Manasseh brought upon Judah (10-16; Cf. 23:26-27). Towards the end of his reign, Manasseh apparently tried to rebel against Assyria. He was taken captive and brought before the Assyrian leaders at Babylon, which at that time was under the control of Assyria. Later he was allowed to return to Jerusalem. Believing that his captivity was a punishment by God for his sins, he attempted to return to the true worship of Yahweh. However, it was too late to undo the damage he had done over the previous half a century, and his reform had no lasting effect (17-18; 2 Chr 33:10-20).

**Verse 1, “Manasseh was 12 years old”** – i.e., Manasseh was born after Hezekiah's illness. His name means, ‘*he causes to forget*’.

**“he reigned in Jerusalem 55 years”** – 697-642 B.C. This included a 10 year co-regency with his father (697-686). He was the longest reigning of any of the kings of Judah.

**Verse 2, “the detestable practices of the nations”** – ‘*the abominations of the heathen*’ (KJV), is lit. ‘*the disgusting actions*’ and is a term to include all of the sins listed in verses 3-7.

**Verse 3, “worshipped all the host of heaven”** – He introduced the Assyrian practice of worshipping the Sun, moon and stars, and even erected altars for them in the Temple (vv 4-5).

**Verse 6, “practiced sorcery and divination”** – *Sorcery* is *onen* which is related to *anen* = a *cloud*. The primary meaning is ‘*to cover*’ and hence ‘*to act secretly*’, i.e., to practice magic.

**Verse 13, “the measuring line used against Samaria and the plumb line used against the house of Ahab”** – The *measuring line* and *plumb line* are normally used in construction, but here of judgement (Cf. Isa 34:11; Amos 7:7-9).

**Verse 16, “shed so much innocent blood”** – He martyred many godly people who opposed his evil practices. Jewish tradition says he had Isaiah sawn in two (Cf. Heb 11:37).

**Verse 18, “buried in his palace garden, the garden of Uzza”** – *Uzza* seems to be a shortened form of *Uzziah* (Cf. 2 Ki 21:18).

**vv 19-26 – AMON, KING OF JUDAH**

Manasseh's son Amon returned to the earlier policies of his father, but after a brief reign, he was murdered. Some of the leading citizens, tired of the constant cruelty and bloodshed (Cf. v. 16), executed Amon's murderers and put Amon's eight-year-old son Josiah on the throne (about 640 BC). In this way, the power could rest with the king's advisers, who could then develop the national policy in a way that would benefit the people and restore peace and stability to Judah (19-26).

**Verse 19, “he reigned in Jerusalem 2 years”** – 642-640 B.C.

**“she was from Jotbah”** – *Jotbah* seems to be *Jotbathah* (Cf. Num 33:33-34; Deut 10:7) near Ezion Geber (Elath), the Red Sea port. However, Saint Jerome said it was in the Galilee.

## CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

**vv 1-20 – THE BOOK OF THE LAW FOUND**

Included in Josiah's reforms was a project for extensive repairs to the temple, which had been damaged during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon (1-7). By this time Assyrian power had weakened considerably, which enabled Josiah to carry out his reformation program without interference from outside. He was even able to extend his power into the conquered territory of the former northern kingdom (Cf. 23:15, 19; 2 Chr 34:6-7). During the fifty-seven years when Manasseh and Amon had reigned, a new generation had grown up in Judah who knew nothing of the law of God as given to Israel by Moses. When workers who were repairing the temple found some scrolls of this long-forgotten law, Josiah, on reading the scrolls, was shocked to discover how far Judah had turned away from God (8-13). He sent messengers to ask a prophet what he should do, and received the reply that, despite his personal faith, Judah was doomed. Nevertheless, God wanted him to continue his reforming work, so that the judgment might be postponed to the reign of some future king (14-20).

**Verse 1, “he reigned in Jerusalem 31 years”** – 640-609 B.C.

**“she was from Bozkath”** – *Bozkath* is in Judah near Lachish.

**Verse 3, “In the 18<sup>th</sup> year of his reign”** – 622 B.C., when he was 26 years of age.

**Verse 4, “Hilkiah the high priest”** – Father of Azariah and grandfather of Seraiah who was later executed by the Babylonians (2 Ki 25:18-20). It is unlikely that this *Hilkiah* was the father of Jeremiah (Cf. Jer 1:1).

**Verse 8, “have found the Book of the Law”** – Some feel that he found the Book of Deuteronomy (that had been especially written for this occasion), however most evangelicals believe it was the Pentateuch (The Book of the Law of Moses). Josephus says they found the book in the bottom of one of the temple treasury chests when the money was taken out.

**Verse 11, “he tore his robes”** – Contrast his reaction with that of Jehoiakim to the message from Jeremiah (Cf. Jer 36:24 and 2 Ki 18:37).

**Verse 12, “Ahikam son of Shaphan”** – Father of *Gedaliah* who was later appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar (Cf. 2 Ki 25:22; Jer 39:14).

**Verse 14, “the prophetess Huldah”** – Why did they seek Huldah and not Jeremiah or Zephaniah?

**“in the Second District”** – Lit., the “*New Quarter*”, perhaps referring to a newly settled area between the first and second walls (Cf. 2 Chr 33:14).

**Verse 17, “by all the idols their hands have made”** – “Or by everything they have done” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

## CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

**vv 1-30 – JOSIAH RENEWS THE COVENANT**

Josiah was not discouraged by the prophecy of ultimate judgment on Judah. On the contrary, he became more energetic in his efforts to change his people. His greater reformation would now begin. To gain the co-operation of all the leading citizens, he explained to them the contents of the book on which he was basing his reforms, then invited them to join with him in renewing the covenant with God (1-3). With uncompromising zeal, Josiah removed all idolatrous priests and destroyed all shrines and sacred objects associated with other gods, whether in Judah or in former Israel. Having destroyed the country shrines, he then centralized the worship in Jerusalem where it could be properly supervised. Although most of the priests came to live in Jerusalem, some refused (4-14; 2 Chr 34:6-7). At Bethel, he burnt the bones of the false prophets on their altar before destroying it, as foretold by an earlier prophet. However, he was careful not to damage the tomb where the bones of the prophet lay (15-20; Cf. 1 Ki 13:1-3, 29-32). On the positive side, Josiah re-established the worship of Yahweh by keeping the Passover. The festival had added significance at this time, as it symbolized yet another deliverance from bondage (21-23). For details of this Passover Cf. 2 Chr 35:1-19). He also ordered the removal of all private household gods, and prohibited all forms of spiritism and fortune telling. Apart from Hezekiah, Josiah was the only king of Judah to receive unqualified praise from the writer of Kings (24-25; Cf. 18:5). However, Josiah's reforms were not enough to remove the idolatrous ideas so deeply rooted in the minds of the people. Few were genuinely converted, and God did not remove his earlier sentence of judgment (26-27). During the years of Assyria's declining power, Egypt took the opportunity to extend its influence. However, Babylon had now risen to power, and in 612 BC, it conquered Nineveh. Pharaoh Necho of Egypt, fearing this Babylonian expansion, went to help what was left of Assyria to withstand Babylon. He no doubt hoped that Assyria might yet form some sort of defense barrier between Egypt and Babylon. Josiah apparently saw this Assyrian-Egyptian alliance as a threat to Judah's independence. He preferred Assyria to remain weak and tried to stop Egypt from helping it. This proved to be a fatal move. Judah was defeated and Josiah killed in battle (609 BC). By a decision of Judah's leading officials, Josiah's second son Jehoahaz (or Joahaz) was made the new king (28-30; 2 Chr 35:20-25). Meanwhile Assyria collapsed completely, and never again became a nation.

*Verse 8, “He broke down the shrines” – “Or He broke down the high places” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>)*

*Verse 13, “and for Molech” – “Hebrew Milcom” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).*

*Verse 27, “There shall my Name be” – “See 1 Kings 8:29” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).*

**vv 31-35 – JEHOAHAZ, KING OF JUDAH**

Pharaoh Necho now considered himself the controller of Judah, and he would not accept the king chosen by the people of Judah. The unfortunate Jehoahaz was thrown into prison and later taken to Egypt, where he eventually died. (31-35).

*Verse 33, “Riblah in the land of Hamath” – “Hebrew; Septuagint (see also 2 Chr 36:3) Necho at Riblah in Hamath removed him” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>)*

*“a hundred talents of silver” – “That is about 3.4 metric tons (about 3 ¾ tons)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>)*

*“a talent of gold” – “That is about 34 kilograms (about 75 pounds)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).*

**vv 36-37 – JEHOIAKIM, KING OF JUDAH**

Necho put Jehoahaz's older brother Jehoiakim on the throne instead, and placed a heavy tax on Judah (36-37).

**CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR****vv 1-7 – JEHOIAKIM OF JUDAH (continued)**

It soon became clear why the people of Judah had not chosen Jehoiakim as king. He was a proud, cruel and oppressive ruler, who murdered those who opposed him and insultingly rejected the advice of God's prophets (Cf. 24:4; Jer. 26:20-23, 36:1-32). In spite of the heavy taxes his country had to pay Egypt, he built himself luxurious royal buildings, forcing people to work on his selfish projects without payment (Jer. 22:13-17). In 605 BC the armies of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt in the famous Battle of Carchemish (Jer. 46:2). This meant that Judah now came under the control of, and had to pay tribute to, Babylon. When the conquerors returned to Babylon, they took with them captives from the conquered countries, including some of the most capable and well educated young men they could find among the leading families of Jerusalem. One of these was the youth Daniel (Dan. 1:1-6). After three years Jehoiakim stopped paying tribute, thinking that Nebuchadnezzar was too busy with wars elsewhere to deal with Judah. Jehoiakim depended on Egypt to support his rebellion, a policy that Jeremiah consistently and courageously opposed (Jer. 2:18, 36). Nebuchadnezzar did not attack Jerusalem immediately, but he encouraged other countries within his Empire to raid Judah and so gradually weaken her (1-4). When he had put down rebellion elsewhere, Nebuchadnezzar sent his armies to besiege Jerusalem. Jehoiakim was taken prisoner and chained ready to be sent to Babylon, but he died before the journey began. No one mourned his death, and his body was thrown on the garbage dump outside Jerusalem as if it were the carcass of an unclean animal (5-7; 2 Chr 36:6; Jer. 22:18-19; 36:30).

*Verse 2, “The LORD sent Babylonian” – “Or The LORD sent Chaldean” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>),.*

**vv 8-17 – JEHOIACHIN, KING OF JUDAH**

The eighteen year old Jehoiachin (also known as Jeconiah, or Coniah) then became king. After three months he saw that further resistance was useless and surrendered (597 BC). Most of the nation's treasures, along with the king, the royal family, the palace officials and all Judah's best people were carried off to Babylon. Among these captives was the young man Ezekiel. Only those whom Babylon did not want were left in Jerusalem. Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, was appointed by Babylon as king (8-17; see Ezek. 1:1-3).

**vv 18-20 – ZEDEKIAH, KING OF JUDAH**

All Judah's most capable administrators had been taken captive to Babylon. The few advisers left to Zedekiah had no true understanding of the situation, either political or religious, and were able to persuade the weak king to seek Egypt's help in rebelling against Babylon. This was a policy that Jeremiah clearly saw was disastrous, for it would lead only to the horrors of siege and destruction. His advice was that Judah accept its fate as God's will and submit to Babylon (18-20; 2 Chr 36:11-14; Jer. 21:1-10; 27:12-15; 37:6-10). However, Zedekiah followed the advice of the pro-Egypt party and rebelled against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar decided to crush the rebellious city once and for all. Egypt came to Jerusalem's aid and the siege was temporarily lifted, but Jeremiah assured the Jerusalemites that this would only give Babylon greater determination to crush both Egypt and Judah. The pro-Egypt party accused Jeremiah of being a traitor and had him imprisoned (Jer. 37:1-21, 38:1-28).

## CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

**vv 1-26 – THE FALL OF JERUSALEM**

The Babylonians returned and Jeremiah's prophecy soon came true. The horrors of the siege are vividly described in the book of Lamentations (Lam 2:10-12, 19-21; 4:4-5, 7-9). When, after a siege of eighteen months, the Babylonians finally made a break in the wall, Zedekiah and some of his men tried to escape, but were captured by the enemy (1-7). Babylonian soldiers then poured into the city, seizing anything of value that could be taken back to Babylon, and burning or smashing what remained. This was the end of Jerusalem (587 BC). The leaders of the rebellion were killed, and the most useful citizens taken captive (8-17). In the course of arresting the chief officials of Jerusalem, the Babylonians released Jeremiah from jail and gave him full freedom to decide where he would like to live, Babylon or Judah. Jeremiah chose to stay in Judah with a small number of farmers and other poorer people who were of no use to Babylon (18-21; Jer. 39:11-40:6). Gedaliah was appointed governor of those who remained in Judah, and with Jeremiah's support he followed a pro-Babylon policy. He took no action against Judah's anti-Babylon military leaders who had managed to escape the Babylonian army. Rather he encouraged them, along with other refugees who had fled the country, to return and settle around Mizpah, north of Jerusalem (22-24; Jer. 40:7-12). Within a few months, Gedaliah was treacherously murdered by the leaders of the anti-Babylon group. Fearing a revenge attack by Nebuchadnezzar, the remaining Judeans in the resettlement area fled for their lives to Egypt, taking the protesting Jeremiah with them (25-26; Jer. 40:13-43:7). According to tradition, Jeremiah was stoned to death in Egypt by his fellow Jews. The Babylonians, meanwhile, made their punishing raid on Judah as expected, and took captive any that they found (582 BC; Jer. 52:30).

**Verse 3, “the fourth month”** – Note: the word *fourth* is not in the original text, but has been added by translators. See Jeremiah 52:6.

**Verse 4, “the Babylonians”** – “Or *Chaldeans*, also in verses 5, 10, 13, 24, 25, 26” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**“They fled toward the Arabah”** – “Or *the Jordan Valley*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**Verse 17, “Each pillar was twenty-seven feet high”** – “Hebrew *eighteen cubits* (about 8.1 meters)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**“one pillar was four and a half feet high”** – “Hebrew *three cubits* (about 1.3 meters)” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

**vv 27-30 – JEHOIACHIN RELEASED**

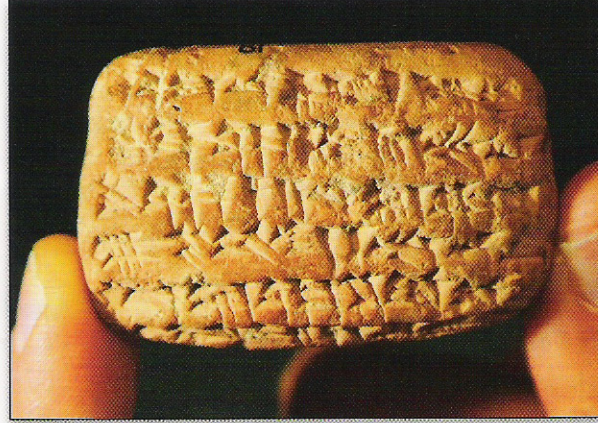
After all the centuries of God's dealings with his people, most of them were now back in Chaldea (Babylon) from where Abraham had been called, and others were back in Egypt where their forefathers had once been slaves. However, God had not cast off his people. They had a sign of hope for the future when the Babylonians released Jehoiachin from prison and promoted him to a place of honour in the Babylonian palace (in 568 BC). God was still in charge of his people's affairs, and one day a remnant would return to the homeland and rebuild the nation (27-30; Cf. Jer. 29:10-14).

**Verse 27, “Evil-Merodach became king”** – “Also called *Amel-Marduk*” (NIV<sup>mg</sup>).

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## ANCIENT RECEIPT CONFIRMS THE OLD TESTAMENT IS BASED ON FACTS



*This tiny cuneiform tablet is a receipt for a donation of gold to a temple made by Nebo-Sarsekim, a Babylonian official mentioned in Jeremiah 39:3. The discovery proves the existence of yet another biblical figure.*

While searching for Babylonian financial accounts among the Assyrian cuneiform tablets in the British Museum, Professor Michael Jursa, found a reference to a Nebo-Sarsekim. It was on a receipt dated 10<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (595 B.C.) for his payment of 0.75 kg of gold to a temple in Babylon. This is clearly the same man that Jeremiah 39:3 mentions. (**Jer 39:3**, "Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and took seats in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer of Samgar, *Nebo-Sarsekim a chief officer*, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officials of the king of Babylon.")

*(The Daily Telegraph, July 13, 2007.)*

## 3,000-YEAR-OLD ARTIFACTS REVEAL HISTORY BEHIND BIBLICAL DAVID AND GOLIATH

*Yosef Garfinkel, an archaeologist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, shows off an ark, or stone shrine model, that was found during excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa, an ancient settlement southwest of Jerusalem.*



An archaeological dig near Goliath's biblical hometown has yielded evidence of Judean religious practices 3,000 years ago, pointing up fresh historical connections to the stories of King David and King Solomon. "We have a city with a population relating to the Kingdom of Judah," Yosef Garfinkel, an archaeologist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, told me today. "This is totally different from Philistine, Canaanite or the cult in the Kingdom of Israel." The site, known today as Khirbet Qeiyafa, is about 20 miles (30 kilometers) southwest of Jerusalem, on top of a hill overlooking the Valley of Elah. For the past five years, Garfinkel and his colleagues have been excavating the ruins of a fortified city there, situated across from what was once the Philistine city of Gath. In the Bible, the giant Goliath came out from Gath to face the Israelites, and was smitten by a rock hurled from David's sling. Garfinkel can't vouch for the story of Goliath, but he says the weapons, the cult items and even the animal bones found

around Khirbet Qeiyafa support his view that the settlement was a key military outpost for the historical House of David, riven by conflict. "There was something here quite military and quite aggressive," he said. "It was not a peaceful village." Based on radiocarbon dating of burned olive pits found at the site, archaeologists believe the ancient city lasted for only 40 years, from 1020 to 980 B.C., before it was destroyed. Some skeptics have suggested that Khirbet Qeiyafa was just another Canaanite settlement, and that David was at best a minor chieftain, or perhaps a folkloric figure like Robin Hood. But Garfinkel said the items found at the site strengthen the connection to King David and the religious practices specified in the Bible. "Over the years, thousands of animal bones were found, including sheep, goats and cattle, but no pigs," he said in a news release from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. "Now we uncovered three cultic rooms, with various cultic paraphernalia, but not even one human or animal figurine was found. This suggests that the population on Khirbet Qeiyafa observed two biblical bans — on pork and on graven images — and thus practiced a different cult from that of the Canaanites or the Philistines." Garfinkel told me that the absence of human imagery was peculiar to the Judeans. "In the northern Kingdom of Israel, you find human representations," he said.



*(Left) One of the cultic standing stones can be seen in this picture of the Khirbet Qeiyafa site. (Right) This basalt altar was found during excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa.*



*A decorated clay shrine model was found at the Khirbet Qeiyafa site.*

The cult objects included five standing stones, two basalt altars, two pottery libation vessels and two portable shrines. Garfinkel said the shrines reflected a Mesopotamian architectural style that went back centuries before the era of King David, and probably inspired the look of the palace built by Solomon, David's son. "It seems that Solomon didn't want to be Canaanite and took a different model from Mesopotamia," Garfinkel told me.

The shrines are boxlike containers made of stone or clay. "I think they were called in Hebrew 'Aron,'" Garfinkel wrote in an email. "This had been translated into English as 'ark' and became a mystic artifact. I think that the Hebrew name was just a simple technical term: a box for keeping god symbols."

Such shrines were probably similar in look to the "Ark of God" highlighted in the Bible as well as in such movies as "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

The clay shrine has an intricate facade, featuring two guardian lions, pillars and birds standing on the roof. The stone shrine was painted red, and its facade is decorated with characteristic triglyph symbols as well as a triple-recessed doorway in front. Garfinkel said the Bible may have referred to those architectural features in its description of Solomon's palace. The technical term usually translated as referring to pillars ("Slaot") may actually be talking about triglyphs, while another term that was thought to refer to windows ("Sequfim") might instead refer to the doorways.

"Now you can see by the model that you have triglyphs at the roof, and you have recessed doorways," Garfinkel said. Such features are also mentioned in biblical references to King Solomon's temple, which was built decades after the age that gave rise to the shrines found at Khirbet Qeiyafa.

**RESERVOIR FROM FIRST TEMPLE ERA FOUND IN JERUSALEM**

By Sebastian Scheiner

Israeli archaeologists say it may have been used by Jewish pilgrims 2,600 years ago



Eli Shukron, an archaeologist for the Israel Antiquities Authority, climbs down a ladder into an ancient public water reservoir near the Western Wall in Jerusalem's Old City on Thursday. The finding shows that the Jerusalem's water consumption during the First Jewish Temple period was not based solely on the output of the Gihon Spring but also relied on public reservoirs, according to Shukron.

Archaeologists have found an ancient water reservoir in Jerusalem that may have been used by pilgrims coming to the Temple Mount, the Israeli Antiquities Authority announced. The IAA said the cistern could have held 66,000 gallons (250 cubic meters) of water; it likely dates back to the era of the First Temple, which, according to the Hebrew Bible, was constructed by King Solomon in the 10th century B.C. and then destroyed 400 years later. Israeli archaeologists believe the reservoir served the general public in the ancient city, but say its location hints at a role in the religious life of Jerusalem.

"Presumably the large water reservoir, which is situated near the Temple Mount, was used for the everyday activities of the Temple Mount itself and also by the pilgrims who went up to the Temple and required water for bathing and drinking," Tvika Tsuk, chief archaeologist of Israel's Nature and Parks Authority, said in a statement. Excavation director Eli Shukron, with the IAA, said the reservoir also sheds new light on the extent of the public water system in Jerusalem hundreds of years ago. "It is now absolutely clear that the Jerusalem's water consumption during the First Temple period was not solely based on the output of the Gihon Spring, but that it also relied on public reservoirs," Shukron said in a statement. The Gihon Spring was the main source of water for the city. The reservoir was exposed during excavations on a massive drainage channel dating to the Second Temple period, according to the IAA. When that channel was constructed, its builders had to remove or cut through existing rock-hewn structures along the route, such as this reservoir. Archaeologists with the IAA said they were able to estimate the age of the cistern based on signatures in its plaster treatment and its similarities with other First Temple reservoirs at sites such as Tel Be'er Sheva, Tel Arad and Tel Bet Shemesh.

(NBC News, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2012)

## Sphinx paws tied to Egyptian pharaoh dug up in Israel



By Megan

Gannon

*This sphinx fragment was found by archaeologists with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem during excavations at Hazor.*

*Photo courtesy of Amnon Ben-Tor, Sharon Zuckerman / Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology*

Archaeologists digging in Israel say they have made an unexpected find: the feet of an Egyptian sphinx linked to a pyramid-building pharaoh. The fragment of the statue's front legs was found in Hazor, a UNESCO World Heritage Site just north of the Sea of Galilee. Between the paws is a hieroglyphic inscription with the name of King Menkaure, sometimes called Mycerinus, who ruled Egypt during the Old Kingdom more than 4,000 years ago and built one of the great Giza pyramids. Researchers don't believe Egypt had a relationship with Israel during Menkaure's reign. They think it's more likely that the sphinx was brought to Israel later on, during the second millennium B.C. [Images: Glitzy Discovery at Giza Pyramids]

The inscription also includes the phrase, "*Beloved by the divine manifestation . . . that gave him eternal life.*" Amnon Ben-Tor, one of the Hebrew University archaeologists leading the excavations at Hazor, thinks that descriptor could be a clue the sphinx originated in the ancient seat of sun worship, Heliopolis, which is today mostly destroyed and covered up by Cairo's sprawl. The part-lion, part-human sphinx was a mythical creature represented in art throughout the ancient Near East as well as India and Greece. Ben-Tor and colleagues say the artifact found at Hazor is the first-ever discovered sphinx fragment associated with king Menkaure. It's also the only royal Egyptian sphinx ever to be unearthed in Israel, according to a statement from Hebrew University. The statue fragment was exposed at the entrance to the city palace in an archaeological layer that dates to the mysterious destruction of Hazor when it was occupied by the Canaanites in the 13th century B.C. The researchers think the sphinx could have been brought to Israel during the 17th to 16th centuries B.C., when part of Egypt was controlled by the Hyksos, a people believed to be originally from northern Canaan. Alternatively, the royal sculpture may have arrived in Hazor as a gift from an Egyptian king during the 15th to 13th centuries B.C., when Egypt controlled much of Canaan through a system of vassal states. At that time, Hazor was the most important city in the southern Levant, covering some 200 acres (80 hectares), with an estimated population of about 20,000. Hazor was strategically located at a crossroads between Egypt and Babylon. Initially a Canaanite city, it had been fortified since the early second millennium B.C., conquered by the Israelites, rebuilt under King Solomon and ultimately destroyed by the Assyrians in 732 B.C.

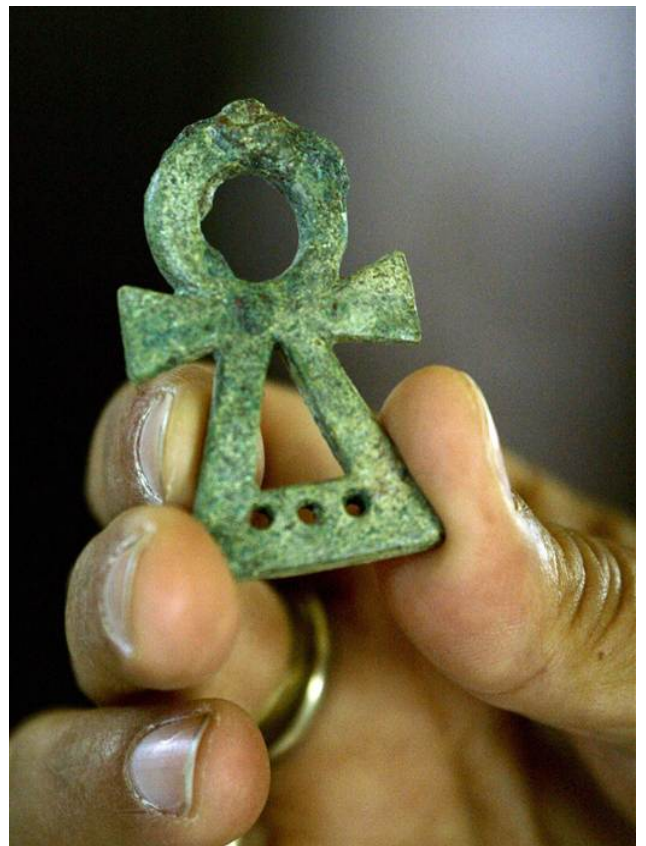
9<sup>th</sup> July, 2013, NBC News/Science.

## Ancient Phoenician Relics Unearthed in Lebanon

By Alan Boyle



Archaeologists have found a treasure trove of ancient artifacts at a dig in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon, including a 4-foot-high (115cm) statue of a Phoenician priest dating back more than 2,500 years. "Nothing comparable has been found in Lebanon since the early 1960s," [Lebanon's Daily Star](#) quoted the excavation's leader, Claude Doumit Serhal, as saying. The priest portrayed in the statue is wearing a ated kilt, and in his left fist he holds an object that experts suggest could be a scroll or a handkerchief.



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Archaeologists hold up the incomplete statue of a Phoenician priest dating back to the sixth century B.C. The statue was displayed at the Freres College site in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon

Archaeologists hold up the incomplete statue of a Phoenician priest dating back to the sixth century B.C. The statue was displayed at the Freres College site in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon on Monday. An archaeologist holds up a bronze symbol representing the Phoenician goddess Tanit during Monday's news conference in Sidon.

The statue was found at Sidon's Freres College site, which has been under excavation for the past 16 years in cooperation with the British Museum. The Daily Star said the statue had been repurposed during the Roman era and was found lying on its front beneath a marble pavement.

Archaeologists also unearthed a bronze representation of the Phoenician goddess [Tanit](#) and Roman-era figurines of the goddess Osiris. They found three previously unknown rooms of a public building from the third millennium B.C., plus 20 graves associated with adults as well as infants from the second millennium B.C., according to the Daily Star.

First published: May 21st 2014, 4:46 am

## Israeli Says He Has Found King David's Citadel

By Daniel Estrin

**Jerusalem** (AP) -- An Israeli archaeologist says he has found the legendary citadel captured by King David in his conquest of Jerusalem, rekindling a longstanding debate about using the Bible as a field guide to identifying ancient ruins. The claim by Eli Shukron, like many such claims in the field of biblical archaeology, has run into criticism. It joins a string of announcements by Israeli archaeologists saying they have unearthed palaces of the legendary biblical king, who is revered in Jewish religious tradition for establishing Jerusalem as its central holy city -- but who has long eluded historians looking for clear-cut evidence of his existence and reign. The present-day Israeli-Palestinian conflict is also wrapped up in the subject. The \$10 million excavation, made accessible to tourists last month, took place in an Arab neighborhood of Jerusalem and was financed by an organization that settles Jews in guarded homes in Arab areas of east Jerusalem in an attempt to prevent the city from being divided. The Palestinians claim east Jerusalem, captured by Israel in 1967, as the capital of a future independent state. Shukron, who excavated at the City of David archaeological site for nearly two decades, says he believes strong evidence supports his theory. "This is the citadel of King David, this is the Citadel of Zion, and this is what King David took from the Jebusites," said Shukron, who said he recently left Israel's Antiquities Authority to work as a lecturer and tour guide. "The whole site we can compare to the Bible perfectly." Most archaeologists in Israel do not dispute that King David was a historical figure, and a written reference to the "House of David" was found in an archaeological site in northern Israel. But archaeologists are divided on identifying Davidic sites in Jerusalem, which he is said to have made his capital.

***"The whole site we can compare to the Bible perfectly."***

Shukron's dig, which began in 1995, uncovered a massive fortification of five-ton stones stacked 21' (6m) wide. Pottery shards helped date the fortification walls to be 3,800 years old. They are the largest walls found in the region from before the time of King Herod, the ambitious builder who expanded the Second Jewish Temple complex in Jerusalem almost 2,100 years ago. The fortification surrounded a water spring and is thought to have protected the ancient city's water source. The fortification was built 800 years before King David would have captured it from its Jebusite rulers. Shukron says the biblical story of David's conquest of Jerusalem provides clues that point to this particular fortification as David's entry point into the city. In the second Book of Samuel, David orders the capture of the walled city by entering it through the water shaft. Shukron's excavation uncovered a narrow shaft where spring water flowed into a carved pool, thought to be where city inhabitants would gather to draw water. Excess water would have flowed out of the walled city through another section of the shaft Shukron said he discovered -- where he believes the city was penetrated. Shukron says no other structure in the area of ancient Jerusalem matches what David would have captured to take the city. The biblical account names it the "Citadel of David" and the "Citadel of Zion." Ronny Reich, who was Shukron's collaborator at the site until 2008, disagrees with the theory. He said more broken pottery found from the 10th century BC, presumably King David's reign, should have been found if the fortification had been in use then. "The connection between archaeology and the Bible has become very, very problematic in recent years," Shukron said he only found two shards that date close to that time. He believes the reason he didn't find more is because the site was in continuous use and old pottery would have been cleared out by David's successors. Much larger quantities of shards found at the site date to about 100 years after King David's reign. Reich said it was not possible to reach definitive conclusions about biblical connections without more direct archaeological evidence. "The connection between archaeology and the Bible has become very, very problematic in recent years," Reich said. Critics say that some archaeologists are too eager to hold a spade in one hand and a Bible in the other in a quest to verify the biblical narrative -- either due to religious beliefs or to prove the Jewish people's historic ties to the land. But other respected Israeli archaeologists say recent finds match the biblical account more than naysayers claim. Shukron, a veteran archaeologist who has excavated a number of significant sites in Jerusalem, said he drew his conclusions after nearly two decades exploring the ancient city. "I know every little thing in the City of David. I didn't see in any other place such a huge fortification as this," said Shukron.

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The biblical connection to the site is emphasized at the City of David archaeological park, where the "Spring Citadel" -- the excavation's official name - has been retrofitted for tourists, including a movie projected on a screen in front of the fortification to illustrate how it may have looked 3,800 years ago. The City of David -- located in east Jerusalem -- is one of the most popular tourist sites in the holy city, with 500,000 tourists visiting last year. "We open the Bible and we see how the archaeology and the Bible actually come together in this place," said Doron Spielman, vice president of the nonprofit Elad Foundation, which oversees the archaeological park. He carried a softcover Bible in his hand as he ambled around the excavation. The site has come under criticism because of the Elad Foundation's nationalistic agenda. Most of the foundation's funding comes from private donations from Jews in the U.S. and U.K., and its activities include purchasing Arab homes near the excavated areas and then helping Jews move in, sometimes under heavy guard. Critics say this political agenda should not mix with archaeology.